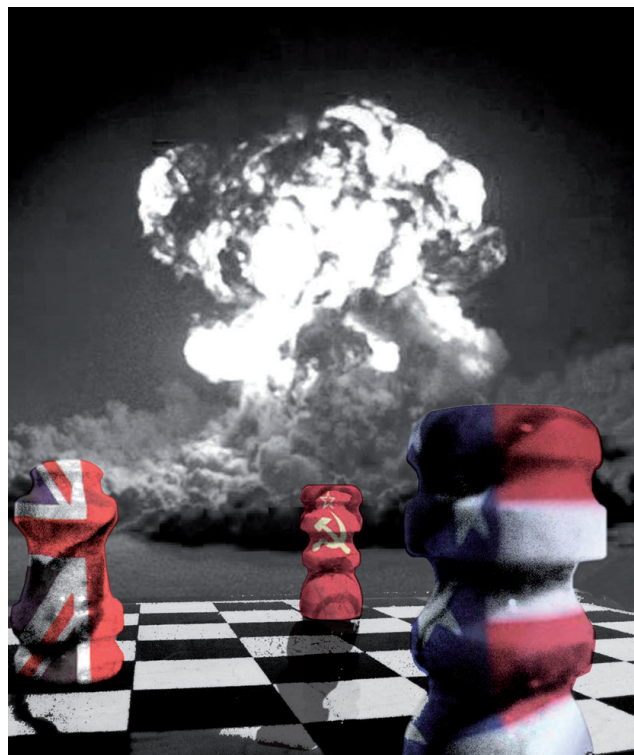


Matti Roitto

## Dissenting Visions

The Executive, Parliament and the  
Problematic Anglo-American Atomic  
Collaboration in the Changes of British  
Atomic Foreign Policy 1945-6



JYVÄSKYLÄ STUDIES IN HUMANITIES 268

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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## ABSTRACT

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The atomic bomb shaped the post-war world and the relations between Britain and the United States. Previous research has presented limited views on British early atomic proliferation in the contexts of domestic policy and Anglo-American relations. The problems of Anglo-American relationship have often been downplayed. Margaret Gowing has claimed that Parliament did not have a say or interest in atomic matters and that everything was ran by the government or the Cabinet or the inner circle of the Cabinet. This view has been repeated without any critical evaluation by other historians ever since. The notion of Parliament's narrow role in foreign and defence policy has also been suggested in most research relating to parliamentary history. The goal of this study is to illustrate the factors which, within one year, led to a change from public, proactive and internationalist policy to a secret, reactive and realist approach. Moreover, these changes and their causes contributed to the partial failure of the Anglo-American atomic collaboration in 1946. This empirical study uses formerly secret archival sources of the government, diplomatic correspondence, and Hansard Parliamentary debates, supplemented with press material. During 1945-46 Parliament referred to atomic energy in 150 instances, in contrast to claims of mute and uninterested Parliament. These findings show the interdependence of the government, Parliament and officials in the atomic matters. Both the Anglo-American "special relationship" and atomic collaboration were more complex issues than has been presented in previous research. I claim that 1) in 1945-1946 there were five turning points when the British policy changed quite drastically back and forth. This was because 2) the role of British officials and, thus, path dependency on previous decisions was greater than has been considered. They informed Clement Attlee's government so that the regime changed its views and pursued secret atomic co-operation for gaining the atomic bomb. 3) This did not entirely succeed due to the British parliament's supervision. Due to the urgent and important nature of atomic matters, Parliament managed to gain access to them. Procedures like parliamentary questions and adjournment debates enhanced Parliament's capability to supervise the government, which limited government's options. 4) This led to problems in implementing policy 5) The Americans were reluctant to continue the atomic co-operation and seem to have applied "atomic diplomacy" against the British in order to enhance their own position in the post-war world. All of these contradicting paradigms affected the British government's possibilities of conducting atomic foreign policy. The "atomic question" also contributed to a gradual change in the British political culture, affecting in part to parliamentarisation of atomic and foreign affairs.

Keywords: atomic bomb, atom, Great Britain, parliament, foreign policy, 1945, 1946, United States, Anglo-American relations

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out how to constantly improve my work. It has been a pleasure working under her supervision and then alongside her. The guidance provided by PhD Antero Holmila, my second supervisor, has also been helpful. Above all, Antero's knowledge about using press material as a source, and the research related with this, helped me greatly in that context.

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No research can be just all fun and laughter, of course, not even with the best colleagues one could ask for. Therefore it has been crucial to have a number of close friends with whom I can do everything *but* work... and yet, occasionally, still also work. I have had great luck with my friends here; especially those who have stayed on here since our carefree years in Kuusankoski, and there have been more great friends both inside and around academia during these years. I do promise, particularly to those who work outside academia that, now this dissertation is finished, I will try to stay in touch a bit more!

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Matti Roitto

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research questions and hypotheses

“Full collaboration between the United States and the British Government in developing tube alloys for military and commercial purposes should continue after the defeat of Japan unless and until terminated by joint agreement.”<sup>1</sup>

During the Second World War, Britain, Canada, and the United States pooled their resources to build the atomic bomb. This had been agreed to by the Prime Minister of Britain, Winston Churchill, and the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt. The initial efforts of the British scientists created a firm base for the research and development conducted in the United States and Canada where the project was safe from enemy bombing. As we can see from the quote above, it was also agreed that development and research continue after the war as well. By the end of July 1945, the new President of the United States, Harry S. Truman, issued permission for the new atomic weapons to be used. According to the existing agreements about Anglo-American atomic cooperation (the Quebec Agreement and the Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire), Great Britain was consulted about the use of the weapons.<sup>2</sup> After the preparation and selection of the intended targets, the B-29 bomber “Enola Gay” dropped a four-ton uranium gun-type fission bomb over the city of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 at 8.15 am. A minute later, the bomb exploded 576m above a local hospital. According to varying sources, 70-80,000 people were killed instantly.<sup>3</sup> Destruction

---

<sup>1</sup> Aide-Mémoire of Conversation between the President and the Prime Minister at Hyde Park, 19 September 1944), printed as appendix 8 in Gowing 1965.

<sup>2</sup> “*This weapon is to be used against Japan between now and August 10<sup>th</sup>.*” President Truman’s diary 25 July 1945. Already on the meeting of the Combined Policy Committee, the instance to oversee the Anglo-American atomic cooperation the British had given their agreement for the use of the atomic weapons. Cf. Gowing, 1974, p.3.

<sup>3</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey 1946, p.8-10; 21-22 “ estimates of casualties have generally ranged between 100,000 and 180,000 for Hiroshima, and between 50,000 and 100,000 for Nagasaki. The Survey believes the dead at Hiroshima to have been between 70,000 and 80,000, with an equal number injured; at Nagasaki over 35,000 dead and somewhat more than that injured seems the most plausible estimate.”

on this scale from a single bomb had never been seen in the world before, even if this was actually smaller than had been initially estimated. There was no need for hours of bombardment, or large fleets of bombers, as there had been in the firebombing of Tokyo or Osaka in March 1945.<sup>4</sup> On the 8 August 1945, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan, and the next day a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki (9 August 1945). In a now hopeless situation, Japan accepted the terms for surrender dictated by the Allies on 14 August 1945, and surrendered officially on 2 September 1945. The role of this winning weapon<sup>5</sup> at the end of the war has been greatly discussed, and some researchers have in fact seen it more as marking the beginning of a new conflict than as ending the war.<sup>6</sup>

With the war now over, joint development of the atomic bomb faltered however, in spite of the agreements made during the war in Quebec and Hyde Park. Much to Britain's surprise, the United States was reluctant to follow up on these agreements. Moreover, the US administration claimed they did not even have a record of these agreements and, less than a year later, Anglo-American atomic collaboration came to a complete standstill when the US Congress passed the Atomic Energy Law in the summer of 1946. The story is not straightforward, however, as in this short period of time British atomic foreign policy changed drastically back and forth. After the British General Election of 1945, the newly installed Labour Government had to tackle the problems of transition from war to peace, and one of these problems was the changing role of Britain in the international context. Since British atomic energy policy had been kept a secret up to this point, Attlee's government had to decide how they would proceed, as this kind of policy did not sit comfortably with many of their election promises. One of these had been to carry out an internationalist foreign policy, but they soon found that this would be less straightforward than they had perhaps first imagined. There was the past atomic cooperation with the US to consider, and the realisation that the Americans were reluctant to continue a partnership in which they felt they had already given so much. This was unfortunate, as Britain had vested her limited resources in atomic research hoping this cooperation would bear fruit for after the war. Attlee's government had to take swift action, define their atomic foreign policy, and implement it as soon as

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Lawrence Freedman states that about 66 000 persons were killed instantly, Freedman 2003, xiii. The radiation increased these figures later.

<sup>4</sup> USSBS: Summary Report (Pacific War) 1946, p.15-17. The strategic bombing offensive on four major cities in Japan had required 1,595 sorties and 9,373 tons of bombs were delivered.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Herken 1988.

<sup>6</sup> Winston Churchill considered atomic bomb as a feat of military strength against the Soviet Union and thought it was a potential deterrent against Soviet Union's aggression even before the surrender of Japan. Churchill 2004. p.472-473. Sherwin 2003, appendix V. (referring to the US War Department's report about the casualties, Soviet Union and Far East 1 June 1945, in which the Americans considered the use of atomic bomb to end the war rapidly and before the Soviet Union would advance to Manchuria. The report stated that from Manchuria Soviet Union could reach to India and thus exert pressure on the other Allies interests in the region.) See also Alperovitz 1996.



possible. But developments in international relations and in domestic policy were not straightforward, and by the summer of 1946, British atomic policy had changed from being active to reactive, open to secret, and internationalist to realist.

The aim of this empirical and mostly qualitative research is two-fold. Firstly, it considers the early phases of British nuclear proliferation, and pinpoints the changes and phases in post-war British atomic foreign policy from August 1945 to the signing of the US Atomic Energy Law in 1946. Secondly, this work offers some explanations for why these changes happened during this critical period of time. How this year came to define atomic matters in the post-war world has often been overlooked, or at least played down in previous research. For instance, the reasons for changes in British atomic foreign policy in this period have not been considered in much detail. My aim is not to point out whether Britain's attempt to pursue cooperation was justified, or whether the Americans broke some agreements when they denied them this opportunity; but to show why the main protagonists in this period took action, and felt they were entitled to do so because of the way they saw the past.

My first hypothesis is that the role of government officials, diplomats and civil servants was extremely important in the apparent 'switch' from an active, open and internationalist policy towards political realism and a policy conducted behind closed doors. They had access to all the information about the new technology and former policies related to it. For the sake of continuity in a time of drastic changes, these officials could not be replaced, as the Government simply did not have the time to take stock of every policy and agency issue. The political leadership also knew very little about atomic matters and as it had established advisory organs to help in decision making, it became rather vulnerable to being influenced by the officials.

My second hypothesis is that Britain's Parliament had a say in the Government's options for conducting atomic foreign policy - a critical aspect that has been completely ignored in previous research. Because of the revolutionary nature of the atomic question in current affairs, and because of the momentum for change in post-war Britain, and the room for manoeuvre offered by the lack of any government policy, Parliament had a chance to take the initiative. For instance, with the help of fairly new parliamentary procedures, it could gain access on matters of defence and foreign policy in a way that had never happened before. The Government had its responsibilities towards Parliament, and by ratifying the United Nations Charter (which also related to atomic matters), it publicly committed itself to a different kind of policy than what the officials were implicitly recommending. According to my findings, Parliament was an active agent in atomic and foreign policy matters. It did not succumb to the executive, as has been previously claimed, but on the contrary was resiliently interested in participating in the debates over important atomic and foreign policy issues. Parliament also attempted to exercise influence over the Government and supervise its actions. One could even say that, on a wider scale, this relates

to an overall trend that was occurring at this time towards the democratisation of foreign policy and conflict resolution.

The third hypothesis, though it plays a smaller role, is that the US practised "atomic diplomacy" on Britain to gain more advantages and a better position in the post-war world. The point here is that the British did not operate in a vacuum, but in the context of rapidly evolving international relations. It was evident, that besides cooperation in atomic research and development, Britain was involved with the United States in many other ways. There was a fear that the US would return to isolationism, and leave Britain to tackle the growing belligerence of the Soviet Union. The traditional view of atomic diplomacy has mainly been that it was a brief, failed attempt within the larger context of American-Soviet relations.<sup>7</sup>

Five phases can be found in this period which define the changes that occurred in Anglo-American cooperation and influenced the politics behind it. The first phase describes the initial period when the British struggled to get to grips with the news that there was now the atomic bomb. It also covers their attempts to take the initiative in atomic negotiations with the US before they would eventually meet with them in November 1945 for this purpose in Washington. Idealism had been a major part of Labour's election proposals, which related to a perceived need for open politics after the horrors of war. These notions soon coalesced around the aim to get the United Nations (UN) to control atomic weapons, share atomic information, and possibly even ban any future atomic bombs. Phase two describes how the undercurrents of political realism from the previous administration also began to gather strength before the Washington conference; and how to manage this situation the Government gradually developed a bidirectional policy so that it could simultaneously pursue the objective of secret cooperation with the US as well as internationalism. This phase culminated in the Anglo-American-Canadian (tripartite) conference in Washington, which the British considered to be a success. Not only did they manage to secure the promise of continued post-war cooperation, but gained even more in terms of an agreement to proceed with the international control of atomic energy. Phase three marks the shock of preparing for the Moscow Conference, called for at short notice by American Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes. The conference itself was a tipping point in Anglo-American atomic relations, as the Americans became more proactive and gained the initiative. It was a phase when international control as well as atomic monopoly or oligopoly (with the US) were still both seen as possibilities. However, the Americans pushed more for the idea of international control at this stage, which the British

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<sup>7</sup> For example see: Gaddis, 1998, p.89-91. Gaddis presents atomic diplomacy as American attempt to try to influence Soviet Union with the benefit of the atomic energy monopoly. As Molotov did not seem to "bite" in the London Conference of the Foreign Ministers, the course of "atomic influence" was dropped. See also Harbutt 1986 124-126 about Molotov in response to Byrnes attempts to pressure the Soviets with the atomic bomb, pretending to be drunk and "revealing" that the Soviet Union would also soon have the atomic bomb before being ushered out from a cocktail party.

felt obliged to follow because this had been strongly supported by Parliament at home. Phase four was marked by a stalemate in atomic cooperation after Moscow, as the Americans chose to shelve atomic cooperation over the winter and spring of 1946, while the British waited thinking this was the best policy, whereas unbeknownst to them they had actually lost the initiative. The British did however try to strengthen Anglo-American relations in other fields in the hope that it would have an eventual positive effect on atomic cooperation when finally resumed. During this phase there was one area in which the British felt some progress was made - Britain and the US finally agreed they had a common foe in the USSR. The fifth and final phase was when atomic cooperation definitively broke down. It focuses on the British reactions to the McMahon Bill which cancelled all previous American promises of atomic cooperation that had been made. Subsequently, the British passed their own Atomic Energy Law in the autumn of 1946.

These phases constitute the backbone of this research and form the structure of this dissertation. Even though thematic division could have been possible, the tapestry of interrelated events that affected British atomic policy is so rich, that a chronological approach became the only viable choice in the end. It also allowed for a better analysis of the causality between actions and events. But before we embark on the dissertation itself, the relevant research literature which framed the basis for this specific piece of research is discussed. As the time period in focus is so narrow, it is possible to aim for a greater degree of precision than has been attempted in works on a greater temporal scale. There has also been a tendency for a certain kind of research to dominate in this field, and there is a need to go through them in order to establish the basis for my hypothesis in detail. At the same time the larger context of events will be briefly presented, because the story is naturally part of a longer history, and many of the problems in 1945-1946 had longer trajectories in the past.

The literature review is then followed by a review of the source material used for this work, and then there are methodological considerations, and some theoretical remarks. The theories have also been considered to some extent in the literature review. After this, the dissertation follows the events chronologically through the five aforementioned phases in British atomic foreign policy, and this is followed by a conclusion.

## **1.2 Previous research**

In many ways, this work stands on the shoulders of giants. It belongs to the tradition of political history but it is also related to parliamentary history, the history of international relations, nuclear proliferation studies, and Cold War historiography. The results of previous academic work in these fields have raised questions about early British atomic policy (or nuclear proliferation), and whether the grand narrative of the “western allies” should be challenged - at least in atomic affairs. The previous research is used to contextualise and to

point out the main events. It is then compared with the primary source material to see what has been overlooked in this crucial period of time that came to define the post-war world and people's understanding of atomic matters, not to mention British atomic policy.

There are two main streaks to the previous research covered here: (1) Anglo-American relations and the alleged special relationship; and (2) atomic or nuclear proliferation studies with the emphasis on the elements of strategy and prestige. There is no way of getting round the fact that the atomic bomb changed the world, by shattering the former concept of global security for good. Some researchers have considered that atomic weapons were used, first and foremost, as a political weapon, as the first act in the forthcoming Cold War.<sup>8</sup> This debate thus relates closely to Cold War historiography, which would also explain to some extent the focus on American-Soviet relations at the expense of considering Britain as an independent Great Power. Some researchers have considered that the United States was actually rather well prepared for the possible implications of the new weapons and acted the way it did to strengthen its position in the post-war world.<sup>9</sup> Consequently the possibility that the US was practising "atomic diplomacy" has been considered, especially by Gar Alperovitz but, like the discussions over the point at which the Cold War really started, it has also been contested heavily and has indeed become one of the classical dilemmas within Cold War studies and history.<sup>10</sup> Primarily seen either as an American-Soviet issue, or as an isolated incident that occurred in a cocktail party during the 1945 London Council of Foreign Ministers.<sup>11</sup> It has been depicted as not just a mere anecdote in the grand narrative of American international relations, but also in the grand narrative of 'harmonious' Anglo-American relations (which have often been portrayed as such, especially during the Cold War era, judging from the large amount of research literature on the special relationship). The result is that these earlier works have become the common consensus. Therefore a brief account of Cold War historiography will serve as a good starting point for the literature review. After all, the eventual

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<sup>8</sup> Churchill 2004, p.472-473. Sherwin 2003, appendix V; Alperovitz 1996, p. 127; 130-131.

<sup>9</sup> For instance the Interrim Committee. Gowing 1965, p.149; 154-156. Herken, 1988, p.21-22 tells for instance that Truman had considered using third atomic weapon in order to force Japan to surrender before the Soviet Union would advance too far in Manchuria. According to Herken, especially US Secretary of War Henry Stimson had considered the effects of the new weapon might have on international relations. Stimson thought that the bomb might cause severe problems. See also Sherwin 2003, appendix V.

<sup>10</sup> Leinonen 2012 120-128; 130 referring to Patricia Dawson Ward's critique for Alperovitz's idea of Byrnes' devising of council of foreign secretaries as a forum of atomic diplomacy. Also: Leinonen 2012, p. 354: "No real efforts to utilize atomic diplomacy, for instance, were ever actually made. The apparent reason was the conflict between the character of atomic diplomacy and an open foreign policy. Methodologically, atomic diplomacy would have meant a return to old-fashioned "secret diplomacy," which might have meant a serious setback to the peace process if it were leaked to the public. Despite some moral restraints, the art of the possible was embodied at its best in quid pro quo politics, in which the Great Powers considered and traded their advantages."

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 7

breakdown of atomic collaboration, and the changes in British atomic foreign policy covered here show that problems almost certainly existed and they were severe.

### 1.2.1 Cold War historiography and the Anglo-American special relationship

Cold War studies focus mainly on the reasons behind the escalation of the Cold War. This has led to a lot of research on the blame or guilt factor. There are three major schools of thought in the subject. The original one, which flourished in the 1950s and '60s puts emphasis on the Soviet Union's expansion, invasive policy and demands for power, especially in Eastern Europe. These led to the West, mainly the US (portrayed as passive and seeking cooperation), to respond with containment. The Soviets were considered impossible to cooperate or negotiate with and this led to the escalation of the Cold War. In a nutshell, this school of thought therefore puts the blame on the Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup> Geographically, this original idea of the Cold War focused mostly on Europe, having been a school of thought originating in the West.<sup>13</sup> This research tendency lasted quite a long time, and it enhanced the idea that the United States and Britain were allies resisting Soviet attempts to dominate the world. The roots of this tradition are mostly in American research. Many of the authors and scholars had also served in the US administration themselves, which must have had an effect on their work as well. Many elements of the tradition could easily be linked into current affairs of the period in which they were written, and it is quite possible that there was the intention to influence the actual policy of the US and other western powers. This point of view was thus for a long time considered as the "official" history of the Cold War, in the West at least, and it has some influence even today.

A second school of thought became more prominent with the rise of "The New Left" after the experiences of the Vietnam War in the 1960s. William Appleman Williams led the vanguard of this revisionism, which re-evaluates US foreign policy in terms of being imperialist, or at least expansionist in a wider context, and posits that the main reason for the dissolution of the Grand Alliance of the war was, in fact, the US trying to contain the Soviet Union in the Second World War, or even earlier. From the revisionist perspective, the US was neither passive nor reactive. Neither did it seriously commit itself to universalism, but used it for its own purposes. For example, with the free market the US was aiming to secure financial interests and capitalism, and use economic power as a lever.<sup>14</sup> And with the open-door policy it aimed to find new

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<sup>12</sup> Crapol, 1987 p.252-254. For example: Herbert Feis, Louis J. Halle and Arthur Schlesinger Jr; Richardson, 1972. p.579-580.

<sup>13</sup> Richardson, 1972. p.579-580.

<sup>14</sup> For example see: Kolko, 1976, p.234-238 & p.352-354. Kolko emphasises the Lend Lease as an example to "guide" the British under the wings of the post-war economic system that the United States had planned for a longer period of time. Cutting of Lend Lease was meant to manipulate the British into loaning money from the United States and to accept the terms set for the loan

markets for the United States.<sup>15</sup> The Lend-Lease is one example of this, as in the financial and loan negotiations with Great Britain in 1945-1946, the Americans tried quite hard to gain access to the Commonwealth in financial and economic terms.<sup>16</sup> The tendency to emphasise economic factors is strong among the revisionists, and though economic factors are not the direct focus of this study, they raise interesting ideas and questions about the intentions of the American foreign policy. Some historians, like Gar Alperovitz have also mentioned the use of atomic weapons and wanting a monopoly in atomic energy as one of the key factors in the emergence of the Cold War. According to Alperovitz the United States wanted to use the atomic bombs as a show of force to the Soviet Union, in order to support their own claims in the international system.<sup>17</sup> Revisionists have also claimed that the unipolar actions of the United States pushed the Soviet Union to respond with its own harsh security politics including its creation of satellite and buffer states.<sup>18</sup> However, the idea that atomic diplomacy was practised within what was to become "the western bloc" is overlooked in the revisionist approach.

The third school of thought is post-revisionism, which challenged most of the claims made by the revisionists, such as American imperialism. Some post-revisionists also tried to find a sort of a balance or even a synthesis between the two former approaches. The work of John Lewis Gaddis, for example, was groundbreaking. His main point was that there were reasons and arguments to be found from both camps that led to the escalation of the Cold War. With this newer approach, the guilt or blame factors are less important than the failure to understand each other, which essentially fed the suspicions on both sides, which in turn led to the hostile and competitive situation of the Cold War.<sup>19</sup> Post-revisionism seems to approve of the United States using economic instruments to achieve political goals, while at the same time claiming that Stalin was more of an opportunist than a planner of world revolutions. Also the idea of the American "empire" seems to have been accepted, though at the same time it is claimed to not have been built with force or coercion.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1980s, European research on the Cold War took a step forward when new archival material was made available, while the 1990s saw the opening of eastern archives for new research.<sup>21</sup> Both have helped to contribute

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<sup>15</sup> Crapol 1987, p.254-257. Notable revisionist figures include for example Gar Alperovitz, Joyce and Gabriel Kolko and Walter LaFeber. Richardson, 1972 p.581 mentions Alperovitz, Kolko and Horowitz as "...hard core of the revisionist school." For key elements in revisionist thinking see Richardson, 1972, p.581-582.

<sup>16</sup> Kolko 1990, p.490-499.

<sup>17</sup> Richardson 1972, p.594-597. Also Kolko, 1990, seems to support the idea of the atomic bomb as a show of (American) force, even inside the "western alliance", p.540-543.

<sup>18</sup> Richardson 1972, p.586-587 referring to Kolko and Horowitz. Richardson criticises the revisionists for searching only for sources confirming pre-planned theories, p.608-609.

<sup>19</sup> Gaddis, 1998, p.11-17. Gaddis mentions Europe as a power vacuum after the second world war, and that superpowers filling that vacuum were bound to cross interests with each other. See also Crapol 1987, p.257-259.

<sup>20</sup> Crapol 1987, p.258-259.

<sup>21</sup> For instance see: Kirby 2002.

to a subject which formerly was more focused on American sources. The subjects and emphases of research have thus now moved more towards, for example, the cultural elements of the Cold War and the Cold War beyond Europe. The British perspective has also only fairly recently started to feature more in the literature now as well. This began with the revisionist approach to the Cold War, shifting the blame on the Americans and to some extent the British too. However, in this kind of research, the role of Britain has usually been studied from the perspective of the struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States. It was not until the 1980s that Britain's own intentions or ambitions were taken into account. Of these more British-oriented works, the most important ones used here are Fraser Harbutt's "The Iron Curtain" (1986), Elisabeth Barker's "The British Between the Superpowers 1945-1950" (1983); and James L. Gormly's "The Collapse of the Grand Alliance 1945-1948" (1987). These three pieces of work are still relevant, for they opened up a new kind of interpretation, even outside the Cold War historiography debate. They have also been among those works which have been referred to in detail in the next generation of research. The strength of these books lies in their depiction of the history of events with greater detail, as the timescale is narrower. In addition, they challenge to some extent the view of seeing things solely from the American perspective, and the idea of Anglo-American relations being problem free. In this way they provide an interesting contextual basis for in-depth analysis and an angle for this research.

For instance, challenging both the focus on the US and USSR, as well as more traditional accounts for the start of Cold War, Barker argues that the drifting apart of the Allies started in 1945, when the Soviets, Americans, and British failed to forge a new world order at Yalta, at a golden opportunity when the old one had been shattered by the war. This corresponds to my hypothesis about the momentum for change that existed in 1945-1946, which indicated that the peace the world would be returning to after the war would be quite a different one than that which existed before the war. Barker also notices that historians tend to see the post-war world dominated by the competition between just the two major superpowers, when in fact the situation was a lot more complicated and nuanced. Harbutt, meanwhile, seems to mostly ignore the British as independent agents, though he does provide in-depth coverage of the US administration and the conflicts within it, and considers atomic matters to some extent, even if it is mainly from the American point of view. However, Harbutt's fascination with Churchill perhaps narrows the focus a bit too much. As for Gormly, he points to the differences and quarrels between the Americans and British, and sheds more light on the often overlooked Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow, which was an important attempt to achieve an international form of atomic control. Though they do use some archival sources and general literature, when it comes to atomic matters, both Barker and Gormly rely mainly on the previous research of Margaret Gowing. For instance, the reason Barker leaves out the Anglo-American atomic question, she says, is because it has already been covered "brilliantly" by Gowing.

At the time of writing of these works, most of the executive sources on atomic matters, at least in Britain, were still classified; but perhaps more importantly, the emphasis of the books was to give an overview of the Cold War, and not to focus too strictly on atomic affairs. In this respect, bearing in mind when they were published, they bring together much new source material which must have been quite challenging to draw together. Cold War historiography has rather strongly influenced the research on the pre-Cold War era too. For instance the Anglo-American special relationship has been questioned by John Saville (1993), and Gormly, amongst others.

The study of Anglo-American relations and the so-called "special relationship" between the two countries has been the focus of much academic attention, and a correspondingly huge corpus of work. Then again, the topic has also been immensely popular outside academic circles too, and some journalists have taken stabs at the theme. Two main paradigms seem to exist. One is the pre-1980s view of Britain miscalculating its resources and not quite being able to understand the new limits of its potential to act as a Great Power. A more recent, but somewhat lesser known, tendency has been to reconsider this, and see British actions as a clever way of coping with alternative means. These include attempts to influence the United States by using a number of economic, defence, and foreign policy strategies to gain American commitment to Europe and Britain, and to oppose the Soviet Union. This interpretation has been backed by Rhiannon Vickers. It is thought that the end of the actual Cold War perhaps opened up intra-western relations for closer study. There has since been a need to explore the special relationship from the perspective of it providing the means to reproduce and maintain western coherence at a time in history when Cold War policies and rhetoric were slowly coming to an end between the United States and Great Britain. This means there has also been room for re-evaluation, new approaches, and more specialised themes to be brought up. As this work is an empirical analysis of the changes - and possible reasons for them - in British atomic foreign policy and atomic collaboration with the United States, it does not address the historiography of the Cold War further. These aspects, however, cannot be overlooked, as they have had an impact on the research literature in general. They also explain certain tendencies in the research literature, such as taking the Anglo-American special relationship as granted in spite of various problems.

More recent works from the British side, on early Cold War foreign relations, have also proved useful for this thesis. Rhiannon Vickers' (2004) "The Labour Party and the World, Volume 1: The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy 1900-1951" has a much more neutral, multifaceted and conclusive approach than the works of the revisionist historians or those focusing on the role of Britain for the first time. Likewise it escapes from the traditional emphasis on "great men", which was common in the earlier works of diplomatic and political history on the period. Though the focus of the book is mostly on the pre-war period and to some degree on the war years, the insight given on Attlee's government is interesting, and uses a variety of sources. The most



important contribution, though not perhaps so directly applicable here, is the view on how ethics, among other factors, contributed to Labour's foreign policy formulation in the wider timeframe. Vickers also takes advantage of parliamentary sources, and her critical approach towards the domestic forces behind Labour's foreign policy, and her analysis of the development of internationalist ideals as the basis for foreign affairs, are important for understanding British foreign policy.<sup>22</sup> Vickers also takes into account the forces in foreign affairs that were countering this, so that the reader is fully aware of the historical context, i.e., that none of these policies started in a vacuum.

One gap in British history that Vickers believes could use more light, and indeed research, is post-war British foreign policy in general. According to her, the Attlee government caused much excitement on the left at the time and, although it has been studied more in academia than any other period in Labour history, the synthetic approach has been lacking. The foreign policy of Attlee's government is attractive to study because it spans so many politically and historically significant issues. To start with, this period was unique in that it was the first time there was a majority Labour government in Britain, with a clear mandate and a reform programme, whereas the Labour minority governments previously had needed to rely on Liberal support to pass legislation and had even less power with regards to the staff of civil service. In 1945 however, Labour swept to electoral victory on the back of a significant majority by any party's standards. This was seen as the first time that Labour could really try its hand at international affairs. Certainly supporters expected a new, more internationalist, ethical, and indeed socialist foreign policy from their government. In addition, Vickers reminds us that this period was remarkable in that Labour's demand for a new world order, based on a post-war settlement that would include international economic planning and the creation of a collective security superstructure that was more effective than the League of Nations appeared to have been met.<sup>23</sup> These are important points, even if the collective security measures did not go quite as planned. Vickers underlines the role of Britain as one of the key actors with the US in the creating of the superstructure for collective security, the nascent United Nations. Labour had also argued on behalf of similar ideas, though subordinating national sovereignty to an international regime was, according to Vickers, not actually mentioned while Labour was in power. Nevertheless, the Government had similar enough concerns as the Americans about post-war security in the world. Ernest Bevin, Clement Attlee and Hugh Dalton were all significantly involved with post-war planning in Churchill's government as well,<sup>24</sup> and this is borne out in the previous research.<sup>25</sup> It was really only after the war when it first became inescapably apparent that Britain's pre-eminent imperial position in the

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<sup>22</sup> The ethics as the basis of Labour's policy has also been considered by Jonathan Schneer.

<sup>23</sup> Vickers 2004, p.158-160.

<sup>24</sup> Vickers 2004, p.160-161.

<sup>25</sup> Bullock, Harris, Morgan, Hennessy, Radice and others.

world was being supplanted by the US, whether it liked it or not.<sup>26</sup> There were other problems too. In domestic politics, there were the differing views of Harold Laski and Bevan on the left wing. There were also ambitious plans for nationalisation and the building of the welfare state. Economic crisis was looming on the doorstep too, which had effect on all policy options.<sup>27</sup> In the end, Vickers returns to the sentiment of British greatness felt at that time, and argues that in a situation hampered by limited resources, there was very little that could be done to maintain Britain's position or prestige.<sup>28</sup>

"There was the enduring belief that Britain was still a Great Power, and as its empire was the most obvious manifestation of its Great Power status, this should be protected in order to prevent a loss of prestige which would lead to a decline in Britain's influence more generally"<sup>29</sup>

Attlee had tried to get this idea across, but to no avail.<sup>30</sup> According to Vickers, the sheer number of topics<sup>31</sup> that his government had to address might go some way to account for the many differing interpretations of Britain's foreign policy from 1945 to '51. I would agree on this point but, contrary to most research, I claim that it was the atomic question that proved to be one of the most problematic of these topics. I argue here that one possible explanation for Britain's declining position, was in fact the atomic bomb. No matter which way it was looked at, the atomic bomb was not just some miracle solution but a cause of many problems too. The atomic question led to the kind of foreign policy that would sow the seeds for the keep left movement later. Vickers mentions that even in the autumn of 1946, there were altogether 56 backbenchers that tabled a motion to amend the King's speech and demand a "third way" policy. Even if no Labour MPs voted on behalf of the amendment, 83 abstained from voting, which - if nothing else - is a sign of criticism.<sup>32</sup> There had been earlier votes of confidence too, for instance, when Bevin was preparing for the Moscow talks at the end of 1945. This would seem as evidence contrary to the ideas originally presented by Kenneth Morgan (1984, 1992), Alan Bullock (1984), and Richie Ovendale (2002) - who are all reviewed by Vickers. They have seen Labour's foreign policy as successful and realistic, in terms of estimating Britain's chances and position - particularly when Bevin got the US to take a defensive stance against the Soviet Union in Europe.<sup>33</sup> Morgan's

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<sup>26</sup> Morgan 1992, p.7-9; p.20-21.

<sup>27</sup> Vickers 2004, p.160-162. For leftist problems see also: Morgan 1984, p.45-47; p.63. Burnett, 2001, p.133. On variety of problems in general, see Bullock 1984, p.49-50; p.121. and Morgan 1992, p.65 and Morgan 1984, p.144-145.

<sup>28</sup> Vickers 2004, p.161-162.

<sup>29</sup> Vickers 2004, p.165.

<sup>30</sup> Vickers 2004, p.161-162.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Vickers 2004, p.162-164. Demobilization, how to deal with the Empire, trade and finance issues and others. Also some of the senior ministers were committed to the idea of Empire, come hell or high water, which led to a policy that could not be afforded or implemented.

<sup>32</sup> Vickers 2004, p.170.

<sup>33</sup> Vickers 2004, p.161 referring to Morgan, Bullock, Ovendale and also to Pelling.

studies, especially “Labour in Power” (1984), provide useful information about the the party’s operations and the division of labour within it.

Vickers also mentions a second approach in the previous research. According to her, it portrays the Labour Government as giving up the socialist ideals and internationalist foreign policy that had brought it to power. Its foreign policy is often presented as misguided, or as a betrayal of the left, as well as a missed opportunity for better world. John Saville (1994), Peter Weiler (1987) and Jonathan Schneer (1992), have advocated these views the most vehemently. I subscribe wholeheartedly to Vickers’ excellent analysis of British foreign policy. Saville’s idea of a “politics of continuity”, a sort of path dependency on previous decisions, and the idea of agency through a system of diplomats and civil servants (as will be presented in the next chapter) is also useful in considering possible reasons for the drastic changes in British foreign policy in the short period of 1945-1946.<sup>34</sup> Either way, it is clear that what has been variously considered as the Anglo-American special relationship, post-war consensus, and an unimportant problem-free time in the grand narrative of Cold War historiography was, in fact, much more complex. The present work adds to this by pointing to the likelihood that there were particularly serious problems with the atomic side of British foreign policy, both in planning and in implementation. This leads us back to British atomic foreign policy, and the surprising dearth of it in academic works. Even Vickers’ first volume relies rather heavily on Gowing’s work for atomic matters, while defence policy is mainly covered from 1948 onwards; so the state of flux prevailing in 1945-46 has been overlooked to some extent.<sup>35</sup> Vickers also seems to subscribe to the myth that 1947 was the year when the go-ahead was given for Britain to build her own atomic bomb. The reasons given for pursuing an independent bomb programme are similar to Gowing’s, and the account seems to rely quite heavily overall on Gowing’s 1989 article.

“Despite the growing Anglo-American Alliance, Britain was reluctant to be too reliant on its allies for its defence needs, and so the decision was made in secret, by Attlee, Bevin and four other members of the Cabinet Defence Committee on 8 January 1947, for Britain to develop an independent nuclear strategy. This decision was made without the knowledge of the rest of the Cabinet, Parliament or the Labour Party. It was made for two reasons. First, for strategic purposes: if other states had so dangerous a weapon, the Britain would need it to deter or retaliate, otherwise Britain would become too dependent on its allies for its defence needs. Second, to halt the image of decline by demonstrating that Britain was still a world power, for ‘Nuclear weapons seemed to be the way by which a medium-sized, but technically advanced, nation could retain Great Power status’ [footnote 92 –to Gowing 1989]”<sup>36</sup>

Vickers argues that the decision for Britain to build her own atomic bomb was based on strategic purposes. She would either need a deterrent or weapon of

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<sup>34</sup> Saville’s work has been depicted as not totally coherent or that successful by Kenneth Kyle in his book review. Kyle, 2009.

<sup>35</sup> Vickers 2004, p.181.

<sup>36</sup> Vickers 2004, p.183 Also: “Nuclear weapons seemed to be the way by which a medium-sized, but technically advanced, nation could retain Great Power status”.

retaliation, if others already possessed such a threat. Otherwise Britain would be too dependent on others for her defence. Another reason was that by being a state with atomic capability, Britain would be able to keep up the image of being a Great Power, or at least slow the decline.<sup>37</sup> This responds well to the earliest British atomic proliferation research, as well as to Gowing's main ideas about the reasons why Britain wanted cooperation and the bomb in the first place. This would also account, at least to some extent, for Britain's attempts to practice a Great Power policy with few resources available to really do this. The new super weapon would have made up for this nicely, and yet this reasoning does not adequately clarify why the internationalist views Vickers so carefully presents would have been thrown to the wind so soon after the election victory. This is perhaps related to atomic matters and because it relies on Gowing's streamlined account of Anglo-American relations in 1945-6.

### 1.2.2 British atomic matters and nuclear proliferation studies

The use of the atomic bombs against Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 is considered one of the most important events of the twentieth century and not only in nuclear proliferation studies. The amount of literature and other material related to these issues is immense. Unfortunately, this also means that the quality varies a lot, especially as the topic sells rather well, which means that books can be churned out fairly regularly on the topic by publishers, as they know they will sell come what may. Luckily there have also been good academic pieces of research written as well, and these will be presented below, though the general tendency has been to concentrate on matters chiefly related to the bipolar nuclear arms race between the US and USSR.

The interesting case of Anglo-American atomic collaboration is that it was one of the priorities of British foreign policy in 1945-1946. This case study can not only be used to shed more light on an important, but overlooked time period, but also early British or Anglo-American atomic proliferation which has previously been dominated mostly accounts that approach the subject from the in terms of strategy or prestige. It is also useful if one is considering the bigger picture of continuity and change, in British political culture. It also takes into account the longer trajectory of attempted parliamentarisation of foreign and defence matters in Britain.

The actual research and development of atomic energy<sup>38</sup> had taken great leaps in the 1930s. The Second World War then took this research further, and the British played an important part, especially in the early research culminating in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The report of Rudolph Peierls and Otto Frisch

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<sup>37</sup> Vickers 2004, p.183.

<sup>38</sup> The term "Atomic Energy" was the one used by the contemporaries, and it contained all the potential of the new invention, from commercial applications to atomic weapons. It is also used in this study instead of terms like nuclear energy, nuclear weapons etc. The limited knowledge of the era concerning the new invention becomes evident with this term; likewise, the term was used widely, perhaps also because it was open to interpretation.

in 1939 marked the beginnings of a research project, and the British atomic energy policy. The project, codenamed “Tube Alloys”, was a secret that only those in the inner circle of Churchill’s War Cabinet knew about.<sup>39</sup> The research was conducted by a sub-committee working under the Committee for the Scientific Survey of Air Warfare. This sub-committee, called The Military Application of Uranium Detonation (MAUD) Committee, soon became an independent entity, though later it would be under the responsibility of the Air Ministry. The results of British atomic research were soon summarised in a report by MAUD, but due to the heavy burden of war, these results and the nascent British atomic research programme<sup>40</sup> was handed over to the United States as part of a mutually beneficial agreement.<sup>41</sup> The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour served to rejuvenate US interest and more of their resources were devoted to the project<sup>42</sup> so, after some difficulties, Anglo-American cooperation continued on American soil. This was made possible by the informal Quebec Agreement, signed by Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt in autumn 1943<sup>43</sup>, which sealed this arrangement and promised full and effective cooperation between the two nations. In 1944 this agreement was supplemented by the Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire, in which both parties agreed that cooperation on atomic energy research should continue after the war against Japan was over, unless mutually broken off. Because of the heavy expenses of the project, mostly paid by the US, the right for possible commercial patents was given to the US as compensation.<sup>44</sup>

Britain, the US and Canada also worked together to secure the raw materials that were so important to the research and production of atomic energy. It was agreed that practical issues, including the manufacture of the atomic bomb and technical knowledge related to its production, were to be dealt with according to *ad hoc* arrangements. Two cooperative organs, the Combined Policy Committee (CPC) and Combined Development Trust (CDT) were established to guide the cooperation and to allocate and acquire the raw materials.<sup>45</sup> A detailed account of this joint project, including the various problems, has been given by Margaret Gowing in “Britain and Atomic Energy” (1965). It is the most important work for the context of this study. However, it is also the “official” history of the British Atomic Energy Project as are the subsequent works of Gowing, which are presented below. In “Britain and Atomic Energy” the focus is on the wartime background to Anglo-American collaboration, and

<sup>39</sup> Bullock 1984, p.184-185. Bullock says that Bevin and Attlee did not even know the project existed! Gowing agrees, Gowing 1974, p.5. See also Hennessy, 2001, p.51. In the general level of security and defense Attlee was supposed to be well informed, Brookshire, 2003, p.3-5.

<sup>40</sup> British interests focused especially on the atomic weapon. For example see: Arnold, 2006 p.6-8; Cawood, 2005 p.1-2.

<sup>41</sup> For example see Gowing, 1965, 34-36, 40-45, 56-66, 76-78; 85; 94; 106; 107-111, 122-127. For a more recent interpretation, see Lee 2006, p.160-166.

<sup>42</sup> Gowing 1965, p.34-36; 56-66; 107-111 & 122.

<sup>43</sup> Gowing 1965, p.167-169.

<sup>44</sup> Quebec Agreement, printed in Gowing, 1965, appendix 4; Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire, printed in Gowing 1965, appendix 8.

<sup>45</sup> Gowing 1965, 170, 234-235.

more importantly on presenting the origins of the British project. The key role of the British in the early stages of atomic research, and the fact that they then passed the information to the Americans is the legitimisation for practically all the British expectations of further cooperation, though Gowing herself does not underline this notion. "Britain and Atomic Energy" is well-written and exhaustively detailed research that has served as the basis for many other pieces of research, including this dissertation. The early atomic research that took place in Britain is depicted in detail. A similar recap of this is presented in Henry de Wolf Smyth's "Atomic Energy for Military Purposes (1945, 5th and 1946, 6th editions), which includes details on the British Tube Alloys programme, and the American Manhattan Project. What happened after the war, however, has been overlooked even though the corpus of atomic or nuclear proliferation studies has expanded rapidly.

There are some vague references about problems in the previous literature, and research conducted on other related topics has raised some questions about whether the cooperation was just as problem-free as the common consensus would have us believe, but most research overlooks the specific problems of Anglo-American atomic cooperation. For example, the British government was well aware that the Quebec Agreement and the Hyde Park supplement could be misinterpreted as referring only to wartime cooperation and that these agreements could be overturned either in the Senate or in the Congress.<sup>46</sup> Likewise the British problems in defining atomic policy have been overlooked, even if the 1970s saw a rise in British atomic history research as well. The public side of post-war cooperation is, however, mentioned briefly by Gowing in the context of the tripartite Washington Declaration, as the basis for attempting to an international control mechanism for atomic energy, technology and weapons.<sup>47</sup> Previous research mainly presents the post-war story of atomic collaboration in the compact form of an Anglo-American narrative too. Domestic and technical difficulties have been considered thoroughly. For example, the new Labour government<sup>48</sup> had to form its atomic energy policy after the bombs were used, and to find out as much information about the subject as possible. Attlee established the Gen 75 Committee to handle these matters, and under this committee was the ACAE (Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy) led by John Anderson (MP for Combined Scottish Universities, National Party), Churchill's former advisor on atomic matters.<sup>49</sup> The British aim seemed to be to secure and strengthen the cooperation with Americans, and through this achieve atomic capability. Gowing also describes how the War Cabinet had totally different powers than the post-war Cabinet at its disposal, due to the exceptional circumstances of war. The legitimacy of secrecy was more profound during wartime, and pragmatism meant that only a very

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<sup>46</sup> Botti 1987 p.5.

<sup>47</sup> Washington Declaration, 15 Nov. 1945, printed in Gowing, 1974, appendix 4.

<sup>48</sup> The Election Day was 26 July 1945, Labour won with a landslide. Morgan, 1984, p.59-61; Ovendale 1998, p.56-57.

<sup>49</sup> Gowing 1974, s.5-6; 19-20. No.186 Campbell's memo to Bevin, 8 August 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol. II.

few people knew of the matter and were involved with making decisions. The problems met during the initial years when the cooperation started out are also presented in detail by Gowing, together with consideration given to the nature of the sources, and some all-round critical analysis. The lack of a similar detail in Gowing's later works is particularly evident in the light of this, and creates an opening for asking certain questions.

Gowing's two volume set on the British atomic project "Independence and Deterrence" was published in 1974. The second volume, "Policy Execution" focuses less on the politics of foreign policy and defence, and instead more on the actualisation of the British plans for a joint project, and then later an independent project. Domestic and technical difficulties are considered in detail. The first volume "Policy Making" charts the course of events in foreign policy and diplomacy related to the British research of atomic energy and the planned cooperation with the United States. The scale of Gowing's research is wider in many ways than that of my research, but that does not completely explain the rather critiqueless approach to Anglo-American atomic relations in "Policy Making". Even when major problems seem to jump out of the context of events, Gowing mainly shrugs them off and does not give them much further consideration. "Hopes are dupes" as a headline of the part in which the breakdown of the Anglo-American atomic cooperation is a dead giveaway about the overly neutral approach the "official historian" has slipped into. Gowing reports the events in detail, but leaves the analysis mostly to the side. Instead of asking why, or evaluating the decisions made, she focuses on answering the question of "what happened?" The problematic side of the cooperation is mentioned only in passing. In Gowing's studies, atomic energy diplomacy thus seems to have been conducted almost in a vacuum, so light are the contextual connections mentioned. This could be related to the nature of Cold War historiography and the need to emphasise the special relationship along with the idea of the atomic collaboration being problem-free. Naturally one must bear in mind that, as the period of time studied is wider than in the present study, there is less space for exhaustive details concerning the years 1945-1946. The groundbreaking role of Gowing is that her work focuses on the British side of atomic energy collaboration and the foreign policy related to it, which is more than can be said of most other studies. Gowing is also cited in almost all of the other related works. Her cautious presentation also leaves room to draw the conclusions that Gowing herself is reluctant to draw. Additionally, Gowing's sources are not marked, as they were confidential at the time of writing. For example, with "Independence and Deterrence", most of the sources were still heavily classified and only Gowing had access to them. However, there is no doubt that she also gained access to informal sources of the kind which can never again be accessed. This means interviews and such, and silent knowledge of those who were in the core of the matters when they happened and might have remembered something that was not necessarily written down, or that has at least not survived through the long periods of archiving and classification. Naturally the oral histories have their problems

as well and Gowing's own role in the British administration must be taken into account.

So, despite the general groundbreaking nature of Gowing's works there seems to be a need to revise the official history; especially since now the Cold War is clearly over, and most of the archival material is now available for researchers. Nevertheless, Margaret Gowing's account has been the gold standard of research for a long time, and there seems to have been a consensus that the results and the account are rather definitive. As mentioned earlier, for instance, Barker, Gormly and Vickers all subscribe to this. However, Barker also mentions that the atomic question played an extremely important role in British post-war foreign relations;<sup>50</sup> while Martin J. Sherwin mentions that atomic policy and foreign policy in Britain were two sides of the same coin<sup>51</sup>. Connecting the two therefore does not seem so far-fetched. Actually what I am doing in this work parallels Barker's work,<sup>52</sup> only that I am challenging the prevailing views in specifically atomic foreign policy rather than in the wider context of foreign policy. This is why it is time to look at the research literature on British nuclear proliferation, or as it was called then - "atomic matters".

Recently, nuclear proliferation studies have gained quite a lot of interest. This is probably related to the end of the Cold War, and there now being more interest in other nuclear powers. The questions studied in these works are astonishingly similar to the problems that were apparent in the immediate post-war world. Then again, these studies have also expanded the scope of atomic or nuclear-related studies from being but a category within other subjects (such as strategic studies) to becoming a whole genre of topics with a culture of its own. One of the earliest definitions of the primary concept of "nuclear" was made by Kirk Willis in 1995.<sup>53</sup> And recently there have been attempts to redefine the concept of atomic/nuclear, especially in the context of British culture.<sup>54</sup> The first chronological phase of my research covered here ("the dawning of the atomic age") is also about how atomic matters were perceived in the press, the Government, Parliament and by the public. Most obvious to a modern reader is that the concept of "nuclear" was in very limited use, and it was mainly used only by scientists. Contemporaries used the vague concept of "atomic" more often, perhaps because this term included all the possibilities and threats related to the matter. Despite Willis' concept of "British nuclear culture", the historically correct term to use when writing about years the 1945-46 would thus be "atomic", as it covers the multifaceted nature

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<sup>50</sup> Barker 1983, p. xii.

<sup>51</sup> Sherwin 2003 p. 81-83.

<sup>52</sup> Barker 1983, p. x-xii. Barker reconsiders the popular view (at the time) that the British were blinded by past greatness and failed to understand the change, which in turn led to problems.

<sup>53</sup> Willis 1995.

<sup>54</sup> University of Liverpool organised a conference, to which I attended, on "British nuclear culture" back in 2009 as an attempt to start to revise the discussion and definitions around the concept and the culture in British history and to review the concept of atomic or nuclear as well as the history of the perceptions and meanings assigned to these concepts.



of the issue. After all, it was only through debating and finding out the contexts to which atomic matters applied, that the whole idea of atomic (nuclear) culture even began to emerge. Nuclear proliferation has been a well-studied topic ever since the use of the first atomic bombs. It has also understandably raised a lot of popular interest in the media. However, more of the research has, again, focused on the American side of the matter, and particularly American-Soviet relations, which means the role of Britain as an active operator with her own interests and plans has been downplayed somewhat. As was the case with alleged special relationship, the timescales of many previous academic works have also overlooked the crucial initial post-war years. Another explanation is naturally the much wider temporal scope of many of the works, which has then left only a limited time and space to cover the first post-war years in detail. Even if the number of researchers who do not subscribe to the special relationship (as such) has risen recently, the particular case of atomic matters within all this has been overlooked. This leads us back to Margaret Gowing and the massive influence of her groundbreaking works. These focus on early British nuclear proliferation, and atomic matters in detail (all in contemporary language) but, except for a few mentions, they do not consider Anglo-American problems that much. The next generation of historical research on nuclear proliferation focused in turn on the evolution of strategy or prestige in international relations based on the perceived realist advantages of possessing atomic weapons. Interesting, but rather narrow pieces of research on these aspects have been presented for instance by Andrew J. Pierre (1972) and G.M. Dillon (1983). Dillon is among the first researchers to pay attention to the British side of affairs, and his works contributed also to Margaret Gowing's "official histories". And Pierre has highlighted the case of Britain to be particularly relevant, as it was one of the first states to pursue atomic capability.<sup>55</sup> Pierre's "Nuclear Politics" also considers the importance of studying the British experience, noting that nuclear proliferation has been one of the gravest questions in history, and yet policy-makers and scientists have only had imperfect knowledge of the various developments. Pierre's work looks to understanding the history of atomic matters within science; whereas Dillon makes a valid point that Britain's significant attempts to achieve atomic capability through continued collaboration with the US have been woefully neglected in the literature.<sup>56</sup>

In general most researchers from the first wave of nuclear proliferation studies have emphasised strategy and defence, or atomic power (weapons) as a means to achieve political prestige.<sup>57</sup> John Baylis gives an excellent account of this in his "Ambiguity and Deterrence" (1995), which brings both of the realist elements of strategy and prestige together, but focuses on a wider timescale, so mostly bypassing 1945-1946. The synthesis offered by Baylis is never-

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<sup>55</sup> Pierre, 1972, p.1-6. Pierre had limited access to sources and emphasis was given on strategic aspects in 1939-1970.

<sup>56</sup> Dillon 1983, p.5-8 has given some considerations on the possibility of oversimplifying this relationship.

<sup>57</sup> Baylis, 1995 p.1-6.

theless plausible and relevant here. At the time, the only concrete implication of the new technology was the atomic bomb. This had strategic value, in being a threat, and no doubt brought prestige to those possessing the secrets required for making the weapon. Solving the threat in one way or another was seen by contemporaries as an essential question, as my findings also illustrate. However, the issues of prestige and strategy were not always so straightforward, as atomic technology also had potential civilian uses. The prestige therefore, as hypothetical as it was, was also related to issues outside military strategy too. Parliamentary sources and other evidence of the changes and widening of the concept and definition of "atomic" are thus important here. Baylis points out that the substantial amount of literature on British Nuclear Policy that now exists can be split into two main approaches. The first one is Gowing's (to which Groom, Dillon and others also subscribe), which focuses on the political dimensions of nuclear weapons in securing political influence and prestige. The second approach focuses more on the role of strategic calculations, and less on the nuclear weapons' political utility (Navias, Wheeler, Freedman, Clark). Baylis himself tries to build a more synthetic and multifaceted approach, by emphasising that atomic development in 1945-1947 was done with "deterrence in mind". The strength of Baylis' works lies in the ambiguity that he brings out between the various options for all the agents, and in pointing out that aspiring for prestige did not automatically rule out strategic thinking.<sup>58</sup> A complementary though not that scientific account of some of the events recounted in this thesis can be found in an autobiographical account from the former head of the Manhattan Project, written some years later by General Leslie R. Groves. "Now It Can Be Told" (1983) has a strong tendency to interpret everything from rather patriotic American stance. The role of the British has understandably been rendered marginal by Groves, and the legitimacy of their case in continuing the atomic collaboration (and many other issues too) has thus been almost categorically denied.

Septimus H. Paul has a totally different approach from Gowing in his study "Nuclear Rivals - Anglo American Atomic Relations 1941-1952" (2000). Paul seems to some extent emphasise the viewpoint of revisionist studies. He enforces the premises of rivalry, even antagonism, and sees the problems for cooperation as part of an intentional strategy, engineered by the Americans. As seductive as this idea might seem, his sources seem to have been selected just to support his basic idea, and in many parts it is the author who extends himself sometimes tenuously over the sources. The study has also been criticised for its lack of context and dearth of British references which means it lacks a wider perspective,<sup>59</sup> and tends to dwell instead on the US government's problems with the collaboration.<sup>60</sup> Paul's coverage on the immediate post-war cooperation and problems is also rather brief. An interesting point however is that Paul pays attention to Raymond Blackburn's activities in the

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<sup>58</sup> For instance see Baylis 1995, p.32-33; 34-43.

<sup>59</sup> Murray, 2001 p.1765-1766.

<sup>60</sup> Greenberg, 2001.

British Parliament and found out about the Churchill-Attlee agreement to keep difficult atomic questions off the floor.<sup>61</sup> Paul has used parliamentary sources to some extent, but in general there is more description than analysis, and many of the parliamentary instances he refers to appear to have come from press material (namely *The Times*)<sup>62</sup>. The strength of Paul's work lies in challenging established conventions and successfully conveying the complexity of the atomic collaboration. It is also one of the few studies that has a direct connection with the themes of the present study.

Studies written by American historians provide much of background for the events of the period in question, and additional information on the early phases of "atomic diplomacy" and the Cold War in general. Fraser Harbutt's "The Iron Curtain", though rather tendentious on the "Anglo-American special relationship" and Churchill myths, provides much on the context of the international politics of the time. It also tries to take the British side into account. Gregg Herken's classic, "The Winning Weapon", also gives some consideration to the British case. Herken's strength is in considering the overall effect of the atomic question on post-war international relations, and making the case, subscribed to by many contemporaries, for the bomb being a tool for (atomic) diplomacy, in spite of Byrnes' well-reported diplomatic bungle at the Council of Foreign Ministers in London (1945). Though Herken ends up depicting matters mainly from American sources, he also provides a more critical approach to American actions than most of the previous works. However, both Herken and Harbutt rely mainly on Gowing in their research related to Britain. Research on atomic proliferation is thus rather generalist and usually focused on wider time frames, on one of the two major themes (prestige or strategy) and, with the exception of Baylis and to some extent Peter Hennessy, they generally lack a synthetic approach. Hennessy's work in general has been a great inspiration for this research, and has to be credited as such. In atomic proliferation studies, however, the situation is similar as Barker and Vickers have noted about previous research on post-war British foreign policy or Anglo-American relations - there is a lack of criticism or concision. This is also somewhat the case with the parliamentary studies. This mention of Parliament takes us back to Gowing once more.

Gowing claims that there was not much interest or controversy over atomic energy in Parliament or in the British press,<sup>63</sup> especially when compared to the United States. Gowing suggests that the smaller scale of the British atomic project, and the secrecy of it were significant reasons for there to be less pressure on the subject from Parliament and the press. One example of

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<sup>61</sup> Paul 2000, p.78-79.

<sup>62</sup> This is revealed by basic research which shows Paul's dating of alleged parliamentary instances as one day later. He nevertheless refers to the Hansard, and not to the newspapers.

<sup>63</sup> Kenneth Morgan agrees, though bases his opinion on Gowing's account. Morgan 1984, p.280-283.

this is the burying of the financing of atomic research under the general sub-headings of the Minister of Supply figures.<sup>64</sup>

“During the whole period of the Labour Government there was not a single House of Commons debate devoted to atomic energy, although occasional references were made to it in other connections such as foreign affairs or defence; Lord Cherwell initiated one debate in the House of Lords, but this was concentrated mainly on questions of organisation.”<sup>65</sup>

This idea of a mute, uninterested Parliament with no tools to challenge Government, and no rights against the Royal prerogative has lived on since Gowing’s work. However, it is blatantly wrong to claim such things. During the one year period (1945-46), Parliament discussed atomic matters on at least 150 occasions. Gowing is partially right in mentioning that the instances were not debates as such, but she must have been referring to plenary debates.

The role of Parliament in atomic matters has been categorically downplayed or overlooked in previous research essential for this dissertation. With the exception of Septimus H. Paul’s work, previous research has mainly relied on Gowing’s claim that there were no real debates about atomic matters, and that whatever little was discussed was irrelevant and inaccessible for parliamentarians. However, the idea of a mute Parliament will be challenged in some depth here. There are several reasons why subscribing to Gowing’s claim has been understandable. The primary reasons and arguments in support of Gowing’s claim relate to Parliament’s role and position in general.

- (1) Other than the British Atomic Energy Bill, Parliament undertook very few legislative tasks<sup>66</sup> that related to atomic energy.
- (2) The Royal prerogative generally meant that most power over foreign policy matters resided with the executive.<sup>67</sup>
- (3) Issues of secrecy limited Parliament’s role in matters involving defence or technical details.<sup>68</sup>
- (4) In terms of fiscal matters, the atomic energy research budget was effectively ‘hidden’ within Ministry of Supply sub-headings.<sup>69</sup>

These explanations seem to support the idea of a mute Parliament, and is one of the likeliest reasons why there has not really been any previous specific research on Parliament and atomic matters. However, some recent more general foreign policy works, like Rhiannon Vickers’ exceptional political analysis of post-war British foreign affairs, use parliamentary sources that are relevant also here. One of the few cases where Parliament is ever even mentioned in

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<sup>64</sup> Gowing 1974 p.48-55.

<sup>65</sup> Gowing 1974 p.48-55.

<sup>66</sup> Poyser 1991, p.14-15. Poyser characterizes legislation as one of the most important tasks for Parliament.

<sup>67</sup> Richards 1967, p. 36-37.

<sup>68</sup> Brand 1992, p.300-307, 317-320.

<sup>69</sup> Gowing 1974, p.48-55.

relation to both atomic energy and foreign policy in the literature, is Paul's mention of the "notorious" Blackburn incident of 30 October 1945.

There are also some general tendencies in British parliamentary studies which explain the lack of research related to atomic matters in Parliament. The most blatant reason is a constitutional one. Jack Brand has, for instance, proposed that there was no way for Parliament to grasp foreign or defence matters due to the royal prerogative, and secrecy in defence and diplomacy, which limited the availability of information (for the 'national interest').<sup>70</sup> Although Brand appears to have overlooked several ways that Parliament did, in fact, have to request more information, it seems his reasoning would largely explain why atomic matters and foreign policy are an unlikely combination in parliamentary studies. Peter G. Richards is one exception however, having written one of the few books devoted to directly to these issues. In "Parliament and Foreign Affairs" he was saying, even in 1967 (when it was published), that foreign policy had been neglected for the last 40 years, in spite of an overall growth in parliamentary studies. He claims to have bridged the gap between political institutions and the study of international politics that resulted from those 40 years.<sup>71</sup> However, the House of Lords has been mostly left out from Richards' work, as he considers the House of Commons to be "the dominant chamber"<sup>72</sup>. A rather interesting feature is Richards' appendix about the time devoted to foreign affairs in the Commons, in terms of procedure and the analysis of questions. Unfortunately the topics are lost under the various procedures, and the most relevant excerpt from the four examples he studies, concerns the years 1947-1948.<sup>73</sup> On its own, information about the amount of time spent discussing foreign affairs is not that useful, but when compared to the total amount of time spent on all debates, it could reveal something about the importance of foreign policy issues in parliament. Finding relevant statistics is however, rather difficult.

A more recent addition has been "Parliament and International Relations" (1991) edited by Charles Carstairs and Richard Ware. In the introduction to this book the surprised editors agree with Richards, that "there has been little direct academic study of parliamentary handling of foreign affairs." This they partly attribute to foreign policy having been a prerogative matter for so long. Part of the reason could have also been Parliament and its members themselves being not so keen to discuss these matters. Also the lack of relevant information available for parliamentarians is thought to be relevant.<sup>74</sup> Both

<sup>70</sup> Brand, 1992 p.300-307, p.317-320.

<sup>71</sup> Richards, 1967, Preface.

<sup>72</sup> Richards 1967, p. 13-15.

<sup>73</sup> Richards, 1967, p. 177-178. In 1947-1948 the House of Commons devoted altogether 100 hours and 17 minutes to foreign affairs, and dealt with 1136 questions of 5 different types. Most of the questions were addressed to Foreign Office (711). The most prominent procedures were Adjournment motions and Government bills.

<sup>74</sup> Carstairs, 1991, p. 2-4. Brand, 1992 p.300-307, p.317-320. Brand gives the atomic energy as an example of the government guided politics, a case in which the parliament couldn't have a big impact on things. It is also wise to remember that at the time, Attlee himself was acting as the Minister of Defence, on top of being the Prime Minister. Richards 1967, p.63-66.

books mention that one of the most important tasks of Parliament is legislation, and as foreign policy (and atomic energy) doesn't require as much of legislation as other issues, the role of the Parliament is thus naturally smaller.<sup>75</sup> Often in the case of parliamentary history, it is the fact that Parliament is a legislative assembly which is emphasised - indeed it is the highest legislative authority in Britain.<sup>76</sup> Legislation has also been depicted as being the main reason for Parliament's existence in parliamentary history, as it is only through passing laws that Parliament can have an effect on things. In the case of British atomic matters however, there was only one legislative act to get through - the British Atomic Energy Bill. But executive sources reveal that even legislative tasks are not really managed by Parliament. For example, the smooth passing of this particular bill had been agreed beforehand by the leader of the opposition and the Government.<sup>77</sup>

It is only quite recently then, that Parliament has been thought to have some sort of role in foreign affairs. An important breakthrough has been the special issue of "Parliamentary History"<sup>78</sup> which focuses on the parliamentarisation of foreign affairs, especially in times of crisis (which make change possible). According to my research regarding British atomic foreign policy, Parliament attempted to challenge customary political culture by breaking the norms despite all these limitations mentioned above. This was done to gain access to the realm of foreign policy and constitutes as change. Continuity, however, could be described as a feature that many well-established political cultures seek. This particularly applies if a political culture is defined by the existing ways in which people use institutions and organisations.<sup>79</sup> On a wider scale, Parliament actually went, to some extent, against the consensus and against the very gradual change often claimed to have been characteristic of the Parliament in foreign policy and British political culture in general<sup>80</sup>. As can be seen in later parts of this dissertation, the dialogue between the executive and Parliament was also extended via the media (mostly newspapers) to gain attention to the issues that were considered to be important. This extra-parliamentary activity could effectively persuade a wider audience, or at the very least involve them in defining what the atomic question was about.

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<sup>75</sup> Richards, 1967 p.78-81. Poyser, 1991 p.14-15.

<sup>76</sup> Dearlove and Saunders 2006, p.281.

<sup>77</sup> TNA PREM 8/366, Wilmot to Attlee, 8 July 1946; TNA FO 800/587, minute by Butler, 5 April 1946; PREM 8/366, Wilmot to Attlee, 4 Oct. 1946; PREM 8/366, Attlee to Churchill, 6 Oct. 1946; Churchill to Attlee, 7 Oct. 1946.

<sup>78</sup> "The British Parliament and Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century", special issue of *Parliamentary History*, forthcoming, 2016.

<sup>79</sup> Elkins & Simeon, 1979, p. 127-130, 139-142. Variety of definitions exists though.

<sup>80</sup> Almond & Verba, 1963, p. 8, 22, 36-7; On the myth of consensus see for instance Pimlot, Kavanagh and Morris 1989, p.12-15.

### 1.3 Sources, theories and methods

There are three primary sources for this research: the British government, parliamentary sources, and press sources, which are to some extent supplemented with others, such as American archival and printed material, mainly from Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS). This threefold approach provides an ample amount of source material given the short period of history that this work covers. However, use of American sources is intentionally limited, as the purpose of this work is to cover the matters from British perspective. Therefore I have abstained from using American sources too much in order to avoid the benefit of hindsight or the position of “all knowing narrator.” At the time of the events discussed in this study the British did not know exactly what the Americans were thinking. They did not have access to the American notes and documents. Relevant theories and methodologies have been covered in the context of each set of sources. Overall, the main methodological approach is historiographical. The results and claims of previous research have been compared to primary sources to show why the subject in question perhaps needs rethinking. In regards to literature, the studies focusing on Britain have been the most important ones. On the American side of affairs, or the Anglo-American relations, my focus has been especially in those works that have contributed in creating the traditional views of the importance of the American role. New additional information has been used to see if it might provide reasons for questioning the results of the previous research, or if it could fill in some of the gaps that have been overlooked. In addition, the most important methodological aspect of this work is the comparison between three levels of activity: governmental, parliamentary, and international.

The first group of sources is from the British executive. This means the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, some other members of the Cabinet or its inner circle (where appropriate), and also certain high-ranking officials and private secretaries involved in diplomatic correspondence. The papers of certain advisory committees have been particularly useful. The second set of sources comes from both the House of Lords and House of Commons during the parliamentary session of 1945-1946, and to some extent the session of 1946-1947. They have been chosen from the digitalized Hansard via initial keyword searches, and from there on the searches have been extended to chart out the relevant themes. The parliamentary sources have then also been cross-checked with printed versions and then rechecked again with the Parliamentary Papers database. These are sources that so far have hardly been used at all in the study of British atomic proliferation. The third set of sources plays a complementary or supplementary role, and consists of press material. The main source for this has been *The Times*, the newspaper with the widest circulation at that time in Britain. But there is also material from the *The Manchester Guardian* and some American newspapers. The use, selection and problems related to the chosen sources are considered in separate sections.

### 1.3.1 Executive sources, theory and methods

One major problem with the archival source material is the sheer quantity. One really has to know who were the central actors and organs that participated in the policy-making and execution to make sense of it. The main characters and administrative structures have been narrowed down with the help of the research literature. Atomic energy and foreign policy were connected at least with the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, some Cabinet insiders, Chiefs of Staff, and Foreign Office staff. Peter Hennessy, for example, draws attention to how decision-making was undertaken within Attlee's Cabinet, and the fact that atomic foreign policy was also connected to various other fields makes the sorting of relevant material challenging.

"For instance, sometimes material dealing with atomic weapons is best placed under the heading of "Defence". At other times it fits more accurately under the caption of "Foreign Policy (USA)."<sup>81</sup>

Hennessy also adds that not every paper that crossed the Prime Minister's desk was added to the PREM archives. Some Cabinet and intelligence information (CX) is therefore scattered around the archives.<sup>82</sup> Again, keyword searches in the database of the (British) National Archives (TNA) have proved a fruitful way to find the archival series in which atomic matters have been covered. These searches have been complemented with cross references to the printed document collections, and searches for politicians and officials who have been considered relevant in previous research, or whose names have appeared repeatedly in the documentation already found. A reconstruction of the Government's atomic organisation, based on Gowing (1974), has also helped a lot in finding possible sources from the archived material in TNA.

Since the end of the Cold War, there's no longer such a pressing need to iron out the wrinkles that once existed in the fabric of past Anglo-American co-operation. Nevertheless, the long era of classified documents has passed, and the Waldegrave Initiative (1991) has made much of the material produced by the British executive available to researchers.<sup>83</sup> For example documents pertaining to the Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy (ACAE), are now available for other people than just official historians like Gowing. Meanwhile, the "new" executive sources are mostly from TNA. These include the papers of the Prime Minister (PREM), Foreign Secretary, Foreign Office (FO 800 and FO 371 to some extent), the Cabinet (CAB 104), the Cabinet's Advisory Committees on atomic matters (ACAE in CAB 134 and Gen 75), and papers of the private secretaries, which have been extremely informative. In particular, the papers of the ACAE and Gen 75 (found in the FO 800 series from the Foreign Office) have formed the backbone of this work's approach to the Government, along with the private papers of Attlee and Bevin. The AB-series of the Atomic Energy Authority

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<sup>81</sup> Hennessy 2001, p.91-92.

<sup>82</sup> Hennessy 2001, p.91-92.

<sup>83</sup> Hennessy, 2003 p.xv.



in Britain, often suggested to me by others as a possibly useful source, focuses on the period actually already after the breakdown of Anglo-American atomic collaboration - when the British atomic energy bill was being drafted. They are thus of no use in the context of this study. As some of the archival sources used for this work were classified for a long time, and a few of the documents apparently remain so, they have mostly not yet been used. Margaret Gowing claims she had access to source material, secret at the time, but as Gowing does not cite or note in the published volumes<sup>84</sup> it is hard to evaluate her use of the sources. Some of these are in printed collections, mainly from the FO 371 series. The former secrecy of the material has also produced one severe disadvantage that causes challenges for research. Most of it was originally kept in a sort of secret "atomic matters" library, but as the documents were declassified, they were returned to their original organisational folders, which has led to some archival disorder and overlap among the documents, with duplicates now appearing in many of the folders.

The thematically arranged printed collection Documents on British Policy Overseas (DBPO), along with its calendar notes, was used in creating the basic frame of the dissertation and to chart out the context of relevant events. It has been useful to have this, not only as a framework on which to base further questions, but also to construct a narrative of the events to see which aspects of the Anglo-American atomic relationship have been overlooked previously by the existing literature. I have then used this to actively distinguish and even challenge the framework created by the existing printed sources which have become almost canonised.

Besides the vast amount of written sources, there are unwritten aspects like private discussions or other talks which were not recorded and so are impossible to trace. For example, most of the activities of MPs and officials were not recorded with the same amount of detail as parliamentary speaking. Of course one reason might have been precisely because those officials and ministers did not want to leave a paper trail that their activities remain secret. For instance it is not that uncommon that delicate matters in meetings with high-ranking government officials were not recorded. For instance Chatham House Rules might have applied so that thoughts and options could be expressed as freely as possible. A good example is the first meeting for Anglo-American atomic negotiations in Washington, on board the *Sequoia*. The Americans asked that the British would abstain from taking notes.

Retracing the political culture, or what Saville calls the "mind of the Foreign Office" is difficult. It is not always evident who actually read and/or prepared the material, not to mention what they themselves thought of things in general. Biographical data, which has been used as much as possible, can help only so much. Likewise there are considerations with regard to the paper trail as well. The circulation and availability of papers and documents is not always

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<sup>84</sup> Apparently notes should exist, and there should be manuscript versions where Gowing has marked down the material considered as classified. This volume has not been accessible to me.

shown. It may well be that certain documents did not reach certain persons, or even if they did, they might not have been read. For instance there are really very few traces of Attlee or Bevin in the source documents, there are the odd initials in a margin somewhere, or comments from a private secretary capturing the PM's view. There is also hardly anything that indicates if certain documents have actually even been read. Research literature has mentioned, for instance, that not every paper that passed the PM's table was read,<sup>85</sup> though there are also mentions that a lot was read but then commented on in other ways than just the written form. Bevin, for one, has claimed that he could not even write that well, which would certainly have affected his written commentary.<sup>86</sup> It has even been claimed that on some occasions memoranda and notes, marked as coming from Bevin, were not just written out, but also crafted by his secretaries with very few instructions.<sup>87</sup>

Nevertheless, all these documents were meant for the internal use of the executive and they served a pragmatic purpose. Thus they can be considered to have captured most of the sentiments of those dictating or at least meant to be writing them. Yet another essential issue of source criticism is naturally how much of the feedback and deliberating was done verbally, and would thus remain in the realm of oral history, with no written sources as evidence. This is made even more challenging by the fact that the contemporaries have passed away and thus interviews cannot be made. Diaries or diary notes are rather few, or they have been written or edited afterwards and are not that reliable.<sup>88</sup> Also the sheer number of people related to these affairs is huge. Much of the actual agency might also be hidden under departmental hierarchy and structures, and clarifying everything in detail would require more of a research team than a sole researcher. One example of this is illustrated in the case of Cadogan and Butler. This was about the Foreign Office's role in taking care of atomic matters as had been publicly stated in Parliament. Alexander Cadogan was in charge, and the "contact person" *de jure* in the Foreign Office, though from the research I conducted in the National Archives on the private papers of Butler and Cadogan (CAB104), most of the work seems to have been done by Nevile Butler. In regards to the question of agency, luckily most of the papers have been signed by the authors, thus confirming who is behind the documents or in whose name they have been written. As for the committee papers or memoranda from various meetings, those persons who were present have been listed as well. However, this does not necessarily clarify sufficiently the vast network of contributing persons.

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<sup>85</sup> Hennessy 2001, p.91-92.

<sup>86</sup> Saville 1993, p.102-103

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p.104-105.

<sup>88</sup> Morgan, 1984 p.6-7, warns about the use of the diaries of Hugh Dalton as they have been altered afterwards.

### 1.3.2 Parliamentary sources, theory and methods

Previous research has claimed that atomic energy, and the politics related to it were kept in the hands of only a few chosen members of the Labour government. Kenneth O. Morgan mentions a “big five” - Attlee, Bevin, Morrison, Dalton, and Cripps - as being always in the inner circle of government. The Cabinet was in charge of the party, and in foreign relations, Attlee let Bevin take charge. Meanwhile, in the House of Lords, Lord Addison took care of things.<sup>89</sup> Though the National Executive Committee (governing body of the Labour Party) was apparently kept at bay, the Labour party still had 259 new members in the House of Commons to work with.<sup>90</sup> This quite probably meant that it would have been impossible to regulate everything. Indeed, it seemed implausible that Parliament would not comment on atomic matters at all. The use of the atomic bomb, and the postulations about how it had changed the world were all over the press. Labour’s promise of a new foreign policy<sup>91</sup> can also be seen as a context in which members might have felt empowered and more willing to speak their minds. In itself, however, this would not have been enough - even if the members had information on foreign matters or a keen interest in them. Traditionally the Government dominates parliamentary business on these matters, with opportunities for backbench initiatives reduced. There are however the supply days, related to financial estimates, in which the topics have been decided by the opposition. Legislation, which is one of the key tasks of Parliament, is seldom required, and most of the debates related to foreign policy focus on ministerial statements and are general in nature. Normally these are handled by the PM and the ministers of the Foreign Office (FO).<sup>92</sup>

However, there were instances, as mentioned above (and of which we shall hear more about later), when parliamentary interest in foreign policy did become more pronounced. In what Septimus H. Paul has called the “Blackburn sensation”<sup>93</sup> (on 30 October 1945), Captain Raymond Blackburn asked Attlee before the Commons to confirm whether there had been a secret pact of atomic energy collaboration between Churchill and Roosevelt, and demanded a public statement on the matter. Attlee avoided the questions, and Morrison answered on behalf of the Government, trying not to give much away. Later, when commenting on the difficult situation with atomic research, he would

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<sup>89</sup> Morgan 1984, p.7-9; p.45-51 “Between 1945-51 the Labour movement was dominated by the Cabinet. Its leading personalities exercised a sustained and unique ascendancy over the government, the party, and its supporters...”

<sup>90</sup> Morgan, 1984, p.59-61; 71-73.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Let Us Face the Future: A Declaration of Labour Policy for the Consideration of the Nation’, Labour Party election manifesto 1945, <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/man/lab50.htm>, (Accessed 22 Aug. 2011), p. 1-9.

<sup>92</sup> Richards, 1967, p.67-68.

<sup>93</sup> Paul, 2000, p.79-80.

describe it as a “first class headache”.<sup>94</sup> Even this one incident alone reveals that there was parliamentary activity on delicate atomic foreign policy matters and that not even secret deals could be kept totally secret. Moreover, further study in this single case reveals the interconnectedness with the press, as this incident was reported in the United States, and led to awkward questions for the US administration who in turn scolded the British and held them accountable for this. The incident also reveals the interplay and the source-related interdependency between the executive and Parliament. Government’s actions were related to Parliament and vice versa. This single event, and Clement Attlee’s reference to parliamentary pressure on him to make a statement on British policy with regards to the atomic bomb<sup>95</sup> led me to look for other mentions in the press. As *The Times* published numerous parliamentary comments on atomic matters, it became evident that a thorough research of parliamentary sources would be necessary to see whether Gowing’s assertion of Parliament being mute was accurate. The core of the parliamentary sources used in this work come from the digitised Hansard, which includes material from both the House of Lords and the House of Commons. As a source material, Hansard has been considered for the most part as reliable, though understandably it cannot record gestures, tones of speech or facial expressions. However, for instance some interjections or jeers have been recorded. Those speaking, and their party allegiance as well as constituency are always in the record too. Since not all of the sources were digitised successfully, the printed index volumes have been important too. In using them I did find some instances that were missing from the digitised records, and also one rather plausible explanation for why some parliamentary material has been overlooked. This will be discussed in detail later on. Using index volumes also avoids a one-sided reliance on the seemingly omnipotent power of keyword searches. Press material and important events found by cross-referencing with other sources have thus been used to make sure that all the relevant material is included. In terms of technology, however, it is clearly the digitisation and online availability of the records of Hansard, and Parliamentary Command Papers that have enabled more efficient research. For example, using such basic elements as key terms - found by doing extensive pre-research - surprising amounts of usable data can be unearthed. The catalogues and indexes of the printed Hansard revealed only handful of parliamentary instances where atomic matters were discussed, asked about or debated, whereas after conducting keyword searches with concepts like “atom\*”, “atom bomb”, “atom energy” and other variations, I was able to find a total of 150 instances in which atomic matters were at least mentioned, if not fully discussed.

Much of the debate concerning these instances was conducted and categorised under other subject headings, such as “Foreign Affairs<sup>96</sup>”, “Defence

<sup>94</sup> “Visit to U.S”, *The Times* 30 Oct 1945. “House of Commons - Atomic Energy”, 31 Oct 1945 *The Times*. “A First class headache - Mr. Morrison’s reply to the debate” 31 Oct 1945 *Ibid*. “Talks on Atomic Energy” 1 Nov 1945 *Ibid*.

<sup>95</sup> Morgan, 1984, p.59-61.

<sup>96</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc601-714.

Policy<sup>97</sup>", and "Inshore Fishing Bill<sup>98</sup>". These would clearly have been ignored, had I relied solely on more conventional tools, and the same applies to finding the relevant parliamentary procedures. This also perhaps explains Gowing's comment about Parliament not having such a role in atomic affairs.

I collected all the instances when atomic energy was mentioned from each month from August 1945 to October 1946 and put them in chronological tables, noting the participants and related procedures. Already at that point it became apparent that there were certain themes, questioners, and parliamentary procedures that kept recurring. There were repeated general mentions and requests for more information, barrages of oral questions, and written supplementary ones. There were adjournment debates like the one on 30 October 1945, initiated by MPs who had not received satisfactory answers to their questions. As some of them were easy to find by reading even just the printed indexes, it must have been that these instances were considered either too trivial by previous research, or that the basic research for Gowing's works has in fact been lazy. The same applies to some of the previous parliamentary research which undermines the role of anything less than a major debate (i.e., one ending in a division by voting). However, by looking at different types of instance, both information about the target subject, as well as information about the work and role of Parliament in British political culture becomes clearer. With this in mind, I organised the chronological tables of the parliamentary sources I had collected into thematic groups.

Of the 150 occasions between August 1945 and October 1946 that atomic matters were raised in Parliament, 117 were in the House of Commons, and 33 in the House of Lords, and 82 of that total were overlapping (i.e., related to more than one theme). I have calculated that roughly a third of all the parliamentary instances (52) were parliamentary questions and, depending on definitions, there were an additional 19 adjournment debates<sup>99</sup>. So all in all, almost half of the parliamentary instances were either questions or adjournment debates. The procedures of the House of Lords differed somewhat from this, but those instances that could be counted as questions have been included.

Despite the diminished powers<sup>100</sup> of the House of Lords (after the Parliament Act of 1911), the upper house should not be ignored, as various members were prominent and influential figures, and the parliamentary style of speaking in the House of Lords enabled a more free-ranging debate on various topics. However, Andrew Adonis claims that, by autumn 1945, the House of Lords had been whipped into submission, and the Conservative majority had agreed to support the Government's proposals, as long as they had been pre-presented (i.e., in the election agenda).<sup>101</sup> But another reason to take the Lords

<sup>97</sup> HC Deb 05 March 1946 vol 420 cc193-294.

<sup>98</sup> HL Deb 26 November 1945 vol 138 cc7-12.

<sup>99</sup> In all the instances, debate that was resumed on following day is counted as two separate debates for the sake of clarity.

<sup>100</sup> Ridley 1992, p.253 states that at least in terms of power the Parliamentary Bill of 1911 lifted the House of Commons above the House of Lords.

<sup>101</sup> Adonis 1988, p.6.

into consideration is the fact that their deliberations were also covered in the press, and so they *de facto* helped to define the concept of “atomic” and related matters in public. The Lords also had the privilege to choose what they debated about, which in itself emphasises those instances when atomic matters were brought up as being instances of genuine concern.

After a close-reading of the categorically organised sources it became clear that several themes overlapped. For example, the defence implications of the atomic bomb might have been mentioned in a parliamentary instance that focused on foreign policy in general, or in relation to the UN control plans. This would mean that at least two of the prominent discourses were present in one instance. Although some of these instances were casual references, quite a substantial number of the debates were lengthier and more detailed. Because of the interconnectedness of many of the main themes, the categorisation of such data can thus be challenging. However, notwithstanding the problems of multi-class findings, I identified six different classes of discourse.<sup>102</sup> This classification was made by analysing each debate, rather than relying on the wide variety and inconsistency of the titles and topics in Hansard.

The first class of discourse concerns the general situation in the new atomic age. The second deals with the military implications for Britain, including defence estimates, the future of defence services and the potential impact of the atomic weapon on strategy, military technology, and the armed forces. The third is related to Great Power policy, especially Britain’s relationship (and atomic energy cooperation) with the United States. International control of atomic energy under the United Nations atomic energy authority is the fourth and perhaps most difficult discourse class to handle, because the debates involved were very wide-ranging. The fifth class concerns various (largely domestic) developmental and research-related issues; while the final sixth discourse class covers miscellaneous matters, which were mainly connected to the potentially peaceful use of atomic energy (many of which in 1945-6 were purely speculative). Though these divisions arise from the sources, they have been enhanced with a further intentional division made by the author between the internationalist and realist streaks in British foreign policy that were present at the time. All of these findings are presented in detail in the parliamentary chart appendix. Below is a general overview of these parliamentary instances.

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<sup>102</sup> ‘Discourse’ is used throughout this study as a descriptive term.

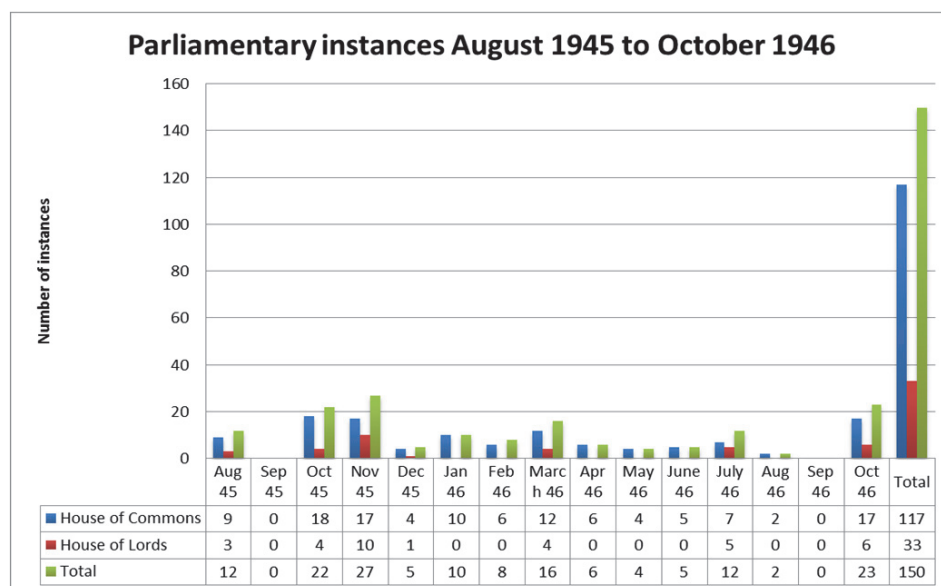


FIGURE 1a Parliamentary instances 1945-1946

Month	House of Commons	House of Lords	Total
Aug 45	9	3	12
Sep 45 (recess)	0	0	0
Oct 45	18	4	22
Nov 45	17	10	27
Dec 45	4	1	5
Jan 46	10	0	10
Feb 46	6	0	8
March 46	12	4	16
Apr 46	6	0	6
May 46	4	0	4
June 46	5	0	5
July 46	7	5	12
Aug 46	2	0	2
Sep 46 (recess)	0	0	0
Oct 46	17	6	23
Total	117	33	150

FIGURE 1b Parliamentary instances 1945-1946

The role of Parliament was an important finding in the initial stages of my research, when we consider earlier claims that Parliament had no such opportunity to take part in atomic matters. It is also noteworthy in terms of new parliamentary history, because legislation and the plenary debates leading to voting (often emphasised as the most important task of Parliament) are not present in these examples. Thus the in-built *pro et contra* debates indicative of legislation (and pointed out by, for instance, Kari Palonen)<sup>103</sup> are rare in the case of the majority of atomic foreign policy debates. In fact, the British Atomic Energy Bill was the only instance of atomic legislation (passed in the autumn 1946).

By reading the parliamentary sources it was evident that the Government was trying to deflect interest, and give away as little as possible. However, Parliament refused to be manipulated and found various procedures to exercise its right to supervise the Government. It is also important to point out that it is not just debates and voting which might have affected the bigger picture. Other kinds of instance help in finding a spin on the more familiar sources, for example, the role of the executive. The executive had to respond to the gauntlet Parliament had thrown down, as answering these questions, sometimes extremely difficult and delicate, could not be ignored indefinitely.<sup>104</sup> Not even “national interest” could be cited as a reason by an executive that was reluctant to comment.<sup>105</sup> The traditional explanation given in the research literature is that Parliament only had an indirect power in defence and foreign affairs, via the budget and fiscal matters. I conclude that there are definitely enough findings to challenge this view, even if estimating the precise effect Parliament had on foreign policy is still difficult. I argue that analysis of the contents of the material nevertheless contribute significantly and provide some interesting and worthwhile insights. Previous explanations have, for example, overlooked extraparliamentary activity, i.e., public commentary in the press. Likewise, the potential threat of the public taking up an interesting debate which would have created parliamentary pressure is a theme that seemed to crop up repeatedly (in both Britain and the US) and so, even if it is just as difficult to measure, it must be taken into account.

One way to estimate the possible impact of Parliament is to compare the sources with each other, to point out any direct references, correlations, or causal links. Examples of this have already been presented above. Another way is to compare the sources to the context of historical events. For example, at the time it was published, the Washington declaration met with favourable commentary in Parliament. Some instances in the close temporal proximity of this event also show support for the international control of atomic energy, and later on there were repeated questions about what had been done to achieve international control. The method I use in studying the role and potential effect of Parliament on British foreign policy in terms of the Anglo-American atomic cooperation is

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<sup>103</sup> Palonen 2008, p. 82.

<sup>104</sup> TNA, PREM 8/113, Attlee to Churchill, 28 Sept. 1945; Churchill to Attlee, 6 Oct. 1945; Attlee to Addison, 8 Oct. 1945; Attlee to Churchill, 12 Oct. 1945.

<sup>105</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p.167-169; 211; also Brand, 1992, p.300-307, p.317-320.



thus empirical and comparative, and relies on strong contextual knowledge. The emphasis is on a qualitative approach and close-reading of the instances where atomic energy was mentioned. The essential aspect in this method is remembering that the results of reading parliamentary sources are intangible unless they are compared to those of the executive or to the context of events. By doing this, the interactions of the various actors can be revealed and can be put into their proper context. In this PhD dissertation, the change in British foreign policy is observed via certain phases that were characterised by tipping points, such as at the meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Washington and in Moscow. These make it easier to trace the effect of parliamentary activity: when a new phase or a tipping point is seen, the activities around it must be observed in order to find out whether Parliament also might have had some effect on the change. The context of events also provides food for thought and may help to find an explanation as to why something was not brought up in Parliament at all in certain months. Once the recess days are counted out as a potential explanation, then it becomes again a matter of substance and looking for further explanations. A busy schedule and limited parliamentary time also have to be taken into account.

On their own, these findings can be used to study the changing political culture in Britain; such as the way Parliament tried to assume a greater role for itself, and challenged the executive's reign (authorized by the royal prerogative) in these matters. This takes us back to the essentials of democracy, if we consider Parliament as working under the mandate of the people. Parliament worked rigorously to participate in the debate, to voice the opinions and worries of the people in their constituencies, and found ways to take part in debating atomic matters, through the framework of procedures, by using parliamentary and supplementary questions, and by voicing dissidence through adjournment debates. This is contrary to what Peter G. Richards has remarked about Parliament sometimes being treated in research as just a forum in which government ministers made speeches and statements<sup>106</sup>. It is true that the executive used Parliament to make statements through planted questions on matters which could not be made officially for diplomatic reasons, but this was not the only use. One other was to get the British involved in the American Bikini atomic trials in 1946, which the Americans wanted to keep secret.<sup>107</sup>

In terms of content analysis, parliamentary speaking is public in nature and forces the Government to justify its policy and to give exposure on a selected matter, as debates rarely lead to rapid changes of opinion.<sup>108</sup> Jane Ridley, however, presents another view in her coverage of the Parliamentary Act of

<sup>106</sup> Richards, 1967, p.164.

<sup>107</sup> HC Deb 28 January 1946 vol 418 cc541, question by David Gammans (Hornsey, Con.). HC Deb 29 January 1946 vol 418 cc682-684. Planted question by Oliver Lyttelton (Aldershot, Con.); TNA CAB 104, Draft reply for question by Mr. Gammans 28 Jan 1946 (E. Bridges for N. Brook): "*The question by Mr. Lyttelton is an arranged question and the Prime Minister's Office have already in their possession a draft reply, prepared after consultation between Sir John Anderson and the Ministry of Supply, agreement to which was obtained in Washington and Ottawa.*"

<sup>108</sup> Roger & Walters, 2006, p.304-305.

1911 when she claims that the role of the opposition changed. After the Act its role was no longer to be the opposition as such, but to appeal to democracy.<sup>109</sup> It may well be that parliamentary speaking is often meant for more audiences than simply governmental sources; but it would be simplistic to say that the main reason was publicity, just as it would be naïve to assume every instance was only about trying to find a compromise through debate. Likewise, using only linguistic analysis, in the vein of Quentin Skinner, cannot always be the most suitable tool for parliamentary studies. This therefore underlines the importance of looking at different type of cases, procedures, and instances than has usually been the case in the field of parliamentary history. By focusing on only a few “important” debates<sup>110</sup>, or plenary sessions, “half of the story” would be forgotten. To pass a bill, or even reach the stage in a debate that would require a vote, a long road of handling the matter might well have already been taken by Parliament on certain topics. It is this road or process that actually offers the most information about the various options considered and Parliament’s views on the matter. All too often the focus is on prominent front-benchers dominating the debates, their initial speeches, i.e., party-line speeches, which are often the well-prepared ones and generally approved by the party’s own ranks. But this is clearly not always the case. Every single speech requires background information, not to mention the opportunity to be presented; and these speeches have to be supported, argued against, or complemented by others.

Since the linguistic turn of the 1970s, conceptual history related to the use of political language via (Skinnerian) speech acts have been in the limelight.<sup>111</sup> They provide tools and examples for in-depth analysis of the sources, but one should be careful with their use, for without good command of the actual historical context in which the politics have been conducted, the theories might take over the sources. Although linguistic approaches, or conceptual historical approaches for that matter, underline the more commonly accepted view of parliamentary deliberation as the means to negotiate political solutions, to reach agreements and to make decisions, by debating *pro et contra*, using only the forms of discussions, disputes and contradictions, they might place too heavy emphasis on the concepts used. These concepts might become, just as the processes in which they have been used, more than just tools for analysis, they might become an end in itself, and not shed light on the phenomenon which should be in focus. Likewise, these kinds of parliamentary studies tend to overlook the interaction between various actors on the political field. Parliament is often studied on its own, or in relation to constitutional matters, such as parliamentary reform or Parliament’s own view of its role in foreign policy and defence. The importance of these aspects cannot be denied, but the contexts of language or the constitution are not the focus of this research.

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<sup>109</sup> Ridley 1992, p.253.

<sup>110</sup> Mainly so called party speeches from the more prominent party members of the front bench.

<sup>111</sup> See for instance Ihalainen 2010; Ihalainen 2013; Palonen 2014.

This is not to say that these approaches are of no use. I would just say that they are not all that there is. They might apply tremendously well, for example, to researching the “Golden Age” of Parliament in Britain, when there was less business to conduct, and speaking was indeed the best way to affect policy and considered as such. It is certainly in the nature of politics to be already of one mind or the other, and to debate these opinions in order to come to a conclusion<sup>112</sup>. But the somewhat idealistic approach of focusing solely on these aspects does not totally apply to modern parliamentary debate, with its many tasks and fast-paced realpolitik, plus the massive flow of information demanding a rapid response to acute problems. Approaches like those of Skinner’s, focusing on heavily laden and pre-selected abstract concepts can thus in some cases be too detached from the everyday demands of politics and the corresponding struggles in Parliament, as Willibald Steinmetz describes.<sup>113</sup>

There is no doubt that parliamentary speaking aims to pursue the ideals of democracy. Parliamentarians’ comments are usually aimed at the Government. In this particular case, they were either inquisitive, instructive, or supervisory in purpose, but they were also true expressions of worry. Not everything was intentionally planned, and not every speech was a carefully devised rhetorical instrument, meant to correspond with guidelines made afterwards by researchers studying them. Much of parliamentary speaking is also just taking care of matters on a day-to-day basis. Steinmetz argues that, at least in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, most parliamentary debates were not consciously prepared linguistic policies. The improvisation and interaction between hundreds of people were the characteristic features of this oral form of communication.<sup>114</sup> One example of that within this research topic has been the case of supplementary questions. Steinmetz’s argument that what can be done really depends on what can be said<sup>115</sup> would explain the dependency between the political debates, the contexts in which they were conducted, and how effective they were in reality. Were they not discussed, asked and debated about, atomic matters would have been beyond the reach of Parliament and thus (in theory) the executive could have proceeded unchecked. The relationship with the rules, as Steinmetz suggests<sup>116</sup>, might be harder to pinpoint in this context however. In the case of questions and adjournment debates, no rules were changed, but the contents of the speeches, questions and debates were. A new topic emerged forming a new set of discourses.<sup>117</sup> On keywords or concepts, Steinmetz explains that “certain nouns prove to be key concepts because they appear again and again at key positions”<sup>118</sup>. In this respect I used a similar method to filter atom-related concepts. To begin with I found material in which the base-concept of “atom” (or its variations) was mentioned. There was no assigned meaning of value in the concept

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<sup>112</sup> Palonen 2008, p. 82.

<sup>113</sup> Steinmetz 2002, p.90-91.

<sup>114</sup> Steinmetz, 2002, p.89.

<sup>115</sup> Steinmetz 2002, p.87.

<sup>116</sup> Steinmetz 2002, p.88.

<sup>117</sup> “Discourse” is used as descriptive term throughout the paper.

<sup>118</sup> Steinmetz 2002, p.92.

itself, it was just a descriptive noun used by contemporaries. In most cases, the concept was clearly connected to fear, hyperbole and the vagueness of the phenomenon itself. It was only when the discussions and contexts in which it featured were compared to one another that the concept then began to assume a more pronounced form.

The linguistic approach has overlooked the “lower intensity” daily business aspects of parliamentary politics. Steinmetz even goes so far to say that most parliamentary activity, even in heated debates could be counted as part of the everyday political struggle, with no hidden agenda or secret intentionalism.<sup>119</sup> This struggle reflects some kind of natural parliamentary disorder which provided enough wiggle room for individual ‘dominos’ on subjects of concern to be touched on. In this case, atomic matters was one such domino, by simple virtue of being such a radical topic (e.g., possible world destruction). Indeed, Kari Palonen claims that when a matter is opened up for debate, then there is constitutional responsibility to cover it.<sup>120</sup> A perfect example, in our context, is the State Opening of Parliament in 1945, when atomic matters were brought up as current affairs. Another is the ratification of the UN Charter a month or two later. When added to the post-war context of events (the return to peace and change of government), and the fact that there was a lack of information and specific Government policy on atomic matters, there was a potential domino effect which made it possible to challenge customary political conventions more than ever. This ‘domino effect’ could be considered as parliamentary momentum. Based on Walter Bagehot, Kari Palonen’s conceptual theory of parliamentarism takes into account four temporal aspects of politics, and these also serve to define momentum in a parliamentary context. The four aspects can be found in what he calls “the English polit-vocabulary”, namely policy, polity, politicking and politicisation.<sup>121</sup> Momentum, he suggests, could be seen as the politicisation of a matter.<sup>122</sup> In other words a topic would have become “playable”, or something that could be argued over. In this context, it means that due to a momentum, the atomic question was now a political reality and its existence was no longer in any doubt. The press reporting and the State opening, and the general comments of atomic matter that followed confirmed that the topic was now “playable”. The difference between this and politicking is on the metaphorical level. Whereas the latter is recognised by Palonen as opportunistic, and happening in the here and now, politicising metaphorises a topic so that it can be better grasped in the abstract and as part of the bigger political picture. Politicking however, according to Palonen, is playing with the contingency of a matter, as a means to oppose those not willing to accept that the present moment is in fact contingent on a trajectory from the past.<sup>123</sup> Meanwhile, “policy” is a more rigid form of politicking, which specifically aims to lessen contingen-

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<sup>119</sup> Steinmetz 2002 p.91-92.

<sup>120</sup> Palonen, 2008, p.82.

<sup>121</sup> Palonen 1993, 10-15; Palonen, 2003 p174-184.

<sup>122</sup> Palonen 1993, p.11-12.

<sup>123</sup> Palonen 1993, p.13.

cy through various kinds of legislation.<sup>124</sup> In this case parliamentary momentum was based on all the elements of change, everything that was “new”, and being able to challenge the elements of continuity in British political culture. In terms of Parliament, the atomic question also shows a parliamentary transformation (without constitutional reform as such) concerning the way of handling foreign affairs, defence, and situating the atomic question within these contexts.

The fact that there was no established atomic policy as such in 1945 could imply that there was room to offer alternate definitions, to persuade, or to at least present a range of options for moving forward. In this case, the lack of ‘policy’ concerned the development of atomic weapons, but as even the pre-established lines and goals for this were unclear and only known by a few, the issue was soon a matter of (re)politicisation. For this reason, the Government did not yet have the chance for politicking, which meant that the topic was free for all. Palonen actually describes politicisation as a means of emphasising plurality, or a range of options; therefore it is also a way to oppose narrow definitions.<sup>125</sup> When there are not enough contingent elements present to constitute a policy (for example, due to lack of knowledge, or strong competing views), it in fact enables a wider scope for discussion, especially if also strengthened by external factors. This was definitely the case in the post-war context, as it was filled with elements of contingency (continuity) and a number of possibilities for change. By doing this not only can we gain new information about the phenomenon but it enables us to challenge, for example, the more traditional views presented from the perspective of national history concerning Parliament, and its alleged lack of role in these affairs. Political culture has long trajectories in the past, which also have to be taken into account. After all, political culture can be considered and as has been described above, as the way people use existing structures to make and execute policy.

The most relevant types of parliamentary procedure for discussing atomic energy in 1945-1946 were the adjournment debates and questions, both written and oral. Therefore a closer study of their nature and use was required. I consider that by studying these parliamentary questions and adjournment debates we are able to get closer to those day-to-day struggles in Parliament that Steinmetz described.<sup>126</sup> After all, politics is a matter of trust and MPs could test this trust via these questions. In drafting their replies, executive officials had to take stock of their own policy, and consider what to say. In estimating the importance or difficulty of questions, the officials gradually had to divulge the information that they had been withholding. The role of parliamentary questions in Britain have only been considered in any real detail in two books: one by Chester and Bowring (1962) and the other by Philip Norton (1992). Chester and Bowring’s work has been essential in helping to understand parliamentary procedures and the importance and role of the various kinds of question. The Government has a responsibility towards Parliament, and not answering ques-

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<sup>124</sup> Palonen 1993, p.12-15.

<sup>125</sup> Palonen 1993, p.13.

<sup>126</sup> Steinmetz, 2002 p.90-92.

tions has its counter means as well. Since the Second World War this has been the adjournment debate which was introduced as a tool for parliamentarians to demand that an issue be taken seriously.<sup>127</sup> Their function was related to parliamentary business, government intentions, and gathering information. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, MPs had almost unlimited opportunities to speak, and the motion “to move for papers” was the procedure for gaining information. The problem was that this procedure could be easily defeated, so this led to the rise of the parliamentary question around the 1850s.<sup>128</sup>

Questions, which had initially been an exception to the regular orders and rules concerning debates, and therefore lacked their own procedures, had developed through *ad hoc* arrangements. Only in 1869, did questions become separately headlined in Parliament. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the workload of Parliament grew rapidly, but the procedures trailed behind. It was still possible for a member to delay, obstruct or hinder public business by introducing private member’s bills.<sup>129</sup> Thus reforms were initiated again, and as of 1882, regulated, topic-driven questions became one of the few means by which MPs were able to take action. However, as it was not possible to speak that freely when asking questions, the role of supplementary questions then became more important.<sup>130</sup> To give the Government time to respond adequately, the practice developed of bringing in written questions in advance. To respond to the large number of questions, limited time and asterisk marked questions were then introduced. The asterisk (star) was used to note the need for an urgent response, which would secure an oral answer, which in turn would then enable the use of supplementary question.<sup>131</sup> However, an essential feature of the democratic conduct of business was that correspondence with the Minister in charge was slow and in private. Therefore press and other kinds of public statements were used to some extent.<sup>132</sup> In the period 1945-1947, there were not yet formal parliamentary committees on foreign policy or defence,<sup>133</sup> so the role of questions was even more important. An additional noteworthy feature of questions is that there are no loyalty or party-discipline issues to consider as there is no voting involved.<sup>134</sup>

Questions and adjournment debates were initiated by both the Government and the opposition, and by frontbenchers and backbenchers. This is interesting, as parliamentary questions have normally been perceived as a device used mostly by backbenchers.<sup>135</sup> The rise of these procedures is most likely connected with the Government’s request to limit members’ opportunities to access

<sup>127</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962 p.164-165; 204-205.

<sup>128</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.12-13; 15-18; 29.

<sup>129</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p.50.

<sup>130</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.41-44; 60.

<sup>131</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.78-79; 84, 86; 109-111.

<sup>132</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.96-108.

<sup>133</sup> Morgan, 1984, p.59-61. According to Morgan Herbert Morrison divided the MPs according to interest to informal groups, and the one focusing on foreign policy did not work due to clashes with the left-wing MPs.

<sup>134</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.215-217.

<sup>135</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.29-30; 217. On exceptions see p.199-200.

the issues mentioned below. The devices used to manage the topics and debates are extremely important to take into account as well, as they determine the context and borders in which MPs had to operate. For example, increasing party discipline has been seen to have helped the Government control topics raised in Parliament. According to Kenneth Morgan, however, the Labour party did not believe in vigorous party discipline in 1945-1946, but relied instead on self-regulation.<sup>136</sup> No doubt the high number of questions<sup>137</sup> correlates also with the limited amount of information available for interested MPs. On a wider scale, the rise in the role of adjournment debates and questions (above all supplementary questions) can be connected to the narrowing of opportunities for parliamentarians to raise debates or to make speeches, leaving the aforementioned procedures “as one of the very few effective weapons remaining in the hands of individual Members”<sup>138</sup>. Studying the questions can also reveal a surprising amount about the dynamics between the executive and Parliament, and their constant interaction. It also gives concrete examples of parliamentary control, and attempts that were made to challenge the executive in the field of policy-making. The questions would also gain interest in the press, thus expanding the discourse so that it also reached the general public, and make a name for the questioner as well. <sup>139</sup>Question time has since become more popular for pressing Ministers to release more information.<sup>140</sup> But various procedures related to question time have also helped Ministers in avoiding awkward questions. In this respect, questions are regulated carefully and there are strict rules regarding the content<sup>141</sup>. Pre-submitted questions mean that Ministers must have consulted their departments and advisors in advance. Therefore it has often been that the emphasis is actually on the supplementary question (which will be unknown to Minister and staff). Naturally Ministers have also had the chance to plant questions of their own.<sup>142</sup> Since the 1940s the rota of answering responsibilities has become formalised, and questions have been grouped according to department. Question Time may well help “the House [of Commons] maintain an investigatory control over the executive”, but the ability to hold Ministers to account seems to be rather limited. If a member is unsatisfied with the answers to his question he can try to raise it in the adjournment debate, if the ballot and Speaker of the House allow it. <sup>143</sup>

Questions often stimulate commentary or additional supplementary questions that are less well-prepared. Being able to present them also depends on

<sup>136</sup> Morgan, 1984, p.59-61. Labour also organised various unofficial committees according to members’ interests perhaps for regulation.

<sup>137</sup> During session 1945-1946, 27 000 questions were made in 165 Question Times. There are indications of deferring questions that might affect the statistics. House of Commons Records, referred in Chester & Bowring 1962 p.87-88; 90.

<sup>138</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p.41-44; 50; 60. Private Notice Question, correspondence with Minister: p.98-106.

<sup>139</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.222-224. Also front-bench might pay attention to skilled MP.

<sup>140</sup> Richards, 1967 p.36-37; 50-52.

<sup>141</sup> See May, 1950 p.338-348.

<sup>142</sup> Biffen, 1996 p.43-49; 103-109; Chester & Bowring 1962, p.114-115.

<sup>143</sup> Biffen, 1996 p.43-49; 103-109; Chester & Bowring 1962, p.114-115.

the Speaker, though another MP can ask a supplementary to another member's question, which can create the phenomenon of "mini-campaigning".<sup>144</sup> During the session held in 1945-1946, it appears that 75% of the oral answers received a supplementary question.<sup>145</sup> Press interest, both at home and abroad, served as a watch-dog for Parliament, so even if questions did not lead to a publicly visible vote, they were nonetheless publicly visible.<sup>146</sup> Despite the possibility of vague answering, or abstaining from comments ("for the sake of national interest") the Ministers were held to account, and normally had to give an answer of some sort, especially if the question was that in that Minister's remit.<sup>147</sup> As will be shown, a single question might be ignored, but the repeated cannot be. The uncertainty of questions, combined with the variety of officials preparing the answers, make the Skinnerian approach<sup>148</sup> less straightforward as the intentions in these speeches are clearly harder to trace. The instructions for drafting answers are even harder to trace, and besides, the drafts for answers might be the only written sources left. In the case of atomic matters even these drafts are rather fragmented as responsibility for answering was often divided among many departments. Some useful examples, however, went through Attlee's private secretary Rickett.<sup>149</sup> These versions of papers had commentary in them that might have been omitted from finalised documents. The fact that drafts for replies can be found in Rickett's papers reveals also that they were considered important enough for the PM to be informed about them and be in charge of replying.

A relatively new addition to parliamentary procedures and practices was the adjournment debate. It was available in theory before 1939, but back then the 30 minutes reserved for it was mostly used for voting. The rise of the adjournment debate really happened during the course of the war (1939-1945), but it was only after 1947 that standing orders actually guaranteed its position.<sup>150</sup> Adjournment debates were initially used during the war to compensate for the limited time left for general debate.<sup>151</sup> In the 1945-6 period studied here, there were 19 adjournment debates, most of them on foreign policy or the international control of atomic energy. The topics for adjournment debates are usually freely chosen, though John Biffen mentions that in general they focus on domestic and constituency matters. Adjournment debates take up a tenth of the time devoted to debates in the Commons, and Ministers and speakers cannot ask for one. In this respect, Biffen indicates that the procedure is important for back-benchers.<sup>152</sup> Adjournment debates are often closely connected to parliamentary questions in the Commons. The normal practice is for an MP to call for an adjournment debate if not satisfied with an answer from the executive. The difference is that an adjournment debate might be difficult to prepare for even if

<sup>144</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p.121.

<sup>145</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p.118.

<sup>146</sup> On questions and publicity for example Chester & Bowring, 1962 p.172-178.

<sup>147</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p.167-169; 211.

<sup>148</sup> For example see Skinner 2002, p.79-80.

<sup>149</sup> For example TNA, CAB 104-series.

<sup>150</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.204-205.

<sup>151</sup> Biffen 1996, p.103.

<sup>152</sup> Biffen 1996, p.105-107, though he does not state sources or the period concerned.



Whips and Speaker favour the Government, plus there can be quite a few pleas for which an adjournment debate may be chosen<sup>153</sup>. There is also the theoretical possibility that other MPs will abstain from making pleas for the benefit of someone else. Adjournment debates are more often used to place an argument, however. The Government has to be careful when replying repeatedly with rebukes, as there is always the possibility of another adjournment debate being requested with all the unpredictability it might bring.<sup>154</sup> Adjournment debates can be initiated in three ways: as seasonal holiday adjournments; as filling the 30 minutes at the end of public business each day; and in situations where all the other business of the House has already been concluded.<sup>155</sup> I also found one instance in which an adjournment debate was used to make a statement. This is the case of Herbert Morrison reading the Washington Declaration for the House of Commons on 15 November 1945.<sup>156</sup> Apparently this was one of the rare cases, in which the move for the House to adjourn was made directly after question time, as the matter was urgent and of public importance (according to standing order number 9).<sup>157</sup>

In conclusion, estimating the potential impact of Parliament and parliamentary pressure on foreign policy and British atomic policy is a challenging task and requires vast amounts of archival sources from the executive together with intense contextualisation. The empirical approach described earlier could well contribute to new parliamentary history by suggesting comparative methods for studying sources from various actors. By focusing on questions and adjournment debates, that is the everyday level of parliamentary activity, the intangible effects of the political struggle can be better accounted for, and a wider view of Parliament's perceptions on matters be achieved. This approach also reveals the complexity of procedures and actors that formed British foreign policy in the early atomic era. At the same time it exposes the partly forgotten side of parliamentary activity, and the inter-connectedness of various factors, which will be used further in examining the role of Parliament as a catalyst for change in British political culture, via foreign policy. Parliament is a part of the British political system, and as such it must be studied within that system and not simply on its own.

### 1.3.3 Press sources, theory and methods

To fully account for the context in which foreign policy was conducted, one must be conscious of the atmosphere in Great Britain at the time, and the sentiments at large in the general public. In this respect, the newspapers would have most obviously reflected this, if not represented it. According to James Curran-Seaton, media does not necessarily have a direct influence on people's opinions but it does however control to some extent the information that people get hold

<sup>153</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.207-208.

<sup>154</sup> Biffen, 1996, p.103.

<sup>155</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.205.

<sup>156</sup> HC Deb 15 November 1945 vol 415 cc2359-63

<sup>157</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.208-209.

of, and this will in turn affect what those people actually consider to be important.<sup>158</sup> Press coverage in the Britain of 1945 has been considered to be one of the major reasons for Labour's election victory by, for example, Peter Hennessy (1992). However, Roy Greenslade argues that this was not how contemporaries saw it in 1945. There was certainly a need for change in the air, though press reporting was thought to play only a small part.<sup>159</sup>

Atomic matters were reported widely in the press in 1945-1946. This contributed to people's understanding about the atomic question and perceptions on the matter. It also had an effect on parliamentarians and the Government. I also believe that press reporting was one factor that helped Parliament to establish momentum on one of the most important topics of current affairs - the atomic bomb - and this in turn helped Parliament to gain access to the matter in politics. Therefore press material has an important supplementary role in this thesis. Stephen Koss has stated that in general critical press activity in this period contributed to the "reformation of British Politics" and in turn was transfigured by it, though the change was apparent only by 1947.<sup>160</sup> Newspapers were the medium of the time, and so the importance of the press in post-war Britain was huge. Roy Greenslade has stated that before the war the daily sale of newspapers was 10.4 million copies, and in May 1946 it was 13.4 million copies. The most widely circulated paper was *The Daily Express*, with a circulation of 3.3 million; with *The Daily Herald* in the second place at 2 million; and *The Times* at about 1 million. According to Greenslade, the press penetration in Britain was 570 papers per 1000 citizens.<sup>161</sup> In addition, there was the likelihood that each paper was read by 3 different people. Furthermore, the Mass Observations research project stated that, according to its calculations, a fifth of Conservative voters read Liberal/Labour papers, a third of Labour supporters read Tory papers and half of Labour voters read Liberal papers. The war had apparently destroyed the previous tripartite division of readers.<sup>162</sup> This meant that reporting in a "hostile" newspaper could still reach a vast amount of readers from different social classes and that a large proportion of the population generally read newspapers.

Koss also refers to Kingsley Martin (1947) who stated that *The Times*, *The Observer*, and *The [Manchester] Guardian* were possibly the most interesting newspapers as they were outside the "party machinery".<sup>163</sup> In addition, *The Times* was read abroad, as the Blackburn incident effectively proved. According to Koss, *The Times* was known to be critical and relatively neutral, whereas *The Daily Mirror* showed strong Labour sympathies, and perhaps an even stronger emphasis than *The Daily Herald* (which was often labelled the trade unions' paper). Meanwhile, *The Manchester Guardian* is estimated by Koss to have also

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<sup>158</sup> Curran-Seaton 1988, p.234.

<sup>159</sup> Greenslade 2003, p.34.

<sup>160</sup> Koss, 1984 p.614-615.

<sup>161</sup> Greenslade 2003, p.5-6. In the United States the comparative figure at the time was 357/1000.

<sup>162</sup> Koss 1984, p.630.

<sup>163</sup> Koss 1984, p.634-635.

been favoured by the trade unions to some extent, though it tried to maintain a neutral reputation.<sup>164</sup> *The Guardian's* circulation was however much smaller, at around just 100,000 copies. Nevertheless it was the second most internationally recognised paper after *The Times*. *The Guardian* also openly competed against *the Times* in terms of being an international and national quality newspaper, and had cut its cooperation with the *Times* foreign correspondence.<sup>165</sup> These factors confirm its role as supplementary to *the Times*, but also necessary in the international context. The party-aligned newspapers would have also provided interesting material, but for the purposes of trying to find more neutral and general commentary the use of *The Times* seemed the better option.

With the use of press material as a source, there are some things that should be taken into account. Antero Holmila points out important facts related to press studies and public opinion in his article (2008). He refers to Adrian Bingham who has claimed that the press may not necessarily offer an unchallenged approach to the opinions of the public, but it does have a great deal of influence on general and political discourses. The press can provide a framework for contemporary topics from a period, but as Paul Addison has said, it is hard to know what ideas were already rooted in the minds of the readers who bought and read the newspapers, and what new ideas were actually conveyed by the writing. The problems of forming a personal opinion are also presented. For instance, it is more often the network of friends, family, and colleagues who affect a person's opinion than the articles actually read in the newspapers.

Mostly the focus in this work is on *The Times* from August 1945 to October 1946. One factor for this choice was that this well-known quality newspaper reported frequently about atomic and foreign affairs in general. In the online archive of the paper, despite the limits of early OCR-scanning, keyword searches alone revealed 843 instances, in which atomic energy was mentioned. Some of these instances are from different parts of the same article, but nevertheless the frequency is staggering. These findings were divided by the database's own classification into the following categories: 611 mentions in "news"; 78 mentions in "letters to the editor"; 55 mentions in "editorials/leaders"; 8 in "official statements"; and the rest belonged in various other minor categories. The "atomic bomb" as a search-term returned 457 results, of which 247 were labelled as "news", and 57 as "letters to the editor". A detailed division of the topics is presented in a separate annexe.<sup>166</sup> This coverage, as well as the contexts in which the atomic bomb was covered speaks volumes about the general interest in this subject at the time. Often these instances correlated with either international events or news, or with parliamentary interest on the matter. *The Times*, in particular, covered the parliamentary debates and commented on them: "atomic" was referred to 70 times, and "atomic bomb" 42 times in the column "Politics and Parliament".<sup>167</sup> Most of this was slightly edited commentary from

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<sup>164</sup> Koss 1984, p. 624-627.

<sup>165</sup> Greenslade 2003, p.6-7; 30.

<sup>166</sup> See appendix 4 about the findings in *the Times*.

<sup>167</sup> Cf appendix 4 about the findings in *the Times*.

the Hansard, and there was no analysis. Only the headlines were edited in any significant way.

As a source, the focus of a newspaper, compared to the actual parliamentary debate might point out which parts of debates or topics were considered important or interesting for the public to hear about. These commentaries and stories have been used here as well, to illustrate public sentiment and the level of external pressure that was on the Government. Moreover, the rather vast coverage of atomic matters implies that this topic was considered to be important and interesting. Besides press circulation, press criticism is another important factor to consider. Winston Churchill spoke in the House of Commons on 18 January 1945 and cursed the press in general, but particularly *The Times* (and the American press) about their harsh attitude towards British politics.<sup>168</sup> Apparently this relates to criticism of British intervention in Greece, which was following a line presented in the leftist press. Despite the critical stance, some self-limiting activities were apparently undertaken as well. Unfortunately the authors' names have been omitted from the original material, besides the letters to the editor, which does not make the source criticism easier. For instance, Koss mentions that the editor of *The Times*, Robert Barrington-Ward tried to prevent critical journalist E.H. Carr from writing an article for fear of possible political consequences.<sup>169</sup> As a source, a newspaper might be able to pinpoint which parts of a debate or topic were considered important or interesting for the public, compared to the actual parliamentary debates themselves. During this post-war period, there was also a general relaxation of press regulation, which one should bear in mind. In Britain, D-notices were not issued any more as had been done in wartime, though the availability of printing ink and paper did affect the number of pages available. In addition, there were hardly any pictures or photos in 1945.<sup>170</sup> Despite D-notices not being issued, the Government did nevertheless keep an eye on the press.<sup>171</sup> Arnold Toynbee was appointed to keep a dossier on atomic news for the Government's advisory bodies. However, I have not found any direct orders or even considerations to pressurise the newspapers about their news coverage. Perhaps there had been enough bad experiences of wartime censorship<sup>172</sup> to try and impose it on post-war press coverage too. For instance, a none too flattering report of government officials was reported in *The Times* when the Minister of Fuel and Power, Emmanuel Shinwell, had apparently fallen victim to either a prank or hoax about a newly invented atomic-powered car. At the moment of unveiling the car, of course, did not start.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Koss 1984, p.618.

<sup>169</sup> Koss, 1984, p.616.

<sup>170</sup> Greenslade 2003, p.3-4.

<sup>171</sup> Curran-Seaton 1988, p.67-73.

<sup>172</sup> Curran-Seaton 1988, p.71-73.

<sup>173</sup> The Times 30 November 1945 "'Atomic Car' Test Disappointment". Shinwell commented that there had been skepticism, but he had been invited by an MP, and that his parliamentary secretary had driven in the car before. The inventor, Dr. Wilson had promised to provide a running car in one month's time. Apparently this was never done. The event was later used in couple of snide interjections to the Govern-

It seems *The Times* was also the chosen newspaper for most of the contemporary politicians. They also interacted with the paper, for example MPs used it for “mini-campaigning”<sup>174</sup> to some extent. The “letters to the editor” column was considered an important forum for public discussion,<sup>175</sup> and there could be found quite a lot written about atomic matters there, from high-ranking bishops to philosophers and parliamentarians. There were now also a record-breaking number of journalists who were also MPs - the parliamentary reporter of *The Times*, Eric Harrison, had run for Parliament, for instance.<sup>176</sup> Meanwhile, the reporter Allingham (World Press News) claimed that, in 1947, MPs were being paid for leaks. *The Evening News* claimed to have paid £5 per piece for inside leaks from a Labour MP.<sup>177</sup> What this meant in practice has not been mentioned by Koss, but it does show that the press had close connections with Parliament and vice versa.

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ment in the House of Commons. The reporting tells about the hyperbole that was related to anything that was somehow “atomic”. The Times did not report the aftermath, the court case: The inventor, “Dr. Wilson” got 21 months jail sentence for fraud and the car was revealed to have been a hoax: *The Cairns Post*, Queensland Australia, 22 July 1946, page 3. “Atomic Car” hoax - Elderly inventor gets goal sentence,”

<sup>174</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p.219-223.

<sup>175</sup> Greenslade 2003, p.6.

<sup>176</sup> Koss, 1984, p.636.

<sup>177</sup> Koss 1984, p.637.

## 2 PHASE ONE: DAWNING OF THE ATOMIC AGE - “MORE VULNERABLE THAN EVER” (AUGUST 1945 - NOVEMBER 1945)

“I confess it was with great anxiety that I surveyed this prospect a month ago. Since then I have been relieved of the burden. At the same time that burden, heavy though it still remains, has been immeasurably lightened. On 17th July there came to us at Potsdam the eagerly awaited news of the trial of the atomic bomb in the Mexican desert. Success beyond all dreams crowned this sombre, magnificent venture of our American Allies. The detailed reports of the Mexican desert experiment, which were brought to us a few days later by air, could leave no doubt in the minds of the very few who were informed, that we were in the presence of a new factor in human affairs, and possessed of powers which were irresistible. Great Britain had a right to be consulted in accordance with Anglo-American agreements. The decision to use the atomic bomb was taken by President Truman and myself at Potsdam, and we approved the military plans to unchain the dread, pent-up forces.

From that moment our outlook on the future was transformed.”<sup>178</sup>

Former Prime Minister Winston Churchill was certainly right that the world had undergone a transformation. News coverage of the atomic bomb<sup>179</sup>, as well as actual use of the bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, had shocked the world in a way that had never before been imagined. In many ways, it was not that clear what had really happened, and all kinds of (sometimes conflicting) information were circulating in addition to the official statements. This chapter focuses on this initial situation, which prevailed in Britain after the atomic bombs were first used in Japan, and how these perceptions relate to the atomic question. The time period covered is roughly from August 1945 to November 1945. By November, more general reactions to the bomb had largely fizzled out<sup>180</sup> and given way to more concrete topics of debate, like defence and later foreign affairs. By then, the initial

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<sup>178</sup> Winston Churchill (Woodford, Con.) HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc78.

<sup>179</sup> For instance see “ATOMIC BOMB USED ON JAPAN: “Scientific Gamble Won” 2,000 TIMES BLAST POWER OF TEN-TONNER - The Most Deadly Weapon” *Manchester Guardian* 7 August 1945. “GERMAN CHIEFS SEE JAPAN’S EXTINCTION: Say Atomic Bomb Is Turning Point in Warfare, Leading to Revolution in World Politics Hitler Bluff Reported” *The New York Times* 9 August 1945.

<sup>180</sup> See appendix 1, Parliamentary instances.

approaches to the atomic question were also taking on a more definite shape, at least in Parliament and among government circles. Indeed, by the time of PM Attlee's trip to the Washington conference, the Government already had a policy of sorts, and there was more (at least partially) accessible information available for debate in the Houses of Parliament. But it had taken a lot to get to that point.

The atomic question initially needed to be defined by both Government and Parliament. This was made all the more difficult for the Government by the fact that it was happening at a time that was already troublesome for a Britain still reeling from the aftermath of war and the new demands of a peacetime Parliament. The situation was new in many ways, with various elements of continuity and discontinuity required, such as path dependency on various political decisions made in the past, balanced with the urgent need to make the numerous reforms that had been promised in Labour's general election campaign. Negotiations were needed between those newly elected to Parliament and those who had more or less remained in semi-permanent positions, such as Foreign Office staff and other civil servants or officials.

These initial views on atomic matters are the focus of this chapter, but they also feature heavily throughout this thesis. Depicting those views is important in itself, as they provide a fresh perspective on the birth of British nuclear culture, even if they are not the focus of this thesis overall. By views, I mean the views of the executive, that is the Government (including its civil servants and officials), and Parliament; supplemented to some extent with press material. This chapter looks specifically at these initial views since they served as a basis for the Government's atomic policies and its interaction with Parliament. Moreover, as will be presented over the course of the next two chapters, this interaction paved the way for a degree of Parliamentary momentum which, in turn, led to an increasing parliamentarisation of atomic, foreign and defence policy.

By participating in defining the debate more clearly and thus giving it some public exposure, Parliament contributed more widely to the way the atomic question and its various issues were understood in Britain. This is because parliamentary debates were of a public nature. Even though the Government wanted to keep the matter out of the public eye (as we shall see later), it could not because of its parliamentary responsibility. Parliament became in many ways the chief public forum for exposing information on the matter and for hearing what the Government intended to do about it. So, in spite of the theoretically clear-cut institutional responsibilities of Government and Parliament,<sup>181</sup> the latter allowed for a wider discussion of atomic matters, both inside and outside Westminster, as parliamentary debate could also be covered in the press.

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<sup>181</sup> Explained in detail in the introduction. In brief, Government's part of the Executive was to be responsible for policy formulation and to some extent also execution, while Parliament was the supreme legislative organ with the task of also supervising the Government. The Executive also included those high-ranking officials who participated, directly or indirectly, in policy definition and formulation, as well as those who implemented policy, and prepared the political executive. These officials were in semi-permanent positions.

The various unknown potential implications (ranging from atomic cars, to replacing coal and hydroelectric power, to world destruction through atomic warfare) made the atomic question into an approachable problem. As Willibald Steinmetz<sup>182</sup> has pointed out, only by first defining what it was all about and talking about it could some attempts at resolving the dilemma be devised. For as vague as the implications were in August 1945, there was no way of getting round the fact that something drastic and far-reaching had happened which affected everyone. Whatever the implications, the atomic question needed to be tackled as soon as possible. Some also believed it it may have contributed to the general post-war chaos, and bringing order to this chaos was seen as essential to secure the future safety of the whole world.

Security and a successful return to peace were of the utmost importance to Britain. Having been among the winners of the war, she was nevertheless seriously weakened, and her role on the world stage was about to change, although she was still seen by other nations as a greater power and one of the “guardians” of the atomic secrets,<sup>183</sup> although not quite as great as the Soviet Union and United States. India had not yet become independent, and the Commonwealth appeared to be relatively strong. Europe was in ruins, and Soviet pressure was growing stronger in numerous locations. The role of the United States in the world, not to mention in Europe, was less certain. It was not clear whether it would assume the role it was expected to take, and stand up to the Soviets, or whether the Soviets would change their policy. Britain, in spite of all her own problems, still therefore had some credible power. For instance Britain’s contribution to the joint Anglo-American atomic research project had been important, even if most of the massive financial burden had been shouldered by the United States and the work done there.<sup>184</sup> This cooperation had reached its desired goal in the form of the atomic bomb, but the question about future atomic research, about possible (commercial) applications and Britain’s role in atomic matters was not clear.

Though not openly stated, it was clear that Britain could in no ways afford to remain indifferent to the global importance of this new technology, nor let it slip through her hands at this opportune moment. There was also an overall sentiment of change and discontinuity, other issues, such as welfare were more important now that the war was over, and for other reasons too (such as the Beveridge Report). The new invention had brought with it the dawning of a

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<sup>182</sup> Steinmetz 2002, 87.

<sup>183</sup> Statement by the President of the United States on 6 August 1945. “...scientific knowledge useful in war was pooled between the United States and Great Britain, and many priceless helps to our victories have come from that arrangement. Under that general policy the research on the atomic bomb was begun. With American and British scientists working together we entered the race of discovery against the Germans.” (Truman Library); TNA CAB 134/7 A.C.A.E.(45)7 Churchill’s statement, read by Attlee on 6 August 1945, had more detailed review of the role of the Britain in the research and collaboration.. Past History and Organisation of the work, Copy of Official Statements Issued by the United Kingdom Government. The British statement was also published for example in the *New York Times* on 6 August 1945. See also No. 192. (Undated) Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Next Atomic Bomb, DBPO Ser.I. Vol.II.

<sup>184</sup> For an example, see Gowing, 1965 p. 267-268.



new age, although precisely what would be 'new' remained open for discussion. There would also probably be undercurrents of continuity as well - in those elements important for maintaining the stability required for societies, countries, and the world to operate.

The first part of this chapter therefore focuses on the initial general reaction of Britain's Parliament and Government, and these are supplemented with some press material, gleaned mostly from *The Times* and *The (Manchester) Guardian* as well as some examples from *The New York Times*. These reactions confirmed that this issue was not only seen to be of the utmost importance, but also a case of conflict resolution and bringing order to the chaos left by the war. This early phase was thus characterized by expressions of fear, and the evident need for further information to define the nature of the atomic question more precisely.

The second part of this chapter then explores just how the Government went about defining the atomic question more precisely; creating a policy for it; and establishing an organization within the Government to address these issues. This organization was initially set up to address the domestic aspects, but gradually its mission was also to solve the international aspects of the problem. Rather unexpectedly, civil servants and diplomats had a more important role in drafting and formulating policy than usual, because the Government had to rely on them to provide the information on this particular matter.

The final third of the chapter concentrates on those parliamentary discussions about the atomic bomb in which opinions began to diverge among MPs, especially with regard to Britain's overall defence policy and foreign relations. It also looks at the various ways and means for participating in the debate that seemed to have emerged. Finally, a comparison of the approaches and strategies used by Parliament and Government should reveal certain disparities which proved to be irreconcilable later on, and made future cooperation, that was nevertheless necessary between them, quite troublesome. It was a collision course that was to affect both Britain's domestic and foreign atomic policy.

## 2.1 Attempts to manage chaos - initial perceptions of atomic matters

This subchapter focuses on Government and Parliament's initial perceptions of the new situation regarding atomic energy and, to some extent, the effects of its coverage in the press. The emphasis is to pinpoint the basis that was established for handling the matter within Parliament, Government, and the inner circle of the Cabinet<sup>185</sup>. This was an evident attempt to create order from the chaotic post-war situation both at home and abroad. But before anything could be done, it required getting to know this beast of an altogether different nature first.

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<sup>185</sup> Attlee, Bevin, Morrison, Dalton, and Cripps were in the inner circle of the government according to Morgan 1984, p. 7-9; 45-51 "Between 1945-51 the Labour movement was dominated by the Cabinet."

Atomic energy was seen to be at the core of this chaos, and it provided a concrete focus for wider concerns too. For both Parliament and Government, it meant attaching the utmost importance to the matter, so that all the manifold aspects of the this hotly disputed topic could be covered. But even just outlining the atomic question proved tricky, and it required a great deal of deliberation before this 'core' became clear and definite. Essentially, the common starting points for both Parliament and the Government was that they were both (a) aware of a change having occurred, b) afraid of what would happen, and c) lacking information to be able to pursue the matter further. But thereafter different strategies for dealing with these matters were soon devised by each.

With the dawning of the atomic age came a realization that the world was rapidly changing, and so was Britain's role within it. It required an immediate, determined response. Though the full implications were not as yet clear, this was not a matter that could be left to its own devices. The Government, Parliament, and the press were all agreed about this. The first parliamentary debate on the matter addressed the topic starkly.

"The sudden announcement of the destructive power of the splitting of an atom of uranium caused not only the end of the war against Japan, but gave us insight into the productive possibilities of that tremendous scientific achievement."<sup>186</sup>

And yet the ensuing discussion about these "productive possibilities" was vague. Atomic energy was evidently perceived in a number of ways, and the impact it would have was not clear, so the initial discussion was characterized by nebulous generalizations, comments for the sake of commenting, and, in the case of William Brown (Rugby, Ind.), even hyperbole.

"I doubt whether we have begun to conceive the implications of this thing. It makes us independent of coal and oil, and alters the strategic basis of the world. It makes us independent of siting our industries in particular places where coal is found, and enables us to resettle industry anywhere we like—from the Alps to the middle of the Sahara if we want to."<sup>187</sup>

Due to a limited understanding of the implications, the concepts "atomic energy", "atomic" and "atomic bomb" were used interchangeably and intermittently. Understanding was limited because the whole matter had only become public after the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs had been dropped, and so this led to much unsubstantiated speculation. Atomic research and other advances in science had been shrouded in secrecy since the 1930s, and the topic was therefore unfamiliar to most of the parliamentary MPs that had been newly voted in, as it was also for the most of the public too.<sup>188</sup> During wartime, such secrecy had perhaps been easier to tolerate, but as the war was now over this argument seemed increasingly hard to defend.

<sup>186</sup> Wing Commander Millington, (Chelmsford, Common Wealth) HC Deb 17 August vol 413 cc218.

<sup>187</sup> HC Deb 17 August 1945 vol. 413 cc262-263.

<sup>188</sup> See for example Wheeler-Bennet 1962, p. 297-299, which reprints John Anderson's radio statement. In this statement Anderson mentions that the leap which science had taken in very limited time in atomic research could have taken even half a century.

However, it was not until the “Blackburn debate” in late October 1945, that the Government and Parliament really confronted the issue. Captain Raymond Blackburn (Birmingham, King’s Norton, Lab.), asked the Government for more information on the subject, in what was to become quite a famous adjournment debate.

“A close examination of the Smyth Report and the White Paper, together with consultations with some British scientists, convinced me that there is need for far greater information, before this House and the public, than is at present available.”<sup>189</sup>

And on behalf of the Government, Deputy Prime Minister, Herbert Morrison<sup>190</sup> emphasized in his answer to Blackburn that the Government also understood the full importance of the matter and would not take its responsibilities lightly.

“It is perfectly clear that the policy cannot afford to be dealt with by the Government in a cursory way. It cannot be dealt with at a low level. It must be dealt with at the higher level of Governmental consideration.”<sup>191</sup>

In addition, there were other issues to consider less directly related to the atomic question. In 1945, Britain was facing a difficult future in several parallel spheres, despite having emerged victorious from the war.

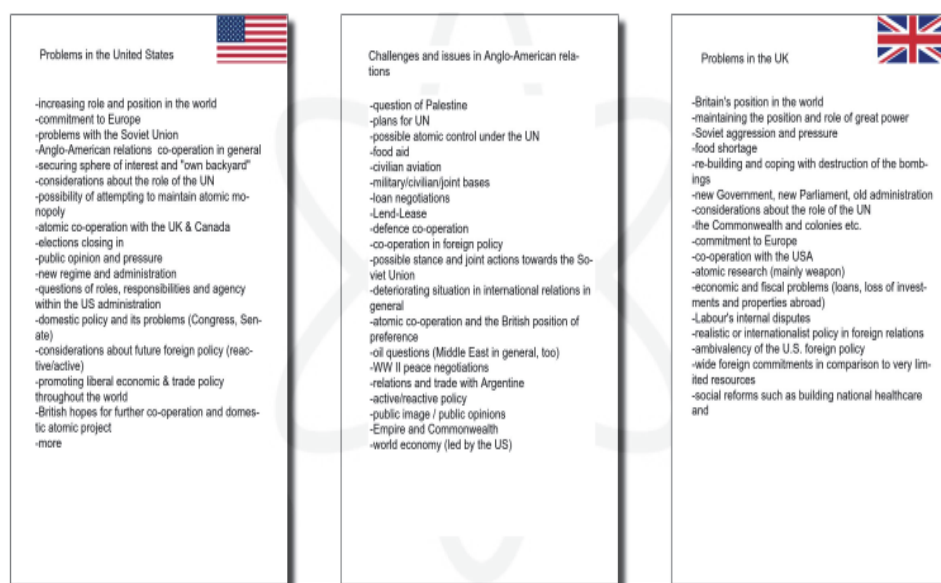


FIGURE 2 Overview of some of the problems in the autumn of 1945

<sup>189</sup> HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol 415 cc334.

<sup>190</sup> A rare occasion, as it was normally the Prime Minister who would answer all atomic questions; and Bevin, who would have otherwise been the first choice to answer after Attlee, was also absent.

<sup>191</sup> HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol. 415 cc345.

Relations with the Americans were on thin ice. For instance, American financial support for Britain, and the cooperation that had existed during wartime were no longer guaranteed, now that the war was over. The “special relationship” (if this had ever really existed), which had often been claimed as an indispensable factor in making the atomic bomb, was beginning to look more and more dispensable. The United States was seen to be drifting away, not only from Britain<sup>192</sup>, but also from its commitment to Europe in general. Added to this, was growing aggression from the Soviet Union, especially towards Britain, which made it clear that it would now be difficult, with her severely depleted resources for Britain, although still a Great Power, to return to the kind of foreign policy that had gone along with that status before the war, in the heyday of the Empire. Nevertheless, the British interest in world affairs had not waned, instead the country had taken a lead in them. Interest in atomic research had grown throughout the long process of developing the atomic bomb, and it was seen as a worthwhile pursuit, as it had evidently changed the world for good.

### 2.1.1 GOVERNMENT - a lack of information and organization

One of the first challenges facing the new Government was to make a statement about the horrifying effects of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was read by Prime Minister Clement Attlee on 6 August 1945, although most of the text he read out had actually been composed earlier on by Winston Churchill. Attlee simply added an introduction of his own, and a solemn remark about the new situation at the end.<sup>193</sup>

“This revelation of the secrets of nature long mercifully withheld from man should arouse the most solemn reflections in the mind and conscience of every human being capable of comprehension. We must indeed pray that these awful agencies will be made to conduce to peace among the nations and that, instead of wreaking measureless havoc upon the entire globe, they may become a perennial foundation of world prosperity.”<sup>194</sup>

By using Churchill’s words, it was clear that the new government had to refer back to previous actors just to be able to initiate proceedings. Although they had both been members of Churchill’s wartime coalition government, neither Attlee nor Bevin had been told anything about the bomb or the Anglo-American cooperation behind it.<sup>195</sup> Churchill had kept the reigns close and tight,<sup>196</sup> with only Lord Portal and John Anderson, who had been in charge of

<sup>192</sup> For example, Harbutt 1986, p.109.

<sup>193</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 A.C.A.E.(45)7. Past History and Organisation of the work, Copy of Official Statements Issued by the United Kingdom Government.

<sup>194</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 A.C.A.E.(45)7. Past History and Organisation of the work, Copy of Official Statements Issued by the United Kingdom Government.

<sup>195</sup> Bullock 1984, p. 184-185; Gowing 1974, p. 5.

<sup>196</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 5. Mentions J.Anderson (Leader of T.A.), Lord Cherwell (Paymaster-General 1942-1945, Physicist and the scientific adviser for the Government), R.A. Butler (F.O. H.M.s Embassy Washington), Col. Llewelin (former member of CPC, Minister of Aircraft production 1942, Minister of Food 1943-1945), Col. Moore-Brabazon (Minister of Aircraft Production 1941-1942), A.Eden (Foreign Secretary 1940-1945, Leader of the House of Commons 1942-1945) and Lord Hankey (Paymaster-General

the Tube Alloys project<sup>197</sup>, being the other two people who knew more or less the whole story. It was perhaps because of this that Anderson read a more detailed statement on the radio on the 7 August 1945.<sup>198</sup> In it, he explained the matter in somewhat less sonorous terms, with an emphasis instead on the importance of the new invention.

"Yesterday's momentous announcement of the successful delivery of the first atomic bomb marks the culmination of an effort of scientific and industrial organisation unparalleled in the world's history."<sup>199</sup>

By toning down the hyperbole and drama of the situation, Anderson aimed to highlight the potential of atomic energy in peacetime. In the same way, he also hoped to reassure the public that this new invention was very much under control and understood.

"The various forms of matter of which our universe is made up are in general very stable. They do not steadily break up and yield their latent energy for man's use. If they did we should lead much more adventurous lives, if indeed such a state of affairs could be compatible with the existence of any organised life on this globe at all."<sup>200</sup>

Calming fears of uncontrolled atomic reactions getting out of hand, was a very real concern for the Government, as these worries had already been expressed in the House of Lords. Lord Darnley, for example, had mentioned that such reactions, if not fully under control, could possibly destroy the whole world.<sup>201</sup> Anderson's statement therefore continued with comments intended to calm such concerns by making it clear that the raw materials necessary for atomic research were highly restricted, and could only be found in the very limited context of atomic research.

"At present only a very few substances are known which exhibit under suitable conditions the phenomenon called nuclear fission. The most important of these is the comparatively rare metallic element uranium. But now that a solution has been found, further developments are sure to follow. Means may, for example, be discovered of utilising other less rare elements which would not ordinarily react in this way. And in various ways means may be found of vastly increasing the efficiency of the reaction upon which the use of the material, whether for military or industrial purposes, depends."

"...For scientists and industrialists there will be the engrossing problem of finding means of controlling the new and practically limitless sources of energy now seen to be available, so that they may be harnessed in the service of humanity. In this field, so far as I am aware, little or no work has yet been done. It may be many years before efficient methods of using atomic energy for industrial purposes could be devised. There will then still be the question whether the new methods can compete economically with traditional sources of power. What is certain is that we may reasonably

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1941-1942, then left out of War Cabinet) to have been in Churchill's inner circle concerning atomic matters.

<sup>197</sup> See appendix 2, organization chart of Churchill's time. On the British research see TNA CAB 134/7 A.C.A.E.(45)7 Past History and Organisation of the work, Copy of Official Statements Issued by the United Kingdom Government.

<sup>198</sup> Wheeler-Bennet 1962, p. 297-299.

<sup>199</sup> Wheeler-Bennet 1962, p. 297-299.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc273-285

look forward to a new era of scientific discovery and development far transcending all experience of the past."<sup>202</sup>

In these attempts to diminish fears of a doomsday scenario and ease concerns, it was also made clear that the civilian and military sides of the technology were intertwined - a matter that was later key to considering the need for controlling atomic energy at an international level. But many ambiguities remained, and the possible ramifications of entering an atomic age were mostly unknown. There was no doubt that countries other than Britain or the United States were interested in developing the technology too. In many ways, the only thing certain was uncertainty.

"All this is, of course, still in the realm of speculation. What is certain is that a vast new field of investigation and development has been opened up in which scientists all the world over will be eager to labour. What must be realised is that this is no mere extension of existing fields of enquiry. A new door has for the first time been prised open. What lies on the other side remains to be seen. The possibilities for good or ill are infinite. There may on the other hand be a veritable treasure-house awaiting fruitful development in the interests of mankind. There might on the other hand, be only the realisation of a maniac dream of death, destruction and desolation. God grant that it may not prove to be so."<sup>203</sup>

According to biographer, Wheeler-Bennet, Anderson had floated the idea of international control and cooperation by Winston Churchill as early as the "second Quebec meeting" in 1944. At that time, Anderson was Chancellor of the Exchequer and in charge of the Tube Alloys project in Britain, so the suggestion had some clout. The reasoning behind this had been to prepare for the post-war situation and any possible international problems in the future. However, as 'international' for Anderson meant including the Soviet Union, Churchill had been adamantly against the idea.<sup>204</sup> According to John Saville, this idea of a world organisation had also been prevalent among Chiefs of Staff and the Foreign Office too at that time.<sup>205</sup> So it was not surprising that, in his statement, Anderson still seemed to lean towards this ideal and, according to PM Attlee's early memoranda on the topic, was keen to suggest that atomic matters be overseen by a new world organisation

"There are problems here calling for statemanship of the highest order. The establishment of any organ for the maintenance of world peace and security would obviously be sheer mockery if means could not be found of guaranteeing the effective international control of an instrument of war of such potency. [...] There could be no higher task for the statesmen of the United Nations gathered round the Conference table."<sup>206</sup>

As was mentioned above, the Labour party had gained a landslide victory in the 1945 general election, no doubt because it had promised various social reforms such as the creation of a welfare state. However, these promises had met

<sup>202</sup> Wheeler-Bennet 1962, p. 297-299.

<sup>203</sup> Wheeler-Bennet 1962, p. 297-299.

<sup>204</sup> Wheeler-Bennet 1962, p. 297.

<sup>205</sup> For instance Saville 1993, p. 27-28; 72-73. Though the military had been even more hostile towards the Soviets already during later part of the war.

<sup>206</sup> Wheeler-Bennet 1962, p. 299.

with the harsh reality of limited resources as Labour entered government. In their 1945 election manifesto, "Let Us Face the Future", Labour had also stated that it wished to conduct an open foreign policy - the time for secret deals was over.<sup>207</sup> Though this did not constitute a policy as such, the intention was clearly there, even if election promises should always be taken with a grain of salt. The importance of cooperation, in particular with the Soviet Union, had also been openly mentioned and indeed had some support. According to the PM, the use of atomic bombs had changed the world drastically, and this underlined the urgent need for an overall rethink of Britain's foreign policy.

"The only course which seems to me to be feasible and to offer reasonable hope of staving off imminent disaster for the world is joint action by the U.S.A, U.K., and Russia based upon stark reality.[...] The new World order has to start now."<sup>208</sup>

Attlee is often described as a leader with usually only rather bland comments to make, but with regards to the idea of peace outlined in the following quote from Labour's election manifesto, he seemed to have taken this topic very much to heart.

"If peace is to be protected we must plan and act. Peace must not be regarded as a thing of passive inactivity: it must be a thing of life and action and work. An internationally protected peace should make possible a known expenditure on armaments as our contribution to the protection of peace; an expenditure that should diminish as the world becomes accustomed to the prohibition of war through an effective collective security."<sup>209</sup>

When we compare this with the memorandum Attlee had issued on atomic matters in Ministerial Committee on Atomic Energy, GEN-75's first meeting, it is clear that he had felt this urgency for international cooperation for some time.

"All nations must give up their dreams of realising some historic expansion at the expense of their neighbours. They must look to a peaceful future instead of to a war-like past.

This sort of thing has in the past been considered a Utopian dream. It has become today the essential condition of the survival of civilization & possibly life on this planet.

No Government has ever been placed in such a position as is ours today. The Governments of the U.K. and U.S.A. are responsible as never before for the future of the human race.

I can see no other course that I should on behalf of the Government put the whole case to President Truman and propose that he and I and Stalin should forthwith take counsel together.

The time is short."<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Let Us Face the Future 1945, p. 1-9.

<sup>208</sup> No.192 (undated), Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Atomic Bomb (slightly revised and circulated as GEN. 75/1 on 28 August 1945), DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>209</sup> Let Us Face the Future 1945.

<sup>210</sup> No.192 (Undated), Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Atomic Bomb, (slightly revised and circulated as GEN. 75/1 on 28 August 1945), DBPO.

Britain had signed an agreement to exchange scientific information with the Soviet Union during the war<sup>211</sup>, and the election manifesto also mentioned co-operation with the Soviets in peacetime<sup>212</sup>. But the fact that Stalin was being seen as a possible peacetime partner is nevertheless somewhat surprising, considering the growing anti-British propaganda in the Soviet Union.<sup>213</sup> Perhaps Attlee was suggesting this bold, unexpected course of action precisely to emphasize the need for change.

“We cannot plan our future while the major factor is uncertain. I believe that only a bold course can save civilization.

“A decision on major policy with regard to the atomic bomb is imperative. Until this is taken civil and military departments are unable to plan. It must be recognised that the emergence of this weapon has rendered much of the post-war planning out of date.”<sup>214</sup>

In particular, the commercial potential of atomic power was one aspect that would require major policy decisions. This was brought to light in a summary of the implications of the new technology, that had been gathered by the Foreign Office and sent to Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. This report still saw the commercial aspect as inseparable from the military side of things,<sup>215</sup> most likely due to the fact that Hiroshima and Nagasaki had only just happened (comments still reflected the shock of these events), but it was thought that it would only be a matter of a few years<sup>216</sup> before these vague commercial possibilities would be realized.

As for the Government, the few comments that they made were generally calmer in tone than the initial reactions expressed by Attlee privately within Executive circles. Indeed, it was within the Government and machinery of the civil service that most worries were voiced by the high-ranking political decision makers. It was mostly the Prime Minister who commented in public on matters at this point, but it seemed his personal interest in the matter faded later on.<sup>217</sup> For example, Attlee showed initiative, and some anxiety, when he sent an urgent telegram to President Harry Truman on the 8 August 1945. In the telegram, Attlee requested that they consult with each other and then make a joint declaration to reassure the world about the Anglo-American position on the atomic question. Such a joint statement would have indisputably emphasized Britain’s role as one of the guardians of atomic energy.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>211</sup> Gowing, 1965, p. 154-156.

<sup>212</sup> Let Us Face the Future 1945. “We must consolidate in peace the great war-time association of the British Commonwealth with the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.”

<sup>213</sup> For example, Harbutt 1986, p. xiv.

<sup>214</sup> No.192 (Undated), Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Atomic Bomb (slightly revised and circulated as GEN. 75/1 on 28 August 1945), DBPO.

<sup>215</sup> For example, No.189, Bevin to Balfour (17 August 1945), DBPO, ser.I, vol.II. “...it is difficult to draw a line between developments for defence purposes and those of commercial application...”

<sup>216</sup> No.186 Sir R. Campbell’s memo for Bevin, 8 August 1945.

<sup>217</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 28.

<sup>218</sup> For example Wheeler-Bennet 1962, p. 327-328.



“The attack on Hiroshima has now demonstrated to the world that a new factor pregnant with immense possibilities for good or evil has come into existence.

Thoughtful people already realise that there must be a revaluation of policies and a readjustment of international relations. There is a widespread anxiety as to whether the new power will be used to serve or to destroy civilization...

I believe that our two nations are profoundly convinced...

I consider therefore, that you and I, as heads of the Governments which have control over this great force should without delay make a Joint Declaration of our intentions to utilize the existence of this great power not for our own ends but as trustees for humanity in the interests of all peoples in order to promote peace and justice in the world”.<sup>219</sup>

In an evident attempt to assuage the anxieties of Parliament, and lessen worry among the general public, Attlee sent yet another telegram to a reluctant Truman, demanding negotiations over the atomic question. This time he used Parliament in his reasoning, saying that a parliamentary statement on the matter could not wait for much longer, hence the urgent need for talks in Washington.<sup>220</sup> Attlee argued that the atomic question had, for example, overshadowed the London Council of Foreign Ministers, and may also jeopardize the “prospective Conference of the United Nations”.<sup>221</sup>

Ernest Bevin tried a different tack to calm things down. For example, he simply denied that atomic matters were relevant in the London Council of Foreign Ministers<sup>222</sup> so they had not been discussed, and consequently they did not affect foreign policy decisions later.

“I have never for one moment, when considering what decisions I should give on this or that issue, considered the atomic bomb. ...I have never once allowed myself to think that I could arrive at this or that decision because Britain was or was not in possession of the atomic bomb.”<sup>223</sup>

As this comment was made in the midst of a definition of atomic policy, it is understandably an attempt to reassure Parliament, and indeed the world, that the Government had the situation in its true perspective. However, this claim seems hard to believe when we look at the various preparatory documents. The fact that the Government was considering the best way to gain an effective close collaboration with the Americans tells a different story. The problems created by the atomic bomb would actually have to be solved on a wider scale, and the Government had therefore initiated the establishment of an organization for gaining information and formulating a policy on the matter. This will be covered in more detail in section 3.2.

<sup>219</sup> No.187, Bevin to Balfour, including Attlee’s telegram sent to Truman (9 August 1945), DBPO, ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>220</sup> No.202, Telegram from Attlee to Truman (16 October 1945), DBPO ser.I, vol.II. “It is my desire to exchange views with you before making further statement but it will not be possible for me to postpone discussion for long.”

<sup>221</sup> No.202, Telegram from Attlee to Truman (16 October 1945), DBPO ser.I vol.II.

<sup>222</sup> HC Debate (10 October 1945) vol. 414 c240W.

<sup>223</sup> HC Debate (7 November 1945) vol. 415 cc1335.

Nonetheless, except for a handful of official statements and Attlee's eloquent appeals to Truman, Parliament was the main forum for comments on atomic matters. The Government used Parliament to make public statements about the subject, and although these statements were few<sup>224</sup>, they reached a wider audience via press commentary of the parliamentary debates that ensued. Because of this, it is essential that we look at the press coverage of atomic matters before turning in more detail to the reactions of Parliament.

Margaret Gowing claims that the British press focused mostly on trivialities when it came to reporting on atomic matters, which would imply that the press material is not much of no relevance<sup>225</sup> but this is only part of the story. For instance, in the parliamentary deliberations from this period MPs talk of having read informative news, especially in *the Times*<sup>226</sup>. The press was also often relevant in that it would feature the *cause célèbre* among the general public; and this, in itself, would merit a parliamentary debate. It also meant press coverage of the matter was of interest to the Government.

### 2.1.2 PRESS - any news is 'good' news

#### "SIR JOHN ANDERSON'S - COMMENT

Sir John Anderson, who was responsible, as Lord President of the Council, for the researching on the bomb, said last night:

"The amount of energy locked up in the atomic bomb is prodigious, and the problem of controlling its release has not been solved. All the effort of the last few years has been directed towards the explosive release of energy. There are great possibilities, if energy on the scale represented in the bomb is made available to drive machinery, and provide sources of power. It might -produce something that will revolutionize all industrial life, but it will take many years of research before an effective process is worked out."

This is not merely a development of things that have gone before. It is absolutely new -a new field of scientific work. A statement can be expected in the next few days, giving the scientific details."<sup>227</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the dawning of the atomic age did not escape the attentions of the press.<sup>228</sup> The public were clearly hungry for news of any kind about all

<sup>224</sup> It is hard to estimate how much of the limited commenting was due to the limited information Government members had, how much for the sake of attempting to manage the public discussion about the atomic question to prevent panic, hyperbole, national interest (defence etc.) and possible international implications, as Parliamentary debates were public, published in Press and also observed by other states.

<sup>225</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 52-53.

<sup>226</sup> For example see HL Debate (16 October 1945) vol. 137 cc275-276. Earl of Darnley referring to *The Times* article citing on The Association of Los Alamos Scientists on the previous day.

<sup>227</sup> *The Times* 7 August 1945, "FIRST ATOMIC BOMB HITS JAPAN -EXPLOSION TONS EQUAL TO OF T.N.T. 20,000 , ANGLO-U.S. WAR SECRET OF FOUR YEARS' RESEARCH "RAIN OF RUIN" FROM THE AIR".

<sup>228</sup> Though Koss (1984, p. 656) claims that by 1947 the political press was dead, and the politicians had lost their grip on newspapers. Nevertheless he also states that for example Labour used the Daily Herald for its own purposes (*ibid.*, p. 626). Mäkilä (2007, p. 18-19; 275), states that the role of the press in general was important in atomic mat-

things atomic, especially following the horrifying shock of the bombs in Japan. Hiroshima and Nagasaki thus paved the way for news coverage on the subject, but even then *the Times* was noting the bleak possibilities for a nuclear future ahead.

“The atomic bomb, more surely than the rocket carries the warning that another world war would mean the destruction of all regulated life.”<sup>229</sup>

*The Manchester Guardian* carried the headline “Most Deadly Weapon” with reference to the atomic bomb, describing it as having two thousand times the explosive capacity of a British ten-ton bomb. This made it the most powerful bomb in the world at the time.<sup>230</sup> Like many other newspapers, coverage in *The Manchester Guardian* relied heavily on the statements given by the American President and his Secretary of War, Henry Stimson. Nevertheless, there was of course still room for commentary.

“Man is at last well on the way to mastery of the means of destroying himself utterly.”<sup>231</sup>

These reports hinted at the immense responsibility now facing the world.

“All future international relations will be influenced for good or for ill by the existence of the atomic bomb...”<sup>232</sup>

On the 7 August 1945 the front page headline in *the New York Times* ran as follows: “First Atomic Bomb dropped on Japan; Missile is Equal to 20,000 Tons of TNT; Truman Warns Foe of a ‘Rain of Ruin’”.<sup>233</sup> Meanwhile, the ingress at the start of another article, written by Jay Waltz, ran: “Secrecy on Weapon So Great That Not Even Workers Knew of Their Product”.<sup>234</sup> Despite wide news coverage all over the world, and statements from various heads of state,<sup>235</sup> the full horrific implications of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had not yet been grasped in August, 1945. All that was known was that devastating destruction had been unleashed, and that this weapon was the most powerful the world had ever seen. It was not just the press and general public who were uninformed; official statements in the form of books or leaflets did not provide

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ters, as at the time there was limited information available for the public, and the members of the press had better access to what was available. However, only the views of elite were often presented.

<sup>229</sup> *The Times* (7 August 1945), “Potentialities of the new weapon -Warning for the future”.

<sup>230</sup> *The Manchester Guardian* (7 August 1945), “Atomic Bomb Used in Japan”.

<sup>231</sup> *The Manchester Guardian* (7 August 1945), “The Atomic Bomb”.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> *New York Times* (7 August 1945), “First Atomic Bomb dropped on Japan.”

<sup>234</sup> *New York Times* (7 August 1945), “Atomic Bombs Made in 3 Hidden ‘Cities’”.

<sup>235</sup> An example of this is President Truman’s radio speech from the conference at Potsdam, 9 September 1945 (Truman Library): “The atomic bomb is too dangerous to be loose in a lawless world. That is why Great Britain, Canada and the United States, who have the secret of its production, do not intend to reveal that secret until means have been found to control the bomb so as to protect ourselves and the rest of the world from the danger of total destruction.”

any further enlightenment either.<sup>236</sup> The bombs had almost certainly been dropped at the earliest possible opportunity with the aim of ending the war as soon as possible. Studies were therefore still being conducted, regarding the effects of nuclear fall-out and atomic energy, by the United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS) and Research and Experiments Department of the British Home Office's mission to Japan.<sup>237</sup>

The two-day debates held in both the Houses of Parliament concerning the United Nations Charter provide another instance of press and Parliament combining forces to extract more information from the Government on atomic matters. This will be covered in greater detail when looking at parliamentary views on how the atomic question should be solved; but in short, Parliament voted to ratify the UN charter in both the Commons and the Lords<sup>238</sup> on 22-23 August 1945.<sup>239</sup>

These debates were reported with interest in *the Times* on the 24 August 1945. One of the key points reported in the article, was when Waldron Smithers (Orpington, Con) had "asked from the Prime Minister if he could assure that the secrets of making atomic bombs would not be given away without the consent of the House."<sup>240</sup> Attlee's abrupt written answer was also included in this article. In it he said that, though full attention would be paid to views of the House, consultation would first be required with the United States and the Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy (ACAE). Some of the debate in the House of Lords was also covered, including Lord Balfour of Inchrye's statement that

"... the use of atomic force opened up terrible possibilities"<sup>241</sup>.

And reporters in the press gallery had also paid attention to Lord Rennel's gloomy comment that

"...if another war happened humanity might come to an end and that it was right and reasonable that people should be afraid of that".<sup>242</sup>

<sup>236</sup> For example the United States had ordered an "official report" from Henry de Wolf-Smyth. In Britain the Government printed only one booklet including statements related to the atomic energy. TNA CAB 134/7, ACAE (45)7, 11 September 1945, Past History and Organisation of the work, Copy of Official Statements Issued by the United Kingdom Government; TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE (45)8 31 August 1945, Copy of the Official Statement Issued by the United States Government. The Smyth-report was also published in several versions as a book.

<sup>237</sup> The Effects of Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki United States Strategic Bombing Survey United States Government Printing Office Washington: 1946 1. (www) "In all, more than 110 men--engineers, architects, fire experts, economists, doctors, photographers, draftsman--participated in the field study at each city, over a period of 10 weeks from October to December, 1945."

<sup>238</sup> HL Debate (22 August 1945), vol. 137 cc104-150; HL Debate (23 August 1945) vol. 137 cc157-186.

<sup>239</sup> HC Debate (22 August 1945), vol. 413 cc659-755; HC Debate (23 August 1945) vol. 413 cc861-950.

<sup>240</sup> *The Times*, 24 August 1945, "United Nations Charter Approved - Atomic Energy and World Peace".

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

By reporting on Parliament's concerns and making them known to the general public in this way, the press was contributing to the cumulative pressure on the Government to take action. The reporting was naturally followed abroad as well as at home. The prevailing term referring to the matter in all these reports was "atom". But in terms of press material, and not just key word hits, the atomic question was featuring heavily in the news anyway. In August 1945 it made the news in various forms on 23 occasions (and that was in just *The Times*). Of these occasions, 14 were actual articles on the subject, and four were reports on parliamentary discussions.<sup>243</sup> The British press was actually less prone to hyperbole in its coverage of the subject than many of its counterparts elsewhere in the world, and indeed throughout August 1945 *The Times* could be said to be almost businesslike in tone. On the other hand, Margaret Gowing suggests otherwise, believing that there was more of an interest in trivialities and less important details. though Gowing does not exactly define what she considered as trivial or as important.<sup>244</sup> Meanwhile, in the United States, discussions about atomic matters were comparatively uninhibited, and explored all aspects of the new invention.<sup>245</sup> In effect, the American press generally gave the issue wider coverage, even commenting on coverage of the initial atomic tests in the foreign press.<sup>246</sup>

"LONDON, Aug. 6 [...] Almost all of London's morning newspapers used almost their entire front pages and their editorial columns, plus other sections in their four pages, to report and acclaim the development of the atomic bomb".<sup>247</sup>

Whereas in the United States, the newspapers were comparatively bigger and filled with pictures, in Britain it was quite different due to various regulations and limitations.<sup>248</sup> One of these limitations was that there was simply a shortage of paper, which thus affected the number of pages a newspaper could print per issue. *The Times*, which was highly regarded, was only ten pages long during wartime, while *The Daily Express*, a broadsheet which was 24 pages before the war, was limited to four by 1945. Pictures were thus scarce in British newspapers during wartime and the post-war period, precisely to leave more space for the words.<sup>249</sup>

Nevertheless, *The Times* had an interesting column in which readers could vent their concerns. "Letters to the Editor" regularly featured expressions of general anxiety and concern from readers about how the atomic bomb had changed the world and posed a threat for mankind. But there were also letters from MPs published there that served in Parliament as a means of "mini cam-

<sup>243</sup> Basis of this is the results given by The Times Archive's search engine and classifications given by the newspaper itself Letters to the editor are not included.

<sup>244</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 52-53.

<sup>245</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 52-53.

<sup>246</sup> The New York Times, 7 August 1945. "Steel Tower 'Vaporized' In Trial of Mighty Bomb: Scientists ..."

<sup>247</sup> The New York Times, 7 August 1945, "ATOMIC BOMB TOPS ALL NEWS IN LONDON"

<sup>248</sup> On the war-time regulation of newspapers see for example Curran, 1988, p. 65-76.

<sup>249</sup> Greenslade 2003, p. 3-4.

painging” on certain atomic matters.<sup>250</sup> This particular use of the column became more evident in 1946, but already by the autumn of 1945, there were many such letters from MPs, which would justifiably merit an in-depth study of their own.

Despite thinking much of the press reporting on atomic matters to be trivial, even Margaret Gowing seems to appreciate the significance of this column. “‘An unceasing flow of correspondence’ of which *The Times* published a selection testified to the profound public interest in the wide range of technical, strategic, political and moral problems, and the views of eminent men [...] were published in full or quoted.” Gowing then mentions however, that this flow eventually subsided and apathy re-emerged;<sup>251</sup> even though, according to *The Times* online database, “atomic” was a word that continued to feature regularly in the paper.<sup>252</sup>

The Government noted these public expressions of anxiety. Rumours about atomic matters were growing at an alarming rate, and so it was decided that information should be regulated in some way. In fact, public pressure was so intense that one of the first things Attlee’s government did, was to establish a committee for gathering and analyzing all news published on the topic. Arnold Toynbee, the historian who also worked for the Foreign Office as head of this research department<sup>253</sup>, was requested to put together a dossier for the Executive (and particularly the A.C.A.E.) on the various press reactions around the world towards atomic research. Though the department’s main focus was on the press abroad, on 30.8.1945, Nevile Butler (Assistant Under Secretary of State) suggested that domestic news should also be covered.<sup>254</sup> This shows how the Government were now sitting up and taking notice of the press. Parliamentarians, for instance, were referring to *The Times* as a source of information<sup>255</sup>, so keeping an eye on the newspapers was in the Government’s best interest if they wanted to be prepared for questions on the floor in Parliament.

John Anderson, chairman of the A.C.A.E., suggested that another way to regulate information would be to publish Britain’s own official statements on these matters, especially since they were already being published and discussed by the press in the United States. Like Wallace Akers, Anderson believed this

<sup>250</sup> For example see: *The Times*, 13 August 1945 “Letters to the Editor – Atomic Bombs – War and Scientific Research – Final Responsibility” a letter from Charles W. Gibson, (Lab, Kennington) Gibson had signed also with the remark “House of Commons”; *The Times*, 20 June 1946 “Letters to the Editor - Atomic Energy”, a letter from Raymond Blackburn. About the extra-parliamentary use of press for gaining exposure see Chester & Bowring 1962, p. 222-224.

<sup>251</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 53.

<sup>252</sup> Cf. appendix 4 about the Times.

<sup>253</sup> Foreign Office List 1945, p. 14. The committee’s business covered the following topics: “Special Research for Foreign Office and other Departments”, “Political Intelligence Weekly Summary”, “Review of Foreign Press”, “Foreign Office Handbooks”.

<sup>254</sup> TNA FO 800/552, Memo by N. Butler for Ronald, 30 August 1945; TNA FO 800/552, Toynbee’s note for Butler with duplicate of the dossier on world reactions to atomic bomb, 15 September 1945. Toynbee complained in his note that the disbanding of the staff who’d been reviewing the press abroad had made it difficult to produce the review dossier.

<sup>255</sup> For instance: HC Debate, 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc749.

would be a more manageable way of controlling publicity than a press conference about the technical sides of atomic research.<sup>256</sup> Consequently, the Government's White Paper, *Statements Relating to the Atomic Bomb*, was hurriedly published in August 1945.<sup>257</sup>

Keeping tabs on the news was seen as essential by the Government, so that anxiety and fears would not cause a public panic. This had already been considered a real risk in an earlier undated memorandum mentioned in the second ACAE meeting on 20 September 1945. The memorandum noted the fact that the Americans were considering in advance any statements made to the Interim Committee about atomic affairs.<sup>258</sup> The Americans, it was noted in the second A.C.A.E. meeting, had also emphasised the very real dangers of panic.

"What public statement should be made when disclosure becomes inevitable about the weapon, its hazards and implications? In drawing up this statement they have to take into account the possibility that if sensational and exaggerated rumours became current there would be some risk of public panic [...]"<sup>259</sup>

Monitoring the press and updating this "extremely interesting and illuminating" dossier soon proved to be an ongoing process, and so it was asked to continue its task in October.<sup>260</sup> Toynbee agreed to be responsible for this, but warned that he could not guarantee the same degree of thoroughness as in earlier reports.<sup>261</sup> A month later the scope of enquiry was widened to include any news on nuclear or fissionable raw materials, again to help the British executive be ready for parliamentary questions on the matter.<sup>262</sup> This is almost certainly related to the Combined Development Trust (CDT)'s efforts at cooperation and Anglo-American attempts to monitor all fissionable raw materials in the world, so as to know which countries might attempt atomic research of their own. In addition, it reveals British interest in the pragmatic side of the atomic question; i.e., where could they acquire more raw materials from in future, even if the joint were located on American soil at the moment.

Another reason for establishing such a survey was that there was only so much the Government could do to regulate and keep tabs on the public debate. Once the war was over, there was no longer any justifiable excuse for limiting

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<sup>256</sup> TNA CAB 134/6 ACAE (45) 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting. Minutes of the meeting of the ACAE held on 21 August 1945.

<sup>257</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE (45)7, 11 September 1945, Past History and Organisation of the Work. Copy of the Official Statement issued by the United Kingdom Government. Printed Booklet HM Treasury "Statements relating to the Atomic Bomb" printed by the HMSO, London 1945.

<sup>258</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 Memorandum - International Treatment of the Tube Alloys Project, included in TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE (45) 3; Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy: International Policy on the use of atomic energy. Note by the Secretary (Rickett), 24 August 1945.

<sup>259</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 Memorandum - International Treatment of the Tube Alloys project, included in TNA CAB 134/7 A.C.A.E. (45) 3 Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy: International Policy on the use of atomic energy. Note by the Secretary (Rickett) 24 August 1945.

<sup>260</sup> TNA FO 800/552, Rickett to Butler, 2 September 1945.

<sup>261</sup> TNA FO 800/552, A letter from Toynbee to the Foreign Office, 8 October 1945.

<sup>262</sup> TNA FO 800/552, Perrin to Toynbee 31 October 1945.

news coverage to the same degree as it had been in wartime. Indeed, it seems that defence notices (D-notices) were not issued as frequently or as directly as they once had been.<sup>263</sup> Toynbee's surveys show the degree to which the Government was prepared to go to indirectly manage public aspects of the atomic question. Though the activities of Toynbee's committee gradually lessened towards the end of 1945, its very existence was a clear indicator that the Government took the general influence of the press on policy-making seriously.

### 2.1.3 PARLIAMENT - hyperbole, shock, and fear

The atomic bombs used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States not only left death and destruction in their wake, but tremors of anxiety and fear all around the world. Now that the effects of nuclear war were there for all to see in Japan, the atomic debate was very much out in the open and with enormous political consequences for the foreseeable future. As indicated earlier in this chapter, it was evidently not just the Government, press and general public who were affected. The shadow of the mushroom cloud also made its way onto the floor of the British Parliament. Altogether, during the 212 sitting days in the Parliamentary session of 1945-1946, and bit beyond<sup>264</sup>, atomic themes appeared were mentioned in 150 different instances. This conflicts somewhat with Margaret Gowing's claim that not a single debate was specifically "devoted" to atomic matters.

"During the whole period of the Labour Government there was not a single House of Commons debate devoted to atomic energy, although occasional references were made to it in other connections such as foreign affairs or defense; Lord Cherwell initiated one debate in the House of Lords, but this was concentrated mainly on questions of organization."<sup>265</sup>

Although there may have not been plenary debates specifically devoted to them and leading to division by voting, atomic matters nevertheless cropped up in Parliament time and time again. Of these times, 116 instances were found in the House of Commons, and 33 in the House of Lords. As mentioned in the introduction above, several aspects of the atomic question were often covered at once, which makes it harder to adopt a strictly chronological or thematic approach, nevertheless the topic did appear in one form or another on the debating floor in both Houses.

In fact Parliament was precisely the place, as mentioned above already, where fears and concerns were expressed most forcefully about what the atomic age would bring. To begin with fears and worries were understandably the kinds of remark that featured most prominently, but other more general remarks and comments were made at this time too. In August, there were in fact three instances of this kind of 'general remark'. In October the number rose to

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<sup>263</sup> Gowing 1974, p.52

<sup>264</sup> The period of research in Parliament goes over the session limit, as the passing of the Atomic Energy Law was to be included.

<sup>265</sup> Gowing, 1974, p. 48-55. See also Morgan 1984, p. 280-283; Baylis 1995, p. 37.



seven, and by November it was ten.<sup>266</sup> More precisely, the general remarks were requests for further information - about either the Government's views on the matter, or the Government's proposed atomic policy. This was to be expected perhaps, considering that most of the other remarks were expressions of shock and fear. What is more surprising though, is the persistence of those MPs and Lords, who did not let go of the matter. The topic was therefore kept in the newspapers, or at least *The Times*, which covered parliamentary debates about the atomic question frequently. *The Manchester Guardian* did also cover events in Parliament as well, but not quite as often.

When the new parliamentary session started in the autumn of 1945, the atomic question was seen to be of such importance by all that it did not matter that there was little actual information on the subject or its implications. It simply had to be debated. This simple fact, that worries and concerns were being voiced, set a precedent for how the atomic question would be handled in the British political context later on, even when there was more concrete information.

Parliament thus developed certain strategies to get around the Government's attempts at regulating information. Two such strategies were, for example, to use parliamentary questions which demanded an oral answer, and later on, adjournment debates. The adjournment debates were used to (a) come back to a theme that members felt needed a more thorough discussion, and (b) as a means for expressing dissent or dissatisfaction with answers given by the Government. But, of course, because most of the remarks included fears and concerns as well, Parliament did actually try a wider range of strategies than just these. And this range testifies to the fact that parliamentarians were keen to participate in the matter in spite of everything else.

But in order to participate, parliamentarians had to find a way to express their concerns within a very tight timetable and certain other restrictions. For example, between 1945 and 1947 there were no formal parliamentary committees held on foreign policy or defence.<sup>267</sup> There were also limitations caused by both the previous and new governments resulting from standing orders<sup>268</sup>, procedural activities, a lack of party discipline<sup>269</sup>, the constitutional division of powers (e.g., the royal prerogative)<sup>270</sup>, and the parliamentary code of conduct<sup>271</sup>.

<sup>266</sup> Cf. Appendix 1 about Parliamentary instances.

<sup>267</sup> Morgan, 1984, p. 59-61. According to Morgan Herbert Morrison divided the MPs according to interest to informal groups, and the one focusing on foreign policy did not work due to clashes with the left-wing MPs.

<sup>268</sup> On procedures and customary rules see May 1917, (1924 would be more accurate but it was not available, 14<sup>th</sup> edition was published in 1946) for instance Chapter XI, about it not being allowed to ask the same question twice in the same session; Chapter VII Methods and order in the transaction of business in Parliament; Chapter XII about the rules of debates.

<sup>269</sup> Morgan, 1984, p. 59-61. Labour also organized various unofficial committees according to members' interests perhaps for regulation? For example "problem backbenchers" were in the one concerning foreign affairs.

<sup>270</sup> Richards, 1967, p. 36-37; 50-52; 63-66.

<sup>271</sup> There were altogether 259 new MPs in the House of Commons, who were perhaps not that well-grounded on the customary practices. See Morgan, 1984, p. 7-9; 45-51; 59-61; 71-73.

Having said this, it is also possible that, with so many new MPs in session, there would have been many who were not “accustomed” to the parliamentary code of conduct that required a degree of self-restraint.

In the Debate on the Address, at the start of Parliament (16 August 1945), Prime Minister Attlee therefore gave some guidelines to the MPs assembled. He wanted issues handled swiftly, so that the autumn recess could be over and done with by 9 October. He also mentioned that the most urgent issues to be handled during the five-day sitting weeks concerned ratification of the United Nation’s charter, a legislative bill concerning local elections, and matters relating to India. Some other alterations were then made concerning standing orders and the schedule of sittings.<sup>272</sup> Attlee then added that questions could be made from Mondays to Thursdays, and that the normal means of raising an issue (via an MP’s private bill) was now limited, due to the already heavy legislative programme that Labour’s election manifesto had promised.<sup>273</sup> He said however that:

“...we shall endeavour to provide opportunities for debate on matters of general interest, and we propose in the interests of Private Members to safeguard the half-hour Adjournment at the end of each day when grievances can be raised.”<sup>274</sup>

These guidelines were evidently designed to limit Parliament’s ability to focus on topics that were outside the Government’s to do list, and the somewhat vague definitions meant that if delicate or embarrassing matters came up, the Government could call a halt to proceedings. Apparently the weighty legislative programme proposed in the elections was considered so important, that being denied the right to raise a motion or speak about every issue seemed a small price to pay for most parliamentarians. Perhaps Attlee’s promise of an allocated time for questions, and the right to an adjournment debate were enough? As will shall see, these two elements did indeed become effective vehicles for debate, and not only on atomic matters, so in spite of these regulatory changes, atomic matters were still given some room to be discussed.

The current section (2.1) of this dissertation roughly covers the three months of August, October, and November 1945. In that time there were 26 instances altogether in Parliament of the kind of general remark which mentioned the ‘dawning of the atomic age’ (thematic category 1). But the procedures used to participate in the debate on this matter were surprisingly varied. As previously stated, Parliament was still looking for a means to comprehend the atomic question in the midst of an already very busy parliamentary session. New MPs were learning the ropes, and the Government were doing their utmost to lessen any discussions that were not directly related to the political agenda for which

<sup>272</sup> About the changes see: HC Deb 15 August 1945 vol 413 cc62-4. The five day sitting week was perhaps the most important change.

<sup>273</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol. 413 cc98-112. Let Us Face the Future, 1945, p. 1-9. The manifesto focused mostly on domestic issues. See also speech given on 23rd of May 1945 in Blackpool. “Shaping foreign policy”; and “Labour foreign policy”; *The Times* 24<sup>th</sup> May 1945

<sup>274</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol. 413 cc99-101.

they won the elections and needed to adhere to. Curiously, only three of these 26 instances took the form of a parliamentary question as procedure, and often with the focus on another subject, but they did all involve a request for more information.

Nevertheless, most of the instances of this category were made during events surrounding the State Opening of Parliament in August, and with a wide array of MPs and Lords contributing. The nature of this occasion was well suited to comments of a general nature. Atomic matters of a general kind were also raised in the orders of the day. In fact, altogether, four out of the 26 instances (in which the thematic debate relating to category 1 was found) were related to the State Opening.

In the House of Lords, nine of the 26 instances occurred. In the Lords there were no such administrative changes made to the way of conducting business as there had been in the Commons, as most of the powers it previously enjoyed had already been removed by the 1911 Parliamentary Act.<sup>275</sup> But the Lords enjoyed at least one advantage over the Commons; they were not prohibited from presenting their own case in a debate, and so deliberations were more free-form. As the Lords represented prominent members of society and the political elite, they often turned this to their advantage, and were often able to discuss the possible implications and fears rising from the new invention more easily than the Commons.

As well as being endowed with the powers to supervise the executive and open up matters to a wider debate, Parliament also had the less tangible potential of influencing people through parliamentary practice. But perhaps Parliament's supreme power lay in its legislative capacity.<sup>276</sup> The only problem was that, as yet, there was nothing to legislate on. Thematic aspects also limited the way topics were presented in Parliament. Events such as the ratification of the United Nations Charter and other big events in the international context also encouraged more general commentary in Parliament. In these cases, the comments were used to underline the importance of whatever the "main topic" was supposed to be. The ratification of the UN Charter was an excellent case in point of just such a main topic. In these cases but also others, the threat of the atomic bomb was cited as a reason for taking action on the matter.<sup>277</sup>

"The world has been faced within the past few weeks by a new and terrifying discovery, the utilization of atomic energy which is truly appalling in its implications and its possible consequences. We are now faced with the question of how this mighty power is to be used: whether it is used for good or for evil. On the answer to that question will depend the future, not only of civilization but maybe of mankind itself."<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> See for example Chester & Bowring 1962, p. 215-217; 221-222. Also Ridley 1992, p. 253.

<sup>276</sup> In terms of legislation there is no higher authority in Britain than Parliament, Dearlove and Saunders, 2006, p. 281.

<sup>277</sup> PM Attlee (Limehouse, Lab.) HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc670.

<sup>278</sup> Viscount Latham, HL Deb 16 August 1945 vol 137 cc23.

The fact that parliamentary time was limited also affected early comments on the atomic question. For example, in August 1945 there were only 12 sittings. Even then, the business of the House could only really begin after the election of the Speaker and the ‘most gracious speech from the throne’ had been delivered.

Though the Government’s responses were not all that revealing or particularly cooperative, the enthusiasm of the new MPs was palpable. Right from the start, during the Debate on the Address in August 1945, interest in the atomic question was plain to see. In the House of Commons the topic was most notably first<sup>279</sup> raised by Winston Churchill. He believed the atomic bomb had transformed the future, and that it was an “irresistible power”, and decisive weapon of victory, which would make the United States a world leader. And, Churchill hastened to add, the British were party to these atomic secrets too. As an example of this, he mentioned how the Americans first consulted the British Government before using the weapon. As for the moral grounds for using such a devastating weapon, Churchill had no qualms, especially as Japan had been given the chance to surrender before the bomb was dropped.<sup>280</sup> Members of Parliament mostly agreed at this point and did not contest Churchill’s view on the moral issues.

The Debate on the Address is Parliament’s answer to the Government’s proposed programme presented by the monarch at the State Opening (i.e., the King or Queen’s Speech) and includes a general review of the overall situation at home and abroad<sup>281</sup> that faces the new parliament. Given the moment’s opportunity, several other MPs commented at this juncture on the troublesome atomic situation, for it was indeed seen to be a source of much trouble. Many new MPs were also eager to present their maiden speeches covering the theme as well. But before backbenchers got their turn, the prominent members from the frontbench had their comments to present.

Prime Minister Clement Attlee (Limehouse, Lab.) followed a similar line of argument in his reply to Churchill at first, acknowledging that atomic energy would change world politics forever, but it was only one of the items on his agenda and he soon turned to other matters. Nevertheless, the fact that Attlee thought the changes were “far-reaching” and “difficult to grasp”, summarized an important point that would feature in future discussions of the atomic bomb and its attendant technology. Its impact was not yet fully known and more information was needed to see what should be done. This corresponded well to the telegram he had sent Truman earlier which made it clear that “unless the

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<sup>279</sup> Though William Gallacher (Fife West, Comm.) had mentioned them already briefly in the Motion for Address to His Majesty on 15. August 1945: “Whatever the future may hold – and with the coming of atomic energy some of us who hitherto considered ourselves quite dynamic figures may find ourselves well in the background –” HC Deb 15 August 1945 vol 413 cc61.

<sup>280</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc76-81.

<sup>281</sup> See for instance <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/occasions/stateopening/>

forces of destruction now set loose on the world are brought under control, it is vain to plan for the future".<sup>282</sup>

Meanwhile, the leader of the Liberal party, Clement Davies (Montgomeryshire, Lib.) made it clear that "the full repercussions of the explosion must have been felt in every Chancellery in every country of the world."<sup>283</sup> He believed there was the very real possibility that the atomic bomb would dispense with all other forms of military and weaponry, by rendering them obsolete, since they could now be destroyed by one atomic bomb in a few seconds. This theme will be covered in more detail in the next section, as the role of defence in relation to an atomic policy gained momentum in Parliament. A reevaluation of politics was also needed, according to Davies, and the rule of laws which would govern all nations, great and small, seemed to be the only answer. Davies touched on the topic of secrecy, and agreed that for now the new discovery should be kept a secret (in American hands), but emphasized that eventually the facts would be known elsewhere, and possibly in the near future. With that in mind, he hoped that

"but a new force arose in the world which, I hope, and everyone of us hopes, will be for the benefit of mankind everywhere [...and that] the political thought and the political science of this world will at last begin to keep pace with the tremendous movement forward of mechanical invention".<sup>284</sup>

Whereas Churchill, Attlee and Davies had all made statements about the new invention in a relatively reflective manner, those of other members were more colourful. For example in the debate on 5 November 1945, Richard Crossman (Coventry East, Lab.) mentioned that the atomic bomb had caused demonic fears amongst the peoples of the Eastern Europe, and that the threat of atomic war would work against peaceful solutions to international problems as well.<sup>285</sup> Though there were also some statements to the contrary, the overall impression was one of fear and not having enough information among parliamentarians; and this reflected the solemn domestic mood as well.<sup>286</sup> Viscount Samuel underlined this drastic change rather well in the House of Lords on the 16 August 1945 during the address in reply to the King's Speech.

"The fourth event, which ultimately may be more momentous than any of the others, is the discovery by man of the means of utilizing atomic energy, its first use having been employed in so terrible a fashion".<sup>287</sup>

Another archetypal case example which evokes both the sense of urgency and importance and the need for more information was made by William Brown (Rugby, Lab).

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<sup>282</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc100-101, 104-105.

<sup>283</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc115.

<sup>284</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc115-116.

<sup>285</sup> HC Deb 05 November 1945 vol 415 cc997-998.

<sup>286</sup> See for example HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc705-707 (Frederick Seymour Cocks, Broxtowe, Lab.)

<sup>287</sup> HL Deb 16 August 1945 vol 137 cc50.

"I beg the new Government to realise that we are at such a crisis in the affairs of this country and the world, because of the discovery of this new atomic power, as we have never experienced before."<sup>288</sup>

The conversation in the House of Lords ran along similar lines. Lord Latham (Lab.) had framed the new situation in no uncertain terms when he claimed that the future of civilization clearly depended on just how the technology was used. Besides its destructive power, the new technology could have other more useful ways of being harnessed in peacetime. Perhaps it could replace coal and improve other aspects of industry too.<sup>289</sup> For instance, atomic energy was mentioned as a possible alternative to the controversial hydro-electric power plants that were just then being considered for Scotland in both chambers.<sup>290</sup> This was in a similar vein to John Anderson's statement earlier. The ethical side of having the atomic bomb was considered too, for example, by Viscount Cranborne and the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. As with Churchill, the emphasis was once again on the technology's power for good. Another theme brought up in the Lords was the problem of keeping atomic secrets.<sup>291</sup> This, it was argued, would also require new approaches.

Viscount Samuel, Leader of the Liberal Lords, made a thorough statement on the topic relaying pieces of information he had gleaned from atomic scientists like James Chadwick, and with a mention of the important part played by the British in this field. He also wondered about the potential of atomic energy as a source of industrial power and electricity, and thought that it would not be long before these would become a reality. He hoped that the government would follow the example of the Canadian government, which had already started to look into the industrial and scientific applications of atomic research.<sup>292</sup> Though these deliberations are being considered here as general mentions of the subject, they also belong to category five (domestic developments of atomic energy) and six (the potential of atomic energy). Viscount Addison promised to carry this information to the Prime minister and reassured the House that the government would try to make the most of the atomic era, and see that the new invention would not be put to destructive use. This message resembled Attlee's own in his statement issued straight after the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan.<sup>293</sup> And yet in spite of these promises, the knowledge that was actually available at the time about more peaceful applications of atomic research was far from comprehensive.

The House of Lords pursued an intensive debate on general topics related to atomic energy on 16 October, beginning with Esme Ivo Bligh (Earl of Darnley) and his proposition

<sup>288</sup> HC Deb 17 August 1945 vol 413 cc265.

<sup>289</sup> HL Deb 16 August 1945 vol 137 cc22-25. See also Wing Commander Millington (Chelmsford, Common Wealth Party) HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc218-220.

<sup>290</sup> For example see HL Deb 22 November 1945 vol 137 cc11871-1188; 1191; HC Deb 14 November 1945 vol 415 cc2203-2204; 2222.

<sup>291</sup> HL Deb 16 August 1945 vol 137 cc36-37 Viscount Cranborne (Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, Leader of the Opposition, Con); Lord Archbishop of Canterbury cc60-63.

<sup>292</sup> HL Deb 16 August 1945 vol 137 cc56-59.

<sup>293</sup> HL Deb 16 August 1945 vol 137 cc76-77.

“to call attention to the crisis in human affairs created by the atomic bomb and its future developments...”<sup>294</sup>

The bleakest scenario, he argued, painted the grim possibility of a world, or maybe even universe, destroyed by irresponsible actions or experiments gone wrong.<sup>295</sup> In a very personalized and colourful way he warned his peers about the dangers of not taking the matter seriously enough.

“If one might descend into the realms of fancy for one moment, astrologers, so far, have not been able to explain satisfactorily the Milky Way. Might I suggest to them that the coming of the atomic bomb suggests that it might be composed of particles of politicians of other worlds condemned to a permanent future of blinking and winking their vituperation of each other and their own lack of blame in the matter of their recently disintegrated spheres?”<sup>296</sup>

Darnley’s eloquent speech on the dangers in store for insincere and unprincipled politicians caught the attention and gained the support of others, such as the Lord Bishop of Chelmsford<sup>297</sup>. In his reply, Lord Cherwell emphasized his detailed knowledge on the matter - explaining the principles related to atomic, or rather “nuclear” energy, as he insisted on calling it. He tried to curb the explosive reactions that dwelt too heavily on the potential dangers of atomic energy, as much as the overly positive ones<sup>298</sup>, and he was supported on this by Viscount Addison, on behalf of the Government. Addison underlined that, although no one should bury their heads in the sand, the problem of atomic energy was part of the bigger issue regarding the overall advance of science; and this should be tackled internationally, or indeed the whole of humanity could be in danger. Referring to Ernest Bevin’s statement on 23 August 1945, he went on to suggest that one important role of the new world organisation would be to keep watch on the matter so that peace could be ensured.<sup>299</sup> All in all, the answer lay in international cooperation, rather than monopolies as such, Addison claimed.<sup>300</sup> This testifies yet again to the prevalence of an idealistic approach to atomic policy.

The Earl of Darnley, who was incidentally one of the most prominent speakers on the matter, disagreed however. He withdrew his motion, but promised to return with another which was to be in a more concrete form and which he hoped would be more suitable for the Lords.<sup>301</sup> Again and again, with the support of the bishops, Darnley demanded that Christian values be the basis of politics and human behaviour in general, as the best response to the immense threat and problems posed by the atomic bomb. Throughout the following year he continued to lament the prospect of nuclear war and to pursue a morally

<sup>294</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc273.

<sup>295</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc273-285

<sup>296</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc280.

<sup>297</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc.294-297.

<sup>298</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc284-294. “I think, therefore, that the noble Lord’s apprehension lest this planet explode as a result of experiments in nuclear disintegration may really be dismissed.”

<sup>299</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc310-315.

<sup>300</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc315-316.

<sup>301</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc316.

critical position on the matter, although he dwelt less on the fears and horrors. He nevertheless estimated that 200 atomic bombs would be enough to destroy Britain and mentioned other potential weapons of mass destruction, that were supposedly being developed, as a further threat.<sup>302</sup>

Lord Chatfield raised the point that perhaps the older members of the House, himself included, did not have enough knowledge about these matters to discuss them fully enough.<sup>303</sup> And meanwhile, in the Commons, Cyril Osborne (Louth, Con) also mentioned a lack of knowledge in his maiden speech when commenting on Truman's 12 point declaration.

"I want to put to the House one or two simple, practical ideas on Anglo-American affairs which I hope hon. Members will endorse. I do not propose to talk about the atomic bomb, because I do not understand it at all, and I think that is a fairly good reason."<sup>304</sup>

The two comments are interesting in the light of previous research which has argued that the potential reasons for MPs and Lords not contributing to foreign affairs and other related matters was due to their lack of knowledge and interest.<sup>305</sup> These two examples show that at least some of them were aware of their personal limitations, yet nevertheless interested and keen to participate in debates on the matter.

Though it should not be taken out of its historical context, it is interesting that Dr. Santo Jeger (St. Pancras South East, Lab.) claimed that "soon anybody will be able to make an atomic bomb in a back kitchen, and then where is the monopoly going to be? I think it is a mistake to imagine that we have several years ahead of us in which to prepare."<sup>306</sup> Though he was perhaps somewhat off the mark with much of his rhetoric, what he was essentially criticizing was this "sacred trust" in the Americans having the monopoly in atomic research. Indeed, Jeger claimed from what he had read that Sweden already possessed this knowledge<sup>307</sup>, that the Russians were naturally hurrying to get theirs, and that Poland was heavily financing atomic research too.<sup>308</sup>

It was clear that most parliamentarians did not fully grasp the implications of the new technology, and so could not really debate the subject in any

<sup>302</sup> HL Deb 10 July 1946 vol 142 cc297-307. HL Deb 29 July 1946, vol.142 cc1097-1102.

<sup>303</sup> HL Deb 14 November 1945 vol 137 cc904 "Certainly we older members of the Services, like the noble Viscount and myself, have not got the technical knowledge, not having taken part in the fighting or the administration of this war."

<sup>304</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1343.

<sup>305</sup> Carstairs, 1991, p. 2-4. Richards 1967, preface.

<sup>306</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1368.

<sup>307</sup> Interestingly this remark actually bore some truth with it, as later in 1946 Sweden declined the British deal to purchase the fissionable raw-material found from Swedish soil, due to its own plans of atomic programme. For instance see TNA CAB 134/9 7 February 1946 Atomic research in Sweden; 11 April 1946 Atomic research in Sweden. TNA CAB 134/7 3.A.C.A.E. (45) 3 Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy. International Policy on the use of atomic energy. Note by the Secretary (Rickett) 24 August 1945. TNA CAB 134/6 A.C.A.E (45) 1st Meeting, Cabinet; Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy. Minutes of a meeting of the Committee, Tuesday 21 August 1945, 4.30pm.

<sup>308</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1368.



pragmatic way at this stage. In general, the debates in the early autumn of 1945, as already demonstrated, showed awe, fear, and occasionally hopes regarding the potential of atomic research. Nevertheless, although the topic was mentioned in debates on various other parliamentary themes, it was evident that more information was needed to know how the non-destructive aspects of this invention could be harnessed.<sup>309</sup> For example, how exactly could atomic power produce electricity or be put to industrial use for the good of man? Lord Cherwell was fairly pessimistic about these possibilities.

“On the second point, that we should not exaggerate the benefits which are to be anticipated from this source of power, I was obviously not so successful. [...] Undoubtedly one can imagine a number of special uses for which it would be extremely valuable, but I do not think it is going to make a new heaven and a new earth.”<sup>310</sup>

Despite Cherwell’s attempts to subdue over-optimistic speculation on the matter, overall support for developing these potentially positive sides was strong in Parliament.<sup>311</sup> Nevertheless, in the autumn and early winter of 1945, debates on this matter were constantly overshadowed by other more pressing domestic problems like the lack of proper housing, and food scarcity.

The lack of information on atomic matters can also be seen in the flurry of speeches that made only rather vague mentions of the topic<sup>312</sup>. But there were some members who were naturally better informed than others, or had more to contribute. Captain Raymond Blackburn (Birmingham King’s Norton, Lab.), for instance, was extremely well-informed. He had consulted the Association of Scientific Workers, showed a wide knowledge on the topic, and was extremely well-informed on both the international as well as technical aspects of the matter.<sup>313</sup> His contributions attracted both criticism<sup>314</sup> and support<sup>315</sup>; and although

<sup>309</sup> See for example Victor Collins (Taunton, Lab.) HC Deb 17 August 1945 vol 413 cc235-236 and Peter Roberts (Sheffield Ecclesall, Con.) HC Deb 28 March 1946 vol 421 cc693-695; 700. The answers from the Government were also then somewhat vague.

<sup>310</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc287. HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc68-137

<sup>311</sup> Millington & Collins HC Deb 17 August 1945 vol 413 cc218-220 (Millington); 235-237 (Collins).

<sup>312</sup> For example see: Piratin, (Stepney, Mile End, Comm). HC Deb 17 August vol 413 cc.247-248 “The announcement only last week of the introduction of the atom bomb to modern warfare... give in my opinion, great cause to be grateful for the opportunities that open before us as envisaged by His Majesty’s Government”.

<sup>313</sup> See for example HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol 415 cc335-336, where Blackburn mentioned the secret co-operation between USA and Britain. See also HC Deb 30 Nov 1945 vol 416 cc 1838-1844. Blackburn was also worried that there were not enough of scientists in the House to cope with the matters. HC Deb 28 March 1946 vol 421 cc684-694.

<sup>314</sup> Blackburn was even accused of a breach of a secret trust, and causing problems for President Truman by Churchill because of his comments on the adjournment debate in 30<sup>th</sup> of October mentioning the secret co-operation between Britain and United States. HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1298-1301. Blackburn answered that he had gained his information from the De Wolfe Smyth’s Report, that was published openly. Then again, Churchill said he had nothing against in publishing the deal. This could have also served as pressure towards the U.S who was reluctant to negotiate about the co-operation. The debate was widely reported in the press: “Visit to U.S”, *The Times* 30 October 1945. “House of Commons – Atomic Energy”, 31 October 1945 *The Times*. “A First class headache – Mr. Morrison’s reply to the debate” 31 October 1945 *Ibid*. “Talks on Atomic Energy” 1 November 1945 *Ibid*.

undoubtedly valuable to the debate, his keen interest in the matter even went so far as to annoy some other members.<sup>316</sup> Blackburn himself has stated in his confessional biography that he had approached scientists in regards to understand the political implications as well as the technical matters of the atomic bomb.<sup>317</sup> Blackburn's activities will be considered more in detail in the chapter 3.

In the upper house there were also those who knew more. There was the self-assured, somewhat pompous figure of Lord Cherwell, as already mentioned.<sup>318</sup> And there was also Viscount Maugham, who showed an equally in-depth knowledge than Blackburn in the lower House, when he reviewed Henry De Wolf Smyth's book on atomic energy development; and discussed the ongoing legislative bill in the United States<sup>319</sup> about how atomic matters would be controlled in the near future.<sup>320</sup>

Other members simply tried to gain more information from the Government. For example, a request was made for photos of the aerial attacks on the Japanese cities.<sup>321</sup> However, the Prime Minister and Government evaded these questions on the basis that it was not merely up to the British. They nevertheless promised to do their utmost to fulfil these requests.<sup>322</sup> Another notable question that the Government had to field concerned press reporting. Members wanted reassurances from the Government that the atomic secrets possessed by the UK would not be allowed to pass from British hands without the consent of Parliament.<sup>323</sup> Interestingly, by framing this request in these demanding terms, Waldron Smithers (Orpington, Con.), was insinuating that the British might already have secrets which should be kept. Equally, when Quintin Hogg (Oxford, Con.) requested a statement from the Government about atomic policy, he received similar, evasive answers on two separate occasions (9 and 17 October). Attlee shrugged off the questions by mentioning the need to first consult the Dominions and United States on the matter before further comments could be made.<sup>324</sup> Almost a year later, Smithers too made a second request for official comments, but again he met with the same non-committal response from the Government.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> HC Deb 02 August 1946 vol 426 cc 1371 (Arthur Palmer, Wimbledon, Lab.) and cc1379 (Philip Noel-Baker, Minister of State, Derby, Lab.)

<sup>316</sup> See for example Ernest Marples (Wallasey, Con.) HC Deb 08 March 1946 vol 420 cc730.

<sup>317</sup> Blackburn 1959, p. 83-4.

<sup>318</sup> For example see HL Deb 16 October, vol 137 cc 284-295.

<sup>319</sup> Apparently he referred to the May-Johnson Bill.

<sup>320</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945, vol 137 cc300-302

<sup>321</sup> James Callaghan (Cardiff South, Lab.) HC Deb 23 August 1945 vol 413 c851W

<sup>322</sup> See HC Deb 23 August 1945 vol 413 c845W (Smithers) and c851W (Callaghan). Callaghan's question was answered by the Under-Secretary of State for Air, John Strachey (Dundee, Lab.)

<sup>323</sup> See HC Deb 23 August 1945 vol 413 c845W (Smithers) and c851W (Callaghan). Callaghan's question was answered by the Under-Secretary of State for Air, John Strachey (Dundee, Lab.)

<sup>324</sup> HC Deb 09 October 1945 vol 414 c22 and HC Deb 17 October vol 414 c1160.

<sup>325</sup> HC Deb 21 October 1946 vol 427 c281W.

#### 2.1.4 Parliamentary momentum and towards establishing a policy

The destructive power of the atomic bombs had changed the world suddenly and forever. In the early autumn of 1945, as clearly shown in this sub-chapter, fear chiefly characterized the handling of the matter in public, via Parliament and the press. Among Government officials this was largely the case too, although not everybody saw the innovation simply in terms of world destruction.

Another perspective was that atomic power would bring prestige and power to those nations that possessed it, as Churchill had implied.<sup>326</sup> Additionally, it could perhaps be used to solve the post-war energy crisis. Nevertheless, for now, most perspectives focused on the bomb and its destructive power, rather than the wider implications of atomic power. These themes featured most heavily in August, October and November, although they did recur to some extent later, especially in the House of Lords.

Already in this early phase Parliament repeatedly made attempts at participating in the topic, and most of the time the Government tried to smother these, or at least deflect them in such a way that they did not detract from the Government's own agenda. Nevertheless, Parliament persisted and was able to further debate on a matter that had originally only been characterized by general remarks and expressions of fear. Together with coverage in the press, the general remarks had put public pressure on the government, and led to more concrete demands for a change in world policy which would prevent its now imminently possible destruction. This bears a striking resemblance to the ideas Attlee had expressed in his initial memoranda, letters and telegrams to Truman; but unfortunately the consensus was short-lived.

This initial phase of parliamentary activity created the basis for a more concrete approach to atomic matters, but it also marked the point where Parliament and the Government started drifting apart. The partial consensus on an idealistic approach to atomic matters in August 1945, was gradually lost as more concrete ideas and approaches became apparent. As we shall see later, parliamentary questions and adjournment debates came to be the key means for responding to the Government's attempts at restricting the discussion of atomic matters. As perceptions of the subject gradually widened, and now that Parliament had its foot in the door, there was, in turn, more room for Parliament to try to influence the decisions then made on the subject. Parliament started to push for changes to foreign policy and defence which would ensure that atomic matters became an international rather than a national responsibility. In effect, what at first seemed a problem to be solved, was now being suggested as a solution. This became the spearhead of parliamentary ideas on the matter.

However, it was the general expressions of fear about atomic matters that really dominated the contents of the parliamentary proceedings in this initial

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<sup>326</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc77-93. This was, however implicit: the bomb was presented as a winning weapon, that would have also been Britain's to give away, but Churchill agreed with the President of the United States that this should not be done. He also mentioned that now Britain and the United States would lead the world.

post-war period. The autumn recess in 1945 (August 24 - October 9) must have been warmly welcomed by the Government. Having a break for September no doubt helped the Government to buy some time and not only gain further information on the matter, but also decide on a more concise atomic policy. Thus when Parliament reconvened in October, the topic was pursued with a vengeance, and the Government's answers became more concrete.

Both Parliament and the Government had started off with a lack of information, even if the latter could not express this openly in Parliament. But for those within the Government's inner circle it was clear that the new parliament and, indeed, the Labour Government that had been elected would eventually require this information before a policy could be adequately presented and discussed. Even if the problems that needed to be discussed were not so clear at this point, everyone involved agreed that more information on the matter was needed. This was the only way the Government would be prepared for the challenges of the atomic age, at home and abroad.

This lack of information originally stemmed from Churchill's wartime policy of extreme secrecy on atomic matters. The Labour Government's approach was more practical: it had to focus on gaining as much information about atomic matters as possible; create an organization for advising decision-makers on the far-reaching implications of the new invention; and to find out more about the Anglo-American cooperation that had been behind the making of the first atomic bombs ever dropped. This was a colossal task for many reasons. These reasons; the process that led to actually forming policy on the subject; and the repercussions that followed, with regard to the relationship between the Government and Parliament, will be explained further in the next sub-chapter (2.2).

## **2.2 Towards a more active atomic policy**

### **2.2.1 Powers, responsibilities and limitations of the executive**

This section (2.2) deals firstly with the role of the executive in the formulation of Britain's atomic policy and thus in her diplomatic relations with the US; and secondly on how the Government gained the knowledge it required to deal more specifically with the atomic question. It is then suggested, as already hypothesised in the introduction, that the troubled change in Government policy in these matters was not due to any inability as such, but rather a clash of interests between the Government and executive, which became glaringly obvious and was compounded by a lack of information on the subject. In effect, the Government was forced to rely on those officials that remained from the previous administration, who clearly advocated a different atomic policy from the Government's, or at least, for example, from the one the Prime Minister had made public. The key argument here is that, because policy makers increasingly had to rely on more informed specialists in the matter, it altered the way in which atomic energy was perceived within the political executive, so that policy

was then forced to differ from what had previously been promised. Later on this led to problems in domestic and foreign policy and in particular critique on foreign policy in domestic policy, as the executive had by this time been obliged to adopt a bidirectional approach and policy which, in turn, put it on a collision course with a parliament seeking to widen its mandate on foreign affairs.

As was mentioned earlier, Anglo-American collaboration on atomic matters had begun in the early stages of the Second World War. The clandestine research and development programme in Britain and Canada, known by the codename Tube Alloys (TA)<sup>327</sup>, was effectively the first atomic weapons project of its kind, and gradually all the information it had gathered was sent to the US-led Manhattan Project. But it wasn't until 1943 however, at Churchill's instigation, that this collaboration was given a more official footing in the Quebec Agreement and Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire.<sup>328</sup> These agreements specified that the basis for the collaboration would be (i) to create an atomic bomb, (ii) that only joint decisions would be made on its use, and (iii) that cooperation would continue after the war.

Early cooperation had focused mostly on the technical and scientific sides of the issue. Two committees were established to coordinate the teams on both sides of the Atlantic. The Combined Policy Committee (CPC) focused on coordinating the research side of the project, while the Combined Development Trust (CDT) was responsible for allocating the raw materials required for it.<sup>329</sup> British scientists were also sent to the US, with many achieving a prominent role in the Manhattan Project.<sup>330</sup> During the war, atomic policy in Britain had largely been in the hands of Winston Churchill and a select few of his War Cabinet<sup>331</sup>, such as Sir John Anderson, who (as we saw in the previous sub-chapter) was also responsible for the TA programme.<sup>332</sup> None of the Labour members of the coalition government were in this inner circle however, and this was perhaps why at this stage, unlike in the US, British atomic policy did not concern future uses of the new technology<sup>333</sup>. The focus was instead on developing an atomic bomb as soon as possible to end a war that was fatally draining an overstretched British Empire. Due to the greater investment in the project from the Americans however<sup>334</sup>, Churchill had perhaps somewhat hastily agreed that any post-war advantages of an industrial or commercial nature would be the overall responsibility of the United States President, and thus be decided at his

<sup>327</sup> Gowing 1965, p. 40-45.

<sup>328</sup> Gowing 1965, p. 40-45; 76-78; 85; 94; 106.

<sup>329</sup> Gowing, 1974, p. 6.

<sup>330</sup> Most of Britain's top scientists were sent to United States starting from 1943. The British team in Berkeley grew to 35 members, and in Los Alamos to 19. At least 6 British scientists were heads of joint groups. Cf. Fakley, 1983 187-189.

<sup>331</sup> Gowing, 1974, p. 5, mentions J. Anderson, Lord Cherwell, R.A. Butler, Col. Llewellyn, Col. Moore-Brabazon, A. Eden and Lord Hankey.

<sup>332</sup> On the British research see TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)7 Past History and Organisation of the work, Copy of Official Statements Issued by the United Kingdom Government. Only two persons along Churchill knew about the business in detail: Anderson, and Lord Cherwell. Gowing 1974, p. 5.

<sup>333</sup> Gowing 1965, p.149; 154-156.

<sup>334</sup> Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire, printed in Gowing, 1965.

discretion.<sup>335</sup> To complicate matters further, Lord Halifax, the Conservative peer who represented the British on the CPC after the war (and was also ambassador to the US), had not been kept in the picture<sup>336</sup>, so he was at a disadvantage when it came to voicing British concerns. The British Foreign Office (FO) thus interacted in a somewhat ad hoc fashion with its North American counterparts, contributing only occasionally.<sup>337</sup>

With the war over in 1945, Britain's newly elected Labour government had, in its manifesto "Let United States Face the Future", promised drastic changes to the way the country would be run. The somewhat idealistic<sup>338</sup> new PM, Clement Attlee, foresaw the founding of a welfare state for all at home, and a foreign policy based on international cooperation that would no longer need to be conducted behind closed doors.<sup>339</sup> The problem was that resources were severely limited.

In this post-war context, there were various actors in Britain who saw atomic energy as one of the key factors that could alter everything.<sup>340</sup> It was thus seen as a crucial consideration in many areas, and this made policy planning very challenging. First and foremost, it was seen as an issue for security and defence, as Hiroshima and Nagasaki had devastatingly made clear. But the same threat<sup>341</sup> also offered the possibilities of military power beyond imagination, without having to commit to a huge army and navy, which would now be rendered obsolete by the bomb.<sup>342</sup> In addition, because Britain was also facing a "financial Dunkirk", as Lord Keynes put it<sup>343</sup>, atomic power now also offered the possibility of an excellent source of cheap energy at a time when Britain had to make tough decisions about whether she would further invest in, for example, coal or hydroelectric power.<sup>344</sup> The question of whether Britain actually had access to the raw materials, resources and knowledge necessary for investing in having 'atomic capability'<sup>345</sup> was, however, not considered in public.

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<sup>335</sup> The Quebec Agreement, printed in Gowing 1965.

<sup>336</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 47.

<sup>337</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 5.

<sup>338</sup> No.192, An undated memo by Attlee, edited and put in circulation on 28.8.1945, DBPO, Series I, vol. II. No.18 Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Future of the Italian Colonies, 1.9.1945, DBPO ser.I vol.II.

<sup>339</sup> Let Us Face the Future, 1945, p. 1-9.

<sup>340</sup> In Parliament the topic was brought up already during the first day of Debate on the Address, see for example: HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc78-81; On Executive and press see for example: TNA FO 800/552, Memo by N.Butler for Mr. Ronald 30 August 1945.

<sup>341</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc114-117, Clement Davies (Montgomeryshire, Lib. Leader of Lib. Party)

<sup>342</sup> HC Deb. 16 Aug. 1945, vol. 413, cols.125-127; HC Deb. 4 Mar. 1946, vol. 420, cc. 99-100.

<sup>343</sup> For example Bullock 1984, p. 121; Morgan 1984, p. 144-145. On Britain's dependency on United States financially Carr 1993 135-136 and on U.S. using this as leverage, see for example Roitto 2008, p. 116; 122.

<sup>344</sup> HC Deb 14 November 1945 vol. 415 cc2203. (Thomas Cook, Dundee, Lab.); HL Deb 22 November 1945 vol 137 cc1187-1188. (Earl of Rosenberry). Lord Cherwell against the wide hyperbole on atomic energy: HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc285-290.

<sup>345</sup> 'Atomic capability' implies being able to use the atomic bomb, without direct reference to it, and yet does not rule out the use of atomic power as a source of energy in

Having this capability might have offered a relative advantage to Britain if she wanted to maintain her status as a great power. However, this goal was not made known in public. The immediate priority for the new Labour government was to draft, first and foremost, a foreign policy for atomic energy. This was because the atomic question was seen, not just as a source of conflict, but also as one of the key reasons for the acute deterioration in international relations<sup>346</sup> between the “Big Three<sup>347</sup>”. To draft such a policy required establishing a specific organisation to this end within the executive, even though there was little chance that this organisation would carry out all the Government’s election promises on this issue.

Britain also had to cope with the situation changing in North America.<sup>348</sup> The United States had invested a great deal more resources<sup>349</sup> in the Anglo-American project than the British, and this understandably had repercussions. Lord Halifax even warned the British government in the late summer of 1945 that the United States was preparing its own atomic policies for the future<sup>350</sup>, and it soon became clear that the two countries were starting to drift apart on this issue.<sup>351</sup>

When looking at the options that presented themselves to the British executive at this stage, one must take into account constitutional aspects such as the division of powers and responsibilities within the British political system. The Government had the power (via the royal prerogative) to conduct foreign affairs, and was thus responsible for drafting and implementing policy.<sup>352</sup> In terms of defence, the responsibility was straightforward too.<sup>353</sup> Attlee was both Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, and he took pains to stress that it was his government and ministers, rather than anybody else’s, that would be making policy.

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peacetime, although this application of the technology did not yet exist in any concrete form at the time.

<sup>346</sup> For example see HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1301-1307 (Clement Davies, Montgomery, Lib.)

<sup>347</sup> The US, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain.

<sup>348</sup> On Truman’s change of policy, distinction from Roosevelt, and the problems of the flow of information see for example Harbutt 1986, p. 99-101;105.

<sup>349</sup> TNA CAB 134/7, ACAE(45)9. Past History and Organisation, note by the secretary, 11 September 1945. British investments had been £3 million, American £500 million. Americans drifting away was also mentioned, and the possible lack of resources for Britain to be able to go on alone in research and development.

<sup>350</sup> Gowing 1965, p. 149; 154-156. Interestingly the French had been preparing as well and a bit later had decided to create their own organisation by following the organisational model established by Renault: Journal Officiel 256. 31 Octobre, 1945, Ordonnance No.45-2563 de 30 octobre, 1945 instituant un commissariat a l’énergie atomique, attached to TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)63, 12 December 1945 French Atomic Energy Commission.

<sup>351</sup> For example Harbutt, 1986, p. 109.

<sup>352</sup> Richards 1967, p. 50-52; 63-66; 78-81. Poyser, 1991, p. 14-15.

<sup>353</sup> Brand, 1992, p. 300-307, 317-320.

“Government policy is laid down by Ministers, and therefore any newspaper or any foreign Power or any politician who thinks that the policy of this Government is laid down by anybody but the Labour Ministers is making a great mistake.”<sup>354</sup>

He also continued to underline the basis of foreign policy in terms of the Big Three. The USSR and United States were Britain’s closest allies and it was their joint responsibility, in terms of foreign affairs, to prevent the horrors of war from reoccurring.<sup>355</sup>

One consequence of the war being over was that the formerly wide-ranging emergency powers of the executive were withdrawn. Nevertheless the Prime Minister remained the highest authority in the Government, with his ministers in charge of their respective ministries. It is also widely thought that in 1945 both the trade unions and the Labour party were firmly aligned behind the Government,<sup>356</sup> but in practice things were not that clear and Attlee’s government definitely needed the confidence and the support of Parliament. This much had been made patently clear in the famous Norway debate which brought down Neville Chamberlain’s government.<sup>357</sup>

In the autumn of 1945 the newly elected Parliament kept a vigilant watch over the Government to ensure that it would implement the foreign policy it had promised in the manifesto which had brought them to power. Though election promises should always be taken with a grain of salt, being more a stated aim than policy *per se*, it seems that at least the Labour MPs had taken them very much at face value. At this point it should be made clear that, of the two organs of the executive, Parliament wielded the supreme power to legislate, that is to decide which of the Government’s policies would become law.<sup>358</sup> The only case where this power to legislate came into effect with regard to atomic matters was the British Atomic Energy Act, discussed later in the spring of 1946. Though such legislative tasks are often seen as the best examples of Parliament in action, this case was predetermined well in advance by factors outside Parliament’s control, as will be shown later.<sup>359</sup> Even so, the Government had to be answerable to Parliament and the Labour Party, and the exposure given to the topic by the plain fact that it required parliamentary debate made it a public one, which then led to further debate, and increased public pressure on the Government.<sup>360</sup>

Formulating an atomic energy policy was again characterized by a lack of information on the subject. For example, many put it in the same category as the atomic bomb, seeing it simply as the flipside of the same coin.<sup>361</sup> This lack of

<sup>354</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 col 413 cc100-101.

<sup>355</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 col 413 cc102; 104.

<sup>356</sup> Morgan 1984, p. 7-9; 45-51 “Between 1945-51 the Labour movement was dominated by the Cabinet.”

<sup>357</sup> For example see Rogers & Walters, 2006, p. 295.

<sup>358</sup> Dearlove and Saunders 2006, p. 281

<sup>359</sup> TNA PREM 8/366, Wilmot to Attlee, 8 July 1946; TNA FO 800/587, minute by Butler, 5 April 1946; PREM 8/366, Wilmot to Attlee, 4 October. 1946; PREM 8/366, Attlee to Churchill, 6 October 1946; Churchill to Attlee, 7 October 1946.

<sup>360</sup> No.202 Telegram from Attlee to Truman 16 October 1945 DBPO ser.I vol.II.

<sup>361</sup> Sherwin 2003, p. 81-83.



information also applied to the executive organisation created by the Government to deal with atomic matters, which in turn had a knock-on effect on its policymaking capability. As a consequence, the role of those “in the know” became crucial to the newly elected decision makers who, in spite of their landslide victory, were going to have to rely on governmental machinery that did not necessarily share their political viewpoint. Indeed, the hypothesis being made here is that the apparent swing in British atomic policy from internationalism to political realism<sup>362</sup> in the autumn of 1945 was due to these internal challenges and contradictions within the executive.<sup>363</sup> This came to a head in the summer of 1946, as several frustrated MPs questioned the Government about how Foreign Office staff were recruited, pointing out there had been few appointments of Labour-oriented civil servants and diplomats.<sup>364</sup> The need to keep information in the hands of a few trusted officials<sup>365</sup> was one reason for this, but it effectively dampened the executive’s ability to meet the demands of the new government. Many of the civil servants and diplomats had, of course, also worked under Churchill’s administration, which had placed a different emphasis on pragmatism, rather than idealism. Those who knew more about atomic matters were thus invariably more Churchillian in their outlook than Attlee and his supporters. It was, after all, these officials that were required to keep the wheels of government in motion, so that it did not collapse every time a general election brought in a new influx of MPs. But by virtue of their role it meant their political views had more weight than might otherwise have been the case.

## 2.2.2 An executive organisation with many faces

### 2.2.2.1 *The Prime Minister, the GEN 75 Committee, and the Defence Committee*

Margaret Gowing claims that the early atomic policy decisions taken by Churchill were clear examples of the PM acting in presidential mode without his Cabinet. And this mode of conduct seemed to carry on when Attlee came to power, as she goes on to say that “atomic bombs or energy appeared less than ten times on the agenda of Cabinet meetings”. In other words, Churchill had set a precedent which had then become the norm. Interestingly, five of these appearances on the agenda were during the first six months of his tenure.<sup>366</sup> Per-

<sup>362</sup> Both concepts are used in descriptive terms.

<sup>363</sup> Executive includes those with political responsibility, but also the members of the civil service, diplomats etc. A collective, descriptive term such as “official” would perhaps suit better. Normally the members of the civil service are not seen to participate in policy formulation, but execution, as the Bureaucracy and the Government are separate entities. Though the civil service has had a certain level of independence in general, in this particular case it seems that the role of the “officials” was actually much more important in the establishing of the post-war British Atomic policy, and especially its foreign policy aspects, thus being at least closer to the “True Government”

<sup>364</sup> HC Deb 19 June 1946 vol 424 cc(w)53-54. Flt. John Haire (Wycombe, Lab.).

<sup>365</sup> The concept of “official” is used in here as a wider, descriptive term, including the civil service and the diplomatic service etc.

<sup>366</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 19-20. Hennessy 2001, p.51 confirms.

haps this was because at that point Attlee still felt the need to respect an electorate that had brought Labour to power with a landslide victory. Peter Hennessy is another researcher who has also noticed this trajectory, and is among those who call it the 'presidentialization of the Premiership'<sup>367</sup>

The role of the diplomatic and civil service personnel, in terms of the effect they had on British post-war atomic foreign policy, has been somewhat overlooked since the early 1990s. It has been commonly accepted that they carried out purely executive tasks for the Government, when in fact their remit was possibly wider and more nuanced. Margaret Gowing may have given quite detailed descriptions of how the executive arm of government was organised, but does not specifically address whether they, rather than the Government that was actually elected, were in fact responsible for some aspects of atomic policy. She simply claims that the executive organisation that was formed to deal with atomic matters "just grew" without any actual planning involved, and makes no further speculation about the ramifications of this.<sup>368</sup>

As Attlee entered office, it quickly became evident that it was decision makers such as himself who most lacked the vital information on atomic issues. Exactly who else in high places was in the same position is hard to say, as most of the Cabinet were not involved in decisions on this matter. Research literature, however, points at least to Bevin and Attlee being none the wiser, and if both the head of government and Foreign Secretary were out of the loop, then it is reasonable to think that others in the Government had very little or no information at all. To deal with this problem, there was the need to delegate responsibilities to those more in the know, but at the same time deny those who may have been more politically ambitious. In the past, things had been organised along purely scientific and pragmatic lines.<sup>369</sup> Now things needed to change, however, according to the new government's requirements. Officials were thus needed that knew about atomic matters to secure the transition of government; and yet as none of these knowledgeable officials were Labour-oriented, political mandates were, at least temporarily, out of the question. Although both Bevin and Attlee had held high ranking positions in previous cabinets, they knew next to nothing about the current state of atomic policy in the country, they needed these officials,<sup>370</sup> especially as it seemed to be of the utmost importance that PM Attlee<sup>371</sup> and his 'big five'<sup>372</sup> establish an atomic policy immediately.

<sup>367</sup> Hennessy, 2001, p. 54-68; 169-177.

<sup>368</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 19; on organization see appendices 2 and 3.

<sup>369</sup> No.186 Campbell's memo to Bevin 8 August 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol. II. The memo noted the Quebec and Hyde Park agreements as the basis for co-operation, though the Americans claimed not to have a copy of the latter. The term of the agreements had also been questioned. Campbell had worked in the embassy in Washington, and was also a former member of CPC, in August 1945 Ambassador temporarily located in Foreign Office. Foreign Office List 1945, p. 1.

<sup>370</sup> Bullock 1984, p. 184-185; Gowing 1974, p. 5.

<sup>371</sup> Attlee was also the Minister of Defense.

<sup>372</sup> Attlee, Bevin, Morrison, Dalton, and Cripps were in the inner circle of the government according to Morgan 1984, p. 7-9; 45-51.

“A decision on major policy with regard to the atomic bomb is imperative. Until this is taken civil and military departments are unable to plan. It must be recognised that the emergence of this weapon has rendered much of the post-war planning out of date.”<sup>373</sup>

What “post-war planning” meant exactly remains unclear at this point, but Attlee did take immediate action. Information on atomic matters was gathered together, especially from the Foreign Office. This information included details such as past Anglo-American collaboration, pertinent technical aspects, and any problems that were to be anticipated.<sup>374</sup> Meanwhile, Attlee established the “Gen 75 Committee”, consisting of high-ranking ministers, to specifically coordinate atomic matters independently of the Cabinet.<sup>375</sup> The members of it, besides himself, were the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin; Deputy Prime Minister, Herbert Morrison<sup>376</sup>; the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hugh Dalton; First Lord of the Admiralty, A.V. Alexander<sup>377</sup>; and the Chief of Air Staff, Lord Charles Portal<sup>378</sup>.

The Gen 75 Committee made decisions about the hoped-for eventual international control of atomic energy, and to a greater extent, Anglo-American cooperation. Gowing points out however, that neither the McMahon Act, or the breakdown in Anglo-American relations that ensued, were discussed by the committee.<sup>379</sup> In its first meeting, Attlee emphasised two things: namely, continuity in atomic research, and cooperation with the US.<sup>380</sup> Interestingly, the “Gen 75” name indicates that it was of ad hoc nature, even though it had many formal elements. Another curious aspect to it was a certain subcommittee quality it possessed. It was seen to be a Cabinet within the Cabinet, and because it alone was responsible for making the atomic policy decisions with Attlee, those outside of it may well never have known of its existence. It was also for this reason that atomic matters were rarely on the agenda of the full Cabinet.<sup>381</sup> However, I did find a committee that has not been mentioned unless it is counted in Gowing’s 7 other GEN committees that, at some point participated in atomic matters.<sup>382</sup> The committee I found was called GEN 96, that met along the Autumn

<sup>373</sup> No.192, (Undated) Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Atomic Bomb, (slightly revised and circulated as GEN. 75/1 on 28 August 1945) DBPO.

<sup>374</sup> For example No.186 Campbell’s to Bevin 8 August 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol. II which outlined the previous co-operation, but also the possible challenges in the future, like international control of the weapon, Soviet attitudes, and the need for further committees to be established. At this point the Anglo-American collaboration was also seen to possibly help the international situation.

<sup>375</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 5-6; 19-20. Members of GEN-75 were: Attlee; Foreign Sec. Bevin; Deputy PM, and Leader of the HC & Lord President Herbert Morrison; Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Dalton; First Lord of the Admiralty A.V. Alexander and apparently Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade (Former Min. of Aircraft Production, rebuked by Churchill on his interest in atomic matters in prev. gov.)

<sup>376</sup> Morrison was also the Leader of the House of Commons, Lord President of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party.

<sup>377</sup> In 1946 Minister without Portfolio, and from 20 December 1946 Minister of Defence.

<sup>378</sup> From 1946 the Controller of Production (Atomic Energy).

<sup>379</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 21.

<sup>380</sup> Gowing, 1974, p. 24.

<sup>381</sup> Gowing, 1974, p. 19-26.

<sup>382</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 58.

1945 and for instance considered the international control of atomic energy.<sup>383</sup> Again, the GEN abbreviation marks as high ranking, ministerial, ad hoc committee. As there is no detailed information about the GEN 96 it is for now left out of the organizational charts.

Another organisation that was set up in tandem at this juncture, and which featured members at the same high-ranking level, was the Defence Committee. Indeed, some members were in both committees. In fact, of the members of the Defence Committee, there were only three service ministers and the Minister of Labour and National Service, George Isaacs, that were not in the Gen 75 Committee.<sup>384</sup> Gowing stresses that the Defence Committee's role in atomic matters, compared to the inner circle and GEN 75, was minimal. As for the regulation of information, security and secrecy were no doubt behind the limited delegation of responsibilities, but the other reason for limited exposure may have been sheer pragmatism. For example, there was no time to waste in finding new personnel for the inner circle, and to brief them with the essential background information.<sup>385</sup> In addition, it was not customary practice to introduce candidates to the civil and diplomatic service from the winning party in an election to replace existing officials, as this might be seen as a form of cronyism. Indeed, this might have been one reason why the selection of Lord Portal as Controller of Production for Atomic Energy did not gain all round support.<sup>386</sup> Adding to this was the fact that some people (for example, Sir John Anderson and Lord Halifax) were so important that they could not be sidelined simply because they were from the opposition parties. Neither could staff from embassies abroad have been called home or changed without there having been diplomatic and political consequences.

#### 2.2.2.2 *The Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy (ACAE)*

There were so many factors to be taken into account when considering the atomic question, that it needed its own committee. The remit of the ACAE covered general domestic and foreign policy, security and military matters, industrial aspects, scientific research and more. Its most important role though perhaps, was to secure the joint foreign policy with the US<sup>387</sup> without appearing too pushy, before the Americans decided for themselves that they no longer needed British support.<sup>388</sup>

<sup>383</sup> For instance see TNA FO 800/547 GEN96/3 Cabinet International control of atomic energy draft report by the *officials* 24 October 1945 (bolding and italics are mine). The officials in this apparently refers to ACAE.

<sup>384</sup> Membership of this committee was: Attlee in chair, Morrison, Bevin, Dalton, three service ministers, Minister of Labour and National Service, George Isaacs, and later as the new Minister of Defence also A.V. Alexander. Gowing, 1974, p. 23-24.

<sup>385</sup> Interesting would be to consider the possibility of the security reasons affecting to the selection of the personnel, were the chances limited to those "in the know", instead of the best possible forces? For example Lord Halifax has been mentioned to be war-weary, as well as other diplomatic staff abroad and at home. See for example Saville 1993, p. 16-17.

<sup>386</sup> For example Lord Portal's nomination for the position of the Controller of Atomic Energy was not greeted without reservation. Gowing 1974, p. 40-41.

<sup>387</sup> No.186 Campbell to Bevin 8 August 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol. II.Gowing, 1974 p24.

<sup>388</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 8 referring to James Chadwick's statement (source not mentioned).

And of course, the United States relationship was also important for Britain for more than atomic reasons. When, for example, the Lend-Lease policy was abruptly cancelled in September 1945, it underlined how much Britain still depended on financial support from the US<sup>389</sup> - and this did not go unnoticed by Parliament.<sup>390</sup> Another reason was that Britain still had scientists working in the US, gaining more knowledge about the new technology by the minute, and to jeopardize this<sup>391</sup> could have been detrimental for Britain's independent atomic research, if this was a path that needed to be taken.

On a wider scale, the A.C.A.E. was addressing the greater question of what Britain actually wanted from the collaboration, what was to be gained, and how these possible gains were to be pursued. That there would remain an Anglo-American (or American) monopoly of the technology was considered unlikely, but having a few years head start was often cited as being of value to both countries.<sup>392</sup> The other point being considered, as mentioned earlier, was how an international mechanism might be established to oversee atomic research from a political as well as technical perspective; so that there might be safety guarantees to prevent the uncontrolled propagation of atomic weapons around the world. Because the number of questions around the topic of atomic research was so huge, the ACAE had thus been set up to act in a consultative capacity for the Government. It reported directly to the Prime Minister, but was lower in the organisational hierarchy than the Gen 75 Committee. The actual terms of the ACAE's appointment were:

"a) to investigate the implications of the use of atomic energy and to advise the Government what steps should be taken for its development in this country either for military or industrial purposes.

b) to put forward proposals for the international treatment of this subject. In doing so the committee should keep in close touch with the work done by the similar committee which has been set up in the US."<sup>393</sup>

The Tube Alloys Directorate, which began life under the auspices of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), soon became an independent organ, or "state within the state"<sup>394</sup>, from 1941 onwards.<sup>395</sup> It was only

<sup>389</sup> On Lend-Lease ending and other problems with the Americans see for example Bullcock 1984, p. 49-50; 121. Morgan 1992, p. 65. Morgan 1984, p. 144-145.

<sup>390</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol. 413 cc123-125, David Gammans (Hornsey, Conservative).

<sup>391</sup> One also has to keep in mind the loan negotiations held in Washington, in which Lord Keynes attempted to secure a huge loan from the Americans, for the purposes of reconstruction etc. The American public attitudes towards financing a "socialist government" were not that supportive.

<sup>392</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 A.C.A.E. (45) 3 Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy. International Policy on the use of atomic energy. Note by the Secretary (Rickett) 24 August 1945. Includes a memorandum dated on 7 June 1945 by unnamed group of officials signed as "by office of the cabinet".

<sup>393</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE (45)1, 20 August 1945, Cabinet Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy, Terms of Reference, a note by the secretary of the Cabinet (E. Bridges)

<sup>394</sup> Tube Alloys Directorate was separated from DSIR as Anderson became Chancellor of the Exchequer. TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)9, 11 September 1945.

<sup>395</sup> For the previous organization, see appendix 2.

in July 1945, that Attlee took over direct responsibility of the programme, and in August 1945, the Tube Alloys Consultative Council was replaced with the ACAE.<sup>396</sup> Gowing claims that Sir John Anderson, even heading Tube Alloys, was in many ways an enemy of the Labour government, being a front bench member of the opposition (National Independent), and yet despite his different political background he was asked to lead the ACAE<sup>397</sup> But although Anderson was, in many respects a minister without portfolio, he was not allowed to attend to Cabinet meetings, its 'inner circle', or the Gen 75 Committee.<sup>398</sup>

Other members of the ACAE were Field Marshall Alan Brooke, Edward Appleton (from the DSIR), Henry Dale, Alan Barlow (Under-Secretary at the Treasury), Alexander Cadogan (Permanent Under Secretary at the Foreign Office), Professor M.S. Blackett, George Thomson, Professor James Chadwick (though normally in the US), and Denis Rickett (who had been in the War Cabinet Office, and was now acting as the secretary of the committee). Wallace Akers<sup>399</sup> also attended the first meeting<sup>400</sup>, according to a memo signed by Attlee's secretary, Edward Bridges. It is interesting to see here that Alexander Cadogan<sup>401</sup> was appointed to represent the Foreign Office, even though most of his tasks were assigned to Nevile Butler (Assistant Under-Secretary of State, FO),<sup>402</sup> who much to his annoyance<sup>403</sup>, was not mentioned when the committee's membership was announced (21 August 1945) in response to parliamentary questions about the government's intended plans.<sup>404</sup> On the 17 October, a civil servant and Professor of Moral Philosophy, Oliver Sherwell Franks (Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Supply) was also appointed to the ACAE<sup>405</sup> Others were also asked to attend from time to time, but the abovementioned were the core of the committee in 1945.<sup>406</sup>

Franks was clearly included in the committee, as the Ministry of Supply would be responsible, to field the anticipated parliamentary questions<sup>407</sup> about

<sup>396</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)9, 11 September 1945.

<sup>397</sup> Cf. appendix 3.

<sup>398</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 26.

<sup>399</sup> Akers had worked as the director of the Tube Alloys Directorate, which was coordinated by J.Anderson.

<sup>400</sup> TNA CAB 134/6 21 August 1945 ACAE First Meeting. Chadwick was in the US.

Akers was not appointed to the ACAE at this point.

<sup>401</sup> Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1938 until 1946, later the British permanent representative in the United Nations.

<sup>402</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE (45) 1, 20 August 1945.

<sup>403</sup> Butler actually threatened to resign from the committee, as he seemed to consider not mentioning him in briefing to Parliament as a show of mistrust. See TNA FO 800/522, Butler to Cadogan 22 August 1945; TNA FO 800/522, Bridges to Sargent 23 August 1945.

<sup>404</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4.

<sup>405</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45) 27, Appointment of an Additional Member, Note by the Secretary, 17 October 1945.

<sup>406</sup> See appendix 3.

<sup>407</sup> HC Deb 29 October 1945 vol 415 cc38-9; TNA CAB 104. A Note by E.Bridges for Prime Minister Attlee 24 October 1945. Draft reply included. Apparently a planted question was the only way for the Executive to make such a statement, as the Americans were against the whole idea of the British research establishment, and especially announcing it in public. It might have also been a way of pressurizing the Americans to agree for the requested negotiations in Washington.

the British research establishment to be created.<sup>408</sup> It is worth noting at this point that the plans for this research establishment had already been delivered to Winston Churchill, as it had been initially planned by the wartime government. The election of a new government merely paused proceedings on the matter for a while, until they were resumed some time later in the autumn of 1945.<sup>409</sup> With the formal establishment of atomic research, the new government needed its own minister to handle atomic issues on a day by day basis. But as defence, strategy and foreign policy were already the respective responsibilities of the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and Minister of Defence; it meant the Minister of Supply's role was limited to mostly administrative tasks. As a consequence, he did not have the final say in any of the policies he was implementing. This remained the case even when the role was given legal status with the passing of the British Atomic Energy Bill<sup>410</sup> in late 1946. Another point worth noting was that Sir John Anderson was heading the committee and thus had the curious *de facto* position of being the minister without portfolio on atomic matters.

It seemed that even the Advisory Committee needed further briefing when, on 11 September 1945, a more detailed memo was issued for the benefit of ACAE members to review previous diplomatic agreements made with the United States and Canada, so that they could make recommendations for the decision makers.<sup>411</sup>

"It may be useful, however, to supplement these statements [ACAE (45) 7; 8] by a short note summarising the principal features of the organisation here and in America, and adding certain details about the work on raw materials which must still be kept secret."<sup>412</sup>

In their recommendations, the Committee emphasised that Britain was still bound by the Quebec Agreement (1943), which limited the potential commercial use of atomic energy. It also mentioned that the focus on strategy and slow pace of research had been out of respect for Anglo-American agreements. If British scientists had been called back for domestic atomic projects, it would understandably alarm the Americans. Yet, in spite of this, Anderson thought Britain already had a much stronger case for conducting her own research, even if American views had to be carefully kept in mind.<sup>413</sup>

The agenda from the first meeting of the A.C.A.E (dated 21 August 1945), perhaps best illustrates the sheer variety of atomic issues facing the committee. Not only was it to review its own organisation and remit, and consult British

<sup>408</sup> HC Deb 29 October 1945 vol 415 cc38-9.

<sup>409</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)9. Past History and Organisation, a note by the secretary 11 September 1945.

<sup>410</sup> Gowing, 1974, p. 23;48.

<sup>411</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)5. Co-Operation between the United States and UK governments, note by the secretary.

<sup>412</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)9, 11 September 1945. Past History and Organisation of the work, a note by the secretary.

<sup>413</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)2 Future Policy and Programme of Research in the United Kingdom 24 August 1945. Including a memo "Tube Alloys Future Policy and Programme" by Sir John Anderson (then as Chancellor of the Exchequer).

representatives in Washington and Montreal on the matter; but also to consider the “large scale production of TA material in the United Kingdom”.<sup>414</sup> The huge impact atomic weapons would have on the future of warfare was brought up as well, as was the international handling and publicity of this discovery. The medical effects of radiation were on the agenda too.<sup>415</sup> In the House of Commons, on 21 August 1945, Attlee twice emphasised the role of the committee to clarify any suspicions Churchill may have had.

“The policy, of course, has to be decided by the Government, but this Committee will advise United States both with regard to the scientific progress and the possibilities and the general background of the whole subject.”<sup>416</sup>

On paper, the ACAE was thus to act only in a consultative capacity and it was made clear that it would not be making direct policy decisions. Nevertheless, because of the expertise of its members, and its extensive access to atomic information, the committee’s role was somewhat larger than just advisory in reality. The memoranda from GEN 75 meetings at least seem to support this, as there are at least not much notes on GEN 75 disagreeing with anything prepared by A.C.A.E. The role of Sir John Anderson as a *de facto* minister without portfolio testifies to this as well. In some ways the Government’s dependence on the committee regarding atomic affairs resembled its relationship with the civil service from the previous administration. Added to this was the fact that the Government needed to consult the United States and Canada in these matters too.<sup>417</sup> Therefore joint activities with the US, focusing on the CPC and CDT, were briefly reviewed. The executive role of the American government was then brought up, and the Quebec Agreement was mentioned briefly as to whether it remained a sound basis for future cooperation (having solved such issues previously).<sup>418</sup> At the same time, the FO was actually starting to wonder if the Quebec Agreement was valid anymore - especially since the Americans had mentioned that they had no traces of such agreements when Attlee had made preliminary attempts to arrange a meeting on the subject with them.<sup>419</sup>

Altogether, the ACAE met eleven times in the autumn 1945, and these meetings spawned 66 additional memoranda. Even though the political responsibility clearly belonged to the government, the minutes of the ACAE meetings indicate that the committee provided information that was considered essential for the executive to be able to draft policy. For example, as negotiations with the Americans in Washington were drawing to (what many considered) a successful close in 1945, the ACAE was carefully monitoring just how transatlantic cooperation was progressing, whilst keeping an eye on American public opinion

<sup>414</sup> TNA CAB 134/6 ACAE(45) First Meeting, Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy. 21 August 1945.

<sup>415</sup> TNA CAB 134/6 ACAE(45) First Meeting, Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy. 21 August 1945.

<sup>416</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc444.

<sup>417</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4.

<sup>418</sup> TNA CAB 134/6 First Meeting, Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy.

<sup>419</sup> No.186 Campbell’s memo to Bevin, 8.8.1945. DBPO ser.I, vol. II; Gowing, 1974, p. 7.



regarding it (as judged by the FO, via the British Embassy in Washington).<sup>420</sup> Not only was such monitoring of public opinion common practice for embassies the world over, but the Washington embassy, in particular, had a large staff to ensure that US public opinion towards Britain remained favourable. The fact that this information was shared with the ACAE, even in its officially limited role as an advisory committee, shows that public opinion was felt to play a large part in atomic policy making. It also showed the US government that the British felt public opinion played a significant part in American policy making.

It would be interesting to find out how the agenda for the meetings was drafted and if there was a particular brief from higher levels on how this should be done.<sup>421</sup> Gowing's vague interpretation seems to be that the drafting and planning was conducted only at the lower echelons of Government, as Attlee's personal role gradually became more one of commentator and final decision-maker than initiator.<sup>422</sup> How the atomic bomb would affect the future of warfare was another topic repeatedly on the ACAE agenda, as were suggestions for an international policy and regulations concerning the new technology.<sup>423</sup> These matters had also become matters of debate in Parliament,<sup>424</sup> and often took the form of questions about international safety, and when the United Nations would be put in control of atomic energy.<sup>425</sup>

If one compares the members of the ACAE to those in the Gen 75 Committee, or Cabinet inner circle, it is clear that they possessed the most expertise on atomic matters, even if the final say was with Attlee and Gen 75.<sup>426</sup> In comparison, the Cabinet, including its inner circle, were supplementary to this task. At least, according to the written sources, the ACAE and Gen 75 Committee were cited more often in the source material as influencing the decision makers. The ACAE analysed the implications of atomic energy and cooperated closely with the Foreign Office, but, in spite of the paper trail of evidence that exists, it would be difficult to quantify precisely the extent to which the ACAE's recommendations affected the decisions made by Attlee and the Gen 75 Committee.

In the early summer of 1946, the ACAE established three subcommittees under itself, as the need for different technical emphases arose. These were the Nuclear Physics, Minerals, and Patents Subcommittees. At that point, atomic collaboration between the UK and US had come to a standstill because the Americans firstly claimed it was against article 102, chapter XVI of the UN Charter<sup>427</sup>, and secondly because the McMahon Act (which was to come into

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<sup>420</sup> TNA CAB 134/6 List of the meetings and agenda of the A.C.A.E in 1945.

<sup>421</sup> With such a vast amount of sources the task might prove to be too challenging at this point.

<sup>422</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 28.

<sup>423</sup> TNA CAB 134/6 List of the meetings and agenda of the A.C.A.E in 1945.

<sup>424</sup> HC Deb 29 October 1945 vol 415 cc38-9.

<sup>425</sup> See for example HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc659-755. Government's motion on ratifying the UN Charter.

<sup>426</sup> Attlee also called Gen 75 his "atomic bomb committee". See Gowing 1974, p. 21.

<sup>427</sup> Charter of the United Nations, Chapter XVI: "1) Every treaty and every international agreement entered into by any Member of the United Nations after the present Charter comes into force shall as soon as possible be registered with the Secretariat and published by it. 2) No party to any such treaty or international agreement which has

force as the United States Atomic Energy Law)<sup>428</sup> prohibited any such international cooperation.

As has already been demonstrated above, significant parts of the executive did not share Attlee's internationalist idealism. There is ample evidence of this in the views expressed in summaries of past cooperation that were to be used as points of reference for future policymaking.<sup>429</sup> For example, the Soviet Union was seen as a partner who should no longer be trusted,<sup>430</sup> as it was in the process of expanding its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. At the same time, it was not yet clear how ready the United States was to establish an 'Anglo-Saxon' sphere of influence with the British to counterbalance this.<sup>431</sup>

It would seem, from the detailed scrutiny it received in the documents of A.C.A.E meetings, that cooperation with the Americans was fast becoming a more likely prospect than wider international cooperation, which received comparatively little attention.<sup>432</sup> Although perhaps not quite as doggedly pragmatic as some other branches of the Government's organisational tree (see below for the Chiefs of Staff Committee for instance), the ACAE was advocating that collaboration with the United States continue, and if this was a continuation of Churchill's policy, it meant strong collaboration. The potential benefits of having an atomic capability was seen as greater than the potential risks of other nations having it. Officials had kept their posts and were conducting matters, at least on the everyday level, with guidelines that had been established earlier. Meanwhile, those that had arrived on the executive with the newly elected Labour government tended towards a more idealistic view of atomic matters. Later on these pragmatic and idealistic perspectives clashed, as we will see later.

### 2.2.2.3 *Other Branches of the Organisational Tree*

The ACAE was not the only committee or extension of the Government's executive branch.<sup>433</sup> In fact, forming committees seemed to be a well-accepted practice. For instance, Patrick Blackett had first suggested that 10 committees be established to consider each aspect of the atomic question.<sup>434</sup> In the end however, only six of them saw the light of day. His ultimate idea was that, when com-

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not been registered in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article may invoke that treaty or agreement before any organ of the United Nations." See also Roitto, 2008, p. 127-130.

<sup>428</sup> Gowing, 1974, p. 111-112.

<sup>429</sup> No.186 Campbell's memo to Bevin 8 August 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol. II.

<sup>430</sup> No.191 Memorandum by N. Butler. DBPO ser.I vol.II; (TNA FO 800/547 Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy. Sir J.Anderson's proposal for an Experimental Establishment) also for example Bullock 1984, p. 235.

<sup>431</sup> TNA, CAB 134/6 ACAE(45)11. Atomic Energy the International Background, memorandum prepared by the F.O 11 September 1945. Printed also as No.193 Foreign Office Memorandum, 11 September 1945. DBPO ser.I vol.II, editors mention that this memo had been written by N.Butler.

<sup>432</sup> TNA FO 800/547 GEN 96/3 24 October 1945, Note by the officials. Especially paragraph VII "United Kingdom Policy". Underlining is from the original document.

<sup>433</sup> Use of the term "Executive" appears in the sources.

<sup>434</sup> TNA CAB 134/7, ACAE(45)13 T.A. Research Organisation, a note by Professor M.S. Blackett 24 September 1945.

bined, these committees would come up with “an objective for the research and development organisation”. Furthermore, he envisioned that the objective would be a concrete one.

“The Government will clearly want to know what this objective is before agreeing to the recommendation of the Committee, and the objective will have to be specified clearly in the necessary negotiation with the US”.<sup>435</sup>

But even within the major expert committees that were eventually created, the division of work was not clear. Margaret Gowing claims that the ACAE and its subcommittees were the most important, with regard to atomic matters in Britain, as were the Gen 75 Committee, the Atomic Weapons Subcommittee, and the two committees set up under the Ministry of Supply (established in March 1946).<sup>436</sup> Whether the Foreign Office had a part to play in atomic policymaking has not yet had much attention however. Although ultimate decisions rested with Attlee, and his closest advisers,<sup>437</sup> there was a way for those FO functionaries to affect policy by only providing the information they saw fit to give the decision makers.

Another factor which would have given the Foreign Office a significant role, was that at this stage, atomic policymaking was very much tied up with foreign policy vis-à-vis the United States. This much is clear from the initial comments of all the major actors involved. FO staff were the most informed people as to the position of the Soviets and Americans in their respective atomic research programmes, so they were included in almost all of the advisory organs. And, as this was his department, this also meant that the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, had a decisive role in atomic affairs, of which Clement Attlee was well aware.

“Foreign affairs are the province of the foreign secretary. It is in my view a mistake for the Prime Minister to intervene personally except in the most exceptional circumstances. There’s a lot in the proverb. ‘If you’ve got a good dog, don’t bark yourself.’<sup>438</sup>

Another excellent example of the post-war government choosing continuity over change when dealing with atomic matters, was how Attlee informed Parliament of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 August 1945 (see section 2.1.2 above). As mentioned earlier, it consisted of reading out loud the statement that had been written earlier by Churchill.<sup>439</sup> Alan Bullock mentions also that Ernest Bevin consulted Churchill, as well as his former Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, on some matters.<sup>440</sup> In fact, Churchill was himself in frequent contact with the FO in 1945-6, having been in charge of all atomic matters when he was PM. A degree of cross-party coordination was also attempted (though to no avail)

<sup>435</sup> TNA CAB 134/7, ACAE(45)13 T.A. Research Organisation, a note by Professor M.S. Blackett 24 September 1945.

<sup>436</sup> See appendix 3.

<sup>437</sup> Gowing 1974, p. 24

<sup>438</sup> For example: Howell 2006, p. 76-77.

<sup>439</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)7. Past History and Organisation of the work, Copy of Official Statements Issued by the United Kingdom Government.

<sup>440</sup> Bullock 1984, p. 80; 84.

when Churchill was asked, as leader of the opposition and for the sake of national security, to keep questions of an explosive nature off the floor of the House.<sup>441</sup> These kind of questions were for instance raw material related ones.

In the Foreign Office, issues were handled according to their geographical area, and there was thus no specific branch of it dedicated to atomic matters. This meant that, besides Bevin, the biggest (ad hoc) atomic responsibility lay with the FO's North American Department,<sup>442</sup> under the guidance of M. Broadmead. However, the Northern Department,<sup>443</sup> run by C.F.A. Warner, was also consulted to keep tabs on any atomic breakthroughs in the Soviet Union.<sup>444</sup>

Sir Alexander Cadogan (Superintending Secretary of the News and Services Liaison Departments, and responsible for Coordination of Intelligence, Foreign Office Representation on Joint Intelligence, and the Joint Planning Staff) was also consulted, but the embassy in Washington was of most importance, even if Lord Halifax there had been kept somewhat in the dark when Churchill was PM. The Embassy Councillor<sup>445</sup>, Roger Makins (another former CPC delegate) also played a prominent role along with Ronald Campbell,<sup>446</sup> not to mention Nevile Butler from the Foreign Office who, as mentioned earlier (2.2.2.2), was the de facto replacement for Cadogan on the ACAE.

So, although Labour was in power and undeniably in control, things were not as straightforward as they seemed. The Labour party was keen on supporting parliamentary practice and governing through discussion, but of course this revealed a division beginning to show. It has been claimed that the essential division in the party (between the trade unions and the rest) was the major cause for the lack of coordination and strategy in Labour policy.<sup>447</sup> But perhaps it was the loss of strategy which caused the division, as the ideological approach that such a strategy would have needed was gradually being swapped for the more pragmatic approach suggested by those who had more knowledge of atomic matters. As we have seen, attitudes in the FO were altogether different from those of many newly elected Labour MPs (and also initially Attlee),<sup>448</sup> and whereas staff and personal advisers in committees could be changed, FO staff could not.

The United States was important in this respect too. Britain (still seen by many in Whitehall as a great power)<sup>449</sup> was considered to still have an advantage or head start in atomic research thanks to the Anglo-American pro-

<sup>441</sup> TNA, PREM 8/113, Attlee to Churchill, 28 September 1945; Churchill to Attlee, 6 October 1945; Attlee to Addison, 8 October 1945; Attlee to Churchill, 12 October 1945.

<sup>442</sup> Superintending secretary Nevile Butler, also in South American Department. Also the role of the British embassy in Washington was great.

<sup>443</sup> Superintending secretary Sir Orme Sargent, also Southern Department.

<sup>444</sup> Foreign Office List 1945, p. 13-20; 82-84.

<sup>445</sup> Foreign Office List 1945, p. 23.

<sup>446</sup> Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign Office since 1945.

<sup>447</sup> For example Dearlove & Saunders 2006, p. 398-400.

<sup>448</sup> Saville 1993 20-29; 31-32; No.192, (Undated) Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Atomic Bomb, (slightly revised and circulated as GEN. 75/1 on 28 August 1945) DBPO Ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>449</sup> Saville 1993, p. 20-21; 26.

gramme, and unless this was capitalised upon soon in international politics, FO officials were convinced that the advantage would be lost.

“...It is important to act quickly before the American views have crystallized...”<sup>450</sup>

This required contacts who had knowledge pertaining to the joint Anglo-American programme.<sup>451</sup> As for policy recommendations, exclusiveness seems to have been what the FO and British Embassy in Washington were recommending, judging from the numerous memoranda and telegrams sent between them. This pragmatic and exclusive approach, however, makes it harder to ascertain what the ultimate long-term goal for the FO was. One possible goal was prestige and power, another to gain a closer relationship with the US for other purposes. Apparently Britain’s goal to become an atomic power was taken for granted, but there is no doubt that gaining the bomb and whatever came with it, was the first short-term objective.

This was indirectly revealed when the Atomic Weapons subcommittee was established under the Chiefs of Staff (and Deputy Chiefs of Staff). Later, after consultation with the chairman (Henry Dale), three other members joined - Blackett, Taylor, and Akers.<sup>452</sup> As the Chiefs of Staff were as pessimistic as the ACAE about a mechanism being created for the international control of atomic weapons,<sup>453</sup> and worried about Britain’s own vulnerability, they were advocating that the UK develop her own atomic capability.<sup>454</sup> This, for them, was the main reason to establish the Atomic Weapons subcommittee under the Deputy Chiefs of Staff. They thought that it should be the body to advise the ACAE on all matters related to weapon application(s),<sup>455</sup> as can be seen from the terms of reference that they drew up for the subcommittee.

“(a) Collect and collate information on the capabilities and limitations of atomic energy when used as a component of a weapon of war.

(b) To recommend which existing or new weapons or projectiles are best suited for its use and the general lines on which the development of the selected weapons should proceed.

<sup>450</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)16 Relations with US, a memo from Makins.

<sup>451</sup> Even the British delegation from the Potsdam Conference had been kept intact despite the change of Government. Bullock 1984, p. 26-27; 72.

<sup>452</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)19, 3 October 1945 Establishment of a Weapon Subcommittee, note by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff; A.C.A.E(45)28, 19 October 1945, Membership of Weapon Subcommittee, a note by the Secretary.

<sup>453</sup> TNA, CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)15. The International Control of Atomic Energy, Note by the Secretary including a draft of the memorandum 24 September 1945; TNA CAB 134/7 ACAE(45)20 International Control of Atomic Energy, note by the secretary, including 3<sup>rd</sup> revised memorandum.

<sup>454</sup> No.199 Minute from Major General Hollis to Mr. Attlee, 10 October 1945. DBPO Ser.I vol.II.

<sup>455</sup> TNA FO 800/549 28 September 1945 Deputy Chiefs of Staff Committee D.C.O.S (45) 80: Forming of the Subcommittee to consider problems concerned with Atomic Weapons and Atomic Power for Defence purposes

(c) In addition to studying the offensive use of atomic energy, to consider what defensive measures can and should be taken against it." <sup>456</sup>

Not only does this illustrate the pragmatic way of thinking within the military, but it also challenges the view held, and even championed, in much previous research that Britain only made the decision to have the bomb for herself as late as 1947.<sup>457</sup> Many experts have, nevertheless, acknowledged that any atomic knowledge gained for peaceful applications could have also been used to make an atomic bomb.<sup>458</sup>

The Atomic Weapons subcommittee casts the Washington negotiations in a different light too. Although, to begin with, it was formed to help draft a joint statement that would allay fears of instant world destruction, and then asked to consider the basis for creating a mechanism of international control that would somehow involve the USSR, what the subcommittee really ended up doing was attempting to renew Anglo-American collaboration. This seemed to be the aim that was most important to those officials who were providing the atomic information that the Government needed.

Sure enough, after it became clear that the US would remain vague about atomic affairs, while the USSR continued to show an aggressive foreign policy, Attlee perhaps took the hint and, taking the initiative one more time, he insisted on meeting Truman, ready to put the reluctant Americans under some pressure and discuss how the UK and US could collaborate further in their atomic research programmes. Attlee claimed that parliamentary pressure was so intense at home, that a statement of some sort had to be issued soon.<sup>459</sup> Therefore negotiations would have to be held, if the Americans wanted to be consulted (and they surely did if they wanted to control the flow of information). For the same reason, it was made public that Britain was to establish its own research facility. The existing CDT (Combined Development Trust) research facilities that had been created by the Quebec Memorandum and Hyde Park Aide-Memoire had, after all, served only American interests up to that point. So it made practical sense from the British perspective to change this, but it could have also been considered a veiled threat to the US. Perhaps it was for this reason that the Government masked the proposal in the form of a planted parliamentary question. This consisted of a friendly MP asking a carefully primed question to which the Government could answer as if they were fielding a genuine concern,

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<sup>456</sup> TNA FO 800/549 28 September 1945 Deputy Chiefs of Staff Committee D.C.O.S (45) 80: Forming of the Subcommittee to consider problems concerned with Atomic Weapons and Atomic Power for Defence purposes; 2 October 1945 D.C.O.S (45) 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Minutes of a meeting held in the offices of the cabinet and Minister of Defence on 1 October 1945.

<sup>457</sup> Gowing, 1974, p. 21-22. "...until January 1947...no explicit decision to make the bomb..."

<sup>458</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 A.C.A.E(45)3 International Policy on the use of atomic energy, 24 August 1945.

<sup>459</sup> No.188 Bevin's telegram to Balfour 11 September 1945, DBPO, ser.I, vol.II. Official request for meeting was sent on 16 October 1945. No.202 Attlee to Truman 16 October 1945 Ibid.

thereby making the motives for the proposal seem wholly legitimate.<sup>460</sup> In addition, were the Americans annoyed by the proposal, the Government could argue that it had been made in the face of domestic political pressure. But in some respects, there was genuine pressure from the media and in Parliament, so it was only partly a stratagem. Sir John Anderson, chairman of the ACAE, had also suggested the Government make a public statement about atomic matters by the same means of a planted question.

“Anderson and the Departments concerned feel that it would be advisable for the Government to make a public announcement as soon as possible of their decision to set up a research and experimental establishment for atomic energy. The attached statement in the form of reply to an arranged Question in Parliament has been approved by [...]”<sup>461</sup>

Peter G. Richards mentions that previous research on this subject has only really focused on Parliament as a forum for statements or speeches delivered by ministers.<sup>462</sup> However planted questions, such as the example mentioned above, tell quite a different story. They proved an effective way of introducing matters for debate which, for diplomatic reasons, may have otherwise caused trouble if formally introduced. Many MPs also tried to make their own statements in the form of questions. Although considered in many ways improper, these kinds of questions were often used in Parliament, and indeed even for certain administrative statements (see below). Often raised by backbenchers, or sometimes by private secretaries on behalf of their own minister, they can be an indirect means for reporting on the actions of departments, commenting on something that has been heavily criticised, and for informing the public of a change in policy.<sup>463</sup> A perfect example of this kind of delicate subject which needed to be indirectly introduced was the proposal to establish the UK's own atomic facility in mainland Britain.<sup>464</sup>

So it came to pass that when an independent British research facility was first mentioned in Parliament on 29 October 1945, against the wishes of the US, it was disguised as the reply to a question raised by William Morrison (Cirencester and Tewkesbury, Conservative).<sup>465</sup> We know it was disguised, because the Government's reply was actually drafted before the question was asked - in Bridges' note to Attlee on 24 October.<sup>466</sup> In this case it is the archival sources which reveal the trickery; which gave the illusion that Parliament had the power and means to exert political pressure on Government, so that deals or plans

<sup>460</sup> Cf. Chester & Bowring, 1962, p. 188; 221-222. Parliament as arena for Government's statements: Richards, 1967, p. 164.

<sup>461</sup> TNA CAB 104. A Note by E.Bridges for Prime Minister Attlee 24.10.1945. Draft reply included.

<sup>462</sup> Richards, 1967, p. 164.

<sup>463</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p. 188; 221-222.

<sup>464</sup> TNA CAB 104. A Note by Attlee's Private Secretary E.Bridges for Attlee 24 October 1945. Draft reply included.

<sup>465</sup> HC Deb 29 October 1945 vol 415 cc38-9.

<sup>466</sup> TNA CAB 104. A Note by E.Bridges for Prime Minister Attlee 24 October 1945. Draft reply included.

that were otherwise supposed to be kept secret (as the Americans would have liked) could be revealed as and when the Government wanted.

In this particular case, Parliament was used as the Government's scapegoat to explain its actions to the Americans. But for many, it also shows parliamentary pressure was a force to be reckoned with, and one that could not be sidelined forever. Thus guiding parliamentary discourse with the government's own agenda, in the form of planted question, was arguably justified. Furthermore, it shows that parliamentary scholars should not trust in parliamentary sources alone, as otherwise this planted question would have gone unnoticed. Parliamentary discourse is not just pro and contra debating, as we might sometimes be led to believe. It can affect outside legislative tasks, intentionally or by accident; and nor should parliamentary questions be relied on as straightforward historical documents, as they may have well been planted for very different reasons than might first appear.

But going back to the House of Commons on 29 October, when the question was 'officially' answered by Attlee, he mentioned that the Government had decided to set up a research establishment at Harwell, as had been advised by the ACAE and that the costs of research would be borne by the Ministry of Supply. Captain Raymond Blackburn (Birmingham King's Norton, Labour), who had a reputation for asking persistent and well-informed questions, came back at the Government with a supplementary query. He asked whether this was specifically research into atomic energy, rather than just any atomic research, because if it was, he argued that the cost would be immense. Attlee simply replied that he was well aware of this and had been informed about such matters by the ACAE.<sup>467</sup>

Behind the scenes, however, Blackburn's questions had caused real alarm among members of the executive. Blackburn's informants were thus sought out, and a certain (unnamed) professor was found to have been disclosing confidential details, such as what specific commercial rights over the results of atomic research had been granted to the Americans under the Quebec Agreement. Disciplinary action was then considered to prevent any more leaks of confidential information.<sup>468</sup> Blackburn mentions that he was summoned the next day by furious Bevin who tried to press Blackburn to give up his confidential contacts.<sup>469</sup>

This is covered in more detail in a later chapter but, as the negotiations in Washington progressed,<sup>470</sup> agendas for the meetings became more concise and carefully prepared. Instead of focusing on a general joint declaration about the peaceful uses of atomic power, and sharing knowledge about using the new technology safely,<sup>471</sup> as had initially been proposed by Attlee, there was now

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<sup>467</sup> HC Deb 29 October 1945 vol 415 cc38-9.

<sup>468</sup> TNA CAB 104, Rickett to Bridges 25 October 1945, a copy of a memo from the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of GEN-75.

<sup>469</sup> Blackburn 1959, p.84-86.

<sup>470</sup> No.203 Bevin's report to Halifax in Washington 17 October 1945. DBPO, ser.I, vol.II. No.204 Bevin to Halifax 19 October 1945, Ibid.

<sup>471</sup> No.233, Washington Declaration 15 November 1945, DBPO ser.I vol.II.



another implicit goal to strengthen bilateral collaboration and secure Britain's role as an atomic power for the future.<sup>472</sup> Nevertheless, the original idealistic policy was not totally abandoned. It was kept in the background as a plan B, were the Anglo-American negotiations to break down. This idealistic policy had also, as we have seen, been promised in the elections, so it needed to be mentioned from time to time. It proved useful, for example, in debates over ratifying the UN Charter. But these idealistic promises were the Government's chickens that would come home to roost, and they would continue to haunt the executive over the coming months. Soon after the negotiations in Washington had been concluded, and Attlee had returned to the UK, Bevin was asked to participate in negotiations with the USSR in Moscow, over creating a mechanism for controlling atomic research internationally. This showed that the atomic question with regard to foreign policy was far less straightforward than had originally been believed. Nobody in the British executive, for example, had foreseen this U-turn in American policy which attempted to draw the Soviet Union closer, in spite of the fact that the original plan had been to draw up an agreement under the auspices of the United Nations.

The negotiations between the USSR and US caused ripples of anxiety to grow in intensity and radiate out from the executive across the whole of the British Government. But to get a better grasp of the full extent of this anxiety will first require a more detailed examination of Britain's adoption of a more active atomic policy, and the consequent Anglo-American negotiations in Washington. The initial changes to the Government's atomic policy must also first be put in its proper context, and then compared to the policy suggested by Parliament. These are covered in the next sub-chapter, which (2.3) looks at them in the context of defence policy, and the in the following chapter (3) with regard to foreign policy and the UN.

In the haste to draft atomic policy before certain opportunities slipped away, the British Government seems to have sacrificed some of its political momentum from the election by allowing itself to be advised on atomic matters by existing officialdom from the previous government who thus indirectly influenced atomic policy. This meant that older foreign policy objectives had to be assimilated into the Labour government's policies, while the more ideological and less practical elements of its initial policy objectives be effectively ditched, even if they remained nominally in place. In short, realism raised its head, and the lure of secret collaboration with the Americans and all the possible gains this might entail were presented in such a way that the course of policy was changed, even if this was not immediately implemented in full. But when the Government faced pressure from Parliament to be more open, room for manoeuvre became limited, at least in public. This hampered both the planning and implementation of policy. In the international context, the Americans were tending to lean more towards the idea of having an atomic monopoly, and this put pressure on the relationship between Parliament and a Government who felt the need to act quickly (regardless of what Parliament thought) while it still

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<sup>472</sup> Roitto 2008, p.75-79.

had a chance of swaying the Americans. But before drawing any further conclusions, this dynamic between Parliament and the Government should be examined more closely.

In response to the initial chaos created by the atomic bomb, the Government established various advisory organs to help it first clarify the situation, and then draft an atomic policy. However, there was such a lack of information among the political elite, that the role of the advisory bodies actually became larger than was originally intended. In a way they became more than just an executive arm of the Government, responsible for simply implementing policies made by others; they were part of the policymaking process themselves. One could therefore argue that the change in foreign policy, from active and idealistic to reactive and realism-oriented started here. This was compounded by a Parliament that began to put pressure on the Government to keep to its initial plans.

## **2.3 Parliamentary response - the focus on defence**

As we have seen in the previous sub-chapter, fear and anxiety over atomic issues was widespread among parliamentarians in the early autumn of 1945, and then again in November, especially due to a deterioration in the international situation and the increasing Soviet aggression towards Britain. Yet at the same time, a more concrete debate began as to practical steps that could be taken, and this gradually enabled Parliament to come up with some answers to the atomic question.

Parliament's first issue concerned the atomic bomb as military weapon. This made sense, as the new technology had only been used in this form and all the rest was, as yet, speculative. But, as the international situation worsened and the atomic bomb made headlines all over the world, the immediacy of the threat of utter annihilation, ensured that the atomic question naturally began to address the more speculative topics. Debates on atomic defence led to debates on foreign policy, to debates on ensuring world peace, and on what the United Nations should do. The debates concerning purely military implications were most prominent in the spring and early summer of 1946 and, with regard to the defence budget, they also featured briefly in the early autumn of 1945.

### **2.3.1 "We are more vulnerable than ever" - parliamentary fears**

This brings us back to the Debate on the Address at the start of Parliament in 1945. Even at this stage, it was clear that there was a great deal of interest in the new weapon that had helped bring the Second World War to a close. Indeed, in a review of the war that had just been won, the former PM (now MP for Woodford, Conservative) described the bomb as an "irresistible power" and a key factor in the defeat of Japan. Churchill then went on to argue that it had saved

numerous allied lives, not to mention unnecessary expenditure on waging the war any longer.<sup>473</sup>

The press also talked about the atomic bomb in these glowing terms - as a wonder weapon that had won the war for the Allies. Similar comments were also repeated to some extent in parliamentary debates as well; Lord Denman supported the use of atomic bombs, for example, during the Lord's debate about Japan on 25 October 1945. But as a whole, supporters were few and far between. Viscount Bennet, for instance, opposed the notion that the atomic bomb had been the decisive factor in ending the war, although like most of the other MPs who expressed moral concern about the new weapon, he nevertheless had supported Churchill's actions<sup>474</sup>. Many of the Lords Spiritual were in this position, for example, while other MPs (e.g., Richard Stokes (Ipswich, Labour) in the Adjournment Debate on 27 March 1946) were morally opposed to the extent that they saw Churchill as a possible war criminal.

"I may say I am in some bewilderment on that matter, because I have never yet understood what is a war criminal. If I had my way and had to deal with war criminals, I should, in the first place, put in the dock those responsible for the release of the atomic bomb. I should certainly include them amongst any war criminals, but that is clearly a matter of opinion."<sup>475</sup>

In the same debate, however, Lord Denman showed that he evidently did not have any moral qualms about using the bomb, judging from the following rather vengeful statement.

"[B]ut after all, if this rumour is true, it did save the lives of many thousands of our men who were prisoners of war. If the rumour be not true the atomic bomb saved thousands of those who were reaching the end of their tether and who were facing a lingering death from starvation or disease. It may be said that these things were due to the innate cruelty of a barbarous people, but I think these things were also due to a deliberate and studied policy which was to degrade and humiliate white men and women in the eyes of Asiatics."<sup>476</sup>

There was nevertheless a wide consensus that with the atomic bomb a complete overhaul of the nation's defences would be necessary. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the Civil Defence Bill (5 November 1945), Home Secretary James Chuter Ede (South Shields, Labour) reviewed the country's wartime defences and concluded that the "technique of civil defence, as highly developed it has been in this country, is now out of date."<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc76-81.

<sup>474</sup> HL Deb 25 October 1945 vol 137 cc519.

<sup>475</sup> HC Deb 27 March 1946 vol 421 cc532-533. Then again for example Lord Denman mentioned the atomic bomb had saved numerous allied troops and POW's lives, and therefore the use of atomic bomb was justified. The topic was also covered in the light of the cruelties performed by Japanese troops in various occasions. For example see: HL Deb 25 Oct vol 137 cc499-508

<sup>476</sup> HL Deb 25 October 1945 vol 137 cc506-507.

<sup>477</sup> HC Deb 5 November 1945 vol 415 cc936-937.

Similar comments had also been made earlier within Government circles by Prime Minister Attlee.<sup>478</sup> Indeed, in a military sense, Britain was now considered to be more vulnerable than ever according to Lord Altrincham (Lt.Col. Sir Edward Grigg, Conservative). Egypt and the Suez Canal, for example, were clearly targets for an atomic attack were the world situation to deteriorate any further.

“We are both now much more vulnerable than we used to be in the past because of the development of the air arm. In the old days, Britain had her moat in the sea, and Egypt had her deserts. The sea is now not impassable, and the deserts are now not impenetrable. All that has been altered by the conquest of the air Both therefore have lost the kind of security on which they used to be able to count, and both have reason, to guard themselves more particularly against the danger in this era of the atomic bomb. If there is anywhere in the world more vulnerable to the atomic bomb than Great Britain it is Egypt, whose whole life depends on the broad stream of the Nile: Therefore for both countries security is not a question of the arrangements, military or otherwise, which are made within the national frontiers of that country.”<sup>479</sup>

It seemed of no matter to Lord Altrincham that no countries other than the United States (or Britain) had access to the atomic bomb already. But, of course, he was not alone in his fears; Cpt. David Gammans (Hornsey, Conservative) was one of the first MPs in the Commons to raise the issue of a changed security situation. Atomic warfare and the vulnerability to aerial attacks meant that Britain could no longer afford to remain isolationist and trust in the Royal Navy and English Channel to be a sufficient deterrent.

“During the whole of the 19<sup>th</sup> century we here could afford to remain more or less isolationist... We were protected by the Royal Navy and by the English Channel. In this war the English Channel proved to be little more than a tank trap, and in the end did not save the United States from flying bombs and rockets. Now we have the atomic bomb.”<sup>480</sup>

Gammans therefore demanded that the Labour government prioritise the security of the British Isles in its foreign policy. He saw them as being “immeasurably more vulnerable” than, for example, the United States or Soviet Union. He based this estimation perhaps on the relatively smaller distance between Britain and its potential aggressors, and on the notion that the high concentrations of population density in the UK made them potential targets for aerial attack.<sup>481</sup>

Viscount Addison (Dr. Christopher Addison, Leader of the House of Lords, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Labour) was certain that a new defence strategy was required, now that the atomic bomb had dissolved former

<sup>478</sup> No.192, (Undated) Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Atomic Bomb, (slightly revised and circulated as GEN. 75/1 on 28 August 1945) DBPO.

<sup>479</sup> HL Deb 7 March vol 139 cc1240-41. There was also discussion about the possibility of atomic war in the Suez area later, see for example HC Deb 29 May vol 423 cc705-706. (Anthony Eden, Warwick and Leamington, Conservative, Deputy Leader of the Opposition). About vulnerability see also HL Deb 29 July 1946 vol 142 cc.1034-1035.

<sup>480</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc125-127.

<sup>481</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc125-127.

frontiers and borders.<sup>482</sup> The Earl of Perth agreed with this also, when the debate was resumed on 28 November.

“It is true that all the old ideas of security have been completely shattered by the invention of the atomic bomb[...].”<sup>483</sup>

The English Channel, dividing Britain from the European mainland was, as we have seen already, variously described in unflattering tones as no more than a tank trap or a moat.<sup>484</sup> However, not only did Britain need new defences, and an overhaul of her armed forces, but the country was facing other serious problems as well, and some members were worried that atomic matters were detracting attention from these.<sup>485</sup> Lord Westwood (Labour) had emphasised already in the early autumn that if resources had somehow been found in the midst of war to create this immense destructive power, there should be resources enough to take care of the urgent post-war housing problem now facing a country that had been heavily bombed for several years.<sup>486</sup> Internationally there was the task ahead of establishing the United Nations, drawing up peace treaties and dealing with the immediate issue facing the country of food shortages.<sup>487</sup> Changes that needed to be made to the armed forces were nevertheless considered throughout the year. It was thought that the atomic bomb would destroy whole armies in an instant.

“A single heavy attack, lasting a matter of minutes, might destroy the ability of a nation to defend itself further.’ ‘The atomic bomb,’ the statement added, ‘is a deadly challenger to civilization itself.’”<sup>488</sup>

The same volatile conditions applied also to foreign policy, and was one of the reasons behind suggestions that atomic energy should be controlled through the United Nations.<sup>489</sup>

There were quite a few remarks like those of Victor Yates (Birmingham Ladywood, Labour) on the possibility for dispensing with large armed forces in the future due to their obsolescence in the face of the atomic bomb.<sup>490</sup> In terms

<sup>482</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc40-41.

<sup>483</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc84-85.

<sup>484</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc636-639 Scholefield (Sydney) Allen (Crewe Lab.)

<sup>485</sup> See for example HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc117-121 Viscount Elibank “it is that the atomic bomb in these debates has, perhaps, too greatly overshadowed the many other important questions and problems now agitating Europe and other parts of the world, many of which will have to be solved irrespective of the atomic bomb.”

<sup>486</sup> HL Deb 16 August 1945 vol 137 cc30-31.

<sup>487</sup> See for example Lord Strabolgi’s (Joseph Montague Kenworthy, Lab.) comment HL Deb 14 November 1945 vol 137 cc886-887. About the food and UNRRA’s small budget compared to the estimated development of atomic weapons (£500 million mentioned by Philip Noel-Baker, The Minister of State, Derby, Lab.) see HC Deb 16 November vol 415 cc2603.

<sup>488</sup> For example see: HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc275-276. Earl of Darnley, referring to *The Times* article citing on The Association of Los Alamos Scientists on the previous day.

<sup>489</sup> For example see HL Deb 27 March vol 140 cc406-407. Lord Chatfield (Alfred Ernle Chatfield)

<sup>490</sup> HC Deb 05 March 1946 vol 420 cc213-214.

of Britain's overstretched military commitment to her severely weakened empire, this could prove a very useful tool. Nevertheless Rhys Davies (Houghton West, Labour) went further along this line of argument by claiming that conscription was needless now that there was the atomic bomb.<sup>491</sup> Both Yates and Davies were using the issue here to argue against the Conservatives' wish to continue compulsory military service, and perhaps, in this respect, the atomic question was serving the needs of Labour's peace strategy. But judging from the Government's Command Paper on Services it was not clear what its attitude to conscription was, as precise estimates on the military requirements for the new international situation<sup>492</sup> were still quite vague at this point. Because of the ambiguous international situation though, the Government's pleas to be given more time before making defence spending decisions were mostly accepted by Parliament. It only became an issue again when the Statement on Defence Estimates was discussed in 1946, and it became clear to all that the Government had still not decided on anything concrete.

British foreign commitments were tying down a large number of troops. For example, even with the war ending, it was clear that some British troops were required as an occupying force in former enemy states. In addition, there were many in Parliament with a vested interest in maintaining an important Army, Navy and Air Force presence.<sup>493</sup> In the House of Lords, Viscount Trenchard (also known as "patron of the Air force") wanted more information on the military implications of atomic proposals and assurances from the Government that all three branches would be kept in some capacity, irrespective of the country's atomic capability.<sup>494</sup> Viscount Samuel (Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords) claimed, in a debate on demobilisation that all three would be needed for 'low intensity conflicts' (LIC).

"Undoubtedly the invention of the atomic bomb will not dispense with military, naval, or air forces. At the present time there are in progress military operations or preparations to forestall the necessity of military operations in Palestine and Java, and even when the United Nations Organisation comes into full operation it might be necessary at any moment to take repressive action in some country threatening aggression. But no one would suggest that any of those cases could be dealt with by dropping atomic bombs and wiping out masses of the population. ...Consequently, it is clear that there must be, for a long time to come, a very considerable force maintained—unhappily at the expense of the taxpayers of this country—and making a demand on our man-power. How big the Forces may be cannot yet be ascertained [...]."<sup>495</sup>

<sup>491</sup> For example see HC Deb 5 March vol 420 cc211-213. For Davies see HC Deb 4 March vol 420 cc99-100. Davies also mentioned the UN as a guardian of the peace.

<sup>492</sup> Though the idea of faster demobilisation was also touched, as Jennie Lee (Cannock, Lab.) mentioned that the atomic bomb should lead to such international co-operation that could make it possible to hasten demobilisation. HC Deb 22 October 1945 vol 414 cc1735-1736.

<sup>493</sup> See for example Viscount Trenchard (Hugh, Montague Trenchard) demanding a statement on the future of the forces, or at least more information. HL Debates 14. November 1945 vol 137 cc878-886.

<sup>494</sup> HL Deb 14 Nov vol 137 cc878-885

<sup>495</sup> HL Deb 20 November 1945 vol 137 cc1018-1019.

Prime Minister Attlee also underlined the need for conventional forces to be able to respond to various overseas military commitments without the mass destruction that atomic warfare seemed to imply.<sup>496</sup> But for the Conservatives in opposition, the Government's policy of secrecy and vagueness on foreign and military commitments made it hard to estimate what was, in fact, adequate.<sup>497</sup> Lord De L'Isle, who had been decorated with the Victoria Cross in the war, pointed out that the Government could not wait for science to solve all future problems if, at that time in 1946, Britain did not have adequate armed forces to even pursue her own foreign policy.<sup>498</sup> Winston Churchill also agreed on the importance of conventional forces being kept alongside atomic weapons.

"I also agree with President Truman when he says that those who argue that, because of the atomic bomb, there is no need for armies, navies and air forces, are at present, 100 per cent wrong."<sup>499</sup>

Another argument that a few parliamentarians used in support of keeping conventional forces was that, with the current state of military technology, Britain would not be able to survive as long as she had done in the recent war, were there to be another. She must therefore be able to mobilise in advance, rather than expect to do it in the midst of war.

"The tempo of modern war has so increased that we cannot rely any longer on surviving the first round of the fight and settling down to build up our Forces after the struggle has begun."<sup>500</sup>

Some MPs pointed to the clear indications that the US would be maintaining a great number of its armed forces.<sup>501</sup> The Government thus felt under some pressure to do the same, especially with regards to the Navy - seen to be vital for not only protecting the British Isles, but also trade throughout the British Empire.<sup>502</sup> In fact, the Army, Royal Air Force (RAF), and Royal Navy (RN) all had their separate interests to protect. The RN, in particular, had a historical importance in defending Britain's trade routes and maritime empire, as Sir Ralph Glyn (Abingdon, Conservative) was keen to remind his colleagues.<sup>503</sup>

"What seems to me to be of prime importance, as the Prime Minister himself hinted, when the conference with the Dominions is held, is the matter of strategy, which has always been jealously guarded by this country, of the land bridge between the

<sup>496</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc105-106.

<sup>497</sup> For instance see HC Deb 05 March 1946 vol 420 cc242 Anthony Eden (Warwick and Leamington, Con.); HC Deb 27 June 1946 vol 424 cc1543-1544. Toby Low, (Blackpool North, Con.)

<sup>498</sup> See for example HL Deb 24 July 1946 vol 142 cc.913-922. Lord Croft (Henry Croft, Conservative,) and Baron De L'Isle and Dudley (William Sidney, Conservative,) cc929-932.

<sup>499</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1297.

<sup>500</sup> Lord Croft (Henry Page Croft, Conservative,) HL Deb 14 November vol 137 cc.891-893.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> HL Deb 14 October 1946 vol 143 cc199-200. Lord Pakenham (Frank Pakenham, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War, Lab.)

<sup>503</sup> See for example HL Deb 26 November 1945 vol 138 cc7-12. And HC Deb 4 March vol 420 cc71-72.

oceans. Whatever may be the future of the Security Council and of U.N.O., nothing will alter the fact that we are a maritime people, and that our Empire depends on the sea and the proper protection of our commerce. To protect our commerce we must command land bridges between the oceans."<sup>504</sup>

Later on in the spring of 1946 however, when the Statement on Defence Estimates was made, the traditional significance of the navy was questioned again. If the atomic bomb were to be carried on ships, perhaps capital ships would no longer need to be constructed, considering that tests had revealed smaller vessels were quite up to the task.<sup>505</sup> In spite of all this however, the Government decided the Royal Navy was not yet to be condemned to obsolescence.<sup>506</sup> Indeed, there were many MPs like James Thomas (Hereford, Conservative) who, as we can see below, wholeheartedly believed that it would be some time yet before air would overtake sea as the major means of transport.

"The atomic bomb may change the type of ship, but it does not alter the mission of the Navy in controlling the sea. If our Navy were to be abandoned, there is no need to use the atomic bomb, because all an enemy has to do is to cut our arteries at sea and destroy us... ..Aircraft grow larger year by year and they are becoming increasingly independent of weather conditions, but the time when air transport will entirely supersede surface transport is not, I think, in the foreseeable future... ..and to regard ships as already becoming obsolescent, to remember sober facts."<sup>507</sup>

Not that the RAF was seen as any less important in an atomic age, especially considering the only atomic bombs to have ever been detonated in warfare were dropped from a plane.<sup>508</sup> Flight Lieutenant John Haire (Wycombe, Labour) claimed that in the future, the whole world could be policed with just a few Mosquito planes armed with atomic bombs.<sup>509</sup> Haire's comment also shows that Britain was seen by some as policing the world in the future. Equally important, if not more so (especially to many in the House of Lords), was the need to reestablish civil aviation. According to Lord Brabazon of Tara (Conservative), the RAF should perhaps wait for further information on atomic weaponry and suchlike before going ahead with the design of new aircraft.<sup>510</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> HC Deb 31 July vol 426 c208W. Group Cpt. Clifford Wilcock (Derby, Lab) had asked if the government would stop the building of capital ships and focus on smaller vessels because of the Bikini tests' results. The answer was that at the moment no capital ships were under construction. Similar question was asked by Wing Cmdr. Roland Robinson (Blackpool South, Conservative,) in HC Deb 30 October 1946 vol 428 cc583-584.

<sup>506</sup> HC Deb 7 March 1946 vol 420 cc544-546 & 551-552. A.V Alexander (First Lord of Admiralty, Sheffield, Hillsborough, Lab.)

<sup>507</sup> HC Deb 7 March 1946 vol 420 cc560-561. Thomas compared cargo transport costs and difficulties by plane and by sea, in favour of the sea transport.

<sup>508</sup> HC Deb 12 October 1945 vol 414 cc619-620 Group Captain Wilcock (Derby, Lab).

<sup>509</sup> HC Deb 22 October 1945 vol 414 cc1774. Though at the moment of this debate the Mosquito B Mk XVI could carry one 4,000-lb HC Mk I-VI "cookie bomb" in its internal bomb bay, the measurements of the "Little Boy" used in Hiroshima were apparently just bit too large to fit in to Mosquito.

<sup>510</sup> For example see: HL Deb 18 October 1945 vol 137 cc371-373. "The suggestion I put forward is that for the next two years the industry should be allowed to concentrate 100 per cent on civil aviation to get it really going." The Lords also seemed quite keen to support air-gliding and private flying clubs.



Prioritising civil aviation was also a point made by MPs in the Commons, especially since civil aviators could also double up as ready-trained military pilots in case of war<sup>511</sup>, and because civil aviation would provide a useful forum for technological breakthroughs that might at the same time prove useful for the RAF.<sup>512</sup> Aviation was thus seen by many as more important than ever. What is interesting in all the above cases, is how the threats posed by the new technology were made to serve a number of quite different agendas.

Although the full implications of atomic technology for British defence were thus not yet fully known, the change in military thinking was relatively drastic. The Government had, understandably, asked for more time to gather the necessary information, and it had been given that time. But now it was time to act.

### 2.3.2 Dispensing population, troops and industry as a possible solution

Finding answers to defence-related problems created by the atomic bomb was difficult. Besides the need to establish firm grounds for peace, and the moral basis for this,<sup>513</sup> there were more material matters to consider. A strategic re-think of where industries and workforces should be based was suggested by Major Wilfred Vernon (Dulwich, Labour),<sup>514</sup> while Cyril Osborne (Louth, Conservative) went a step further on 5 December 1945, when he asked if armaments factories should perhaps be moved to the Dominions, only to be met with a derisive response from the House. Nevertheless, the idea of relocating centres of defence activity persisted. Brigadier Toby Low (Blackpool North, Conservative) raised such options in the spring of 1946.

*“When I was looking at it from the worm's eye point of view, when we considered defence against frightful weapons, we were always faced with two courses. Firstly, to go underground, or, secondly, to disperse, or sometimes to do both. I believe that if we take our defence seriously, and if we consider it necessary to continue having a defence scheme at all, this country is faced with exactly that alternative in the quite near future.”<sup>515</sup>*

He was supported by Major Niall McPherson (Dumfries, National Liberal) who also mentioned the dispersal of troops as one option so that the armed forces be better protected from atomic attack.

*“The advance of science, and the development of air communications and of technical equipment, have fused together the problems of the defence of bases and of communications. They are no longer separable. That process of fusion seems to me to have been completed by the invention of the atom bomb, which necessitates a great*

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<sup>511</sup> HC Deb 12 October 1945 vol 414 cc612-613 Lt.Col. Sir Thomas Moore (Ayr Burghs, Conn) cc619-620 Group Captain Wilcock (Derby, Lab).

<sup>512</sup> The pre-war era had seen various feats in showing of technology and skills of specialists in fields related to military and defence, for instance the speed-flying contests and record setting competitions. Similar events happen all the time even today.

<sup>513</sup> For example see HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc273-285.

<sup>514</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc684-688;

<sup>515</sup> HC Deb 4 March 1946 vol 420 cc93-94.

deal more dispersion, and the holding of forces at different places to a greater extent than before.”<sup>516</sup>

Although much of this actual reorganisation of defence occurred later than 1945-6, and so is beyond the scope of this sub-chapter, defence was nevertheless being generally considered as part of the atomic question.

Foreign policy required cooperation with other Commonwealth countries and the United Nations. In terms of a wider defence policy, the US and USSR also needed to be considered too.<sup>517</sup> Winston Churchill, like the Chiefs of Staff mentioned earlier, was a strong advocate for Britain having her own bomb. During an intense adjournment debate on foreign policy, and just before Attlee was about to head to the Anglo-American negotiations in Washington, Churchill declared that US President Truman had acknowledged Britain was in possession of atomic secrets.<sup>518</sup>

Churchill added that, as this was the case, Britain should therefore manufacture her own bomb.

“Fifthly, and this, I take it, is already agreed, we should make atomic bombs, and have them here, even if manufactured elsewhere, in suitable safe storage with the least possible delay.”<sup>519</sup>

Other contributors to the debate thought that having a British atomic bomb would act as an effective deterrent.<sup>520</sup> Others, like Lt. Colonel Martin Lindsay (Solihull, Labour) voiced concerns over an arms race and recommended international cooperation, but agreed that Britain should pursue her own programme as well.<sup>521</sup> Gradually the atomic bomb was changing from being simply a weapon of war into a political weapon. On 23 November 1945 in his ‘oral question’<sup>522</sup>, William Teeling (Brighton, Conservative) even went so far as to say that Hiroshima and Nagasaki had brought about a political victory, rather than a military one, and thus the Allies should still be wary of a Japan that might fight back.<sup>523</sup>

Teeling’s concern was not shared by so many though. Major Niall Macpherson (Dumfriesshire, National Liberal), in the same debate on Foreign Affairs, was more concerned with the fact that, unlike other weapons previously, if this one got into the wrong hands it could mean much greater destruction than ever before.<sup>524</sup> This previous comment shows that MPs had limited access to a good source of information about the atomic bomb. And Teeling evidently

<sup>516</sup> HC Deb 4 March 1946 vol 420 cc113-114.

<sup>517</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc82-85.

<sup>518</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945, vol 415 cc1299. Churchill read out from a statement Truman had made at a press conference held in response to the infamous Blackburn adjournment debate when atomic secrets were leaked (see 2.2.2.3 above).

<sup>519</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945, vol 415 cc1300.

<sup>520</sup> HC Deb 12 March 1946 vol 420 cc990-992.

<sup>521</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945, vol 415 cc1314-1315.

<sup>522</sup> ‘Oral questions’ were one of the parliamentary tools that MPs used to open up the atomic debate. See section 2.3.4 for further details.

<sup>523</sup> HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 cc797-798.

<sup>524</sup> HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 cc821-822.

did not know about the horrors of radiation, judging from his comment. These horrific effects were both still being discovered by experts, and being kept secret for understandable reasons.

But even if Britain did have the bomb as a deterrent, it was not seen to be enough. Parliament returned to the ideas expressed in Labour's election manifesto, concerning a foreign policy which could alter the course of international relations, so that the atomic threat would become an international rather than national responsibility. Cooperation between the great powers was initially suggested to effect this change. For example, the Soviet Union could be allowed a greater role in solving the atomic question with the US and UK, and thereby have less need to be belligerent. Some MPs backed this idea, but some were sternly against it.<sup>525</sup>

Another suggestion was to control atomic development internationally via the United Nations. So the debate had widened, with quite variety of suggestions now that Parliament had found the means to debate the subject.

What is interesting about these debates on defence, was that they were now seemingly inseparable from the foreign policy debates. Before, the two had been simply overlapping yet nevertheless distinct, but with the advent of the atomic bomb, defence and foreign policy were veritably welded together. This was partly due to the wide scope of debate that the atomic question opened up. Parliament's remit was usually to discuss foreign policy, rather than defence (in the interests of national security); but the atomic debate meant that by simply discussing the urgent international situation in 1945-6 (which Parliament could not afford to ignore), meant defence policy was also discussed and required that parliamentarians be better informed of it. The gleaning of this information was via a number of parliamentary procedures, such as adjournment debates and questions, which had been found to work in the first post-war phase of parliamentary momentum. This phase will be covered in more detail in 2.3.3.

### 2.3.3 From shock and fear to insufficient defence - first phase

The crisis of war has a parliamentary momentum of its own that can make political cultures more receptive to change, but this change must not be so great as to cause the political system to break down. Transition from war to peace therefore takes time and a great deal of effort. The transition period of returning to peace in British politics (1945-1946) witnessed just this kind of momentum within Parliament. Old practices could not be kept as such, but too much of the new might have brought things down.

The atomic question presented an important post-war challenge regarding defence and foreign policy. It was seen, on the one hand, as a major factor in the troubled international relations; and on the other, as a possible military deterrent and potential energy source for a country facing energy shortages with limited defence. The question thus raised public interest and Parliament was

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<sup>525</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1295-1296 (Churchill); HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 cc787-788

obliged to discuss it, despite the Government's attempts at regulation. This was done via especially oral questions (see the case of Teeling above), and if this did not work, then through an adjournment debate (also see above). These countered the Government's attempts to regulate the agenda by (among other procedures) limiting time, or avoiding answering.

The transition from war to peace was a context ripe for political change. As mentioned many times earlier, the election had brought in an influx of new MPs, many of whom had never been in government. The mandate of change from the people was strong among these MPs, and a pragmatic policy mattered. Certain customary procedures enabled a wider grasp of current affairs, and the atomic bomb was one such current affair available for grasping. It could not be swept under the rug by the Government. This all meant there was a post-war parliamentary momentum for change anyway, and added to this was the fact that the atomic bomb was seen as an immense threat that needed to be discussed.

The atomic bomb caused anxiety and led, as we have seen, to a certain degree of hyperbole due to a lack of precise information on the matter. Most of the discussion was at first attempting to define 'the atomic question'. In addition to the odd remarks, and expressions of fear, Parliament did start to gain some information to base further questions on, as autumn turned into the winter of 1945. The new technology's immediate connection to matters of defence became evident from these questions, and Parliament gradually gained access to defence information that before would have been restricted. Before this, Parliament would only have been brought in to discuss the defence budget estimates;<sup>526</sup> but now this was more than just a matter of finances. Parliamentarians were aware that there was leverage to be had here, and pressure to be utilized. If the Government had nothing to say on a matter, it could nevertheless be questioned further until a statement was made. In the meantime, it had to give something away occasionally, as no comment might have led to unwanted further scrutiny from Parliament, ammunition for the opposition, and even perhaps a vote of confidence. Not answering at all could lead to something much worse than offering carefully chosen tidbits, as Chamberlain's fall from grace in the famous Norway debate plainly showed.

The atomic bomb was a weapon. Therefore the atomic matters fell under the category of defence. This was an easy way to pigeon-hole the difficult atomic question, and while reorganising defence, reallocating industries, or creating Britain's own atomic deterrent were never seen as permanent solutions to the immense threat Parliament saw hanging over Britain, it was nevertheless time to look beyond defence. Perhaps the world could be made a safer place in some way to ensure that atomic warfare would only ever remain a distant threat.

This required a change in foreign policy, as had been promised earlier by the leaders of the Labour Party. The challenge posed by the atomic bomb was too large to be solved solely in the realm of defence; and parliamentarians had a right to participate in finding a solution for the matter. Negotiating access to

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<sup>526</sup> Richards 1967, Brand 1992.

atomic matters thus gave Parliament better access to both defence and foreign affairs. In addition to this, Parliament found relatively new complementary procedural practices that allowed it to exercise its constitutional right to supervise Government.

Parliament's job was to contribute to a better public understanding of the new technology, and combined with press coverage of the issue, this is just what it did. As the atomic bomb had been a 'current affair' for some time, this also contributed to the parliamentary momentum to discuss the matter further. Parliament thus gained further access to foreign affairs, which was again a field in which its role was somewhat marginal, or so some previous research claims<sup>527</sup>. My research has, however, led to a slightly different perspective. Foreign affairs were not out of the reach of Parliament, and neither was the atomic question. There were numerous attributing factors, of which historical context was perhaps the most important. The sentiment of change suggested to many that this was the chance that must be taken to do things differently. The golden age of rhetorics was far behind, and new simpler tools, such as the adjournment debate, and questions, especially related to media and press coverage of the topics at hand, meant avoiding voting and heavily regulated measures. Indirectly, the increased parliamentarisation of foreign policy matters also contributed to this.<sup>528</sup>

The atomic question also threw up the idea of a "new" foreign policy which would involve international control via the UN, for example. Parliament had already been given access to information about the UN, when it was asked to ratify the Charter of the UN. There was a hope that the stability and safety of the world could be ensured in this way, and that an unnecessary (and possibly very dangerous) arms race could be avoided - even though some claimed this had already begun.<sup>529</sup>

The next chapter looks more thoroughly at how the Government defined, then rephrased and attempted to consolidate its foreign policy in the course of parliamentary debates over the atomic question.

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<sup>527</sup> Cf. introduction about previous literature. Also in political theory of the time Suvi Soininen 2008 has considered that Parliament might have been considered as rubber stamp in foreign policy. The idea is however only based on two political theorists' ideas and not on empirical research.

<sup>528</sup> Cf. Ihalainen & Matikainen 2016; Roitto 2016; Matikainen 2016 (all forthcoming).

<sup>529</sup> HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 cc788.

### **3 PHASE TWO: FOREIGN POLICY - A STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE REALITIES OF SECRET COOPERATION AND MORE IDEALISTIC NOTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL CONTROL (NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1945)**

This chapter looks at the variety of atomic and foreign policy options that were being considered by the British government and its parliament (which were more interdependent than ever) in late 1945. These options can be placed into one of two categories: (1) public, internationalist, and idealistic; or (2) secret and realistic. It will also become clear that to do this involves a comparison of Parliament and the executive's attitude on how the atomic question related to foreign affairs. In many cases, these approaches overlapped, but there was also a clear dichotomy between the two as to how they should be pursued. Comparing attitudes to atomic foreign policy in terms of these two categories is done to reveal: (a) the changes in British policy that occurred; (b) aspects of atomic diplomacy within the West; and (c) whether Parliament had an effect on how the Government tackled the atomic question.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, irrespective of Labour's initial idealistic stance on the matter, officials from the former administration had very quickly made it clear to the executive that there was no time to waste in drafting atomic policy, due to the fragile international situation and the danger of Britain losing its currently advantageous but rapidly diminishing atomic potential.

Meanwhile, in Parliament it took a little longer to make the connection between atomic and foreign policy; but once the link was established, it strengthened parliamentary momentum so that, against all odds, parliamentarians were able to take a more active role in foreign policy considerations as well as atomic matters. The nature of this momentum is thus also considered in this chapter.

The executive eventually opted for realistic over idealistic policies in the end, culminating in the Washington negotiations in November, but Parliament could not be persuaded on that point, and so that path is also examined here, as in this brief period of time, two major changes in British atomic foreign policy

occurred at the governmental level. However as we shall see, due to parliamentary pressure, the internationalist side of the matter could not be totally forsaken by the government either.

Both Parliament and the executive had similar bidirectional notions about atomic foreign policy in the early autumn of 1945. In other words, they saw atomic and foreign policy as needing to be pursued in two largely opposing directions at the same time. Internationalist policy of co-operation and international control was the initial option. The other option was the aim of becoming first and foremost a state with atomic capability in order to be safe, which meant realist policy, and for the Government further secret co-operation. In other words, on the one hand there was the international threat that the atomic bomb posed for the whole world, and on the other there was the national threat that *not* having the atomic bomb posed for Britain (in the new scenario of the atomic age). This bidirectional combination henceforth constituted initial, ambivalent “atomic foreign policy”. Because of Labour dominance, Parliament saw the internationalist side of the matter as particularly important, whereas the Government felt pressure the other way, after briefings of a more secretive realistic policy from executive officials in the early autumn, and in the context of increasing international tension by the end of 1945.

Section 3.1 looks at an expanded version of the atomic question which might explain more fully the bidirectional approach. This covers the general shift towards seeing atomic matters as part and parcel of foreign policy; the British executive’s preliminary attempts at drafting atomic policy; Parliament’s initial situation upon its election; and the momentum therein which eventually contributed to the parliamentarisation of atomic matters within the framework of defence and then foreign policy.

Section 3.2 has two main parts. The first focuses more precisely on idealist or internationalist suggestions for atomic foreign policy, particularly as envisioned in Parliament. These involved a variety of solutions, including the United Nations, internationalism, global cooperation, and even a worldwide ban on the bomb. I also point out that, by committing publicly to these in Parliament, the executive had indirectly made it possible for Parliament to have a say on the matter as well. This newly gained prerogative created further problems.

The second part of 3.2 considers the rise of the political realism, especially in the Government’s atomic foreign policy agenda. And even if it did not wholly support cooperation limited bilaterally to Anglo-American cooperation at this stage, Parliament’s version of this realism is also important. In a later course of events, it has been suggested<sup>530</sup> that this became an alternative third way for internationalist policy. In the autumn of 1945, however, the Government sought to implement the atomic policy that it had rapidly drafted because of external and internal pressures. Later this pressure was also cleverly used as leverage within what was to become the “western bloc”. The policy had severe limitations, both on the international and domestic levels, and although it was to change a few times over the course of the year, it was essentially against the

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<sup>530</sup> Vickers 2004, p.169.

Labour Party's original manifesto pledge of peaceful international cooperation which aimed to end an era of "behind the doors" foreign policy. The international situation worsened for a number of reasons and attributing factors, such as path dependency on past atomic co-operation, British dependency on American economic support, and the failure of the Council of Foreign Secretaries (held in London from 11 September - 2 October 1945)<sup>531</sup>, affected the situation, a more realist foreign policy began to emerge.

Section 3.3 therefore covers the actual talks in Washington, and the further bidirectional atomic foreign policies that were a result of them. It became evident after these talks, that Government and Parliament mostly supported different policies as their first option, and from this point onwards they began to go their separate ways, at least in terms of searching for solutions to the atomic question. The political realist position adopted by the Government mainly focused on a continuation of the traditional great power foreign policy, while Parliament's more internationalist position focused on the idea that the United Nations should play a key role in solving the atomic question.

Though it is also related to these events, the Moscow conference and its aftermath are covered separately (in chapter 5), as these events constitute yet another turning point in atomic foreign policy, at least from the government's point of view.

### 3.1 Bidirectional atomic foreign policy

"No Government has ever been placed in such a position as is ours today. The Governments of the U.K. and the U.S.A. are responsible as never before for the future of the human race.

I can see no other course than that I should on behalf of the Government put the whole of the case to President Truman and propose that he and I and Stalin should forthwith take counsel together."<sup>532</sup>

The above quote, from a Gen 75 memorandum of Attlee's that we saw earlier was later circulated within the FO. It sought to underline the global importance of the atomic question, and perhaps more importantly for us here, it illustrated the initial starting point for Attlee's foreign policy. The sheer scale of the atomic question, and its implications for defence, meant seriously reconsidering Britain's position in the world and the stance she would take in the future. Not only was this clear to the main political actors<sup>533</sup>, but also to a curious and worried public, kept abreast of the matter by a press that emphasised the global significance of

<sup>531</sup> When the American Secretary of State, James Byrnes, failed in his attempts at atomic diplomacy with the USSR. For instance see Harbutt 1986, p. 124-126.

<sup>532</sup> No.192 (undated), Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Atomic Bomb (slightly revised and circulated as GEN. 75/1 on 28 August 1945), DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>533</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 A.C.A.E(45)3 International Policy on the use of atomic energy, 24 August 1945; HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1297 (Winston Churchill, Woodford, Con.); cc1303 (Clement Davies, Montgomery, Lib.) cc.1328-1329 (Lynn Ungoe-Thomas (Llandaff and Barry, Lab) demanded an according change in foreign policy.



the atomic bomb.<sup>534</sup> However, as mentioned earlier, not everyone in Government was as yet fully informed of the foreign policy implications. Attlee and Bevin, for instance, had been kept out of the loop regarding Anglo-American atomic research.<sup>535</sup> Most of the essential information about past agreements that had been made were kept secret and in the hands of a few officials from the previous administration who were therefore essential to ensure governmental continuity.

The Labour government thus received the necessary briefings which soon made it clear that foreign affairs and atomic policy would henceforth be inextricably linked. To begin with Attlee's inner circle had devised a preliminary approach to the subject based on the ideals that had swept Labour to power; while executive officials had a different approach, as seen from the briefings of the advisory bodies (discussed in 2.2.2).<sup>536</sup> The latter based their approach more on the political realism of Attlee's predecessor Churchill.

"37. Whatever arrangements may be made in the international field there are two points which are of fundamental importance in the policy to be pursued by this country.

38. The first is that we should undertake production of bombs on a large scale for our own defence as soon as possible. The Advisory Committee are at present considering plans for large scale production; but it would be of assistance to them in framing technical recommendations if they were given an indication of the Government's views in regard to the relative importance of:

the production of bombs;

the development of atomic energy for industrial purposes;

research and development

We suggest that the Prime Minister should issue a directive laying it down that priority is to be given to the first of these objectives.

39. The second essential in our policy is that we should maintain the closest possible co-operation with the United States[...]"<sup>537</sup>

This is quite different from what for instance Gormly has suggested. According to him the Cabinet, the Foreign Office as well as the Chiefs of Staff seconded Attlee's initial views of atomic control under the United Nations mandate.<sup>538</sup> Roger Makins even stated that conflicts were to be expected and that the atomic bomb would not be the solution for all the defence problems:

"...second-rate weapons will still be required against second-rate nations."<sup>539</sup>

<sup>534</sup> Mäkilä, 2007 p.18-19; 275.

<sup>535</sup> Bullock 1984, p.184-185. Bullock says that Bevin and Attlee didn't even know the project existed! Gowing agrees, Gowing 1974, p.5. See also Hennessy, 2001, p.51.

<sup>536</sup> No 193. Foreign Office Memorandum A.C.A.E.(45)(11) [PREM 8/117] 11 September 1945. DBPO Ser.I. Vol.II.

<sup>537</sup> TNA FO 800/547 GEN 96/3 24 October 1945, Note by the officials. Especially paragraph VII "United Kingdom Policy". Underlining is from the original document.

<sup>538</sup> Gormly 1984, p.125-126.

<sup>539</sup> No.195 A Note by Mr. Makins A.C.A.E.(45)16 [CAB 134/7] 24 September 1945. DBPO Ser.I Vol.II,

### 3.1.1 Government

Foreign policy from Churchill's era had been very much defined in terms of Anglo-American relations and political realism.<sup>540</sup> This meant not only winning the war, but gaining a comparative advantage by making the most of the "atomic head start", by using Anglo-American cooperation to its fullest potential for the benefit of Britain. And this meant making the most of the collaboration in not just atomic, but also economic and military terms. The cooperation had been initiated by Churchill and Roosevelt who, largely due to external factors, shared particular goals and visions.<sup>541</sup> However, now that both these heads of state had been replaced by Attlee and Truman, the collaboration was no longer a given.

The British Prime minister and Foreign Secretary now needed to be informed about atomic issues before considering, drafting and conducting foreign (and defence) policy, which officials could then implement.<sup>542</sup> This was done with the support of the Government's recently established advisory bodies, on a need-to-know basis. However, there was an overwhelming sense of urgency due to the quickly deteriorating international situation, where hopes for a long-lasting peace were being replaced by a mounting fear of conflict. The American attitude towards the world and towards Britain was constantly changing too. At this stage, it was not sure whether the Americans would see the many important issues facing the world in the same way as the British. As a consequence, continuity was important to save precious time, as well as very limited resources, when there were already informed men available on the spot. It was also not customary to change the whole administration when the political leadership changes as British political culture is characterized by gradual change. There were also fears that the U.S. mistrusted the new Labour government in Britain to some extent,<sup>543</sup> and so it was hoped the presence of people from the previous administration would in part help to reassure the Americans. This is yet another example of continuity being paradoxically one effect of post-war changes and discontinuity.

Path-dependency was another key factor in British atomic foreign policy. Britain had invested much of her limited resources<sup>544</sup> in atomic research as part

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<sup>540</sup> Realism in short: The nature and the character of the world is Hobbesian, anarchistic, chaotic and unstable, and survival is the main purpose. To serve this purpose it is essential to have power, as in military, financial as only the strongest will survive. Comparative advantage over others is seen essential in this, especially in terms of "hard power". Though at this point diplomatic skill was also considered as one of the essential powers. For instance in Grieco 1988, p.485-489; see also Morgenthau 1978, p.4-15.

<sup>541</sup> Gowing 1965, p.167-169. Gormly, 1984, p.127.

<sup>542</sup> For instance see No.195 A Note by Mr. Makins A.C.A.E.(45)16 [CAB 134/7] 24 September 1945. DBPO Ser.I Vol.II "...it is important to act quickly before the American views have crystallised... The main points on which a decision is required in order to initiate effective co-operation are..."

<sup>543</sup> Weiler 1992, p.60.

<sup>544</sup> "Resources" is used in here in the widest possible sense, including manpower, policy, physical resources, science et. British research tends to refer to developing jet engine, radar and other inventions and calls this a sharing of the labour in agreement with

of the Anglo-American deal which ensured in return that Britain received help in other ways. This meant that any change in atomic or foreign policy, no matter what the field, would be next to impossible without involving the Americans. The foreign policy aspects of the atomic question were manifold, but for the purposes of simplification, there were two main opposing lines of argument. These were continuity versus discontinuity, old versus new, and political realism versus internationalist idealism.

Within a month or two of establishing the atomic advisory bodies, the Government had gained a lot of information to act upon. One important issue, which had weighed heavily on considerations for future policy had been the Americans claiming they did not have any copies of documents and agreements made regarding Anglo-American atomic cooperation.<sup>545</sup> The explanation given (which is repeated without much further analysis in research literature) was that, due to a misunderstanding of the codename for the British atomic research programme, all 'Tube Alloys' documents had been wrongly filed under naval issues.<sup>546</sup> This caused great alarm in the Foreign Office, and it needed to be solved straight away<sup>547</sup>, whatever the new government's intended policy might be. Letting this careless slip-up by the Americans go was simply out of the question, as the British had invested heavily in the new, war-winning technology. One consequence of this attitude was, of course, to increase the importance of the previous administration's policy. The international situation only added to this emphasis, so that political realism had a head start on the more idealist internationalist proposals that the Labour party had nevertheless originally won the general election with. The fact was that after thorough consultation with executive officials who knew more about the atomic situation than themselves, the Government's inner circle, even if not Attlee, were gradually forced to drop much of their former idealism, and adopt more and more realist policies.

This former idealism aimed to establish peace and eliminate international friction. It was a line strongly supported by Prime Minister Attlee, and also at some point curiously by Sir John Anderson (ACAE chairman and opposition MP), who apparently had previously presented the idea already to Churchill, though to no avail.<sup>548</sup>

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the Americans. See: TNA FO 800/438 Attlee to Truman 6 June 1946: "...our scientists were amongst the first to become convinced of the enormous military possibilities of the atomic energy project... if we had been willing to face the diversion of industrial effort that would have been needed, we had the resources and the scientific and technical skill that would have enabled United States to embark on the development of the project in this country... we gave it in the confident belief that the experience and knowledge gained in th America would be made freely available to us, just as we made freely available to you the results of research in other fields such as radar and jet propulsion..."

<sup>545</sup> No.186 a Memorandum by Campbell to Bevin 8.8.1945 DBPO ser.I, vol.II. cf. Gowing, 1974, p.7.

<sup>546</sup> For instance Herken 1988, p.62 footnote.

<sup>547</sup> No.186 a Memorandum by Campbell to Bevin 8.8.1945 DBPO ser.I, vol.II. cf. Gowing, 1974, p.7.

<sup>548</sup> No.192, (Undated) Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Atomic Bomb, (slightly revised and circulated as GEN. 75/1 on 28th of August.1945) DBPO Ser.I Vol.II This

The background to this idealism likely stemmed from the shock and fear caused by the new weapon, but the movement to form a better world organisation than the League of Nations had also been strong in the 1930s. As for the Labour party, this line of political thinking had also been prominent<sup>549</sup> from the very beginnings of the party. In a way then, the continuity of Labour's ideology played an important role in all of this. It was to be expected that now they were finally in power the changes that they had promised for so long would finally be put into practice, especially when all foreign policy now lay in the shadow of the mushroom cloud.

By contrast, political realism focused on the great power *realpolitik* of strengthening Anglo-American atomic collaboration further. Jukka Leinonen, has indicated that the bi-directional policy of Britain was intentional: However, a bipartisan foreign policy was not merely an American phenomenon. In Britain, both Ernest Bevin and Anthony Eden saw bipartisan foreign policy as a way of assuring Britain's world status. This included accepting possible differences it might have caused in domestic policy.<sup>550</sup> Though not stated openly in executive memoranda, it meant Britain would attempt to become a state with atomic capability by gaining as much of information from the United States as possible.<sup>551</sup> This was of course as much due to the threat of the Soviet Union as anything else.<sup>552</sup> Even the potency of British diplomacy that Stalin had been said to fear<sup>553</sup> did not seem to be enough. Russians were now seen to only recognize power.<sup>554</sup>

On a wider scale this was related to a Hobbesian view of the world as an anarchic place filled with competition and threats, which it was best to be safeguarded against. Current events seemed to confirm that this was indeed the case, and it had of course been a tried and tested policy throughout the war. Officials in the executive (especially in the FO) had been recruited over a long period of time and, unlike the political leadership, they usually came from a similar conservative public school background. To some extent, an old 'empire' way of thinking about the world, in terms of the great powers, thus prevailed in the Foreign Office.<sup>555</sup> When the Government was briefed before it attempted to define an atomic policy, it was soon made very clear that foreign affairs were at the heart of the matter. The FO staff that made the briefings also laid out some possible solutions, i.e., recommending cooperation to gain atomic capability, which could then be used as either a deterrent or to produce cheap energy for

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was written as the basis of "Atomic Bomb Committee's" (GEN75) consideration. On Anderson's proposal: Wheeler-Bennet 1962, p.297.

<sup>549</sup> Fabian society and Labour's internationalism, cf. Vickers 2004 in general.

<sup>550</sup> Leinonen 2012, p.86.

<sup>551</sup> No.195 A Note by Mr. Makins A.C.A.E.(45)16 [CAB 134/7] 24 September 1945. DBPO Ser.I Vol.II

<sup>552</sup> No. 194 Minute by Sir A. Clark Kerr [FO 800/555] 12 September 1945 DBPO Ser.I Vol.II

<sup>553</sup> Harbutt 1986, p.119.

<sup>554</sup> No. 194 Minute by Sir A. Clark Kerr [FO 800/555] 12 September 1945 DBPO Ser.I Vol.II

<sup>555</sup> Saville, 1993, p.3-4; 19-21.

industrial purposes; as well as the possible pitfalls of such a policy, e.g., international friction.

But the Government had to reckon with Parliament, which I believe was the main reason any implementation of foreign policy was either limited or delayed. The fact was that the 'need to make the most of our atomic head start' argument that was being preferred by FO officials was largely at odds with Attlee's and Labour's own agenda, and what had been promised by the new Labour government in public. And the repercussions of this delay were soon felt in the chill and indecisive sentiment that descended on Anglo-American atomic cooperation at this point. Nevertheless, Parliament also had to reckon with the Government. Parliament could not operate without government policies that it could scrutinize and question, and the Government also remained the main source of official atomic information too - much of which was still classified as top secret.

The lack of information available to MPs was not, however, due to any lack of interest.<sup>556</sup> As we have already seen in the previous chapter, momentum stemming from the end of the war and the change of government may now have stymied, but the general comments about atomic matters that were made in this brief period had now gained a momentum of their own. Because of the defence implications of the atomic bomb, Parliament now could debate defence in a wider context than previously, when before they had only discussed defence with regard to budget estimates. Moreover, because the Government's responsibility towards Parliament (and thus the general public) was a constitutional matter, it was also a prerequisite for democracy.<sup>557</sup> Any Government, even one with an overwhelming parliamentary majority such as Attlee's, requires at least the moral support of its parliament and, in times of division, its votes too. Anthony King has emphasised one other often overlooked fact that it is extremely important for governments to avoid the negative publicity that awkward backbenchers might cause. The possibility of public protest is, of course, a great deterrent for any Government, and from its own ranks could also provide the means for the opposition to challenge the unity of the Government.<sup>558</sup> For example, even when Chamberlain's government had exceptional wartime powers, Parliament was still able to have its say by means of the adjournment debate (as outlined in 2.1.3) and could even fall a government.<sup>559</sup>

For the Government, the best defence in this situation was to have a coherent policy rather than no policy at all. So after formulating the policy, the executive took the initiative and started to deal with the more "chaotic" elements in it. Initial ideas of sharing "secrets" with the Soviets to relieve international tension were thus soon dropped, although in Parliament the idea was still being talked about late into the spring of 1946.

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<sup>556</sup> Carstairs, 1991 2-4. Richards 1967, preface.

<sup>557</sup> Dahl 2001 p.3405-7.

<sup>558</sup> King 1971, p.13-15.

<sup>559</sup> For example see Rogers & Walters, 2006 p.295.

As we saw in the last chapter, Attlee's memoranda also testify to the fact that he shared some of these more ideological and moral policies to begin with. The menace of the atomic bomb was in itself enough, he thought, to perhaps herald the dawning of a new era of international cooperation between the great powers to achieve peaceful solutions without the need for power-politics, if the alternative was utter annihilation in an atomic war. He had also briefly thought about the possibilities of outlawing atomic weapons, though this soon proved itself to be an unattainable goal, and in his correspondence with Truman he had brought up the idea of an international control mechanism for the new invention. Likewise, after the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs before the negotiations that took place in Washington, Attlee proposed that the US and UK governments issue a joint statement to reassure the world about their peaceful intentions. The same sentiment was evident among the general public in Britain, and so representatives of the Government also made sure to reiterate this position in Parliament. In spite of this atmosphere however, civil servants and those in the know were recommending other more politically realist factors be taken into account. Attlee and Bevin were thus briefed as thoroughly as possible in spite of the general furore and public reaction to the dawning of the atomic age. This meant that there were significant elements of continuity with a prevalence towards realism that indirectly influenced the possibilities of Attlee's government's atomic policy right from the start of his term in office. This will be covered more in detail in the following sub chapters.

### 3.1.2 Parliament

David Gammans (Hornsey, Conservative), was quick to voice concerns that many opposition MPs had about the new government in 1945.

"What is Labour's foreign policy? I hope I do not have to judge that foreign policy from some of the statements made at the Blackpool Conference, because if we take these at their face value, what they are interested in is not anything which has to do with security in this country, but the question of whether or not there is a left wing Government in some other country. We are not interested whether the Government of another country is Left Wing, Centre, Right Wing, red, pink, or yellow. What matters to us, is whether that Government of that country is favourable to the security of this country"<sup>560</sup>

Gammans was stressing the point that Britain and her security should take precedence over any self-inflated ideals of internationalism. And he went on to point out that if foreign policy was indeed left to foreign powers to sort out, and Britain focused instead on her domestic priorities, as many in Labour were advocating, this so-called 'internationalism' would ironically be a more parochial and short-sighted policy than directly defending her interests abroad.

"I believe that as never before, this Parliament and the people of this country must turn their eyes outwards on the world and not merely on our problems at home, be-

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<sup>560</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc126-127.

cause if our foreign policy fails, everything fails with it, and the plans of His Majesty's Government, whether they be good or otherwise, just become meaningless."<sup>561</sup>

Many in Labour agreed with Gammans however. He was emphasising the point that Parliament should play an active part in determining foreign policy, and that it should be a coherent one too.

According to royal prerogative and the customary constitutional practice by which the British political system operated at the time, the Government held the executive position in the field of foreign policy.<sup>562</sup> In the face of the atomic threat however, the newly elected parliament did not completely accept this state of affairs. Foreign policy was seen as extremely important soon, and therefore it should also be made a subject of parliamentary deliberation. This interest in foreign policy extended beyond simply the atomic question which, as we have seen, was by its very nature rather nebulous anyway. Accordingly, parliamentarians declared an interest in a variety of topics, such as trade agreements, peace treaties and other foreign affairs not directly related to 'atomic' matters. But when they were more directly related to atomic affairs, they often took the form of oral and written questions, as the chances for any larger debates on foreign policy were, to begin with, rather slim.

At this stage, it is perhaps important to distinguish between the two chambers of Parliament, as they responded in quite different ways with regard to foreign policy. The House of Commons fought vigorously to take part in foreign policy debates, whereas the Lords were not so concerned with taking part in executive decisions, as much as discussing the wider issues. In the Commons, the information needed to debate policy was gathered mostly through the use of parliamentary questions from both Labour and Conservative MPs alike. In some cases the questions were worded rather strongly, and in 1945 the theme of atomic relations with regard to the great powers actually cropped up 12 times in October, and 13 in November. The number of instances was never again so high in this particular parliament, but the theme was nonetheless regularly mentioned henceforth, which shows that it remained a thoroughly debated subject that was never very far from the floor in the Commons.

The House of Lords debated foreign policy somewhat less vigorously than the House of Commons, but in a much wider, perhaps even abstract context. This seems to be backed up by much of the research literature which mentions the free-ranging debates that took place in a House of Lords which was now beginning to play a more subsidiary role to the Commons, losing much of its former importance to become something more along the lines of a public forum for debate. Nevertheless, these wider debates no doubt had an extra-parliamentary importance for shedding light on some general perceptions of the atomic question. Yet it should also be kept in mind that the Lords selected topics to debate in perhaps a less systematic way than their party-driven colleagues in the Commons.

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<sup>561</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc126-127.

<sup>562</sup> Richards 1967, p. 36-37.

Strangely, some previous research has claimed that the House of Commons was uninterested in foreign affairs, although there is plenty of evidence that indicates otherwise. Perhaps this was because the key domestic policies that were simultaneously being discussed, such as nationalisation and the founding of the welfare state, were so huge that they might have seemed to overshadow foreign affairs. But the fact was that internationalism, openness, and cooperation also formed central planks of the Labour government's agenda. Perhaps because a lot of the discussion of foreign affairs did not take the standard rhetorical form of *pro et contra* debate, or were issues that were actually voted upon, foreign policy has escaped the limelight of historical research. It was nevertheless discussed via other common (but oddly lesser known) parliamentary channels, and this fact had been a major contributing factor in the build-up of parliamentary momentum.

It is through approaching parliamentary sources in a different way, from the viewpoint of everyday politics, and pragmatism<sup>563</sup>, that it becomes evident how important foreign policy was to many individual MPs. For example, oral and written questions provided a key outlet for discussion when the chances of any larger debate were stymied by a Government that gave only vague answers in the hope of keeping the topic off the floor of the House. Parliament had to focus on gaining information first, but it was clear that the Government was hardly any better informed and certainly would not be volunteering any information until its own line on the matter was clearly established and resolved with the Americans, who were anyway keen to safeguard all atomic secrets.

But it was just a matter of time before foreign affairs were being discussed on the floor. This was due to the press coverage, and the fears that had been voiced following the Debate on the Address, which meant that it became inevitable that Parliament eventually discuss current affairs. Atomic matters in particular were usually addressed via oral and written questions, as there was always time allocated for questions, and any unsatisfactory answers could be challenged further. Equally, any piece of information obtained could be used in further supervision of the Government.

As we have already seen, the rise in importance of foreign affairs was partly due to the fact that the implications of atomic war were so devastating<sup>564</sup>, compared to previous forms of war, that more than just a defence policy (which had also been the Government's business) would be needed to cope with the enormity of the task at hand. The Government tried as it might to give as little as possible away with delayed and vague answers, but this only served to increase parliamentary pressure for more information, especially after the autumn recess. Essentially it was soon clear to the Government that a lot depended on the Americans.<sup>565</sup>

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<sup>563</sup> Steinmetz 2002, p.90-91.

<sup>564</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc306.Freedman 2001, p.38-39.

<sup>565</sup> No.195 A Note by Mr. Makins 24.9.1945. DOBPO ser.I, vol.II. Harbutt 1986, p.116-117; 130-131, mentions that the U.S had already clear plans about their intended foreign policy in regards to USSR, UK and atomic matters. Herken, 1988, p.32-38 confirms.



Cooperation between all the great powers was initially recommended in Parliament, especially by new Labour MPs, and the idea of international control was supported by various parliamentarians in both chambers as well. Some members advocated the idea of sharing the secret of the atomic bomb with other countries or of the Soviet Union being invited to join the negotiations. Herbert Hughes (Wolverhampton West, Lab.) called for the need for independent foreign policy advocating peace:

“Let us imagine what the situation would be if the boot were on the other foot, and that instead of the atomic bomb being in the United States it were housed somewhere in the centre of the Urals. I can imagine the degree of eloquence with which Members opposite would urge that the atomic bomb be put at the disposal of the United Nations.”<sup>566</sup>

Some members had already suggested that the difficult attitude of the Soviets was a consequence of the atomic monopoly wielded by United States, although Hector McNeil (Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign Office) unequivocally stated that such ideas were extremely dangerous.<sup>567</sup> Demands for closer cooperation and relations with the Soviets, in line with Labour’s original election agenda, were voiced in the early autumn, but subsequently suggestions that atomic information should be shared with the Soviet Union became less and less frequent.

The dominant theme of the debate in the House of Lords was the ongoing relationship between the ‘Big Three’ – the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain (and Canada) – particularly with respect to the control of atomic energy and sharing information about the new field. The possibility of atomic monopoly was viewed as highly unlikely. As Viscount Addison stated:

“I am glad some noble Lords paid tribute to what was done at Washington with regard to the direction of developments in the use of atomic energy. I am quite sure it is true that it cannot be monopolized. We all knew that. The knowledge of these things has been spread all over the world among scientists for many years past.”<sup>568</sup>

Indeed, as Britain had been a global empire, and in many ways remained so, questions of defence still had many global implications. With the deterioration in international relations, and the presence of this new awful weapon, there was suspicion and mistrust world-wide.<sup>569</sup> For many, solving the atomic question was thus perhaps the key to solving the international situation too.

Labour parliamentarians were understandably the most in favour of pursuing a policy of peace and international cooperation. Both the United States and the Soviet Union were seen as instrumental in achieving this goal.

“Economic strife and political and military insecurity are enemies of peace. We cannot cut ourselves off from the rest of the world - and we ought not to try. [...] We must consolidate in peace the great war-time association of the British Commonwealth with the USA and the USSR. Let it not be forgotten that in the years leading

<sup>566</sup> HC Deb. 7 Nov. 1945, vol. 415, col. 1370.

<sup>567</sup> HC Deb. 5 Nov. 1945, vol. 415, cols. 986–1018. Crossman, Boothby, Hudson, McNeill.

<sup>568</sup> HL Deb. 27 Nov. 1945, vol. 137, col. 41.

<sup>569</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc21-22 (Cranbourne); cc38 (York).

up to the war the Tories were so scared of Russia that they missed the chance to establish a partnership which might well have prevented the war.”

There was also the idea of involving five great powers instead of just three.

“We must join with France and China and all others who have contributed to the common victory in forming an International Organisation capable of keeping the peace in years to come. All must work together in true comradeship to achieve continuous social and economic progress. [...] We should build a new United Nations, allies in a new war on hunger, ignorance and want.

The British, while putting their own house in order, must play the part of brave and constructive leaders in international affairs.”<sup>570</sup>

Despite these admirable intentions, which were also mentioned in Attlee’s memoranda,<sup>571</sup> the FO was, as we have already seen, recommending a more realistic approach. It consisted of strengthening atomic collaboration with the US but Parliament did not really have a say in this matter as Government avoided making any clear statements about this in the House.<sup>572</sup> Also, the plain fact could not be avoided that, in spite of these brave public sentiments espoused by the Labour government, Britain’s position in the world was declining. The economy was moribund, there was a food and housing shortage and there was demobilisation to cope with, to mention just a few of the issues.<sup>573</sup> There was also the novel territory of creating a welfare state that occupied much of Parliament’s time, which meant less time could be spent on atomic matters. After all, even within the context of foreign policy, not all of it related to just atomic matters or the great powers. For example, there were matters of the crumbling empire to deal with too.

Foreign relations were nevertheless considered important by both the Houses of Parliament; but of the two chambers, the House of Commons was the more active. One of the key factors as to why there was so little foreign affairs actually discussed in Parliament at this time can be attributed to the Government’s attempts to limit the parliamentary time put aside for the subject.<sup>574</sup> But then we must bear in mind that the subject had already received quite a lot of attention during the State Opening and Debate on the Address, partly because it was customary for current affairs to be debated in the former, and the atomic bomb was very much a current affair just then.

Judging from the records of parliamentary debates, it therefore should come as no surprise that the atomic question was soon seen to be at the core of the international tension gripping the world.<sup>575</sup> Many high ranking politicians

<sup>570</sup> Let Us Face the Future 1945, p. 1-9.

<sup>571</sup> No.192, An undated memo by Attlee, edited and put in circulation on 28.8.1945. DBPO, Series I, vol. II.

<sup>572</sup> No.195 A Note by Mr. Makins 24.9.1945. DOBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>573</sup> Morgan 1992, p.7-9; 20-21; p. 36-38. See also: Morgan 1984, 45-47; 63. Burnett, 2001, p. 133.

<sup>574</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol. 413 cc98-112.

<sup>575</sup> For instance, see. HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc 721-725

confirmed this view.<sup>576</sup> Defence alone could not solve all the problems caused by the atomic bomb. Foreign policy began to be seen as the key, especially in Parliament, to solving the atomic question and, in turn, this furthered parliamentary access to more atomic information in spite of the constitutional requirements of the royal prerogative for secrecy. This was the essence of parliamentary momentum,<sup>577</sup> combined with overall post-war expectations of change.

We should not forget that by being a threat to the whole world, the atomic bomb was of course a threat to Britain as well.<sup>578</sup> In turn, because the issue had become one of foreign policy as well as one of defence, British security was now also a matter of public interest, and needed to be given consideration as such by the agents of the people, i.e., Parliament.

Once this bidirectional breakthrough was finally achieved, foreign policy split, as we have seen, into two approaches. The first, which followed the more traditional great power policy, was not mentioned that often. It focused, as ever, on Anglo-American relations, and to a lesser extent on the Soviet Union.<sup>579</sup> Besides the government, Churchill was one of the few who firmly advocated close cooperation with the US. In general, a more politically realist great power policy was not so prominent. This again points to the notion of discontinuity in politics that sprang from general post-war sentiments.

The other, more prominent, approach to foreign policy in Parliament was to press for greater international cooperation. It is pertinent to this chapter because this approach later developed into discussions as to how the United Nations could regulate the new technology, and the ratification of the United Nations Charter was a topic that greatly increased parliamentary momentum. In fact, discussing the UN Charter set a precedent for allowing Parliament to cover UN matters on the floor. The Government actually presented the UN Charter to be ratified and accepted by Parliament<sup>580</sup>, instead of just relying on the reinvoked Ponsonby rule, which only allowed Parliamentarians to read the texts of international agreements to be ratified 21 days in advance.<sup>581</sup> The charter ratification actually led to a vote too, which shows the extent to which Parliament was now participating in foreign policy. It meant that, after this, it was now legitimate for Parliament to discuss worldwide atomic regulation in UN and internationalist terms.

What is particularly interesting about the foreign policy debates that began with discussion of the UN Charter, is to see the preponderance of similar questions in both Commons and Lords, and how often a question was phrased to find out about both approaches in the bidirectional atomic foreign policy at

<sup>576</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc659-670 (Attlee); HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1334-1335 (Bevin).

<sup>577</sup> See introduction, also Roitto, 2016 forthcoming.

<sup>578</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc125-127. HL Deb 7 March 1946 vol 139 cc1240-41; Freedman 2001 p.38-39.

<sup>579</sup> Vickers 2004, p.175-176.

<sup>580</sup> HL Deb 22 August 1945 vol 137 cc104-50; HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc659-755

<sup>581</sup> Select Committee on Constitution Fifteenth Report, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200506/ldselect/ldconst/236/23612.htm>

one and the same time. On 21 August 1945, for example, both Labour and Conservative MPs bombarded Attlee with a salvo of critical questions. Waldron Smithers (Orpington, Con.) wanted to know which governments knew how to manufacture atomic bombs.<sup>582</sup> This was both a demand to know Britain's unilateral position in atomic affairs, as well as an indirect query about the states that should be given a prioritized focus in terms of foreign policy, should a multilateral atomic context exist.

Meanwhile Quintin Hogg (Oxford, Conservative) asked whether there had yet been any international discussions about controlling the manufacture and use of atomic bombs. Similar themes were raised by Sydney Silverman (Nelson & Colne, Labour) and William Warbey (Luton, Labour) who wanted to know if international cooperation over atomic energy would involve a "big five"<sup>583</sup> or "big four". These questions thus indirectly presumed which countries already possessed atomic capability.<sup>584</sup> Silverman then went on to say he was worried that the United States might "retain exclusive possession of this secret". He was therefore not only asking about the undermining of collective international security, but also underlining how important the United States was perceived to be for atomic foreign policy. James Hudson (West Ealing, Labour) expressed similar worries and went so far as to ask if the Government had plans via the United Nations to control all essential components and raw materials needed in the manufacture of atomic weaponry so that they never again be used against humans.<sup>585</sup> At this point, hardly any parliamentarians would have known that such a plan would have basically affected just the US and, to a lesser extent, Canada and Britain.

As is the custom in parliamentary debate, these questions already implied a possible solution for the Government.<sup>586</sup> Hogg, Silverman, and Warbey were, in effect, suggesting that there be consultation between the great powers to share information and control the new invention, while Hudson was suggesting that the United Nations could do this. Meanwhile, in a more positive vein, Frederick Cocks (Broxtowe, Labour) asked if the Anglo-American collaboration that had produced the bomb would now get on and develop atomic energy for civilian and industrial purposes. Cocks wanted to know if there had yet been discussions on this theme, and wanted an assurance from the Prime Minister that these quite possibly beneficial developments would not be waylaid by any underfunding.<sup>587</sup>

We can see here that parliamentarians were attempting to phrase their message so that blunt answers would be hard for the Government to make. The argumentative character of these questions demanded a wider response, as

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<sup>582</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4.

<sup>583</sup> Big five consisted of the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China.

<sup>584</sup> Though this is more inclined thematically to the international control and to the UN, it reveals again the inter-connectedness, and moreover, the idea that the atomic matters were perceived to belong firstly to the great powers. HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4

<sup>585</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4.

<sup>586</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p. 181-184.

<sup>587</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4

there was only so many times they could be rebutted before attracting wider scrutiny and speculation. Indeed, Chester and Bowring have noted that a wide answer is even expected when it comes to questions of foreign affairs.<sup>588</sup> Cocks' question also illustrates the fact that a number of MPs still believed Britain actually had something to share or give away, due to her collaboration with the Americans. It can also be seen as an attempt to fish for more information, and a rhetorical trap - either Britain had something to give away or not and this would be revealed whatever the answer.

However, given the sheer number of questions that were asked at this point, it would have been easy for the Government to ignore key parts of those questions deemed unsuitable for comment.<sup>589</sup> In fact, the Prime Minister did just that when he avoided rhetorical traps by answering that these complex questions had gained Government's attention, and that all efforts would be taken to use the new invention in the interests of world peace. Attlee then added that with this in mind he would need to consult the US before making a statement.<sup>590</sup> This was in part a delaying tactic so that more information could be gathered together before actually putting together a policy or an approach.

In fact, Attlee's chief response to the barrage of oral questions thrown at him on 21 August was to unveil the Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy. Winston Churchill tried to force Attlee's hand with his question about the precise role of the committee, but otherwise Attlee's diversion worked. Churchill had wanted to know if the committee was purely for addressing technical matters related to the development and research of atomic bombs, or if it would have an influence on policy formulation as well.<sup>591</sup> This was a statement in the form of a question which required an answer that could not be sidelined. Robert Hudson (Southport, Conservative) also voiced concerns among MPs that the practical limitations Attlee had mentioned concerning MPs' involvement in ACAE matters might "take away the opportunity to press for urgent action by the Government"<sup>592</sup>. The response Attlee gave to these oral questions was that the main purpose of the committee was consultative. This was somewhat frustrating, as although archival sources suggest that this was indeed the ACAE's statement of purpose, in practice the expertise of the committee gave it a far more prominent role than simply consultation.<sup>593</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p. 181-184.

<sup>589</sup> Chester and Bowring 1962, p. 181-184.

<sup>590</sup> See for example HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4; for later see also HC Deb 09 October 1945 vol 414 cc22; HC Deb 10 October 1945 vol 414 cc227-8.

<sup>591</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4.

<sup>592</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>593</sup> TNA CAB 134/6 A.C.A.E (45) 1st Meeting, Cabinet; Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy Minutes of a meeting of the Committee, Tuesday 21 August 1945, 4.30pm; CAB 134/7 MEMORANDA 20 August 1945 Cabinet Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy Composition and terms of reference, note by the secretary of the cabinet.

"The policy, of course, has to be decided by the Government, but this committee will advise us both with regard to the scientific progress and the possibilities and the general background of the whole subject."<sup>594</sup>

Attlee also promised Hudson that members would have the chance to ask any question they liked on the subject.<sup>595</sup> Again this corresponded to the theory but not the practice. Archival sources suggest that the Government was actually most reluctant to shed any information on 'the subject'. Indeed, draft answers were prepared precisely to avoid giving much away, and supplementary questions that might follow them were also covered in advance so the answering minister would not be caught out.<sup>596</sup> Lest we forget, parliamentarians had somewhat limited access to relevant information on atomic matters, which would have also hampered participation. Richards has proposed that this was one of the most important factors explaining limited parliamentary involvement in foreign affairs.<sup>597</sup> Parliamentarians were quite aware of this and, as mentioned in the last chapter, they sought information wherever available. Newspapers (and to some extent books<sup>598</sup>) were quoted as a source of information,<sup>599</sup> and some of them also had access to other sources<sup>600</sup>, which they used as a means to press for more information from the Government.

Needless to say, the first round of questions did not satisfy the curiosity of the House of Commons. After the autumn recess there was another round of oral and written questions asking for clarifications from the government on foreign and atomic policy.<sup>601</sup> But the debate about the ratification of the UN Charter, which was a motion introduced by the Government, emphasised the more internationalist stance. Although we have seen there were a number of similarities in the way the Lords and Commons deliberated and commented on foreign affairs, at this point we should look at the differences between the two chambers, and it is best that these be addressed in separate parts.

### 3.1.2.1 THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The widening of the atomic question to cover foreign policy began with the general comments made on defence issues, and parliamentarians finding proper ways and means to participate more in the debate. Foreign policy was also covered in a general way during the State Opening of Parliament as is customary. During the Debate on the Address, attention was paid to various hot spots

<sup>594</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4.

<sup>595</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4.

<sup>596</sup> For instance, see: TNA, CAB 126/238 notes for supplementaries 28 November 1945.

<sup>597</sup> Carstairs, 1991, p. 2-4. Brand, 1992, p.300-307, p.317-320.

<sup>598</sup> De Wolf Smyth, 1946.

<sup>599</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc78 (Templewood, though about problems in Germany) HL Deb 16 August 1945 vol 137 cc23-24. HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc275-276. Earl of Darnley, referring to The Times article citing on The Association of Los Alamos Scientists on the previous day. Koss, 1984, p.636.

<sup>600</sup> For example Raymond Blackburn's mysterious scientist contact. The use of the Parliament's information services was also possible, but is not considered further in this work. Blackburn 1959, p.85-86.

<sup>601</sup> See for example HC Deb 09 October vol 414 cc227-228.

around the post-war world<sup>602</sup>, there was a policy overview, and hopes and fears were expressed relating to the use of the atomic bombs in Japan. This was an essential part in the foundations upon which latter instances of atomic foreign policy debates were built upon in the Commons. The Debate on the Address lasted for two parliamentary days, and 20 August was designated as the day for foreign affairs. Atomic matters were considered to have been one of the most essential issues in the King's speech<sup>603</sup>, which underlines the importance of this matter to the Commons. The possibilities for this new invention at this point seemed endless and it was thought that, given the right handling, this debate could might even take care of some of the other topics mentioned in the long debates. It was hoped that the Government's motion to control the new technology would have the full support of the House,<sup>604</sup> but it was clear that the Government would have to produce more information and statements on atomic affairs.

Winston Churchill opened the Debate on the Address with general comments relating to both atomic and foreign policy. Besides describing the atomic bomb as a weapon that won the war, he emphasised the importance of Anglo-American (and Canadian) cooperation in preparing the bomb. Churchill was also against the idea of sharing atomic knowledge for the time being.

"I may say that I am in entire agreement with the President that the secrets of the atomic bomb shall so far as possible not be imparted at the present time to any other country in the world. This is in no design or wish for arbitrary power but for the common safety of the world. Nothing can stop the progress of research and experiment in every country, but although research will no doubt proceed in many places, the construction of the immense plants necessary to transform theory into action cannot be improvised in any country."<sup>605</sup>

Although he acknowledged that the United States had played a leading role, he claimed that it was Britain who would lead the world, together with the US, towards democracy.

"Now is the time for Britons to speak out."<sup>606</sup>

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Attlee underlined the case that foreign policy, and any policy in Britain would henceforth be decided by the Government and Labour ministers, and nobody else. Both the Soviet Union and the United States were Britain's closest allies. Even though the horrors of war were to be prevented (by foreign policy), Britain was to keep her military fully prepared and ready to take care of her various foreign commitments.<sup>607</sup> In other words, despite wanting to promote peace in the world, Britain would still be taking care of her

<sup>602</sup> See for example HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc313-321 (Anthony Eden, Warwick and Leamington, Conservative.)

<sup>603</sup> William Brown, (Rugby, Labour) HC Deb 17 August vol 413 cc262-263.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid.

<sup>605</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc79-80.

<sup>606</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc86.

<sup>607</sup> Hc Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc100-106.

interests abroad and would thus remain a force to be reckoned with. There was no intention whatsoever to give up her position of importance in world affairs.

The Liberal party in the Commons was led by Clement Davies, and they had a slightly softer approach. For now, the United States was seen as a suitable temporary guardian of atomic secrets, but a change in world politics would be inevitable, and with this, the idealists would become the true realists and thus the Liberals supported a peace policy.<sup>608</sup>

On the domestic front, David Gammans described the world situation from a slightly different perspective. In his opinion, the bomb had made the world a more dangerous place, and Britain was especially vulnerable to it.

"I wish to suggest to His Majesty's Government that from now on, the basis of their foreign policy must be the security of this island. We are the most vulnerable political unit in the world, with our vast centres of population and the targets they present from the air."<sup>609</sup>

Wing Commander Ernest Millington (Chelmsford, Common Wealth) also brought up foreign policy during the Debate on the Address. He stated that only a month previously the foreign policy statements given might well have corresponded to the actual world situation, but this was now no longer the case. In his opinion, the new agenda should focus on creating a European federation and, eventually, a world government so that conflicts could be resolved in conferences.<sup>610</sup> Britain "deserved to be in the lead", and should aim towards the kind of socialist state promised in the election manifesto, and atomic matters also had a part to play in this.

"One of the earnestness which the Government can give to the people of their understanding of the historic situation in which they have come to power, one way in which they can show that they understand the horror that has been aroused in the minds of men of good will by the fact that it is possible to exterminate a whole town by one small bomb, is for them to get industrial control over that great potential weapon of production, and see that it is put into the hands of the people of this State. I listened with interest to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) yesterday, in which he made a case for the desirability of leaving the final details of this invention in the exclusive hands of the Government of America. I personally cannot accept that argument. I feel that this Government positively must take that tremendous weapon of power out of the hands of any one Government in the world, that it must be in the possession of all the people of the world and that the first thing that must be done is to see that research, ownership and all the secrets of that weapon shall be vested in some such organisation as a committee of the United Nations."

Millington's proposal seems somewhat inconsistent. Firstly atomic technology should, at the earliest opportunity, be made the British state's responsibility; and yet he was also saying that the technology should be shared and not remain in any single government's hands. Millington also did not seem to acknowledge that other states, especially the US, might have their own quite different opinions about sharing the new technology. Nevertheless, Millington seemed to be

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<sup>608</sup> Ibid. cc114-116.

<sup>609</sup> HC Deb 16 August 1945 vol 413 cc125-126.

<sup>610</sup> HC Deb 17 August 1945 vol 413 cc219-220.



voicing the opinions of a fairly large number of MPs who believed that Britain definitely had a leading role to play when it came to the future of the new invention. Even on the far left, Phil Piratin (Mile End, Communist) said that Churchill's "atomically energetic" statements revealed that the British people had "a great deal to be thankful for the opportunities ahead of [them], as envisaged by HM Government".<sup>611</sup> This comment is a rare case of atomic matters being used for rhetorical effect in Parliament. It not only illustrates the aforementioned hubris of Britain seeing itself as somehow at the centre of atomic affairs, but also shows how the changes proposed by the new Government would be most welcome, whether or not Piratin was complimenting or criticising Churchill.

The final day for the Debate on the Address was 20 August 1945. Ernest Bevin, in his capacity as Foreign Secretary, started by outlining the foreign policy along the lines of Labour's election manifesto.

"In conducting the foreign policy of this country I shall always be actuated by the desire that it should be worthy of the immense sacrifices that have been made during the war."<sup>612</sup>

He assured the House that the general goal of British foreign policy would be security, and specified how this would be achieved, and yet at the same time was able to promise a total change from what had gone before with the previous government.

"No foreign policy can ever be good unless it is constructive, and the constructive aspect of our foreign policy is the most important. Between the wars we became accustomed to the vicious circle whereby trade could not flourish because of lack of security, while security was endangered through lack of trade. Now, at last, we have found our way to what is, for the time being, security. Therefore, this is the moment to break the vicious circle [...]. It is with this in mind that His Majesty's Government regard the economic reconstruction of the world as a primary object of their foreign policy".<sup>613</sup>

These comments confirm the Labour Party's position on foreign policy, especially with regard to the two world wars and their causes; and they show the importance attached to the election manifesto, even if it was not a political program as such. Nevertheless, these noble intentions of building a lasting world peace were for the time being overshadowed by more pressing domestic and international problems in the realms of economics and finance. Bevin also mentioned the Potsdam communiqué as being one of the chief guidelines for his foreign policy, with regard to resettlement in Europe and peace negotiations.<sup>614</sup> This willingness to adhere to previously held agreements shows that not every policy could be changed, even if such changes were on the agenda. The element of continuity was thus, as it still is, a strong factor in international relations. The Labour government was not acting in a temporal vacuum, but had to work with

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<sup>611</sup> HC Deb 17 August 1945 vol 413 cc249.

<sup>612</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc283.

<sup>613</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc287

<sup>614</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc289-292.

what had been left them by previous incumbents at Westminster. Potsdam had been started by Churchill and his government and it still needed to be carried out.

In the opposition's reply to Bevin's statements, Churchill more or less thanked the United States for the Lend-Lease that had kept Britain going through the war.<sup>615</sup> He then went on to show overall support for Bevin's commentary and statement, noting that the Government seemed to have a realistic approach to international problems, and stressing the continued importance of the atomic bomb and Anglo-American relations in foreign affairs. Churchill also emphasised the importance of the Grand Alliance, and the notion that foreign policy should never be a party issue.<sup>616</sup>

Two further comments deserve highlighting. Anthony Eden (Warwick and Leamington, Conservative) mentioned that Parliament should play a prominent role in foreign policy:

"It seems to me that it is not our duty to emphasise the divergencies that may exist between United States on foreign policy, but rather to state those divergencies frankly, in order that we may try to reach agreement as a result of discussions, so that Parliament may, in these difficult years of foreign policy, function largely as a Council of State"<sup>617</sup>

In comparison to earlier statements given by Attlee, that the Government's foreign policy was to be decided only by its ministers, this seems like a clear challenge from the opposition. Although, as Churchill had previously supported cross-party consensus when it came to foreign policy, this could also be interpreted as an attempt to expand Parliament's mandate for specifically supporting the Government. Cross-party consensus was expressed from the Government's side too, when Michael Foot (Plymouth, Labour) went so far as to say that

"where-ever else British policy may have failed in the past 10 years, in the matter of foreign policy it has been a glittering and matchless success".<sup>618</sup>

As well as this consensus, Foot was noting the importance of continuity in foreign policy, even if many parliamentarians would rather have made a distinc-

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<sup>615</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc300. This is interesting for just before Christmas the British Ambassador in the US, Lord Halifax sent a note for the Prime Minister, in which he had emphasised that some of his reliable American contacts had expressed disappointment in Britain not expressing gratitude for the Lend-Lease in public. Halifax even suggested making a motion on the matter. See: DBPO Ser.I,Vol.IV Calendar note iii. to No.5. Washington to Foreign Office (Prime Minister) No.8489, 21 December 1945.

<sup>616</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc301-303 (Fitzroy Maclean, Lancaster, Conservative,) Maclean also expressed his worries that the basis of foreign policy might be on ideological principles, i.e. the Britain being indirectly dependent on the average American private citizen's reaction to the socialist experiment in Britain; Ibid. cc.312-313, (Anthony Eden, Warwick and Leamington, Conservative,); Ibid. cc324-325, (James Hudson, Ealing West, Labour Co-o).

<sup>617</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc312-313.

<sup>618</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc336.

tion from the past,<sup>619</sup> and his speech highlights how foreign policy (and to an even greater degree atomic policy) was dependent, and perceived to be dependent, on those who knew of the previous government's policy.

"It is true that the electors have fought largely on domestic issues, and that, in foreign affairs, the Government are partly committed to policies which were previously initiated by the Coalition."<sup>620</sup>

Foot was joining the ranks of those politicians who saw no need for a change in political climate, when it came to foreign affairs or international influence.

"The Leader of the Opposition in his speech appeared to suggest that the leadership of the nations had in some way passed to the US. He appeared to approve the process, or at least he said that we must limit our ideas of British influence throughout the world. I do not know exactly what he meant, but I hope we are not going to have from this new Government an unambitious foreign policy."<sup>621</sup>

He too felt that, if ever, now was the time for Britain to show leadership.

"The invention of the atomic bomb should impel us to assume the position of leadership among the nations with all the courage we can muster."<sup>622</sup>

Foot was seconded by Hugh Fraser (Stone, Conservative), who expressed his support for Bevin as well. Britain should pursue a courageous foreign policy, it was felt, according to a long tradition. It was not just about defending the interests of the country, but of the Commonwealth, and the rights of ordinary men, women, and states therein, as long as Britain was able to do so.<sup>623</sup>

Vernon Bartlett (Bridgwater, Independent) reminded the House that no matter what happened, British foreign policy should be firm and be fully and widely supported. Responsibilities should also be clear - ministers should be in charge and not the officials. This latter reminder was again emphasising the importance of Parliament and asking that the minister in charge get all the support he required, so that Ernest Bevin would not end up in the same position as Neville Chamberlain had done earlier.<sup>624</sup>

"Also there have been times when we have had two foreign policies, one run from the Foreign Office and one from Downing Street. [...] It is the importance of abolishing that secrecy which is hallowed by the magic word "security." The problem of finishing off the aggressors has now become a political and not a military problem. [...] I want to see as quickly as possible the right hon. Gentleman taking over much more control of matters which in the past have been left in military hands. The war is over. Do not let us forget it. After all, policy should depend upon public opinion, and we have to realise how much of the peace settlement has already been made without any kind of consultation with public opinion at all – very much more than during the last

<sup>619</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc351. Dr. Hyacinth Morgan (Rochdale, Labour), See also Fred Peart (Workington, Labour): "If mankind is to survive we must have a new approach to foreign politics and international affairs." cc359; "Jungle politics are obsolete. The atomic bomb has seen to that." cc360.

<sup>620</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc336.

<sup>621</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc340.

<sup>622</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc341.

<sup>623</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc345.

<sup>624</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc332-333.

Peace Conference. Great territorial changes have already been agreed to by the British Government without any opportunity for the British public or the House of Commons really to know the details. That may have been necessary—it probably was necessary during the war—but I do beg of the right hon. Gentleman and the right hon. Gentleman who is going to wind up this Debate that they should pay a great deal of attention to this business of getting back to the maximum of publicity possible for all our actions in foreign affairs. We have realised that public opinion cannot be suppressed; it is vitally important that it should be well informed. It has got to be informed through the newspapers, radio and so on.”<sup>625</sup>

Bartlett was also making a constitutional plea here. The Government were responsible for Parliament, just as Parliament had its responsibilities to the people, and while it may have been necessary in time of war, the war was now over, and a very clear signal needed to be given to the people that there was no longer any reason for secret dealings. Openness in foreign affairs was thus of the utmost importance, and politics should not be conducted on the basis of purely military requirements. As for the atomic bomb, Bartlett made another important remark clearly presenting the two main options that would ostensibly lead to a bidirectional foreign policy.

“I sympathise with the refusal of the Prime Minister earlier in this Debate to make a definite statement about what is to happen to that bomb. But I would ask the House to reflect for a moment. What are the alternatives? We can either try to keep the secret ourselves with the US, or we can hand it on to the Military Staffs Committee of the Security Council, that is to say to the other three permanent members of the Security Council, the Soviet Union, China and France. If we keep it ourselves we shall be masters of the world for a time—for the time when nobody wants to make war because everybody has had enough of it for the time being. We shall be able to impose our will upon the world.”<sup>626</sup>

Mastery of the world was in many ways the core of the matter. As we have already seen, the Foreign Office (and many parliamentarians) saw that Britain definitely still had a leading role to play in the world. The atomic bomb, this ‘wonder weapon’, was perceived by some as a means for retaining this position in world politics, although it may not have been mentioned per se. Bartlett’s support for Attlee not making any comments about the atomic bomb was surprising however. Perhaps he understood that the matter was not one that Britain could decide for herself. He also pointed out that the character of atomic weapons was such that it made even great countries vulnerable despite their “territorial advantage”. He also drew attention to the precarious world situation and the possibility of an escalating arms race.

“It may be that the British and the Americans are less dangerous than other people and are better to be trusted with so important a weapon. I hope that is so. I do not know. The alternative is surely that the Security Council cannot possibly exist if two permanent members of the Council possess so important a military secret that the other three have not got. It is impossible that in such circumstances this new international organisation which many hon. Members have spoken about can continue to exist. It would only be a matter of time before some other scientist working for some other Government manages to split some other atom and produces some other

<sup>625</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc332-333.

<sup>626</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc334-335.

bomb. They will think that their bomb is better than ours, the temptation to test it will be irresistible; we shall have another war very quickly.”<sup>627</sup>

In comparison to the House of Commons, the House of Lords on the whole commented less on atomic foreign affairs. The level of commentary was also more generalist, and the debates were rather lengthy and tiresome. As the Lords now lacked much of their previous powers, perhaps they now felt that their role was purely deliberative. Nevertheless, they contributed to the public discussion of atomic matters in the context of foreign affairs.

### 3.1.2.2 THE HOUSE OF LORDS

The Lords did not play a particularly active role in foreign policy, especially with regards to atomic matters and the great powers. There is, however, some evidence that both atomic matters and the general political deterioration in the world were discussed. In addition, the two-day debate on foreign policy that took place on 27-28 November 1945 was in itself very thorough.

The first instance was when, on 16 October 1945, the Lords addressed foreign policy in a lengthy, eloquent, but rather vague debate which ranged over several other topics as well. The Earl of Darnley’s (Esme Ivo Bligh) profound idealism featured heavily in this debate. Darnley had called a motion to discuss how the United Nations should be made responsible for atomic affairs in the world. He believed the atomic bomb had caused a “crisis in human affairs”. Throughout the year he had been voicing anxiety over the future of the world, and demanding a different approach to politics so that it be based more on moral values.<sup>628</sup> Not only were similar views being expressed in the Commons, but he was also supported by the Lords Spiritual - for example, Cyril Garbett (Lord Archbishop of York)<sup>629</sup> and George Bell (Lord Bishop of Chichester)<sup>630</sup>. The latter were worried that mankind’s material capacity had outstripped the moral one, and that a potentially fatal international mistrust based on the atomic bomb was the cause of these problems. They were pessimistic about politics and peace treaties, and felt that only through abiding by God’s laws and increasing moral values amongst men could the immense danger of atomic war be avoided. They would have amounted to nothing less than another form of internationalism or idealism. The fact that these notions kept cropping up in debates shows not only how persistent these parliamentarians were, but to some extent, how the Government was unable to reassure them. Viscount Maugham went so far as to state that “there is no complete answer to the atomic bomb and to the perils of the release of nuclear energy other than the abolition of war.”<sup>631</sup>

The conference was briefly mentioned one other time before the Washington Conference, when the Marquess of Londonderry proposed that some of the Lords join the Prime Minister’s delegation to discuss civil aviation with the

<sup>627</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc335

<sup>628</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc273-285; HL Deb 29 July 1946 vol 142 cc1097-1102.

<sup>629</sup> See for example HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc36-41.

<sup>630</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc51-57.

<sup>631</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc93

Americans.<sup>632</sup> Viscount Samuel noted that atomic and foreign policy were now irrevocably intertwined and thus both extremely important issues. For this reason, they needed clarification as soon as possible.

“[I]t will be clear that the subject of the atomic bomb cannot well be isolated from that of international relations generally. Indeed, the highly important statement which we have just heard indicates quite clearly that it is bound up with the general question of the Organisation of the United Nations and with other matters of foreign policy. A debate upon foreign policy in this House is, if I may say so, already somewhat overdue, but at the same time it cannot take place, as the noble Viscount has said, until after the return of the Prime Minister and his statement made to Parliament. ...But in general I feel certain that the whole House will agree that there ought to be a debate in the very near future, and that it should cover both the question of foreign policy and foreign relations as well as that of the atomic bomb.”<sup>633</sup>

But the Lords seemed satisfied with the idea of having their debate on foreign policy only after Attlee returned from Washington. Perhaps this is because of the House’s “submission” to the Government, as suggested by Andrew Adonis. He has claimed that in 1945 the House of Lords was a “wasted and powerless assembly”<sup>634</sup>, which had submitted itself, under Lord Salisbury, to the Government and its overwhelming majority.<sup>635</sup>

So by the time the PM had returned from the Washington talks, the Lords were more or less in agreement that this was the proper time to debate foreign policy.<sup>636</sup> The Washington Declaration was thus read aloud in both chambers,<sup>637</sup> and the first major foreign policy debate only took place at the end of November<sup>638</sup>. Even then, this covered more than atomic foreign affairs, as the UN was debated as well. Despite the coalition government’s passing and the rise of party politics, Viscount Cranborne made the point that the Lords were showing a certain consensus for the sake and the best interests of the nation on the issues related to foreign policy, and he was supported in this by Lords Hutchison<sup>639</sup> and Templewood.

“Speech after speech has shown a fact which must be very satisfactory to the members of the Government, and indeed to every British citizen—namely, that in this crisis in the world’s history there are no Party issues compromising the foreign policy of the nation.”<sup>640</sup>

<sup>632</sup> HL Deb 06 November 1945 vol 137 cc651-727. Londonderry: *ibid.* cc675.

<sup>633</sup> HL Deb 15 November 1945 vol 137 cc980-81 Viscount Samuel commenting the Washington Declaration.

<sup>634</sup> For example HL, with conservative majority had agreed to pass laws which had been stated in the Labour party’s election agenda despite their own views. This emphasises the role of the election agenda as well!

<sup>635</sup> Adonis 1988, p. 6.

<sup>636</sup> HL Deb 15 November 1945 vol 137 cc980-81. Viscount Cranborne (Conservative, Leader of the Opposition in HL), Viscount Addison (Labour Leader of the House of Lords).

<sup>637</sup> Washington Declaration 15th of November 1945. HC Deb 15 November 1945 vol 415 cc2359-63.

<sup>638</sup> This is counted as two separate instances.

<sup>639</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc17 for consensus in foreign policy. HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc 62-66 (Hutchison).

<sup>640</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc75 (Templewood, Conservative).

Hutchison then went on to state that the sooner party politics was left out of foreign policy making around the world, the better. He also agreed that the questions surrounding the atomic bomb had to be settled rapidly, before it was used as a weapon of war again. In his opinion there was no realistic possibility to rid the world of war for good, and so a long-term foreign policy was of the utmost importance.

“I feel that the prevention of future wars and the rearrangement of a new world depends upon America, Russia and ourselves hanging together.”<sup>641</sup>

The scope of this policy thus needed to be much wider than before,<sup>642</sup> and yet at the same time Hutchison was indicating a certain lack of political realism in the Government’s approach.

“You cannot have a really successful foreign policy unless you have an instrument behind that policy. The Foreign Office has always said to us “Tell us your force and we will tell you our policy”. We have always said “Tell us your policy and then we will tell you the force required to carry it out”.”<sup>643</sup>

This statement characterises the mixed-up situation perfectly. Despite all its briefings, meetings and consultations, the Government did not yet have a concise enough atomic foreign policy to actually implement. To put it bluntly, British atomic foreign policy was in a ‘chicken or the egg’ situation.

During the rest of that year from autumn 1945 onwards, the Lords tackled atomic issues in ten lengthy sessions (motions, debates etc.). October and November were the busiest months,<sup>644</sup> even if a lot of these talks concerned the United Nations and international control, especially after the Washington Conference. These will be covered in more detail in 3.3 below. Leaving this aside for now therefore, the chief focus for the Lords seemed to be on gaining more information about the Government’s overall view of foreign policy. Although, since parliamentary time was limited, Viscount Elibank reminded the House that there were other foreign policy matters than just the atomic question to be covered too.<sup>645</sup>

“[I]t is that the atomic bomb in these debates has, perhaps, too greatly overshadowed the many other important questions and problems now agitating Europe and other parts of the world, many of which will have to be solved irrespective of the atomic bomb.”

Relations between the “Big Three” were also covered, regarding the sharing of atomic know-how. What seemed clear from these discussions, as Viscount Addison noted, was that many members saw the likelihood of there being an atomic monopoly as very slim.<sup>646</sup>

<sup>641</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc63.

<sup>642</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc62-63.

<sup>643</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc63. (Hutchison, Liberal)

<sup>644</sup> See appendix 1.

<sup>645</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc117-118; See also Lord Altricham Ibid. cc.97-104.

<sup>646</sup> Viscount Samuel HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 137 cc 26-37.

"I am glad some noble Lords paid tribute to what was done at Washington with regard to the direction of developments in the use of atomic energy. I am quite sure it is true that it cannot be monopolized. We all knew that. The knowledge of these things has been spread all over the world among scientists for many years past. The "how-to-do-it" or the "how-to-manufacture" will, before long, no doubt, be equally widely known also."<sup>647</sup>

The new invention was perceived to be the main cause of friction between the former allies,<sup>648</sup> and this friction might lead to further problems. Although the UN was seen as essential for clearing up this atmosphere of mistrust and establishing a means for controlling the new technology, some members clearly believed the fledgling organisation would be far from omnipotent.<sup>649</sup> The Earl of Perth, especially, drew wider conclusions and suggested that British foreign policy should instead be built on four pillars, with the United Nations acting as simply the roof. The pillars would represent cooperation with (i) the Dominions, (ii) the United States, (iii) the USSR, and (iv) France and the smaller western democracies as a possible option, although this fourth pillar was not as yet fully clear.<sup>650</sup> On the other hand, the Earl of Perth also argued that the only antidote for the atomic bomb, would be to make another bomb.<sup>651</sup>

Viscount Addison, representing the Government, was sceptical that the international atomic control and required inspections suggested by Viscount Samuel would actually work, and backed Attlee's point that only by abolishing war and replacing it with international cooperation would the world be safe from atomic devastation.<sup>652</sup> Then again, Samuel was also emphasising that Britain was still a great power, and that splitting the atom was very much a British accomplishment. He stated that those who had the head start would stay in the lead, and as Britain, Canada and the US did indeed have that head start, this can be seen as advice to hold on to atomic secrets and pursue a more traditional and politically realist foreign policy. When we combine this with Lord Samuel's notion that "no monopolies can be kept", a politically realist interpretation would see this as a call to hold on to one's relative advantage and use it in the nation's best interests.<sup>653</sup> Lord Saltoun also supported the idea that some amount of secrecy in deals and negotiations was, in the light of Britain's current position, quite understandable.<sup>654</sup>

All the same, when we compare the number of instances found, it seems the House of Lords tended more towards the idealistic approach in foreign policy. During the two-day debate there was minimal discussion of great power (group 3) cases., but there was a fair number of comments made in support of internationalism (group 4):

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<sup>647</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 137 cc41.

<sup>648</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 137 cc23-24. HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc69-70.

<sup>649</sup> For example see HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 137 cc17-26.

<sup>650</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc82-85.

<sup>651</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc86-87.

<sup>652</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc42

<sup>653</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc27-28.

<sup>654</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc121-122.



“My Lords, we have to face the fact that, if the world is to survive at all, then a wider and better scheme of international co-operation must be devised, but one that need not, and should not, of itself, in any way detract from the value of national characteristics.”<sup>655</sup>

For instance Lord Jowitt considered that the problematic foreign situation might be eased with a greater exchange of knowledge, rather than by more traditional means.<sup>656</sup> Lord Templewood also emphasised that isolation would be bad for Britain, with her still great industrial and military powers. He also mentioned that it was Russian attitudes, together with the rise of nationalist feeling on the continent, which was preventing the problems being solved.<sup>657</sup> Interestingly, he referred to *The Times* as his means for gaining information about the crucial problems in the world at the time.<sup>658</sup> Meanwhile, Viscount Cranborne declared his support for cooperation between governments, but not for any form of union as such.<sup>659</sup>

After this intensive two-day debate on foreign affairs, the House of Lords’ attention soon shifted to other themes. Neither concise recommendations nor any particular consensus could be found, but the two competing approaches in foreign policy had definitely revealed themselves. Both of these had their supporters, but perhaps what was more prominent was the notion across the House that foreign policy was indeed the key to solving the problems created by the atomic bomb.

The next time there was a more direct focus in the House of Lords on atomic foreign affairs and great power policy was early in March of 1946. During the autumn 1945 atomic foreign policy relating to the United Nations was brought up only five times. Limited parliamentary time and the diminished political clout of the Lords, as mentioned in an earlier context, must have had something to do with this, but other possible reasons remain unclear. It perhaps underlines the notion that the Lords had become more of a forum for debating, than for legislation,<sup>660</sup> a place in which ideas could be aired as part of a wider public debate. The limited amount of information on atomic policy, and the wide array of other topics that needed to be aired would most likely have reduced the number of instances as well.

While both the Houses of Parliament considered either an idealist or realist atomic foreign policy, the Government was also considering its options. Views within it had not yet fully crystallized, in spite of the elements of continuity from Churchill’s previous administration. Bi-directional policy is not such a novel idea, as it is of course politically expedient to have various alternatives and plans in store in case the context, in which that policy is to operate, changes.

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<sup>655</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc41-43 (Addison, gov. representative); cc50-51 (Chelwood); cc37-40 (York) ; cc52-53 (Chichester).

<sup>656</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc70-73.

<sup>657</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc78-79.

<sup>658</sup> HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc78.

<sup>659</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc20.

<sup>660</sup> Richards, 1967, p.164; Adonis 1988, p.6.

It is not politically expedient, however, when a bi-directional policy becomes simply an indecisive policy - as it seemed to do in this case. The idea of international control, in the wider context of international idealism, was high on the agenda of Labour's election manifesto, and it had clearly been read and digested by many, especially the newly elected Labour parliamentarians. Therefore it was natural to demand discontinuity from former policies and to strike out for the new ones that had been promised. This foreign policy would be public and idealist, focus on international cooperation, and later on, control of atomic knowledge and technology. Though a similar mood had prevailed (at least in the mind of Attlee) it was nevertheless unclear which policy would actually be pursued. Perhaps both were to be attempted at the same time?

Although Parliament and the Government were interested in both the approaches to foreign policy, differing views between them developed over the latter months of 1945. I claim that parliamentary pressure caused the Government to stall in both defining and implementing a policy, or suitable approach. Truman's Navy Day Speech also pressed the urgency of Government's action. The repercussions this had on the Government's foreign policy, particularly with regard to the United States, were made clear in the Washington Conference and during the precedent parliamentary debating.

For instance Raymond Blackburn asked the Americans for information on previous secret agreements between the United States and Britain,<sup>661</sup> and was snubbed. The British wanted to announce Attlee's visit to discuss the atomic problem, but the Americans wanted to keep any previous collaboration, and the reason for Attlee's visit as secret as possible for the sake of their domestic policy<sup>662</sup> and general public opinion, which was strongly against sharing any atomic "secrets". This eventually led to severe problems for the negotiations, as press reports of the discussions already had in the British parliament had reached the Americans, and had annoyed the American administration.<sup>663</sup>

As has I have shown so far, when Parliament began to recognise the connection between foreign affairs and the atomic question, it also found ways to participate in the matter through the use of parliamentary questions and adjournment debates. In fact, almost half of the parliamentary instances which addressed atomic matters in general were either questions or adjournment debates.<sup>664</sup>

The widening of thematic perceptions of the atomic question was an important factor too. It meant that atomic matters could be covered in the context of current events, which had to be debated in Parliament. This then led to the emergence of parliamentary views on what to do. Although a certain type of

<sup>661</sup> HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol 415 cc334-341.

<sup>662</sup> No.204 Bevin to Halifax 19 October 1945; No.205 Halifax to Bevin 20 October 1945. DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II.

<sup>663</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1298-1301; The Times 30 October 1945. "House of Commons - Atomic Energy", 31 October 1945 The Times. "A First class headache - Mr. Morrison's reply to the debate" 31 October 1945 Ibid. "Talks on Atomic Energy" 1 November 1945 Ibid. Churchill referred this as a breach of sacred trust one week later.

<sup>664</sup> 52 instances of questions, 19 adjournment debates.

consensus can be seen, Parliament was by no means unanimous in its opinion, and yet normal party divisions did not seem to apply when it came to this topic. Because the pro-UN side had possibly more access to information and it was thus a more appealing approach, which was additionally easier to present, as it involved palming off the responsibility on someone else, this policy gained overall greater support in Parliament. Moreover, in spite of what had been planned behind Cabinet doors, the push by the Government to ratify the UN charter meant that it had to publicly commit itself to an open, internationalist policy, following the rules set out by the UN Charter. These rules, for instance, stated that any agreements between two or more parties (i.e., nations, countries) which could be considered as alliance should be publicly reported.<sup>665</sup> Atomic cooperation would be a clear case of one such issue.

Another point to bear in mind is that this all happened in a relatively short time. The Government had prepared a preliminary approach, but this still seemed to waver between two approaches. Parliamentary debates about the matter must have contributed to this to some extent as well. Public support for international cooperation and control of the weapon (or co-operation with the USSR) was even greater than in Parliament, so it would be difficult to go against that altogether. Furthermore, the peace-policy was a long-cherished proposal for the Labour Party, so it could not be simply discarded in an offhand manner, at least in public, even if Kenneth Morgan claims that the party was mostly under the thumb of the Cabinet's inner circle. The fact that parliamentarians attempted to raise adjournment debates, or press for parliamentary questions seems to disprove such a claim.

Meanwhile the other more politically realist approach to consolidate the Anglo-American collaboration and exclude the Soviets was simultaneously moving forward, via the various officials recommending it from key departments such as the Foreign Office and from the Chiefs of Staff.<sup>666</sup> This approach was sceptical of the UN, and were principally opposed to the USSR. The increasingly hostile attitude of the Soviets was thus taken as proof enough that international control would fail. The failure of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London no doubt contributed to this pessimism earlier in the autumn of 1945.<sup>667</sup>

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<sup>665</sup> Charter of the United Nations, Chapter XVI: "1) Every treaty and every international agreement entered into by any Member of the United Nations after the present Charter comes into force shall as soon as possible be registered with the Secretariat and published by it. 2) No party to any such treaty or international agreement which has not been registered in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article may invoke that treaty or agreement before any organ of the United Nations." See also Roitto, 2008 p.127-130.

<sup>666</sup> In general foreign policy: Saville 1993, p.31-32; 42-43. No. 194 Minute by Sir A. Clark Kerr [FO 800/555] 12 September 1945 DBPO Ser.I Vol.II; No.199 Minute from Major General Hollis to Mr. Attlee, 10 October 1945. DBPO Ser.I vol.II. Saville mentions that the hardest attitude towards the Soviet Union was within the Chiefs of Staff. They were also the advisors of the A.C.A.E in terms of atomic weapons and policy. TNA FO 800/549 28 September 1945 Deputy Chiefs of Staff Committee D.C.O.S (45) 80: Forming of the sub-committee to consider problems concerned with Atomic Weapons and Atomic Power for Defence purposes.

<sup>667</sup> Good account is given in Harbut 1986, cf. also Herken 1988.

After the bidirectional atomic foreign policy was drafted it was only a short matter of time before a tipping point was reached and thereafter Parliament and the Government more or less went their separate ways. These were the aforementioned public idealism on the one hand (Parliament), and secret realism on the other (Government). But the situation was far from clear, and there were many in both these branches of the executive who were not so straightforwardly partisan for either policy. Nevertheless, political realists were keen to correctly determine who the post-war "Great Powers" would now be, and as their approach began to gain the upper hand in Government circles, we will look more closely at this approach in the following sub-chapter (3.2).

### 3.2 An internationalist or realist atomic policy?

"Making an atomic bomb the servant of man not the destroyer - UN the only way"<sup>668</sup>

Parliamentarians were not the only people that saw the atomic question as an intrinsic foreign policy issue.<sup>669</sup> The above headline, printed in *The Manchester Guardian*, illustrates how the press also shared this view, and what was publicly expected of the new Government in terms of Britain's atomic foreign policy. The article was referring in particular to Bevin's commentary in Parliament. However, things were not quite as clear cut as the headline may have suggested. Although policymaking had become a tussle between two main lines of thought, grouped around internationalism on the one hand, and political realism on the other; the struggle was also between continuity and change in general - and it was particularly fierce within Attlee's government itself. Decisions made in the past had framed the policy options so that a certain type of path dependency applied to even the more idealist politicians. Then again, the optimism shown with the change in government at the end of the war gave every indication that now (more than ever) was the time to make a fresh start and try and do things differently. It was certainly one reason why many wanted to pursue a more internationalist atomic foreign policy, and invest time and thought in such notions as the United Nations. Section 3.2.1 covers these discourses in more detail.

The problem was that both internationalist and realist approaches presented viable options, as regards atomic and foreign policy, and no doubt because of this they were often irrevocably intertwined. But as time wore on it became less tenable to pursue a bidirectional policy. So for the purposes of presenting a case, a deliberately constructed dichotomy will be presented here. With this in mind, the United Nations was seen by some as the best alternative

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<sup>668</sup> Headline from *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 November 1945, referring to Bevin's comments in Parliament.

<sup>669</sup> Sherwin 2003, p.81-83. According to Sherwin the British foreign policy and the atomic energy policy were so closely connected that they could be interpreted as different sides of the same coin.

to the older type of realist world policy. Indeed, from the autumn 1945 onwards, the UN was increasingly seen as an effective policy option. Attention had been drawn to the UN with growing international friction, and fears that the atomic bomb might get into the wrong hands. And British parliamentarians had already spent some time considering its role when they had ratified the UN Charter earlier.

As indicated in 3.1, it was thought by many that the defence of the UK as it stood would now be inadequate in the event of an atomic war, and thus the bomb was deemed essential as a deterrent. But for other parliamentarians this was morally unacceptable. The Government had also the added difficulty that it needed to define atomic policy rapidly. In some ways this was done from scratch, in other ways the Government relied on a policy of continuity, as it was believed questions of national security could not be changed so quickly without wreaking devastating consequences. Therefore policy remained bidirectional as much as possible. Neither the path dependent option of pursuing an atomic deterrent purely through Anglo-American collaboration, nor the internationalist solution of banning the atomic bomb completely, were ever fully settled on. Although fortunately atomic foreign policy did not quite attain the mythical beast proportions of a Hydra, it was nevertheless two-headed, which made it a hard enough one to implement.

However, the 'politically realist' option of continuing Churchill's policy of pursuing Anglo-American atomic collaboration in secrecy, behind the backs of Parliament and voters was not just about Britain. It was about the United States, and the fact that the Americans did not want to share any "atomic secrets" in spite of former agreements. Although this may have set a certain tone of distrust, the British did not want disagreements to spill over into other matters for which they depended on the United States. For although the war was over, the reality was that Britain was virtually bankrupt with the abrupt end of lend-lease.<sup>670</sup> Loan negotiations with the United States were therefore crucial and had already been initiated, so it was important that atomic policy did not upset the Americans. The nature of past Anglo-American cooperation thus limited how much policy could be constructed anew, and there was pressure for there to be continuity, if not even closer ties with the Americans, as officials and civil servants felt that they would still be able to 'guide' the Americans in such an eventuality.

It was only when discussion of the atomic question in Parliament led to its conflation with foreign affairs that the internationalist approach became apparent. This not only tied in Labour's election promises, as we have already seen, but also showed that the Government was earnest in addressing people's fears for the safety of the whole world by seeing it as a global issue and thus one in which the UN should be involved.

In the House of Commons, Vernon Bartlett was concerned that individual nation states might try to grab whatever atomic advantages they could before the United Nations would come into effect.

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<sup>670</sup> Vickers 2004, p.161-162.

"I urge that the information should be handed over to the Military Staffs Committee as soon as the United Nations Charter has come into operation and methods have been devised to control the manufacture."<sup>671</sup>

Flight Lieutenant Fred Peart (Workington, Labour) spoke for many, and in line with his party's election manifesto, when he described how the atomic bomb should be a matter of international concern rather than as a weapon to be blithely wielded as a deterrent by the same Great Powers who had so patently failed to prevent two World Wars from happening. With so much more at stake, the consequences, he argued, could be horrific.

"I believe, too, that a Labour Government will give a lead to remove any suspicion and distrust between this country and our great Ally the Soviet Union. Suspicion and distrust marred our relationships before the war. If we had won friendship with Russia probably this terrible war could have been averted. In conjunction with the Soviet Union, and America, indeed with all nations, we must plan a new world. Those individuals who would toy with power politics are playing a dangerous game. The world cannot afford to have another war. Jungle politics are obsolete. The atomic bomb has seen to that. The Council of Foreign Ministers has great problems before it. I believe if its faces those problems with courage and sincerity a lasting peace can be won."<sup>672</sup>

The Government showed their agreement with this when Philip Noel-Baker (Minister of State, Labour) confirmed the vital importance of the atomic question, and its connection to foreign affairs.

"I cannot sit down without saying something about the atomic bomb. Nobody who speaks on international relations can now avoid the subject [...]. The Government's conclusion is that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington [A. Eden]. This is our last chance. We accept the views of my hon. Friend the Member for West Ealing [Mr. J. Hudson], and this Parliament has come here to make an end of war. The Government accept that, and we do not mean to have an unambitious foreign policy. We believe that leadership by Britain may be a factor of immense importance in time to come. It was my experience between the wars that, when Britain led, international institutions gave good results, but that, when Britain did not lead, they too often failed. Now we share the leadership with our great Allies, and, above all, with the United States and the Soviet Union; the Foreign Secretary will see to it that Britain plays her part with the Commonwealth nations at her side. His programme is one of Parliamentary democracy, of helping those who stood for freedom throughout the war, of condemning every act of violence and lawless bloodshed, of economic reconstruction by international action, of political solidarity against aggression and of active, vigorous, unreserved co-operation in the tasks of peace. It has been a people's war, and we are going to make it people's peace."<sup>673</sup>

The answer underlined the Government's view (and especially "the mind of the foreign office") that Britain still had a prominent place in world politics.<sup>674</sup> The backing provided (indirectly) by the Commonwealth enabled Britain to compare herself to the Soviet Union and the United States in terms of importance. The notions of solidarity and of a "people's peace" were, however, somewhat new elements. Nevertheless these reveal that one of the goals of foreign policy

<sup>671</sup> Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc334-335.

<sup>672</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc360.

<sup>673</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc399-400.

<sup>674</sup> Saville, 1993, p.3; 6-9;20; 26. Vickers 2004, p.161-162; though Vickers considers that the fall of the Empire was to some extent realized, p.163.

was to prevent another (atomic) war. However, just how this would be achieved was not, as yet, being discussed. The main thing was that, even if the practicalities of UN involvement seemed remote, the noble ideal that it *should* become a UN matter had been expressed publicly. It also showed the electorate that the election agenda was being carried out as promised.

“We believe with him that Governments must have policies which the people understand. The simple folk in every nation now believe that the vital interests of nations are not individual but common interests which they cannot help but share. They believe that the prosperity of one nation promotes the prosperity of others. They believe that war is futile, wasteful, and wicked. They believe that it can be ended by our generation if we want to. The Government believe these things too, and it is in that spirit that they will do their work.”<sup>675</sup>

There was, of course, no mention of any attempt to continue secret collaboration with the US to gain a headstart in the likelihood of a forthcoming atomic arms race. Indeed, the Americans were particularly reluctant that this become a matter of public debate in the same year as they faced elections. Parliamentarians and members of the public were thus reassured about the best of intentions, and that Britain would remain an important player in world politics. Opinions were expressed in the House of Commons (many already during the Debate on the Address) that it was Britain’s duty to pursue a foreign policy that would resolve any international mistrust, ease Soviet suspicions, instigate future cooperation between the Big Three, set a moral example to the world, and forge closer ties with the United States. The idea of British world leadership via the UN was put forward as an alternative to competition between the Great Powers. Indeed, by leading from within the UN, Britain could perhaps pave a ‘third way’ for the UN so that the fledgling organisation would eventually take over what had formerly been the responsibilities of the Great Powers.

The atomic question was not the only reason for favouring the UN. The Labour Party had long supported the founding of an organisation to support internationalism more effectively than the League of Nations, which had patently failed in the inter-war years. There was a need to replace it with a more effective and truly international organisation to promote peace and cooperation. The UN would be able to intervene in possible conflict zones to contain them and restore peace and order where the former organisation had patently failed. One of the key reasons for the League’s failure was thought to have been the withdrawal, and subsequent isolationism, of the United States between the wars. Labour also argued that the British Conservative governments of the inter-war years had also been too little concerned with international ideals, and so internationalism soon became a part of their ideology<sup>676</sup> as a party in opposition - although they were unable to implement it any significant way during Churchill’s wartime coalition government. By the time Labour was in Government, it was thus important that

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<sup>675</sup> HC Deb 20 August 1945 vol 413 cc399-400. This was addressed for John Freeman (Watford, Lab.)

<sup>676</sup> Vickers 2004, p.199-204.

the internationalist agenda, which had been kept smouldering for the decades when the Party was not in power, be actually implemented to some extent.

Although Bevin and Attlee had both been in the wartime coalition Cabinet, it was nevertheless very much Churchill's government during the war, and the priority was of course to win the war. But as soon as Labour gained power, Attlee himself was promoting internationalism and even thinking of banning the bomb.<sup>677</sup> Alan Macmillan claims that Attlee had gone so far as to prohibit initiating a British atomic project before first consulting with the Americans to see whether first they should make a joint effort instead to contain the technology.<sup>678</sup> As we have seen earlier, these notions featured heavily in Attlee's own initial memoranda and not only were they in the core of Labour's foreign policy,<sup>679</sup> but were also supported among the general public at large too.

It therefore seemed inevitable, once Labour was in power with an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons (and with a henceforth weaker House of Lords), that the new kind of cooperative, open, and frank internationalist foreign policy that had been talked about for decades would finally be instigated. The UN was seen as the proper instrument for promoting peace, stability and prosperity; and a key part of this would be to resolve the atomic question. As mentioned earlier, Britain was considered be more vulnerable to atomic attacks than many other nations.<sup>680</sup> Therefore besides requests for general information about the UN, there were many questions about how the UN would share atomic information amongst its members in the future. Above all, there needed to be safeguards to prevent the proliferation of atomic weapons. One suggestion by MPs was to share the technology among allied or UN member states.<sup>681</sup> Wielding an atomic threat as the means to enforce peace upon the world was not considered feasible. Irrespective of the innovative possibilities it might present, it was the threat of atomic technology that was seen as the primary motive for sharing atomic knowledge to ease suspicions. But the Americans were against sharing any knowledge. This limited the Government's UN-oriented foreign policy options to the following:

- (i) The United Nations should direct foreign policy from a global perspective.
- (ii) The United Nations should control atomic raw materials (originally controlling raw materials had been suggested as a way to stop anyone other than Canada, the US and Britain getting their hands on the technology).

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<sup>677</sup> No.192, An undated memo by Attlee, edited and put in circulation on 28.8.1945. DBPO, Series I, vol. II.

<sup>678</sup> Macmillan 1991, p.4.

<sup>679</sup> Vickers 2004, p.194.

<sup>680</sup> For example see: HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc275-276. Earl of Darnley, referring to The Times article citing on The Association of Los Alamos Scientists on the previous day.

<sup>681</sup> see for example HC Deb 24 October 1945 vol 414 c2012 (Blackburn)



- (iii) Sharing the new information and technology (safely) through the UN organization, and perhaps also co-operating together under its auspices
- (iv) Giving the United Nations the sole right to use the atomic bomb as a deterrent against possible aggressors, and the right to remove bombs from national arsenals.<sup>682</sup> Until that point, the US was presented as a suitable temporary keeper or guardian of the new invention until the UN was ready. Banning the atomic bomb was now seen to be as difficult as getting hold of it. Therefore it was seen as attainable for the UN to use it as a deterrent.

These were also largely the topics covered in the instances when atomic matters were raised in reference to the UN. But as the international situation kept deteriorating, other less internationalist options had to be considered, and these were lent credence by the abovementioned reports and advice coming in from the Foreign Office.<sup>683</sup> In the same message Nevile Butler also mentioned that:

“The Foreign Office should, I think, support strongly the recommendation that the production of bombs should be given first priority. Sir James Chadwick, who has seen all the developments in this at first hand, feels that it is most important that we should have the weapon as quickly as possible”<sup>684</sup>

and

“It is easy to criticize a policy that provides on the one hand for a convention searching to eliminate the use of atomic bomb, and at the same time take urgent steps to produce it. This just has to be faced.”<sup>685</sup>

Judging from this, the government for one had noticed its own bidirectional approach. The message also states it clearly that Britain opted for producing atomic bomb as soon as possible, but also kept the internationalist option along.

What kept the internationalist options alive however was, strangely enough, as much the realists as the internationalists. Indeed, true ‘realists’ could not completely forsake the greater possibilities that an internationalist approach might offer, especially while Britain was still reliant on so much aid from the US and therefore in no fit state to bargain on an equal footing. Perhaps the UN Charter could in fact provide the means to secure a more real (if not quite ‘realist’) internationalist approach. For this reason, the ratification of the UN Charter was a means for Parliament, and to some extent the Government and executive,

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<sup>682</sup> This would have concerned only the United States at this point, but only Canada, United States and Britain, and actually very few persons in those countries knew of this.

<sup>683</sup> TNA FO 800/547. Butler to Cadogan 1 November 1945 (intended possibly for GEN75 meeting: “I submit the revised official’s report for consideration at this evening’s meeting of Ministers... ) about the control plans. The United States would require quid pro quo approach, the USSR would benefit from having guarantees against surprise atomic attack, and the Americans would like to have raw-material monopoly.

<sup>684</sup> TNA FO 800/547. Butler to Cadogan 1 November 1945.

<sup>685</sup> Ibid.

to argue in favour of the UN as a way to indirectly contribute to atomic and foreign policymaking.

As mentioned already, Clement Attlee seemed to waver between the idealism he had initially espoused and realism. One explanation is that he was “wearing the hats” of both Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. This meant that he needed to be seen to support both UN control (and a possible worldwide ban of the weapon) on the one hand, and secret transatlantic cooperation on the other.<sup>686</sup> For Attlee, the purpose of the UN was to avoid war, and in that respect, atomic weapons posed an immense threat.<sup>687</sup>

The Government had, until now, given only vague and delayed answers about atomic policy, and was not at all keen on opening the floor to debates on the matter in Parliament. As already mentioned, the Government was loathe to debate a matter on which its own lines (and the US government’s) were not yet clearly established. But Attlee really did need to consult with the Americans, and it was not just a delaying tactic.<sup>688</sup> When it came to the UN, however, and particularly the ratification of the UN Charter, the Government actually began the debate by introducing the Charter to be ratified. Perhaps this was because there was more information available and the matter had already been touched upon in the State Opening.

Therefore, after the autumn recess, Parliament was able to exert increasing pressure on the executive with regard to atomic matters. Although Labour had a clear majority in Parliament, there was always the risk of negative publicity, and because Parliament was a public forum, and its activities well-reported abroad, there was nevertheless a need for the executive to be circumspect. Requests for further information gradually gave way to debates (and questions) focusing on the government’s intended lines of atomic foreign policy, as the international situation worsened; and once Parliament had supported ratification of the UN Charter, much of these debates focused around whether the UN would provide the best means to lessen this international friction.

As the UN discourse did not appear out of the thin air, its origins need to be presented. In the early autumn it was evident that many Labour parliamentarians had paid attention to their party’s election agenda. When it came to foreign relations, the emphasis in the manifesto was on true international cooperation, which stressed the importance of both the Soviet Union and the United States.

“Economic strife and political and military insecurity are enemies of peace. We cannot cut ourselves off from the rest of the world - and we ought not to try [...]. We must consolidate in peace the great war-time association of the British Commonwealth with the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Let it not be forgotten that in the years leading up to the war the Tories were so scared of Russia that they missed the chance to establish a partnership which might well have prevented the war”.

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<sup>686</sup> No.192, An undated memo by Attlee, edited and put in circulation on 28 August 1945. DBPO, Series I, vol. II.

<sup>687</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc659-663.

<sup>688</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4.

But there was also a suggestion that the new world order of peace might also lie with a “big five” that would include France and China.

“We must join with France and China and all others who have contributed to the common victory in forming an International Organisation capable of keeping the peace in years to come. All must work together in true comradeship to achieve continuous social and economic progress [...]. We should build a new United Nations, allies in a new war on hunger, ignorance and want”.

In any case, Britain had to lead the way in this internationalist post-war world to make it a better place in spite of her own problems.

“The British, while putting their own house in order, must play the part of brave and constructive leaders in international affairs”.<sup>689</sup>

As mentioned already, this became known as the ‘third way’ by some parliamentarians. It was thus now perceived to be more important to have brave and constructive leadership, than simply a defence policy.

### 3.2.1 “Humanity’s last chance” - the United Nations as atomic arbitrator

As we have seen, the atomic question raised the spectre of world destruction. Because of the severity of the matter, some suggestions, such as those mentioned earlier of Lord Darnley and the Lords Spiritual, understandably focused on Christian values and morals as the necessary basis for atomic policy. They also supported an internationalist foreign policy, and their moral angle thus strengthened the argument for a peaceful and neutral United Nations to be responsible for controlling the new technology.

Compared to other topics that touched on the atomic question, when it came to discussing the UN, atomic matters could be discussed quite freely. The UN was covered widely for instance in the press, and information available was relatively plentiful. This meant it was easier for individual parliamentarians to draft ever more precise questions or claims, or to demand an adjournment debate based on actual argumentation, which would in turn make the use of rhetorical devices easier. And because the UN was now most definitely current affairs, not even standing orders and customary practices could be used to limit commentary. Besides, Parliament had been specifically asked by the Government to ratify the UN Charter, which meant it was being actively encouraged to discuss atomic matters in this particular context. For example, would the United Nations be able to function in a world where atomic bombs were a reality?<sup>690</sup> If one atomic strike could cause so much destruction, was so hard to stop, and be carried out so swiftly, then it was of the utmost importance that the weapon did not get into the wrong people’s hands. Placing atomic weapons and related technology under the mandate and supervision of the United Nations was thus quite a reasonable solution for an issue of such global proportions. These discussions also naturally touched on British foreign policy within such a scenario,

<sup>689</sup> Let Us Face the Future, 1945, p.1-9.

<sup>690</sup> For example 17 April 1945, referred in HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc659.

were the United Nations to take control. Although Attlee made it clear that his preamble was an expression of intention, rather than anything more binding, his emphasis was that the top priority of the UN should be to prevent war.<sup>691</sup> The United Nations Security Council was not simply to be a police force which could be called out in an emergency. It would be a forum in which the countries that wielded the most power in the world could meet up and cooperate in foreign policy so that military emergencies would not even occur in the first place. In this respect, the atomic question was seen as a possible spanner in the works, especially if it prevented the kind of cooperation between the Great Powers which would enable the UN to function properly.

Britain was not among the first countries to ratify the UN Charter, but the parliamentary debate took place over two days (22-23 August 1945), and was held in both chambers. The fact that both Houses did eventually support ratification shows that there was a general consensus on the need for a new world organization to ensure peace on Earth (albeit an Earth now faced with the atomic bomb) after the ravages of two world wars. But the debate also revealed concerns about the practicalities of how such an organisation would go about such a task, especially since the charter had been drawn up before Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>692</sup> And these practicalities were of course what most interested the political realists. No doubt most commentators were also thinking about the disastrous record of the League of Nations.

Lest we forget, the ratification debate had a big impact on atomic foreign policy as it enabled Parliament to comment on foreign affairs in general, and thereby legitimised demands for more information on related atomic matters. Attlee nevertheless managed the debate for the Government in such a way that it was made apparent that the substance of the charter should ride over party agendas for the sake of the greater good. He underlined that Britain could not stay out of the organisation, especially as 50 other states had already ratified the charter.<sup>693</sup> The United Nations would be an organisation that should be ever ready and not just assembled for emergencies.

“What, I think, is required is a continuous discussion of international affairs, not spasmodic action at times of crisis”<sup>694</sup>

This comment underlines the perceived importance of continuity in foreign policy, even within the context of Labour’s cherished internationalism. International relations should be taken seriously and required continuous interaction, so that international cooperation would become the norm rather than a fleeting exception. As the executive was well aware, this was particularly important for post-war Britain, considering it was not certain that she would maintain her former Great Power status otherwise.<sup>695</sup> Indeed, if the Dominions and countries

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<sup>691</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc659-663.

<sup>692</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc695-698.

<sup>693</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc659-663; 669-670.

<sup>694</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc664-665

<sup>695</sup> No.18 Record by Mr. Dixon of a conversation between Mr. Bevin, Senator Vandenberg and Mr. J. Foster Dulles on 24 January 1946 [F.O. 800/513], Foreign Office, 26th

of the Commonwealth joined the the UN as well, this would certainly add to Britain's overall international clout. Attlee highlighted that Britain and Canada were already to have leading roles in the intended UN Security Council, which would henceforth form the core of all UN activity.<sup>696</sup> The United Nations would form the basis for a more stable world system than the previous model, which had been guided by the contradictory interests of nation states and their traditional diplomacy of preferences and alliances. In his introduction, Attlee cited the main points of the UN Charter:

“to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind and

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends—

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and

to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

to employ international machinery for the promotion, of the economic and social advancement of all peoples”.<sup>697</sup>

Attlee also explained the proposals for how the UN would be organised in terms of its various parts and their different functions. The General Assembly was to consider any matter related to international security and recommend various possible actions. Meanwhile, as already proposed in Dumbarton Oaks, the Security Council would have five permanent members consisting of the Great Powers, and six rotating members taking into account issues such as geographic representation. Attlee suggested that these should be nations, which had perhaps already shown their interest in advocating peace. In this way it was also hoped as mentioned earlier that, due to the many countries that formed the Commonwealth and Dominions, Britain's own role would be enhanced as a leader of these nations in a range of geographic locations. This perhaps also persuaded those who might otherwise have been opposed to such an idealist plan to think of it instead as more realistically serving British interests, even if couched in an internationalist context.

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January 1946, [F.O. 800/513], DBPO ser.I, vol.IV. About Keynes' comments to Brand 29 January 1946: Bullen, 1985, footnote 6, p.69 DBPO ser.I.vol.IV.

<sup>696</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc 663; 665.

<sup>697</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc662.

Anthony Eden (Warwick and Leamington, Conservative) was thus all for there being a UN, and happy to debate the charter and recommend it on behalf of Churchill<sup>698</sup> and the opposition; but provided that it was clearly explained just how the United Nations would actually work. Conservative political realists could therefore also see the UN as a way forward, providing that in practice the UN enhanced Britain's global influence.

"I would present to the House two considerations for their examination in approving this Charter this afternoon. First, I would ask them to consider whether we need a world organization at all, and if we are agreed we do need one, is this one suited to our purpose and what are its differences from our earlier attempts?"<sup>699</sup>

Eden saw a need for an organisation such as the UN, and not just because of the atomic bomb. News and information travelling faster meant that problems once considered remote were now close at hand and thus more urgent. Current diplomatic channels were already overwhelmed, he reasoned, and thus any new organisation must open a new channel for communicating and negotiating international problems. This echoed Attlee's call for the new body to be permanently in session, and not just for emergencies. It was important that the UN was not slow and sluggish in responding, but ever ready. Eden then went on to ponder the League of Nations and suggested that one of the reasons the former world organisation had failed was because the US had not joined,<sup>700</sup> just as Attlee and his Foreign Office staff had felt. The second reason he gave was that League of Nations had been too democratic, in that it had given equal weight to each nation in spite of the fact that the political reality might have been otherwise. Hence nothing could really be achieved as any member state had the right to veto at their disposal which meant nothing would be agreed on. Within the United Nations, however, the Security Council five would be the only member states to have this right to veto. Eden seemed generally supportive of this more politically realist form of internationalism as, he argued, the Great Powers were in any case the ones who would be most responsible for keeping the peace.<sup>701</sup> The right to veto, however, was seen as problematic by some. Indeed, it was soon to become a crucial issue both for the UN Atomic Control Commission<sup>702</sup> and, as Viscount Cranbourne pointed out to the Lords in late November, the Security Council.

"There are many of us, as your Lordships know, who always thought the veto provision unfortunate, but now I believe it has become absolutely disastrous. While it remains in the Charter, it is always open—or always would be open—for any permanent member of the Council to veto the use of the bomb, or even the threat of use of the bomb, in any dispute, whether the Power in question was directly concerned in

<sup>698</sup> Reason for his absence has escaped the sources at my disposal.

<sup>699</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc671-672.

<sup>700</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc674-675; cc680.

<sup>701</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc674-675; cc680.

<sup>702</sup> For instance see HC Deb 02 August 1946 vol 426 cc1359-87. Raymond Blackburn mentioned that the UN Atomic Energy Control Commission's work had been deadlocked for a long time, but that there was a hope of the plans advancing finally..

the dispute or not. In such circumstances the whole deterrent value of the bomb as a means for preserving peace would be largely nullified."<sup>703</sup>

Returning to the ratification debate, Eden voiced the concerns of many in the Government when he asked to what extent Britain could actually trust the United Nations to work. American participation in the UN was seen as fundamental to its ability to function, and since both the US and USSR had already signed the charter, the pressure to also accept was strong. As mentioned above, Attlee drew attention to the fact that "50 nations" had already agreed to it. Meanwhile, on behalf of the opposition, Eden (who had played a part in earlier negotiations) also recommended it be signed, as he also agreed this was a matter that rode above party interests.<sup>704</sup> In fact, because the US was definitely part of this world organisation this time, Eden expressed his full support for the charter.<sup>705</sup> In this respect, he reflected the general tendency among MPs from all parties (including the Liberals), and thus parliamentary consensus was achieved with comparatively little scrutiny in the end.

By ratifying the Charter, Britain publicly committed to UN values and regulations. These were to come back and haunt the executive, as it meant that it had, in effect, "promised" these values to Parliament. It also, as mentioned earlier, set a precedent in a custom-based constitution for Parliament to be consulted henceforth about foreign and atomic affairs. And on an anecdotal note, it was also one of the rare cases where there was a vote cast about an issue related even indirectly to atomic affairs. After ratification, most of the instances that followed concerning the United Nations and atomic energy (many of which also touched on foreign policy) related to either the international control of atomic energy, conducting an open policy with regard to atomic 'secrets' to preserve world peace, and how these might eventually all be put under the UN 'umbrella' of responsibility. In many debates, especially in the Commons, an open policy and the sharing of atomic secrets was seen as a necessary prerequisite for the UN to be able to carry out its duties. Sharing knowledge was mentioned in general, but in many cases it referred directly to Soviet Union.<sup>706</sup> Any attempts to claim a monopoly on such a devastating invention would damage cooperation between the Great Powers and endanger any chance of the Security Council working properly.<sup>707</sup> For Attlee especially it was of the utmost importance that there be open communication between the Great Powers.<sup>708</sup> Although the finger was not being directly pointed at any one particular country, it was clear who would have that monopoly if there were to be one. Now that Britain had ratified, some MPs felt that UN policy should even be followed with regard to (as yet to be decided) atomic matters.<sup>709</sup> For instance Alfred Bossom

<sup>703</sup> HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc24.

<sup>704</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc713.

<sup>705</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc680.

<sup>706</sup> For example see Tom Horabin: HC Deb 26 Oct 1945 vol 414 cc 2399-2401; 2405.

<sup>707</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1300-1303. (Clement Davies)

<sup>708</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc653

<sup>709</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1317-1324 (Donald Bruce, Portsmouth North, Lab).

(Maidstone, Conservative) asked the Prime Minister if any arrangement had “yet been agreed upon between the major Allies to prevent any State with aggressive intentions from being able secretly to manufacture atomic bombs in the future”. In answer, he received the reply from Attlee below.

“Not yet, but as I have informed the House, I am in communication with the President of the United States on the general questions of the control of the atomic bomb. I should prefer not to make any statement at present”.<sup>710</sup>

Bossom followed this up with a supplementary question to ask that an announcement be made as soon as possible, given the “supreme importance” of the matter. Attlee had to comply and he promised to keep the House informed but only after consultation with the US and other countries.<sup>711</sup>

The role of the United States as the temporary “keeper” of atomic secrets seemed to be accepted on the whole with little scrutiny.<sup>712</sup> The Government had to walk a difficult tightrope between acknowledging that there was a time and place for secrecy, and keeping “the UN in mind”.<sup>713</sup> This perhaps explains why firm reassurances about following the United Nations Charter were not specifically given by the executive in spite of some requests. Indeed, when these arguments were presented by Bevin on behalf of the Government, something completely different was being prepared at the same time in secrecy via the traditional diplomatic channels. The United Nations was, in effect, seen as the new alternative for an older type of world politics, and from the autumn of 1945 onwards, it was seen as essential to ensure the safety of the world, especially as the atomic bomb was seen as “too dangerous to be loose in a lawless world”<sup>714</sup>. These themes were brought up time and again by members from all parties in debates via both oral and written questions prior to the Washington conference in 1945.<sup>715</sup> They wanted to know not only if there had been Great Power consultation about the international control of atomic energy (for example, at the Council of Foreign Ministers in London<sup>716</sup>), but also which governments actually had access to the technology, and of course what the British government was intending to do about it. Whereas Attlee promised to inform Parliament after consulting the Americans, Bevin was reluctant to shed any information about the problematic London talks.<sup>717</sup>

All in all, the United Nations became synonymous with an internationalist atomic foreign policy for the majority of Parliament. But although there was consensus about the need for the UN, there remained many realists, mainly among the Conservatives, who disagreed about just how the UN should oper-

<sup>710</sup> HC Deb 10 October 1945 vol 414 cc227-8.

<sup>711</sup> HC Deb 10 October 1945 vol 414 cc227-8.

<sup>712</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1325-1327. (Ronald Ross, Londonderry, Ulster Unionist).

<sup>713</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1334-1337 (Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary).

<sup>714</sup> President Truman’s radio speech from Potsdam conference on 9 September 1945.

<sup>715</sup> See for example HC Deb 10 October 1945 vol 414 cc227-228.

<sup>716</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4. For FM council in London HC Deb 10 October 1945 vol 414 c240W

<sup>717</sup> See for example HC Deb 10 October 1945 vol 414 cc227-228.



ate with regard to atomic foreign policy. Many people considered the UN as the only policy option, and therefore internationalism was kept alive, even if it became only a nominal internationalist stance, being hard to implement in the proto-cold war atmosphere of mistrust that was forming. For the Government it was, if nothing else, a good plan B should the political realism favoured by executive officials fail. This realism will be looked at in greater detail next.

### 3.2.2 Political realism and Great Power politics

This sub-chapter focuses on policies that the Government largely kept to themselves or released on a “need to know” basis, although some activities were made public for persuasive purposes, such as making a show of power. There is no escaping the fact that realist policies frequently overlapped with internationalist ones, and that often the two sides were so interconnected that even for instance a chronological distinction is somewhat artificial. In other words, the two operated in parallel for quite some time. Indeed, as we already saw in the last section, there was even a politically realist form of internationalism. It was not simply that there was first an internationalist approach, and then the realist one. The situation changed constantly, but whether this is artificial or not, a division of this kind is required to explain the two distinctive, thematic paths in more detail. Similarly the views of the Commons, the Lords and the Government are all dealt with in this section separately for the sake of clarity and purposes of comparison, even though they often resembled each other.

Political realism and Great Power politics refer here to the traditional bilateral approach to foreign affairs, i.e., conducting them on a one-to-one basis in terms of direct relations between two countries. It also refers to the idea that chaos is the true political reality and that in order to survive, a political entity must play power-politics and make calculations based on comparative advantage. Both hard (military) and soft power (such as media persuasion and diplomacy) are used to do this, and the line between these is a thin one drawn in sand. For instance economic, industrial, and capital resources would also add to power and prestige at the international level. The people in Government who had been traditionally the most likely to be politically realist were, as mentioned earlier, those working as officials in the executive, particularly within the Foreign Office.

International implications, threats and relations were covered in FO reports from the perspective of Britain’s expected interest. For this reason, the Foreign Office had kept tabs on the big American investments in the previous collaboration with Britain, and the promises of its continuation made by the previous US president, Franklin Roosevelt. It was also clear to FO staff that it was paramount that Britain use this favourable head start to her advantage before American foreign policy crystallized into a less pro-British stance. Most Americans at this point considered the atomic bomb to be a good thing, as it had won the war. And since they were the only ones who had it, they believed

it was in good hands.<sup>718</sup> Even if the Americans were already showing vagueness about their intentions and willingness to continue atomic collaboration with the British, working with the Americans was still seen as the basis of British atomic foreign policy within the FO. And since Britain had most definitely been a leading world power before the war, there would naturally have been some reluctance to change working methods if realist policy had previously proved so successful. Some FO officials might even have been of the opinion that Britain could actually steer American opinion and policy to serve British interests.<sup>719</sup>

The politically realist approach recommended by the Foreign Office was thus for Britain to become a fully-fledged atomic power through collaboration with the United States. These also soon became primary goals for the executive.<sup>720</sup> It was decided that the collaboration was to be strengthened and secured through secret negotiations, that would eventually be held in Washington.<sup>721</sup> Prime Minister Attlee was to travel out to the United States in November 1945 expressly for this purpose, but the official reason given to the public would be quite different. Although it was kept out of the public eye, the envoy's real job was essentially to persuade Americans to support policies that would be favourable to the British. To this end, the UK had established a huge propaganda agency in the United States, and were paying close attention to American public sentiment.<sup>722</sup> In this way, the Americans had been somewhat reluctantly pressed into negotiations through a mix of parliamentary pressure and planted questions.

As mentioned already, the internationalist options were not completely discarded however. After all, Bevin had defined an intended foreign policy in Blackpool earlier that year, that would ideally involve cooperation between all the Great Powers.<sup>723</sup> The dawn of the atomic age was, however, a major stumbling block for the idealists, as the new weapon had changed the concept of security profoundly.<sup>724</sup>

"The coming of the atomic bomb has, in fact, brought into actuality what I described to the House then as only a possibility. I am certain that all of us, in this House, realise that we are now faced with a naked choice between world co-operation and world destruction, and it is, therefore, with the consciousness of six years of war behind us, and all the possibilities that hang over us in the future, that I commend this Charter to the House and confidently ask approval of its ratification."<sup>725</sup>

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<sup>718</sup> Herken 1988, p.30-32.

<sup>719</sup> Saville 1993, p.20.

<sup>720</sup> No.195 Note by Makins 24 September 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>721</sup> See for example No.186 a Memorandum by Campbell to Bevin 8.8.1945 DBPO ser.I, vol.II. No.204 a Telegram by Bevin to Halifax 19 October 1945 Ibid.

<sup>722</sup> Anstey, 1984.

<sup>723</sup> Speech given on 23 May 1945 in Labour Party's conference in Blackpool. "Shaping foreign policy"; "Labour foreign policy"; the Times 24 May 1945.

<sup>724</sup> See for example No.192, Undated memorandum on atomic bomb by Attlee, circulated unedited 28 August 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>725</sup> HC Deb 22 August 1945 vol 413 cc670.

Therefore when Attlee's intended trip to Washington was eventually announced it provoked some comments among MPs. The House of Lords seemed content enough to wait until the trip was over, but in the House of Commons pressure was building up and questions needed answering. The opposition wanted a debate on foreign policy in general, and showed some signs of frustration when this was asked to be postponed. Various members across the floor wanted to know more about the precise purpose of this trip, about the plans for atomic energy, and the plans concerning the United Nations. As the answers given were vague, some members tried different tactics and asked about the Prime Minister's delegation. Why, for example, were there no scientists accompanying him on this trip?<sup>726</sup> The executive also felt the strain of parliamentary pressure, but they turned this to their advantage by presenting it as one reason why negotiations were needed now more than ever to the otherwise reluctant Americans.<sup>727</sup> James L. Gormly claims that the Washington Conference (10-16 November 1945) was instigated by the Americans only, and that it was where the idea to establish an international atomic control commission within the United Nations was first mooted.<sup>728</sup> Gormly's claims are typical in emphasising the role of the United States over other actors, as well as downplaying the complexity of the atomic issue.<sup>729</sup> As we will see, it was also the stated intention of the Washington Declaration issued by the Heads of States.<sup>730</sup> However, the ulterior motive for the British, who were in fact the ones who had pressed for the negotiations, was to secure a continuation of the wartime atomic collaboration with the United States.<sup>731</sup>

The atomic bomb seemed to have already rendered the UN charter obsolete before it was even ratified.<sup>732</sup> But at the same time the United Nations was seen by many parliamentarians to be the best way to tackle issues related to the bomb. Then again, others wondered how the United Nations would function precisely in a world overshadowed by the mushroom cloud.<sup>733</sup> Peace and internationalism were all very well, but for some, it was more realistic to prepare for the worst first. Only then could something different be considered. Internationalist solutions generally involved working together with both the US and the USSR, yet as international friction increased there was less talk of cooperating with the Soviets, and Churchill's atomic foreign policy of *primus inter pares* with the Americans started to regain some of its former attractiveness even among Labour MPs. All the same, during the problematic talks held between 11 September and 2 October at the first Council of Foreign Ministers in London, it be-

<sup>726</sup> For example see HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol 415 cc243-244; HC Deb 08 November 1945 vol 415 c1447.

<sup>727</sup> No. 202 Telegram by Attlee to Truman 16.10.1945 DBPO ser.I, vol.II. "It is my desire to exchange views with You before making further statement but it will not be possible for me to postpone discussion for long."

<sup>728</sup> Gormly 1984, p. 126;130-137.

<sup>729</sup> Though Gormly was among the first who paid attention to the problems in Anglo-American relationship during immediate post-war era.

<sup>730</sup> Washington Declaration 15 November 1945.

<sup>731</sup> Gowing, 1974, p.73 See also Roitto 2008, p.45-52.

<sup>732</sup> HC Deb 23 August 1945 vol 413 cc921.

<sup>733</sup> HC Deb 21 August 1945 vol 413 cc441-4

came palpably clear to the US Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, that the atomic bomb did not seem threatening enough to the Soviets for them to agree with the US about the fate of recently vanquished Japan. In addition, the momentum from the end of the war that had seen Labour win a landslide victory in Britain on the back of promising major changes meant that there was strong support among the majority of MPs for internationalism. Perhaps the way forward would be for a more politically realist form of internationalism within the UN; especially since, in many ways, the ratification of the UN charter was just an extension of the Ponsonby rule, reinstated in 1929, which had set the precedent for Parliament to be able to not only see the documents it was to ratify but comment on them. This would have perhaps muddied the waters for purely realist policymakers and meant that some internationalist concessions would have to be made. In spite of this, traditional foreign affairs and their relation to the atomic question were debated, and the debates raised a fair amount of interest abroad, even having some repercussions which will be looked at in greater detail here later.

'Atomic' featured a total of 150 times in parliamentary instances, and of those instances, 51 were in discourses that also mentioned the 'Great Powers' (Atomic discourse was brought up a total of 284 times).<sup>734</sup> The statistics also reveal that October and November were the months in which the two terms cropped up the most in the discourses. This supports the hypothesis, presented in the introduction, that the first instances of atomic and foreign policies being discussed as a linked topic took place in the autumn of 1945. More often than not these instances occurred at the same time as other foreign affair debates - which were usually about the United Nations. One reason for this might well have been that the world was still reeling from the repercussions of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It also highlights not only the multi-faceted character of atomic foreign affairs but also the parliamentary way of conducting affairs. The first, and possibly widest debate on foreign policy happened at the State Opening. The atomic question was approached from numerous angles and touched on a number of themes, many of which belonged to the third thematic category (see chapter 1), i.e., discussion of the Great Powers. But the State Opening of Parliament in August 1945 was particularly unusual for a State Opening in that in a way the Government failed to state its intended atomic policy, and gave other parliamentarians the chance to comment, especially the leaders of the parties in each House. It also gave them the chance to utilize certain procedural tools for monitoring the executive, which they used even when there was only the slightest room for manoeuvre. Another key contextual aspect which may explain the findings is of course the Washington conference held later on in the autumn of 1945 as it prevented debate on foreign affairs for some time.

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<sup>734</sup> Total number of Parliamentary instances in which 'atomic' was mentioned is 150. As one instance could include numerous themes, all of the themes need to be counted. That makes altogether 286 instances of any theme. Of these appearances 52 were related (at least) to Great Power policy.

For some reason, the Washington conference was talked about in Parliament (in atomic context) more than the earlier Council of Foreign Ministers in London. One of the reasons was perhaps because the conference in London took place at the time of parliamentary recess. Bevin did, however, mention it in the Commons on 9 October 1945, when he talked about the “disappointing events” of the conference; even if he made no mention of the atomic bomb. At this point, Winston Churchill commented that, due to the difficult world situation, perhaps it would be useful to have a debate soon on the “general position” of British foreign policy. Bevin stated in his reply that he would not “burk” the debate, should the House want it, but in his opinion it might be better to wait for a more opportune moment.<sup>735</sup>

“I think the situation is so delicate that if the debate were delayed for a little while it may be that the strings would be remended and the national and international interests be better served.”<sup>736</sup>

Churchill did not pursue the matter, but the following day William Warbey (Luton, Labour) attempted to coax a statement about atomic policy out of Bevin. Via a written question, he wanted to know “whether the question of international control of the atomic bomb and of atomic energy was discussed at the Council of Foreign Ministers recently held in London; and whether he has any statement to make on the matter.”<sup>737</sup> Bevin’s reply was “no”. He had nothing more to add.<sup>738</sup> Because the question had been submitted in advance in written form it also meant Bevin was not caught unaware. The pre-submission also meant that the repetitive element, which otherwise might have increased pressure, was not as strong as might at first seem when looking at events in a purely chronological order.<sup>739</sup> On October 17, Quentin Hogg (Oxford, Conservative) also attempted to raise the matter<sup>740</sup> by asking the Prime Minister when he would “be in a position to explain the views of His Majesty’s Government relative to the political issues raised by the invention of the atomic bomb.”<sup>741</sup> Attlee’s reply was blunt, though truthful, as the requests for negotiations to be held in Washington were indeed being made; and it was evident that the British executive were waiting for a favourable response from the Americans.<sup>742</sup>

<sup>735</sup> HC Deb 09 October 1945 vol 414 cc35-43.

<sup>736</sup> HC Deb 09 October 1945 vol 414 cc41.

<sup>737</sup> HC Deb 10 October 1945 vol 414 c240W

<sup>738</sup> Ibid.

<sup>739</sup> This notion is important and characteristic for parliamentary way of conducting business. What might appear first-hand as increasing parliamentary pressure might not be as straightforward.

<sup>740</sup> This was one of the rare instances which had been given a headline directly related to Atomic matters. “Atomic bomb (Political issues)”.

<sup>741</sup> HC Deb 17 October vol 414 c1160.

<sup>742</sup> The Dominions could be a rhetorical device for lightening the load, or it might have meant Canada.

"I am now in communication with the Governments of the Dominions and of the United States of America. In these circumstances I have no statement to make at the present time."<sup>743</sup>

The barrage of questions surrounding the theme continued when Raymond Blackburn asked for the Government's view on whether information on atomic matters would continue to be shared amongst the other UN members who had defeated Japan and Germany, and if scientists' opinions about sharing them had been taken into consideration.<sup>744</sup> This loaded question was cleverly worded for teasing out information, as it already presented the British and Americans as being on one side (with their atomic knowledge), and those victors without atomic knowledge on the other. In addition, it was formulated in such a way as to lead people to believe that there had already been an exchange of atomic information between the allies earlier. Again the Prime Minister avoided the rhetorical traps with vague answers and needing to talk with the United States before releasing any further information.<sup>745</sup> Unfortunately the comments also gave the impression that the British executive could do very little without consulting the Americans first, or that American views had to be taken into account seriously. Certain FO memoranda had certainly suggested this, but they conflicted with the other memoranda which urged that Britain act before American views crystallized.<sup>746</sup>

Ernest Bevin denied that atomic matters had been brought up at all in the Council of Foreign Ministers in London<sup>747</sup>, and he later denied that they had ever affected his foreign policy decisions.

"I have never for one moment, when considering what decisions I should give on this or that issue, considered the atomic bomb. I have looked at despatches from our Ambassadors overseas, and from all the information I have been able to get—and I make this declaration which I hope will be accepted throughout the world—I have never once allowed myself to think that I could arrive at this or that decision because Britain was or was not in possession of the atomic bomb."<sup>748</sup>

But archival sources reveal that this was not the whole story. British representatives had been disappointed by the fact that American Foreign Secretary James F. Byrnes had not wanted to discuss atomic issues with the British in London despite their requests.<sup>749</sup> Perhaps frustrated by the vague answers given by Ministers, Parliament (especially the opposition) sought an opportunity to de-

<sup>743</sup> HC Deb 17 October vol 414 c1160.

<sup>744</sup> HC Deb 24 October 1945 vol 414 c2012.

<sup>745</sup> For example see HC Deb 09 October vol 414 cc228.

<sup>746</sup> TNA CAB 134/7 A.C.A.E.(45)16 Relations with United States, a memo from Makins

<sup>747</sup> HC Deb 10 October 1945 vol 414 c240W

<sup>748</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1335. Though in the same comment Bevin mentioned about being asked about atomic matters in London: "When I was challenged jocularly recently at a conference in London about the atomic bomb I said in reply: "Not a single answer I have given, or a single decision I have taken in this conference—not for one moment have I thought of it." Ibid.

<sup>749</sup> No.197 Dixon to Rowan 29 September 1945, There had been an attempt to discuss with Byrnes already on 27 September 1945 but Byrnes declined to speak to about the matters and said it was not pertinent to him. DBPO, ser.I, vol.II

bate foreign policy.<sup>750</sup> Disappointed at not getting a statement on the Washington talks, Churchill actually challenged Attlee to a foreign policy debate on 30 October 1945. Martin Lindsay (Solihull, Conservative) also followed Churchill's lead and demanded a full statement from Attlee upon his return from Washington. Meanwhile, Labour MPs George Pargiter (Spelthorne) and David Kirkwood (Dumbarton Burghs) were worried that the Soviet Union might be possibly excluded.<sup>751</sup> Compared to all this relatively eager activity in the House of Commons,<sup>752</sup> it seemed the House of Lords was content to wait.

The approaching Washington talks concerned many MPs, and they were keen that the Government clearly define its atomic foreign policy beforehand. MPs discussed the choice of representatives for the delegation that would go, and some even cross-examined<sup>753</sup> the Government about the real agenda of the talks, as if they did not believe the officially stated purpose. Attlee had a clear answer for the latter, and for those such as Mont Follick (Loughborough, Labour), who wanted to know which scientists were participating in the delegation; pointing out that most of the prominent British scientists were still working in the US, and could thus be reached there on arrival.<sup>754</sup> Strangely this answer did not cause further supplementary questions, and yet there is currently no evidence that would lead us to suppose that Follick's question was planted by the Government, perhaps to clear up in advance any doubts there may have been about the true aim of the Washington talks.

Major Wilfried Vernon (Dumfries, Labour) also submitted a question, in written form, asking the Prime Minister to list the members of his delegation. In the reply Attlee mentioned John Anderson (ACAE), R.N. Butler (Foreign Office / ACAE), General-Major Jacob (Office of the Minister of Defence, and the Joint Staff Mission's bomb committee specialist), Denis Rickett (Cabinet), and some personal staff.<sup>755</sup> Most MPs did not readily subscribe to the publicly stated agenda and wanted to know more. This might explain why Attlee told Truman that parliamentary pressure was such that he could not postpone making an atomic policy statement for much longer.<sup>756</sup> As mentioned earlier, the Government might have actually welcomed this pressure as a means of leverage to bring the reluctant Americans to the table.

Raymond Blackburn (King's Norton, Labour) had already proved himself a persistent questioner with regard to atomic matters. Perhaps because of the limited opportunities to debate foreign policy or because he was dubious of the

<sup>750</sup> See for example HC Deb 25 October 1945 vol 414 c2196.

<sup>751</sup> HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol 415 cc243-4

<sup>752</sup> For example see HC Deb 26 October vol 414 cc2399. "I think if the present Government make it clear exactly where they stand in relation to Russia." Tom Horabin (North Cornwall. Lib)

<sup>753</sup> Follick, HC Deb 08 November 1945 vol 415 cc1447 Follick wondered why there were only few scientists in the delegation. See also Major Vernon's similar question HC Deb 08 November 1945 vol. 415 cc1603W.

<sup>754</sup> HC Deb 08 November 1945 vol 415 c1447.

<sup>755</sup> HC Deb 08 November 1945 vol 415 c1603W.

<sup>756</sup> No.202 Telegram from Attlee to Truman 16th October 1945 DBPO ser.I vol.II. "It is my desire to exchange views with you before making further statement but it will not be possible for me to postpone discussion for long."

real purpose behind the Washington conference, he demanded an adjournment debate on 30 October 1945. He actually stirred a hornet's nest in the Commons when he did this, by asking about the Quebec agreement between Churchill and Roosevelt, that had established the close and secretive cooperation between the United States and Great Britain. He demanded that this agreement be published on a need-to-know basis for Parliament, if it was to deliberate about this most important foreign policy issue which was about to be renegotiated in Washington.<sup>757</sup> Blackburn was one of those MPs, in line with Labour's election manifesto, who felt that the time for secret diplomacy and blindly following the 'balance of power' doctrine was over. He himself had detailed information on atomic matters, and was worried, for example, that the Quebec agreement seemed to have left the peacetime development of atomic technology at the sole discretion of the American president. Blackburn went so far as to claim that now the war was over, there was no need for the utmost secrecy and the details of the agreement should be released so that Parliament could decide more effectively whether to ratify the deal in future.<sup>758</sup>

"Every hon. Member of this House must be deeply conscious of his responsibility in helping to guide our policy on atomic energy, not only for the benefit of our own people but for the benefit of all peoples all over the world."<sup>759</sup>

According to Blackburn's information, the British were already in full possession of the "so-called secret" of the atomic bomb, and thus he did not seem to think it mattered whether the Americans were keen to continue collaborating or not. And yet the continuation was of course not solely dependent on the wishes of the British parliament, or even the Government's. Blackburn wanted more information especially on the peacetime applications of atomic technology, and he felt that there should be more information about this available, so that all mankind could benefit. In the light of Churchill's earlier question as to whether the ACAE was a purely technical and scientific committee, or did indeed have the power to draw up policy, one of Blackburn's questions proved rather interesting, when he asked if it was true that Sir James Chadwick was the only "really up-to-date nuclear physicist"<sup>760</sup> on the Committee. The Foreign Office of course urged the Government to avoid Blackburn's questions at all costs.<sup>761</sup> Attlee managed to do just this, and the Leader of the House, Herbert Morrison, answered on behalf of the government, abstaining from a direct statement and trying not to give much away.<sup>762</sup> He later commented that the difficult situation surrounding atomic research was becoming a "first class headache"<sup>763</sup>. Bevin

<sup>757</sup> HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol 415 cc334-40.

<sup>758</sup> HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol 415 cc334-341.

<sup>759</sup> HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol 415 cc334.

<sup>760</sup> HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol 415 cc334-341.

<sup>761</sup> TNA, CAB 126/238, Rickett to Pimlott, late Oct. 1945.

<sup>762</sup> HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol. 415 cc342-348.

<sup>763</sup> See for example "House of Commons - Atomic Energy", 31.10.1945 *The Times*. "A First class headache - Mr. Morrison's reply to the debate" 31.10.1945. "Talks on Atomic Energy" 1.11.1945.



also reprimanded Blackburn in private and attempted to press him to give up his informants.<sup>764</sup>

Meanwhile Blackburn's questions caused even more of a furore when they were reported in the newspapers overseas. Churchill, at least, claimed that the American press had got a hold of them via the public reports of debate and that they had made big headlines.<sup>765</sup> He then went on to blame Blackburn for breaching a secret trust and causing serious problems for President Truman, who had been questioned by the press about it on 31 October. Churchill demanded there be a consensus on foreign policy in Britain, while simultaneously acknowledging that the agreement could be published on his behalf, but the Americans had to be consulted beforehand. Churchill also pointed out that Truman had let slip that the British knew all the atomic secrets that the Americans did, and he strongly advised "the House to leave the question where it now lies".<sup>766</sup> Blackburn defended himself by stating that all the information he had mentioned, was already available and published in Henry De Wolf Smythe's book on the development of the atomic bomb.<sup>767</sup>

As mentioned before, the Lords were keen on a foreign policy debate as well, but happy to do this after the Prime Minister's return<sup>768</sup>. But it was harder for the Government to avoid a Commons debate on foreign policy before Washington.<sup>769</sup> There were in fact two major adjournment debates related to foreign policy (plus the "Blackburn incident"). The first was on 7 November 1945, just before the Washington negotiations, and the second took place while the negotiations were still in progress, when Herbert Morrison delivered a communiqué from the British delegation in Washington (14 November). After reading it, Morrison requested that no comment be made until the foreign policy debate to be had after Attlee's return.<sup>770</sup> Meanwhile, the first adjournment debate was initiated by Churchill, who drew attention to President Truman's Navy Day speech that had been given on 27 October. It had included a 12-point declaration concerning both international and atomic themes. Numerous MPs commented on the speech and pledged their support in the forthcoming negotiations. But they also had opinions on how foreign affairs should henceforth be conducted and what the priorities of foreign policy should be.<sup>771</sup> Churchill nevertheless emphasised the need for a consensus when it came to foreign policy.

"First, we should fortify in every way our special and friendly connections with the United States, aiming always at a fraternal association for the purpose of common

<sup>764</sup> Blackburn 1959, p.83-86.

<sup>765</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol.415 cc1290-1301.

<sup>766</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol.415 cc1290-1301.

<sup>767</sup> In the Adjournment debate Blackburn already reveals his own source to be Henry D. Smyth's book "Atomic Energy for Military Purposes". HC Deb 30 October 1945 vol. 415 cc334-335. The book has mentions about the co-operation, see Smyth 1946, p.255-256. (The first prints were done in 1945, and the fifth edition with British Statement as appendix was dated in November 1945.) HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol.415 cc1298-1299.

<sup>768</sup> HL Deb 06 November 1945 vol 137 cc675. (Marquess of Londonderry)

<sup>769</sup> See for example HC Deb 25 October 1945 vol. 414 c2196.

<sup>770</sup> HC Deb 15 November 1945 vol 415 cc2359-63

<sup>771</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1290-390.

protection and world peace. Secondly, this association should in no way have a point against any other country, great or small, in the world, but should, on the contrary, be used to draw the leading victorious Powers ever more closely together on equal terms and in all good faith and good will. Thirdly, we should not abandon our special relationship with the United States and Canada about the atomic bomb, and we should aid the United States to guard this weapon as a sacred trust for the maintenance of peace. Fourthly, we should seek constantly to promote and strengthen the world organisation of the United Nations, so that, in due course, it may eventually be fitted to become the safe and trusted repository of these great agents. Fifthly, and this, I take it, is already agreed, we should make atomic bombs, and have them here, even if manufactured elsewhere, in suitable safe storage with the least possible delay."<sup>772</sup>

It was clear that the idealistic approach to foreign policy was of secondary (actually fourth) importance to Churchill, and was to be embarked on "in due course". The priority was of course the US alliance, and a more realist policy which would capitalise on the "Power" of the victors. Churchill insisted that any idea of Britain pursuing an anti-Russian policy was unfounded, and that only "a long period of very marked injuries and antagonisms" could cause such an eventuality to take place. Nevertheless, Churchill trusted the Americans and did not want to share any atomic secrets elsewhere before safety guarantees could be properly established. He believed it would only take three to four years for these international safety guarantees to be in place. Churchill also speculated as to whether the Soviet Union was on the verge of having its own atomic bomb soon ready (as it had claimed).<sup>773</sup> He added that only if, in this eventuality, they refused to share the know-how would relations with the USSR deteriorate.<sup>774</sup> It seemed Churchill was giving the required diplomatic assurances towards the Soviet Union, but at the same time warning that this support would be withdrawn if the Soviets proved uncooperative. His remarks about the United States having a leading role and responsibility for world affairs, his recognition of the importance of Truman's Navy Day speech, and his request that Britain "march together" with the United States were probably the kind of elements he felt were needed to buff up the image of Britain in the US<sup>775</sup>, especially after the embarrassment of the Blackburn debacle. The Foreign Office were most likely very grateful for the speech as well.

It was almost definitely easier for a prominent and well-respected figure like Churchill to encourage pro-British sentiment in the United States, than it was for the as yet unknown Labour Party leaders. The Americans were also probably somewhat suspicious of Labour's socialist domestic policies anyway. Also, because he was now in the opposition, it was easier for Churchill to issue grave warnings about the Soviet Union than it must have been for official representatives of the Government (now that he was no longer the PM). This is worth bearing in mind when looking at the important role Churchill played later on in Fulton, which was also in many ways beneficial to Britain as well. Churchill continuously gave the Government an alternative approach to atomic

<sup>772</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1299-1300.

<sup>773</sup> The well-reported "Molotov-incident" in London.

<sup>774</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415cc.1209-1297.

<sup>775</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415cc.1209-1297

foreign relations. His inside knowledge of certain matters must have made the comments more influential too. Nevertheless, there is no paper trail to confirm that there was any purposeful collaboration between Churchill and the executive to help the Government as such, although he had been consulted, for example, by Bevin and Attlee about atomic policy.

As we see from his speech in the adjournment debate on 7 November, Churchill wanted the atomic bomb in British hands, and was quite convinced that the US would not share its own arsenal. However, Britain also had an acknowledged role as “guardian” of atomic secrets, which Churchill clearly felt was important. Even if Truman was not giving out any secrets, Britain (and Canada) had an almost equal amount of atomic information at its disposal as the US.<sup>776</sup>

The leader of the Liberal party, Clement Davies (Montgomery), also supported the idea of the United States and Britain working together. He was worried about mistrust spreading across the world, and saw that both the USSR and US were gradually following policies that would only lead to more suspicion. For example, the United States had claimed it had no expansionist claims, yet at the same time was demanding bases all round the world for its own defence. The Soviet Union, meanwhile, was pursuing a similarly aggressive policy of establishing buffer states. Davies felt that the atomic bomb should really put an end to this traditional balance of power thinking, and that a new foreign policy was required. He believed that not even the greatest of powers could carry the burden of leadership on their shoulders alone, cooperation was thus the key to a safer world. Attempts at achieving an atomic monopoly would simply cause “the great alliance”<sup>777</sup> to founder. In a way Davies had put his finger on the centre-path, or third way, similar to that being suggested by the executive. The idea of cooperating with the United States gradually gained more traction as the autumn of 1945 wore on,<sup>778</sup> although a degree of critical sentiment towards the US was also apparent. In all likelihood, these stemmed from other issues with the Americans, such as their unilateral actions of abruptly cutting off the lend lease and being shamelessly pressing in the loan negotiations. Sir Ronald Ross (Londonderry, Ulster Unionists) also supported close US relations but agreed that a monopoly would be problematic. Nevertheless, while the United Nations was still under construction, it was acceptable that the US serve as a temporary keeper of atomic secrets. Again this was the third way being advocated - a politically realist strain of internationalism. Ross also reminded the house that the atomic question was not the only one to keep in mind, when considering US relations and foreign policy in general.<sup>779</sup> Meanwhile, Lt. Colonel Thomas Moore (Ayr Burghs, Conservative) noted that the front bench was almost empty, and said he supported Bevin, even welcoming him to join the

<sup>776</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1294;1299-1300.

<sup>777</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1300-1307.

<sup>778</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1344-1345. Cyril Osborne (Louth, Con.) was even worried that there were no interest group for advocating Anglo-American relations in the House.

<sup>779</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1324-1328.

Conservative party. As for the atomic bomb and Anglo-American relations, he believed the bomb would not safeguard of world peace. Truman's 12-point declaration was no more reassuring in that respect either, and he thought that Attlee should tell Truman so.<sup>780</sup>

On the other side of the House meanwhile, Patrick Gordon-Walker (Smethwick, Labour) was surprised to see himself supporting Churchill. He was aware that even if the US did not return to a policy of isolationism, it could still cause severe problems for world stability in economic terms. Gordon-Walker also felt it was very important to remember that the economic would always come before political decisions in the US, whereas in the USSR, it would be vice versa.<sup>781</sup> Another contribution came from Aneurin Bevan's private secretary, Major Donald Bruce (Portsmouth North, Labour), who claimed that it was the American mistrust of sharing the new technology that was causing the real problem worldwide and, if this was not dealt with, it could put the whole United Nations project in jeopardy.<sup>782</sup>

As for critics of the Government, the well-informed Lieutenant Colonel Martin Lindsay (Solihull, Conservative) and, in the next quote, Lynn Ungoad-Thomas (Llandaff and Barry, Labour) maintained that cooperation between the "big three" should remain a priority.

"The relationship of the three countries, Russia, America and ourselves, dominates every question of foreign policy. Solve that relationship and then, almost automatically, solutions will be far more easily found for all the other problems of foreign policy."<sup>783</sup>

Ungoad-Thomas also proposed that the public be kept informed about atomic energy questions, foreign policy and its changes, as it was the people's right to know, having given Labour their mandate to govern in the first place.<sup>784</sup>

"There is far too much, and there has been far too much, polite diplomatic language and ersatz explanations which conceal the true position."

"[...]I urge upon the Government the tremendous importance nowadays of telling the country as much as possible about foreign affairs. Let people know where we stand; let them know what is happening. After all, if things go wrong, it is the people who suffer under modern conditions, and they are entitled to know. Tell them what has happened at these conferences. Tell them—what, in fact, we are all puzzled about—what happened at Quebec. Let us know at the earliest possible moment what will have happened at Washington. Tell the people, as the Leader of the Liberal party requested the Government to do, everything possible. Let this Socialist Government, which depends upon the confidence of the people, themselves confide in the people."<sup>785</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1362-1366.

<sup>781</sup> HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1307-1312.

<sup>782</sup> Ibid. cc1317-1324. Bruce claimed Truman's policy conflicting even with the UN Charter, and the article 47.

<sup>783</sup> Ibid. cc.1330.

<sup>784</sup> For example see: Ibid 1328-1333.

<sup>785</sup> Ibid. cc. 1329.

Colonel Lindsay also demanded government openness, but this was because he believed that an international arms race between the Great Powers was already going on due to mistrust. The Soviets were understandably reluctant to cooperate, because they were being treated like a junior state when it came to atomic technology. Lindsay also wondered about the industrial and domestic side of the negotiations and wondered how much of it actually depended on the outcome of talks between Truman and Attlee.

“I cannot help wondering whether the decision to develop nuclear power in this country waits the outcome of the talks between the President and the Prime minister?”<sup>786</sup>

Lindsay was also keen to know how atomic energy could be harnessed for the good of the country.

“The Prime Minister will take with him to America the best wishes of all our people. I hope he will tell the President with that frankness and firmness which Americans respect that we have every intention of going ahead in the full-scale production in this country of nuclear power so as to give our people all the benefits that this discovery may have made available.”<sup>787</sup>

Ernest Bevin answered on behalf of the government, and was glad to note that almost everyone seemed to agree “on the imperative necessity of Britain retaining her moral lead in the world”. He admitted that because of the “frightful nightmare of insecurity” and the need to take turns with the “principle of cooperation” in foreign affairs, there were nevertheless a few crosswinds in British foreign policy. In other words, sometimes idealism was brought to the fore, and sometimes there were elements of the old fashioned realist policy-making. For example, the world may have changed, but the shadow of the past war and wishes for security had still left their mark. Nevertheless, Bevin claimed that the old way of conducting foreign policy through “peace conferences” had come to an end. He then asked the House for patience during this transition period in the way international affairs would be conducted as Britain, and her Parliament and Government were not the sole agents involved.<sup>788</sup> With the approaching negotiations in Washington, such careful comments would have been welcomed by the executive - there was no need to cause anymore unnecessary public scrutiny in the US. As for civilian uses of atomic energy, Bevin went on to say that these would first need international control methods to be devised first, “so that as atomic energy evolves in industry, the necessity for its use as a weapon will have disappeared by reason of the new world organisation which we will endeavour to create”.<sup>789</sup> Bevin recognized the Monroe doctrine in the Western hemisphere, but claimed that Britain had no interest in provoking international tension or Soviet aggression. After all, everybody had the right to have close relations with their ‘neighbours’, the Soviets as well as

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<sup>786</sup> Ibid. cc1312-1317.

<sup>787</sup> Ibid.

<sup>788</sup> Ibid cc1333-1336

<sup>789</sup> Ibid cc1337.

the British. With regards to “British moral leadership in the world”, and considering what MPs had already said, Bevin returned to his new approach to foreign policy.

“[P]ower politics, spheres of influence and that kind of approach to world affairs do present great difficulties. I used, at the Labour Party Conference at Blackpool, quite a simple phrase, which I now repeat as an appeal to the Great Powers on behalf of His Majesty's Government. Put the cards on the table face upwards. We are ready to do it.”<sup>790</sup>

Bevin agreed with Truman and Churchill that the atomic bomb would actually not make conventional defence obsolete, as during the last 100 years the armed forces had mostly been used to police and keep law and order in the world. The atomic bomb could evidently not be used in these more subtle ways. Despite his hope that in the future, the UN could help cut down military expenses, he also reminded the House about the various obligations Britain still had around the world. Until this situation was clear, no risks would be taken. All the same Bevin agreed with many in the House, when he added that there would be many chances for Britain to play a major role in a post-war world.

“I cannot help feeling that His Majesty's Government are in a favoured position, both to mould public opinion and to guide this great issue of peace and war, because of the very backing we shall get in trying to find a solution.”<sup>791</sup>

At this point, it does not seem so far-fetched to suggest that this ‘moral leadership’ was being foisted on Britain by her leaders for lack of her having any of the other elements that would have made a realism-oriented, power policy possible. It was clear that, after much hammering out, that internationalism and realism were starting to become two sides of the same coin.

Most of the comments delivered after Bevin's replies repeated similar themes: the responsibilities of the Great Powers, the need for cooperation between them, and wishes of success for the Prime Minister on his trip. Some members nevertheless still suggested sharing details about the atomic bomb with other countries, or inviting the USSR to join the negotiations<sup>792</sup>. Herbert (Billy) Hughes (Wolverhampton West, Labour), for instance, reminded MPs of the need for an independent foreign policy advocating peace, pointing out that they would be more vocal about this if they were in the Russians' position right now.

“Let us imagine what the situation would be if the boot were on the other foot, and that instead of the atomic bomb being in the United States it were housed somewhere in the centre of the Urals. I can imagine the degree of eloquence with which Members opposite would urge that the atomic bomb be put at the disposal of the United Nations.”<sup>793</sup>

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<sup>790</sup> Ibid cc.1337-1338

<sup>791</sup> Ibid cc.1340-42.

<sup>792</sup> See for example Vernon Bartlett (Bridgewater, Independent) Ibid. cc.1360 and Dr. Santo Jeger (St. Pancras, South East, Lab.) cc.1369-1370.

<sup>793</sup> Ibid. cc.1370-1373.

But in this debate, although Hughes voted in support of the UN, he was in a minority with his pro-Soviet comments. Willie Gallacher (Fife, Communist), not surprisingly a strong supporter of the Soviet Union, was also in a minority and was cut short at the end of the adjournment debate in the middle of presenting agitated comments to support the Soviet Union.<sup>794</sup> The whole of this interesting debate lasted for almost 6 hours and would have covered nearly all the atomic foreign policy concerns, if the Government had been listening. The same themes were brought up in later instances covering (atomic) foreign affairs, but many attitudes had by then changed due to the changing international context. Ironically, in spite of Bevin's "cards on the table" argument, the negotiations in Washington were in fact intended to be just the kind of secret diplomacy that he was so keen to condemn. It even went against the UN ideals which demanded that all alliances, pacts, and deals be made known to the UN. This last point was important for the US, as it was able to argue from this that previous Anglo-American secret deals were no longer binding, especially from this United Nations perspective.

Attlee went, and then he came back, and even if the explanations raised eyebrows, they were somehow accepted. However, if Parliament had been aware of the true reasons for the talks, i.e., to gain American support for the British atomic project through cooperation and a pooling of atomic resources, this would have no doubt been thoroughly challenged. Attlee's debriefing of the trip to Parliament, on 15 November, was simply to repeat the main points of the Washington Declaration. That is, the purpose of the proposed UN commission was to safely enable the exchange of basic information on atomic research, for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind.<sup>795</sup> This was in line with what most MPs were expecting to have taken place, so it was mostly welcomed. What promises there had actually been made, of future secret Anglo-American cooperation, were of course left out (these will be fully explored in 3.3).<sup>796</sup> A second adjournment debate followed the reading of the Washington declaration, and it lasted for two days later in the same month (22-23 November). Thus overall, foreign policy discussions in the Commons were less likely to dwell on the traditional realist nitty gritty as much as the internationalist perspective.

In the House of Lords too, it was the idealistic approach in foreign affairs that garnered more interest and was discussed more often. But as Anglo-American atomic relations are the particular focus of this dissertation, we should perhaps take a closer look at possible explanations for why this subject did not feature so heavily in the Lords' discussions. During the autumn of 1945 there were only five instances related to atomic foreign policy, or to Great Power relations within this context. One of these was a two-day debate, and two of

<sup>794</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1370-373; 1387-90.

<sup>795</sup> Washington Declaration 15<sup>th</sup> of November 1945. HC Deb 15 November 1945 vol 415 cc2359-63.

<sup>796</sup> Botti 1987, p.13 on Attlee's speech in the House of Commons. Also: HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol. 416 cc 601-714, for Attlee's speech see cc606-609 and HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 cc759-846. For House of Lords see HL Deb 27 November 1945 vol 138 cc17-66.

these instances occurred before the reading of the Washington Declaration. The two-day debate on foreign policy that took place on 27-28 November 1945 was, in particular, notable for its thoroughness. After this, the theme does not show up again until early March 1946. The reason for this somewhat limited activity is not that clear. As mentioned earlier, limits to parliamentary time (due to a heavy legislative agenda) and the fact that the Lords powers in this field had been somewhat diminished, must have had something to do with it. It meant the Lords was becoming more of a forum for public debate, than a legislative assembly<sup>797</sup>. The repercussions of this were that a wide array of subjects were covered and in no particular depth. Another possible explanation could be the composition of the House, but unfortunately such an enquiry is beyond the scope of this work. Nevertheless, the few atomic foreign policy discussions that were held in the Lords added to the societal debate by contributing to the general exposure of atomic matters, and they supported the momentum for the coverage of this subject in the Commons.

### 3.2.3 Disaster at the London Council of Foreign Ministers

Straight after its election<sup>798</sup>, the Labour government had to move swiftly to form an atomic energy policy with very little prior knowledge of the subject. As we have already seen in chapter 2, Attlee had established the Gen 75 Committee to look into what former policy had so far been, and how it should continue. Under this committee there was also the influential ACAE (Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy) led by John Anderson, Churchill's former advisor on atomic matters.<sup>799</sup> The key British aim was apparently, judging from the documents of these advisory bodies, to secure British atomic capability by strengthening Anglo-American cooperation. Although there were of course some foreign policy issues that had nothing to do with atomic matters, British atomic energy and foreign policy were, as Martin J. Sherwin points out, so closely connected at this point, that they were like two sides of the same coin.<sup>800</sup>

Indeed, gaining atomic capability would have affected a state's position in world affairs at this point to such an extent, that it was indirectly related to other aspects of foreign affairs. With the recommendations of the advisory bodies, the worsening of the international situation and fresh knowledge as to how much had already been invested in wartime Anglo-American cooperation, the British Government decided to pursue research collaboration with the United States. The British aimed to secure the earlier promises of continuing cooperation, and to strengthen it further. So, as we have seen in 3.2.2, reluctant Americans were pressurized into the Washington talks in November 1945 (because the British parliament apparently wanted to know more). Much to the annoy-

<sup>797</sup> Richards, 1967, p.164; Adonis 1988, p.6.

<sup>798</sup> The Election Day was 26 July 1945, Labour had won with a landslide. Morgan, 1984, p.59-61; Ovendale 1998, p.56-57.

<sup>799</sup> Gowing 1974, p.5-6; 19-20. No.186 Campbell's memo to Bevin, 8.8.1945. DBPO ser.I, vol. II.

<sup>800</sup> Sherwin 2003, p.81-83.



ance of the British, however, the Americans tried to use the negotiations as leverage on other issues. The international control of atomic energy was only put to one side for a while but, due to American interest, it then started to dominate the talks in Washington. This was then later put in the form of a joint declaration by the two governments - known as the Washington Declaration. Within this agreement, after some struggle, the British had been able to advance plans for bilateral cooperation and preliminary documents outlining these intentions were signed by heads of states. But there were complications when Blackburn later demanded that previous secret agreements between the United States and Britain be made public. The Americans had wanted to keep the earlier collaboration as secret as possible for the sake of domestic policy and due to public opinion at home, which was firmly against sharing any atomic 'secrets', even if in the statements given about Hiroshima and Nagasaki Britain had been mentioned as one of the trustees of the new force.<sup>801</sup>

It was hoped that strengthening transatlantic cooperation would be a cost-effective means to achieve atomic capability as resources were scarce. There was hope that it might even help Britain as an economic lever<sup>802</sup> too, as many prominent British scientists were still working within the joint project on American soil as well. Unless something went dramatically wrong in the relationship, it was therefore thought that Anglo-American cooperation was the easiest solution. Britain also still had a prominent role in the eyes of the world concerning the atomic matters. As well as the US, there had been a pragmatic British alliance with the USSR during the war too. French scientists too had made important contribution to early British research, so atomic affairs were very much an international matter.

The first possibility to reconsider the matter at a higher international level after the war was the London Council of Foreign Ministers, which had been devised as part of the Postdam Agreement. The main purpose of it was to hammer out peace settlements among the Big Five (the US, UK, USSR, France, and China). It was clear that the atomic question would come up at some point. "The Grand Alliance" of Britain, the US and USSR, mentioned for example by Harbutt in a great classical narrative of the emerging Cold War, was shifting. The Soviet Union now aspired to a greater influence in Europe. According to Harbutt, the Soviet Union was hoping that the United States would not be so keen to intervene in European affairs.<sup>803</sup> So it gradually became clear that securing any real international cooperation or control would be difficult.<sup>804</sup> Documents prepared by the Foreign Office for Bevin regarding Tube Alloys and the Soviets attest to this. Bevin was even thinking of attempting this before the

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<sup>801</sup> Truman's statement 9 August 1945.

<sup>802</sup> No.188 Bevin to Balfour 11 August 1945, DBPO, ser.I vol II.No 189 Bevin to Balfour 17 August 1945.

<sup>803</sup> Harbutt 1986, p.xiv.

<sup>804</sup> TNA FO 800/547 GEN 75/10 International control of Atomic Energy - report by the officials 1 Octgboer 1945

council.<sup>805</sup> Meanwhile, the Americans were described as having “Maxim Gun”<sup>806</sup>, or upper hand in atomic bargaining, therefore it was important to keep American opinions in mind.

“In the last resort we shall have to accept whatever is the considered view of the United States in regards giving the Russians the information which would enable them to be as forward as ourselves in Tube Alloys development”.<sup>807</sup>

The British Foreign Office was of the opinion that the Soviet Union was not to be trusted. They had, for instance, been the aggressor against Finland in 1939. Meanwhile, Truman had decreed that misuse of the bomb should be prevented by “trustees of the new force”.

“In view of this categoric statement, which seems to have incurred little criticism in this country, in the United States or outside, it seems that information should not be communicated to the Soviet Government at least until some effective means of control have been devised.”<sup>808</sup>

Cooperation with the Soviets was thus out of the question, at least for now. The London Conference (or Council) of Foreign Ministers, when it was finally held, from 11 September to 2 October 1945, was an unmitigated disaster, which affected also to the following British policy. The American Secretary of State’s intended atomic diplomacy to force the Soviet Union into a more amenable position failed, and the international situation became even more problematic.<sup>809</sup> Nor did Britain consult the Soviet Union about atomic matters either. But the British were also angry that Byrnes did not want to consult them about atomic matters either.<sup>810</sup> The London conference has been covered quite extensively in the research literature, even if it was not exactly discussed in Parliament (after all it had adjourned for the month of September). Therefore it does need a thorough depiction. It seems that what emerged most forcibly from the meeting was Molotov’s strong response on behalf of the USSR to Byrnes’ attempt. In this he acted out as being drunk and claimed that the Soviets would soon have atomic bomb.<sup>811</sup> Notions of wider international cooperation for controlling the new technology were thus temporarily shelved and kept as a ‘plan B’.

Meanwhile over the summer of 1945, on the Anglo-American front, the FO had been alarmed to hear the Americans claim they had lost their copy of the Hyde Park Aide memoire, which had promised continuing atomic cooperation.

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<sup>805</sup> Bullen, p.524. Covering note from Butler to No. 190, Foreign Office Memorandum 18 August 1945. Also No.190 foreign Office Memorandum 18 August 1945.

<sup>806</sup> Analogue between the atomic bomb and the Maxim machine gun, associated to Britain’s old conquests.cf. Hilaire Belloc’s poem “The Modern Traveller”:  
“Whatever happens, we have got  
The Maxim gun, and they have not”

<sup>807</sup> No.190 Foreign Office Memorandum 18 August 1945. DBPO Ser.I. Vol.II

<sup>808</sup> No.190 Foreign Office Memorandum 18 August 1945. DBPO Ser.I. Vol.II.

<sup>809</sup> Harbutt 1986, p.125

<sup>810</sup> No.197 Dixon to Rowan 29 September 1945 DBPO, ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>811</sup> Herken 1988, p.48-49.

A copy was thus sent immediately<sup>812</sup> and attempts to organize a meeting were initiated. Attlee took charge, and insisted on meeting Truman for the aforementioned Washington negotiations.<sup>813</sup> As we have seen, notions of internationalism may have begun creeping in again at this point, even while secret deal were being sought with the US; but there was true interaction between the Government and Parliament starting to show in atomic matters. Nevertheless, parliamentary activity was among the causes which limited and perhaps delayed the Government in being able to implement an effective atomic foreign policy (especially with regard to the Americans), and I will return to this later. Parliament needed the Government's policies to scrutinize, indeed it depended on them for its very existence. It also needed information to properly evaluate policy, so in those terms Government had the upper hand, nevertheless it was indecisive enough to give more room for Parliament to manoeuvre, and to further challenge and delay the Government, as it could not simply ignore Parliament's requests. Nevertheless, after the Americans had agreed to the Washington talks<sup>814</sup>, the news seemed to tilt the balance away from the UN slightly, and a bit more towards Anglo-American co-operation as preparations for this conference reveal; and the opening of the talks themselves revealed, much to the surprise of the British, that the American approach to atomic matters was also bidirectional. Attlee's government had thus, by this point, more or less decided to continue in the footsteps of Churchill's more secretive atomic policy vis-a-vis the United States. The shock at the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki mentioned by Attlee in his memos in August had slipped towards politics guided by the principles of political realism. This secrecy was also encouraged, if not demanded, by the Americans too, to such a point that the visit should be disguised as relating to something other than atomic matters. Simultaneously, the British also wanted some leverage over the US, and so also notified the Soviet Union about the forthcoming talks, as we will see. Parliament, meanwhile, was expecting a proper foreign policy debate from the Government after its negotiations with the Americans about purportedly the UN, when in reality it was about transatlantic atomic cooperation.<sup>815</sup>

### 3.3 The Washington Conference - an interim solution

Since August, Attlee had been putting pressure on Truman to come to the negotiating table about atomic matters. As we have seen, the British needed to know

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<sup>812</sup> No.186 Campbell's memo to Bevin, 8 August 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol. II. The Copy had been sent on 25 June 1945.

<sup>813</sup> No.188 Bevin's telegram to Balfour 11 September 1945, DOBPO, ser.I, vol.II. Official request for meeting was sent on 16 October 1945. No.202 Attlee to Truman 16 October 1945 Ibid.

<sup>814</sup> No.203 Bevin's report to Halifax in Washington 17 October 1945. DBPO, ser.I, vol.II. No.204 Bevin to Halifax 19 October 1945, Ibid.

<sup>815</sup> HC Deb 15 November 1945 vol 415 cc2369-63 and HL Deb 15 November 1945 vol 137 cc977-81.

about the future of any secret cooperation there might be between the US and UK, as well as the more official plans for cooperation vis-à-vis international atomic control mechanisms. So they pressed on, in spite of the Americans' reluctance to enter into any talks.<sup>816</sup> Truman had proposed that a diversion be created to keep the true agenda of the conference out of the public eye; but this was not what the British wanted,<sup>817</sup> as Bevin intended to issue a public statement about the forthcoming negotiations.<sup>818</sup> Indeed, Attlee had already used planted questions in Parliament to make an implicit statement about atomic foreign policy that would force the US to come to the table - if they wanted to have any say over the UK government's public statements.<sup>819</sup> It seemed to work, as the next telegraphs were about arranging Attlee's trip, the reasons for which had already been leaked to the press in the United States. This also meant a public statement had to be made in the UK too,<sup>820</sup> Attlee then claimed in his telegram to Truman<sup>821</sup>, as publicity on the matter could no longer be avoided. Even if this was just a clever stratagem from Attlee and his executive, parliamentary discussions had indeed put pressure on the Government which, in turn, had international repercussions.

So after this relatively strenuous diplomatic effort, the negotiations the British had wished for finally came true. Although Attlee's views had changed to some extent over the course of the autumn, through gaining more information about earlier wartime atomic policy, he was still formally advocating the Labour Party's proposals for solving the atomic crisis by international means. But he was becoming increasingly aware of a change in the air, especially when the Americans had glibly claimed to have lost the very documents (from the Quebec Agreement and Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire) which had confirmed that atomic cooperation would continue between the two countries after the war. The British therefore needed to reaffirm their position by reclaiming these promises and securing them for the future, as well as getting the Americans to reveal more about their international intentions. In the greater scheme of

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<sup>816</sup> TNA FO 800/438 telegram from FO to Washington, concerning Washington conference planning/requests, Bevin informs about PM's telegram 17 October 1945; Telegram from FO to Washington, copy of Truman's telegram to Attlee 17 October 1945;

<sup>817</sup> TNA FO 800/438 (arrived on 21 Oct.) telegraph from Washington to FO, 20 October 1945, reporting to Bevin about conference plans & torpedoing Truman's wishes for creating a diversion.

<sup>818</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Telegram from FO to Washington 19 October 1945.

<sup>819</sup> HC Deb 29 October 1945 vol 415 cc38-9; TNA CAB 104. A Note by E. Bridges for Prime Minister Attlee 24 October 1945. Draft reply included. Apparently a planted question was the only way for the Executive to make such a statement, as the Americans were against the whole idea of the British research establishment, and especially announcing it in public. It might have also been a way of pressurizing the Americans to agree for the requested negotiations in Washington. TNA CAB 134/7 A.C.A.E.(45)9. Past History and Organisation, a note by the secretary 11 September 1945.

<sup>820</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Bevin's minute to Attlee about the visit to Washington 24. October 1945; Undated telegram to Ambassador in Washington (Halifax) about arrangements of Attlee's visit; Telegraph from Washington to FO 29 October 1945, about us press knowing about Attlee's visit, and intention to talk about the atomic bomb.

<sup>821</sup> TNA FO 800/438 undated message from Prime Minister to Truman, referring to Truman's no.12. About publicity cannot be avoided.

things, this thus marked a wind-change in British atomic foreign policy. The first had been to embark on an atomic foreign policy that emphasised internationalism and cooperation, and now this was a switch back to the more realist wartime policy of secret deals and going behind Parliament's back.

But the Washington talks themselves were no easier than instigating them in the first place had been. As we shall see in this sub-chapter, the US delegation caused immense problems for the British, by tying the discussion of atomic matters to other previously unrelated conditions that the Americans shamelessly used in their favour to pressurize the British. Moreover, the Americans did not seem to be clear about their goal, as the otherwise straightforward atomic agenda for the British was gradually hijacked with seemingly irrelevant, unrelated matters, such as the question of Palestine. Britain's goals were ultimately linked to keeping her a Great Power, particularly in terms of prestige and strategic importance - the two main motives behind early British atomic proliferation.<sup>822</sup> In addition to wanting to gain from the cooperation in practical terms, the British were perhaps seeking (public) recognition from their wartime ally, and from other states thereon too. In this difficult time of post-war change, it was important that Britain increase her soft power, particularly since as a victor in the war she had gained substantially very little for herself. Left with a Great Power mentality and aspirations, but very little resources and means to act upon them, diplomacy remained the best option if Britain wanted to pursue an imperial policy. With regard to the US, this meant emphasising the elements of continuity in their relationship: path dependency on longer cooperation in politics, military matters, research and development, trade and so forth. The British did not consider themselves to have been the only ones to have benefited from the partnership, even if the immediate post-war sentiment in the US (and policies that pandered to this) made out that this was so.

The negotiations in Washington were much more complex than most of the previous literature has assumed.<sup>823</sup> Indeed, they were conducted in two phases: the first of which involved sounding the basis for negotiation, and came to an abrupt end when the Americans expressed the wish to make a declaration about the world situation and American interests in atomic technology; and the second of which addressed what the British had really come for, i.e., a guarantee of future cooperation. This phase could not be entered into, however, until the declaration sought by the US had been fine-tuned in detail. This meant there was less time for the second phase of the talks, especially since, by now, the American press wanted to know more about the actual intentions of the talks. Nevertheless, the negotiations did seem to reach a very concrete outcome in the end, with the Washington Declaration (drafted by General Groves and John Anderson) about plans for an international mechanism for atomic control, and a *modus vivendi* agreed upon regarding future Anglo-American cooperation. A

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<sup>822</sup> Baylis, 1995 p.1-6.

<sup>823</sup> Cf. Harbut 1986, Herken 1988, Paul 2000, Groves 1983, Vickers 2007, Barker 1983. Gowing (1976) handles these aspects very briefly. Gormly claims the negotiations to have been an American idea from the start.

document was signed in support of this by Truman and Attlee, as were the plans for creating a more formal agreement about Anglo-American cooperation.

### 3.3.1 Side-tracked from the start

Some of the news published before the talks was very alarming, and American politicians were particularly annoyed by some of the reporting. The *New York Times*, for instance, featured an article on the “Blackburn Debate” on 30 October, which claimed that the US, UK, and Canada were going to meet to discuss atomic matters in the US on 11 November 1945. Blackburn’s comments about earlier wartime agreements that had been made were also enthusiastically commented on, with emphasis on the atomic secrets that had already been shared.<sup>824</sup> A few days later, the *NY Times* continued on this theme, with a headline claiming that Attlee was proposing to share atomic “secrets” with the “Big 5” via the United Nations (or “UNO” as it was then known in its fledgling state). Perhaps the most alarming headlines, however, were:

“Truman Says London, Canada Possess as Much Knowledge of Bomb as We Do [...] ATTLEE TO PROPOSE UNO GET ATOM BOMB [...] British Think U.S. Holds Back”.<sup>825</sup>

This only served to put extra pressure on the participants in the negotiations, but they were perhaps quite accurate about the British proposing a UN solution, judging from Attlee’s initial telegraphs.

The British delegation set off for Washington on 9 November 1945, arriving there the next day.<sup>826</sup> The first engagement covered welcoming formalities at the White House, and official matters were not brought up.<sup>827</sup> In the evening, nine members of the British delegation plus secretary met up to prepare for the negotiations. They drafted a declaration, in case the negotiations would advance rapidly and successfully. Prime Minister Attlee was present (with private secretary); as were Ambassador Lord Halifax, Field Marshal Wilson<sup>828</sup>, and General Major Jacob<sup>829</sup>. Among them was also Professor Cockcroft, representing the scientific side of atomic matters; while Roger Makins and Nevile Butler from the Foreign Office were there to cover foreign affairs. But perhaps the most important member of the delegation was John Anderson, head of the ACAE. Anderson was the person who probably had the best overall perspective of the current position in atomic affairs, having been one of the few people who

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<sup>824</sup> *The New York Times*, 31 October 1945: “Truman and Attlee will meet NOV. 11 to discuss atoms.”

<sup>825</sup> *The New York Times*, 1 November 1945: Attlee to propose vesting atom data in security council”.

<sup>826</sup> Wheeler-Bennet 1962, p.333.

<sup>827</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 1 p.591, DBPO, ser.I, vol.II

<sup>828</sup> Joint Staff Mission’s British representative. JSM was a cooperative military organ established for coordinating military affairs and war efforts together with the Americans.

<sup>829</sup> Representatives of both the cabinet and the ministry of defence.

had been privy to Churchill's handling of these matters during the war.<sup>830</sup> Parliament had been particularly inquisitive about who would be in this delegation, mainly in an attempt to gain more information about the nature of the intended talks, and the choice of delegates shows just how serious the negotiations were from the British perspective. It is also clear that atomic matters were seen in terms of foreign policy and military affairs, as parliamentary instances earlier in the autumn had confirmed. Bevin was not present as he had other matters to attend to, and for security reasons. The PM and Foreign Secretary travelling overseas together was thought to pose a security risk, and it might also have triggered undue public interest back home as to the precise nature of the talks. However, just as the British delegation was setting off for the US, it received the alarming news that the US was not bringing any of its high-ranking scientific advisors to the negotiations, even though the British had mentioned they would be bringing theirs. This signalled that perhaps the Americans were not prepared to talk about atomic matters in detail. Indeed, it soon became clear that President Truman and the Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, meant to keep a tight rein on the negotiations themselves.<sup>831</sup>

Although the talks followed Attlee's initial division of the atomic question into international control mechanisms on the one hand, and the future of Anglo-American cooperation on the other;<sup>832</sup> the proposal to issue a joint declaration soon began to dominate the agenda. The sources used in this thesis do not suggest any reason why the Americans were so clearly pushing for this, and nor did the British delegation seem to give it any thought either, judging from the Documents on British Policy Overseas' (DBPO), a collection of British sources related to the negotiations in Washington.<sup>833</sup> The first day included an unofficial cruise on the Potomac River. It was intended, as everyone knew, to address matters in a preliminary way; and yet the themes brought up there (aboard the presidential yacht, USS Sequoia) were to dominate the rest of the negotiations in Washington. It was while on the Potomac, that President Truman proposed that the forthcoming members of the UN's permanent security council should have a right to veto in matters related to the atomic question. The British wanted to take notes, but Truman objected. So it was not until after the cruise that

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<sup>830</sup> No.216 Note of First Meeting of United Kingdom Delegation held at the White House on Saturday, 10 November 1945, at 6.15 p.m. DBPO, ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>831</sup> The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 8 November, 6.35 p.m.), Washington, 08th November 1945, FO 800/438 DBPO Ser.I.vol.II

<sup>832</sup> No.216. Note of First Meeting of United Kingdom Delegation held at the White House on Saturday, 10 November 1945, at 6.15 p.m. DBPO Ser.I.vol.II

<sup>833</sup> Additional material at the (British) National Archives (TNA) at my disposal does not give other reasons for this drive for drafting a declaration. The DBPO collection does briefly mention that unofficial memos were prepared by the British, but hunting them down, even in the case that they would have been filed, required too much time from other sources. Moreover, quite a lot was left unwritten, too. It is to be expected that Chatham House-rules might have been applied on many of the matters, in order to ensure most active participation and commentary without the fear of leaving paper trail. Recap on the following negotiations reveal that this was the case with the Washington talks as well. The Americans for instance asked the British not to take notes.

the British delegation was able to put their heads together to make a more detailed proposition for their requested, and intended declaration.

First and foremost, the declaration expressed concern at the destructive power of the atomic bomb, and about any intentions there may have been to build more of them. It also mentioned the urgent need to set up a system of international checks and balances, so that there would be some kind of global mechanism to regulate the new technology. Concrete ideas for this included creating the means for international inspections and supervision; and the British also made sure to include the clear proposal that basic information about the new technology be shared.<sup>834</sup> Interestingly, atomic secrets were implicitly talked about as something that both, the US and Britain/Canada already shared. The British draft of the declaration<sup>835</sup> eventually had 9 points, of which the most important one was to prevent the misuse of atomic technology. Another reason for sharing basic information would be to increase the trust among nations. Moreover, atomic energy might be found to have peaceful uses which could even benefit the world, and this would be something the global mechanism for regulating atomic technology might also address. Although this information was definitely not to be shared with 'outsiders', the British concluded their draft with a notion that an exchange, to a certain extent, of atomic information might reduce the fear of apocalypse throughout the world.

However, the Americans did not seem to support this idea.<sup>836</sup> The United States had already been considering these matters in the light of domestic policy since the early autumn, and apparently unbeknownst to the British, War Minister Stimson had at one time also actually supported, to a certain degree, the idea of sharing information.<sup>837</sup> But then Stimson had resigned and this earlier line of policy was gradually dropped as fewer subscribed to it. Indeed, the majority of Congress and the Senate were now firmly opposed to sharing any atomic secrets, and instead a secretive policy was increasingly suggested. For instance Senator Kenneth McKellar, who ran the Senate Appropriations Committee and was well informed about the Manhattan Project (via the Tennessee Valley Authority) had written to Truman on 27 September with 20 reasons as to why no other country should have any atomic information.

"The question immediately submitted was whether we should give to Russia our formula for making the atomic bomb, it being seemingly understood that we were going to give this formula to Great Britain and to Canada because Great Britain had furnished twenty-five or thirty workers or scientists who aided us in the progress, and because we wanted to retain Great Britain's goodwill, and because Canada had furnished the uranium but of course at an enormous price.

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<sup>834</sup> No.216. Note of First Meeting of United Kingdom Delegation held at the White House on Saturday, 10 November 1945, at 6.15 p.m. DBPO Ser.I.vol.II

<sup>835</sup> Altogether the second of the drafts the British made.

<sup>836</sup> No.217 Draft Heads of Statement prepared by Sir John Anderson in the light of the discussions on board the Sequoia on 11 November 1945, Washington, 11th November 1945, U 9660/6550/70 DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II.

<sup>837</sup> Stimson's report to Truman in regards to sharing atomic knowledge with the Soviets, 11 September 1945, Truman Library, see also Stimson's letter to Truman 11 September 1945, Truman Library.



It seems to me unwise, impolitic and dangerous to our nation's defense, provocative of war, and dangerous to peace, to give this formula to Russia, England, Canada or to any other nation."<sup>838</sup>

Not everyone was quite so extreme. In this respect, McKellar was at odds with David Lilienthal<sup>839</sup>, who we will return to in chapter 6. However, McKellar thought that the whole world owed its existence to the United States and its war efforts, and he also reminded Truman that the Manhattan project had cost the US 2.6 billion dollars.<sup>840</sup> In comparison, he felt the British had given very little, and although the Canadians may have provided the uranium, it had been at a heavy price (he appeared to appreciate them even less). It seemed to McKellar that atomic know-how was a trump card worth keeping above all else in the post-war world. Security would be safe in American hands where it would serve only peaceful interests, and sharing it would only cause problems. If, on the other hand, atomic information was shared with the British and Canadians, it would then have to be shared with countless others. McKellar claimed he had nothing but respect for the Russians but, whereas the US had concretely given them, for example, technological help and food aid, they did not help the American war effort in any way (least of all with atomic research).

"Russia as a government nor as a people did not give us material aid in discovering this formula and, therefore, is not entitled to the use of it or property rights in it on this account"<sup>841</sup>

By the same argument, however, the British and Canadians were entitled to atomic knowledge; and yet, in spite his expertise, McKellar denied this, or at least belittled it (perhaps in the heat of the moment) with not entirely correct information.

"Great Britain or Canada did not give us any material aid in discovering this bomb, though I have been reliably informed that twenty-five or thirty British citizens, the most of them scientists, were over here and helped in one way or another with it, and usually the work of [...] scientists or helpers would not entitle her to a property right in this bomb. [...] This help from Great Britain was so inconsequential, and her own self defense was so much at stake, a thousand fold more than ours, that surely she could not claim a property interest in the formula of the bomb by the casual assistance of twenty-five or thirty people in a two billion six hundred million dollar (\$2,600,000,000) enterprise"<sup>842</sup>

McKellar's argument then took an even stranger twist when he added that, were the British to appeal that they already knew a lot and could therefore be trusted, there would then be no need for any further sharing!<sup>843</sup>

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<sup>838</sup> Kenneth McKellar to Harry S. Truman, accompanied by a report, 27 September 1945, Truman Library.

<sup>839</sup> A more lenient high-ranking politician, in charge of the Lilienthal committee for post-war atomic planning in the USA.

<sup>840</sup> Estimate in 1945 currency.

<sup>841</sup> Senator McKellar's letter to Truman, 27 September 1945 Truman Library.

<sup>842</sup> Senator McKellar's letter to Truman, 27 September 1945 Truman Library.

<sup>843</sup> Senator McKellar's letter to Truman, 27 September 1945 Truman Library.

Whatever McKellar thought, and for whatever political motivations, the fact of the matter was that the British mission in Los Alamos (and British cooperation elsewhere with the Americans) had clearly been of a more significant nature than he maintained. Moreover, the Manhattan project owed much to initial British research, which had then been handed over to the US. It is possible that, despite his high ranking position in the Manhattan Project, the senator did not have access to all this information, yet he must surely have been informed in detail by someone. McKellar was not alone in his disingenuous belittling of the British atomic contribution. In Henry deWolf-Smyth's report on the Manhattan Project, a book that General Groves had ordered, British participation was not even mentioned; and it was not until reprints came out that the British effort was included.<sup>844</sup> Even if the senator's letter were a single piece of evidence on its own, it is clear that the atomic bomb was seen, for all intents and purposes, as an American invention by many in the US. Indeed, given that the war had only just ended it was understandable that the US public's views of recent history would be somewhat distorted, and that consequently the idea of sharing the technology with any other country seemed quite ludicrous.<sup>845</sup> The British had become quite aware of this early on and, for this reason, devoted a large proportion of their limited resources to an information mission for promoting pro-British sentiment in the United States.<sup>846</sup> Many Americans, for instance overlooked the fact that the US joined the war late, and that Britain had not just been fighting in Europe, but in the Far East and Africa too. Senator McKellar was, in particular, emphasising victory over the Japanese in the Pacific above all else. The view on past alliances was to quantify them in financial terms rather than remember the earlier years of the war when Britain faced her enemies alone. Meanwhile the British, for their part, had a tendency to exaggerate this latter role in the eventual victory of the Allies; seeing themselves as the 'fortress of democracy' in Europe - the legacy of grand narrative which most definitely carried on into Attlee's time in office. But it was the United States that now saw itself as having a new and prominent role in world affairs, as McKellar's comments indicate. And this, in turn, must have affected the basis of much post-war policymaking, even if planning for after the war had started much earlier in the United States.<sup>847</sup>

The negotiations that followed the initial meetings were not reported in detail, but the focus seemed to shift to editing and modifying the intended joint

<sup>844</sup> Henry D. Smyth's book "Atomic Energy for Military Purposes", (1946) The first prints were done in 1945, and the fifth edition with British Statement as appendix was dated in November 1945.

<sup>845</sup> Senator McKellar's letter to Truman, 27 September 1945 Truman Library.

<sup>846</sup> Ministry of Information was in charge of the 500 employee-mission until FO inherited the project in 1946. Anstey, 1984, p.417-420; 421.

<sup>847</sup> Groves, 1983, p.327, footnote 5: Interrim committee had civilian emphasis, and had been established in the spring of 1945 by Truman, based on recommendation of Stimson. For instance Gowing 1965, p.149; 154-156 mentions that the US appeared to be well-aware of the great implications of the atomic bomb, and planned accordingly. Herken, 1988, p.21-22 mentions Truman's considerations about the possibility of using third atomic bomb to force Japan surrender faster, before the Soviet Union had advanced too far in its offensive. Byrt See also Sherwin 2003, appendix V.

declaration. The British delegation (judging from DBPO sources) saw the declaration more as piece of pro-British propaganda. It would serve, not so much as a step towards actually creating an international control mechanism, but as a public acknowledgement that Britain had played an important role in atomic research. Meanwhile, the Americans saw this instead as an opportunity to raise other issues, parallel to the actual agenda (in return for acknowledging Britain's contributions). One these issues was Palestine, much to the annoyance of the British.<sup>848</sup> The British then drafted a second formal proposal<sup>849</sup> for the declaration on 13 November 1945. The proposed alterations were mostly minor and technical - Attlee, for example, wanted a more inclusive statement, mentioning atomic weapons as only one of many new weapons of mass destruction. In such a threatening world situation, peaceful cooperation and goodwill among nations was now needed more than ever. Attlee also wanted the declaration to stipulate that the states issuing the declaration would share the responsibility of tackling these tremendous challenges on an equal footing.<sup>850</sup> Apparently this was to try and appease the Soviet Union, which (judging from reports coming in) was clearly becoming mistrustful of its former allies' true intentions for meeting in Washington.

Indeed, the wording may well have also been influenced by the strange press-leak about the contents of the negotiations, especially the "secret intentions" of the talks, as the press had described them. Although the US government wanted the utmost secrecy, the British delegation was considering issuing a public statement of their own, as there had already been a lot of speculation in the American press about "the Attlee plan", describing it as hostile and unipolar against the Soviet Union, and this rumour needed to be dispelled.<sup>851</sup> Nevertheless, such a statement was not issued in the end, as the British delegation thought that by doing so they would actually confirm that the press had hit a nerve and there was something behind this speculation. Besides, it had been the

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<sup>848</sup> No.218 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 November, 4.5 a.m.), Washington, 11 November 1945, E 8659/15/3 DBPO Ser.I, vol.II regarding the forthcoming statement concerning Palestine issued by the United States on 13 November 1945. The Americans wanted to establish Anglo-American committee to solve the issue of Palestine. According to Halifax, Attlee had been able to fine-tune the statement to be more appropriate, but it did not please the British at all. Childs 2001, p.30-32; and Morgan 1992 p.49-52, state that the Palestine was a problem for the United States mainly due to the emigration limitations Britain had established. These had been complained in the United States by numerous interest groups.

<sup>849</sup> third draft altogether

<sup>850</sup> Note 220 of 2nd Meeting of UK Delegation in British Embassy, Washington, on 13 November 1945. U 9660/6550/70 DBPO ser.I, vol.II. Anglo-American cooperation was discussed, as was a continuation of the Quebec Agreement, and collaboration was raised by Truman with Attlee after the meeting too. There is, however, no direct confirmation of this in the source material available to the DBPO. Cf. Bullen 1985. No. 220: 13 Nov. 1945 Minute from Gen. Jacob to Mr. Attlee (Washington). Policy on Anglo-American atomic collaboration: British need for 'firm assurance of support from the United States in the event of the bomb being used against us'

<sup>851</sup> No.219 Minute from Mr. Butler to Mr. Rowan (Washington), Washington, 12 November 1945, PREM 8/117, DBPO Ser.I.vol.II regarding the possible wrong conclusions made by the Soviet Union about the British policy towards and with the United States.

British who had actually informed Stalin about the negotiations in advance<sup>852</sup>, mentioning that atomic energy would be discussed in a general way precisely to avoid mistrust; and Stalin had replied with a brief message thanking the British for the information.<sup>853</sup> Perhaps it was because the leak now seemed to have an uncontrollable life of its own with the press coverage and public opinion. According to research conducted by the Americans themselves, roughly 70% of the American public and 90% of Congress were against of the idea of sharing atomic secrets. Interestingly the argumentation focused on the notion of these being "secrets", as if all that was required was to get hold of a formula or recipe, and bingo, atomic capability would be achieved; at least this is what comes across from Senator McKeller's letter to Truman about easily stolen atomic secrets.<sup>854</sup>

Although impossible to prove, it could have been that the Americans had leaked information about the negotiations to increase public pressure and enhance their own case. It is unlikely that the British would have, as further leaks were especially harmful to their own case, and slightly less so for the Americans, who had also attempted separate negotiations with the USSR beforehand via Byrnes, where to bring the Soviets closer he presented the British as the masterminds behind alleged anti-Soviet plans.

The third official draft<sup>855</sup> of the declaration contained a softer internationalism than the second, and was actually delivered to the Americans. Certain aspects had been clarified: it was essential to prevent another devastating war; the wider security solution hinged on securing the atomic bomb; and there should be a clear mechanism for sharing any further knowledge about atomic technology with third parties, but only if the world situation became more relaxed, and there were real opportunities for openness and cooperation.<sup>856</sup> Perhaps the most important part of the third draft, however, was its sixth paragraph on creating a backdoor for atomic weapons to be controlled by the UN,<sup>857</sup> perhaps in an attempt to gain both Soviet and American support. Although perhaps somewhat naive, it was hoped that the Soviets would support this as it would be officially removing the weapon from national arsenals (i.e., from the US); and that the Americans would magnanimously support it as they would

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<sup>852</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Foreign Office to Washington 29 October 1945 about Attlee's letter to Stalin to inform about the forthcoming Anglo-American talks about atomic problems.

<sup>853</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Stalin's reply, 9 November 1945.

<sup>854</sup> Herken, 1988, p.30-32. Herken himself does not define the exchange or sharing of information in this. It may thus well be that the sharing of the information could have been understood as in sharing the information with the Soviet Union, in the vein of giving the information to it. It is also not certain whether the British acquired this piece of research information. They did conduct surveys about popular sentiments at least, and attempted to affect to it too, cf. Anstey 1984.

<sup>855</sup> Fourth altogether.

<sup>856</sup> No.222, Third British Draft of Heads of Statement, in the form communicated to Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Pearson, Washington, 13 November 1945, U 9660/6550/70, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>857</sup> No.222 Third British Draft of Heads of States in the form communicated to Mr.Byrnes and Mr.Pearson, Washington 13 November 1945, U9660/6550/70, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

be transferring the control of “their bombs” to the UN, which the United States played a leading role in anyway, so in effect they would be (secretly) keeping their arsenal. Research literature in general has overlooked the details of these negotiations for a long time. Gowing, for instance, makes no reference to it. The Americans responded to this with their own, more cautious draft for the intended declaration. It was similar to the British one, but each point was more loosely worded to allow a more diverse interpretation. The first sentences, for example, made a vague mention of the possibility to discuss international control measures for atomic technology.<sup>858</sup>

There were also proposals, like in the British draft, for peace and international control; and the other points focused on how information would be exchanged and on what possible international pretext. Finally, the Americans ended their draft in the style of an eloquent rhetoric-filled sermon, but without any immediate solution for achieving the aforementioned world peace. Instead there was the suggestion of establishing an independent control commission for atomic matters within the United Nations, which would mean an extra round of international negotiations with the other permanent members of the Security Council before any action could be taken. This was not what the British delegation had hoped for, and probably seemed to them more of an American delaying tactic. Then again, it did at least offer the illusion that other states would have a say in atomic affairs. Nothing more concrete about a wider international exchange of information was mentioned however. If there was to be any, it would be under the auspices of this proposed commission, if such a commission were ever to be created at all.<sup>859</sup> In other words, the British would not be getting an iota of more information than anyone else.

So the British met a third time on 14 November 1945 to further edit their own draft proposal. According to DBPO editor Roger Bullen, this draft was not submitted to the FO Archives. The main difference this time was that it focused on the control commission that the Americans had proposed. The British delegation was concerned that, as a full member of the Security Council the Soviet Union might think it had a case to demand detailed information about atomic technology, on the grounds that it would be essential for the work of the commission.<sup>860</sup> Without detailed information it would, indeed, have been impossible to make informed decisions about the commercial use of atomic energy. So for the British, there was no hurry to establish this international commission, particularly as they also stood to lose their comparative advantage over other countries if such a thing was to come into existence. In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king, and Anglo-American cooperation needed to be reestablished before Britain could reclaim that royal position. This was what instigated the fourth meeting of the British delegation a few hours later, when a fourth draft proposal was drawn up and agreed upon. Attlee was to present it directly

<sup>858</sup> “...have discussed the possibility of international action...” No.223 First American draft 13 November 1945. *Ibid.*

<sup>859</sup> No.223 First American draft 13 November 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>860</sup> No.224 Memorandum of the third meeting of the British delegation 14 November 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

to Truman in the course of forthcoming negotiations due for that afternoon.<sup>861</sup> This was the one agreed on for the eventual declaration, as it accommodated the Americans' second draft (identical to their first, except it was made even clearer that the formation of a commission would precede any sharing of atomic know-how).<sup>862</sup>

The fourth draft proposal from the British also tried to approach the more overly sentimental tone of the American draft, in lamenting the horrors of war. This was not only meant to appeal to American taste, but also to accommodate the internationalist sentiment back home that had been promised in Labour's election manifesto. It was evidently an attempt to meet the Americans somewhere in the middle, but it was clear that there was now little left to underline a special relationship between the Americans and British.<sup>863</sup>

Although these negotiations about the declaration had been concluded in just a matter of days, it seemed the Americans were stalling whenever they could, and any comments that could be squeezed out of them remained as loose and ambiguous as possible, whereas the British had thought about every nuance precisely to avoid ambiguity. Of course the Americans had more to lose,<sup>864</sup> while the British had very little; and apart from the few British scientists remaining in the US<sup>865</sup>, and raw materials for atomic power, Britain had very little to offer. Added to that, not only was US public opinion against cooperation, but the British were also heavily dependent on American loans and other forms of aid and support.<sup>866</sup> Of the British scientists, only Penney and perhaps Cockcroft are thought to have been particularly necessary for continued atomic research.<sup>867</sup> One should also bear in mind that the British had already made it quite plain they wanted cooperation to continue, which meant that they were obliged to rely on American goodwill, which had been hard to get in the first place. Besides, flashing the USSR scare card would not work anymore, now that the US itself had appeared to have changed its overall foreign policy towards the Russians, at least compared to earlier mentions in London by Byrnes about the US "having the atomic bomb in the pocket"<sup>868</sup>.

As far as atomic secrets went, the US was not not going to be that accommodating to anyone else besides itself. No wonder then that Attlee had nothing of significance to telegraph home then, except that President Truman was grow-

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<sup>861</sup> No.224, Memorandum of the third meeting of the British delegation 14 November 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.14 November 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>862</sup> No.229 Second American draft communique, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>863</sup> No.228, fourth British draft, 14 November 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>864</sup> Grieco 1988, p.485-489.

<sup>865</sup> Most of Britain's top scientists were sent to United States starting from 1943. The British team in Berkeley grew to 35 members, and in Los Alamos to 19. At least 6 British scientists were heads of joint groups. Cf. Fakley, 1983 p.187-189.

<sup>866</sup> For example Bullock 1984 p.121; Morgan 1984 p.144-145. On Britain's dependency on United States financially and US. using this as leverage, see for example Roitto 2008, p.116; p.122. Gormly 1987, p. 9-12.

<sup>867</sup> Gowing 1974, p.113, 295-296.

<sup>868</sup> For instance Herken 1988, p.48.

ing impatient and wanted to get the declaration ready.<sup>869</sup> Just why Truman was so eager to get the initially unplanned declaration ready is not certain. One possible factor is the pressure of public opinion and the alleged "Attlee plan" that was hovering in the headlines. It was also possibly because the spectre of the Soviet Union was looming in the wings too, all the time growing more hostile. The third plausible reason might have simply been the meticulous approach the British had in formulating their drafts, due to the fact that the precise wordings left little room for the kind of ambiguities that had been so amenable to US interests in the Quebec Agreement or Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire before. This was one possible explanation for why the negotiations on this topic were so short too - it saved the US the trouble of having to break it to the British that many of their requests would not be granted. After all, with time being of the essence, there was no time for the Americans to go through all the wording and correct it so that it could be free for any angle of interpretation. So by 15 November the declaration was agreed on and Attlee telegraphed the final draft home with a comment about Truman's impatience to get it out. The Cabinet thus did not comment on the draft except for some formalities. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were concerned that there was as yet no defence against an atomic attack, and Bevin wanted to cancel the right to veto of the proposed atomic control commission in case of its misuse by members of the Great Powers. Bevin's proposal was truer to a policy of internationalism, but it seemed the negotiations had taken their toll on Attlee and, in his desire to revive the special relationship, his internationalist principles had seemingly caved in. He therefore did not concur with Bevin and the veto clause was eventually left in, rendering the committee practically useless, as it now meant that it simply depended on goodwill among the Great Powers (i.e., as politically realist an organisation as ever), and that goodwill was hardly forthcoming as the Cold War set in.<sup>870</sup>

The Washington Declaration was thus conveyed to the world at a press-conference on 15 November 1945. It had 9 paragraphs, and met nearly all the wishes of the US, whereas the British had arrived with high hopes and had most of them dashed. The declaration's main message was that in atomic matters peaceful cooperation would be the foremost consideration, and that the three signatories, Canada, the United States and Britain, would support this. Due to the technical advantage they had, it was their responsibility to do so. The means for peaceful interaction needed to be developed further, and misuse

<sup>869</sup> No.221 Joint Staff Mission, Attlee to Cabinet Office 13 November 1945, reporting about the progress of the talks. The telegraph more or less just included annoyance about the leaks to the press and reporting about the drafting work. Attlee promised to report more later and to produce the drafts for those at home to see. No.227 Joint Staff Mission, Attlee to Cabinet Office (2nd time) 14 November 1945. In this telegraph Attlee recapped the acceptance procedure of the drafts, and promised to clear any drafts at home before signing them. At the same time he mentioned that the talks had shifted towards the creating of the declaration. The results pleased him however. Only the idea of the commission was a stone in Attlee's shoe. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>870</sup> No.230 Joint Staff Mission to Cabinet Office (Including Attlee's telegraph)). This included the draft for the declaration. No.231 Litteration of Attlee's telephone call home for the purposes of receiving comments about the draft, 15 November 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

of the new technology should be prevented at all cost. Therefore it was essential that before the signatories share the new technology with others, safety measures be developed to ensure the technology be used for only peaceful ends, and a common set of rules be thus devised for controlling and regulating the new technology. This was where the new world organisation, the UN, would play an important part. A control commission would be established under its auspices to help in atomic affairs.<sup>871</sup> In effect, the proposed commission was a creation of the US government, but Canada and Britain were described in the declaration as co-planners of it. Meanwhile, the British had expected to tackle the issue of Anglo-American atomic collaboration, more precisely, the secret cooperation within it, to follow up their wartime alliance. A binding contract or agreement had been sought after, and in the hope of eventually achieving a formal agreement to continue atomic collaboration, many surprising requests from the Americans had been accommodated. Any such formal agreement was not forthcoming, however, and the committee thus took centre stage, much to the annoyance of the British, due (for the most part) to its loosely defined powers and responsibilities. The British also suspected that the commission might annoy the Soviets too, as it effectively bypassed Security Council members.<sup>872</sup> The British had wanted the committee to be established under the Security Council, but without the power of veto given to its members. Admittedly, Britain had been referred to as one of the three developers of the new technology in the declaration, but the Government was now committed to an internationalist policy (admittedly one it had promised Parliament and the faithful electorate earlier), which would cause problems later. In the next section I will cover the rest of the negotiations and evaluate them from the British perspective in greater detail.

### 3.3.2 From the Washington Declaration to an actual agreement about Anglo-American atomic collaboration

The first part of the Washington negotiations addressed internationalism more than Anglo-American collaboration, and yet the declaration, that was a result of increasing American pressure to move forward,<sup>873</sup> should have been one that Attlee would not object to. After all, he himself had come close to preaching about it earlier, as can be seen in the messages he had sent to Truman (see 3.2.2). In Parliament there had been numerous expressions of anxiety and fears about the atomic weapon being let loose in the world. Although they had played for time, the Government had eventually mentioned the need for the world to change. Likewise, important role of the UN in the future of the world had been

<sup>871</sup> No.233 Washington declaration 15 November 1945. Ibid. cf. Appendix 7.

<sup>872</sup> No.235 Butler to Campbell 15 November 1945, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>873</sup> No.223 First American draft 13 November 1945. No.229 Second American draft 14 November 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol.II. The important parts covered gradual development of the control commission, as well as in return, gradual increase in exchange of information. Gowing 1974, p.74 stated that the long duration was due only to formalities.



emphasised by Government. Indeed, the Government had brought the ratification of the UN Charter into Parliament, which henceforth tied Britain to UN rules, as well as the kind of policy that would fit this outlook. The declaration was meant to play an essential role<sup>874</sup> in terms of increasing Britain's prestige in terms of atomic advantage and therefore also Britain's political stature in the world, but instead played into the Americans' hands and made it easy for the US to refuse any further cooperation with the British later. This the British did not know. The Declaration on its own was considered as an achievement. It did, after all respond to Attlee's initial views. However, atomic cooperation had not been agreed on, so the British delegation still had their work cut out for them, and had to tread lightly just to even negotiate with the Americans.

The second phase of the negotiations began on the same day (14 November) as the declaration was delivered. Finally the British were getting to the part they had called the negotiations for in the first place. But just as they were actually starting to progress, and favourable outcomes were in sight, the American delegation struck once more with an unexpected issue - the question of Palestine. The Americans thought Palestine would be the most suitable destination for Jewish refugees, and they wanted restrictions on Jewish immigration to be lifted. Although the British resisted the idea of unregulated immigration at first, thinking it might create problems with the resident Arab population, they eventually agreed to this, with the promise of renewed Anglo-American cooperation now dangling so much closer before them.<sup>875</sup> There were thus only minor comments made about this "surprise" request in the margins of the British delegation's record of negotiations. Palestine had been initially brought up on board the USS Sequoia during the preliminary unofficial part of the negotiations, but now that this had been (perhaps rather hastily) dealt with, the two parties finally got down to the meat of the matter (14 and 15 November).

The British goal was to secure a post-war continuation of the Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire and Quebec Agreement (at least in spirit) because, although these wartime agreements had chiefly concerned the Manhattan and Tube Alloys Projects, there had also been a latent promise in both of continuing atomic cooperation in the future.<sup>876</sup> The British had indeed realised that the former the agreements did not bind the Americans anymore but did not admit they knew this to the Americans in public. The British MAUD Committee<sup>877</sup> reports that had been handed to the US early on in the war were particularly prominent in the minds of the British here. Indeed, the whole Manhattan Project owed much to these reports.<sup>878</sup> But it was not clear to the British what the US would actually want from the collaboration. The raw material agreements that the US had secured from Britain from the previous agreements were one thing that had evi-

<sup>874</sup> In general about atomic prestige see Vickers 2004, p.183.

<sup>875</sup> No.226 Minute from Mr. Makins to Sir J. Anderson (Washington), Washington, 14 November 1945, CAB 126/276 1945 DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II regarding the meeting with General Groves and Harrison.

<sup>876</sup> No.186 Campbell to Bevin 8 August 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol. II.

<sup>877</sup> The Military Application of Uranium Detonation Committee

<sup>878</sup> Gowing 1965, p.76-78; 85; 94; 106; 242-244.

dently benefited the US greatly, but whether they would be willing to pay whatever it cost to continue them was another. The Americans did, however, reveal that they had been authorised by president Truman to conduct the talks based on Quebec Agreement, and to prepare a new, up-to-date agreement. The American delegation even went so far as to state that both the Combined Policy Committee (CPC) and Combined Development Trust (CDT) were still useful and could continue to coordinate cooperation in the future. Only minor adjustments would be required in their opinion. The Americans saw the CPC as especially useful in preparing the actual agreement of cooperation too.<sup>879</sup> In his own book however, General Groves claimed that the CDT covered the most important aspects of future cooperation for the Americans, as it ensured the availability of uranium. Not surprisingly perhaps, the initiative to establish the organisation had come from the United States.<sup>880</sup> Continuity was therefore given priority, partly due to the fact that both the CPC and CDT had worked well during the war; and partly because time was limited, and both governments wanted to keep give atomic collaboration a low profile. Besides, a new organisation would have diverted much needed time and resources from the more important practical work, such as research and construction. It is also true that, for the Americans, just keeping the existing organisations going would have been the most efficient way to invest as little as possible and yet keep the British satisfied; and it also meant there was no interruption in the flow of raw materials to the US.

When it came to specifics though, General Groves insisted on first receiving instructions from the highest possible level (meaning the President) before he could negotiate about the responsibilities of the CPC and CDT. Groves wanted clarification on various matters, such as whether the cooperation was to be full or partial; adding that the loose wording of the Quebec Agreement made it difficult to interpretate the real intentions of the agreement - even if it had worked well due to a good and trusting relationship among the key personnel involved in the project. By this, Groves was referring to his good relationship with British scientist, Professor James Chadwick, who had played a crucial role in the Combined Policy Committee.<sup>881</sup> Strangely, it seems that Groves counted himself as a significant contributor to Anglo-American relations, although later, in his own book, he claims he was referring specifically to the relationship between Roosevelt and Churchill.<sup>882</sup> Indeed, more has been written about Groves' mistrust of cooperation, and his support for the idea that the US keep an atomic monopoly. In fact a number of studies, including his own autobiography, men-

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<sup>879</sup> No.226 Minute from Mr. Makins to Sir J. Anderson (Washington), Washington, 14 November 1945, CAB 126/276 1945 DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II regarding the meeting with General Groves and Harrison.

<sup>880</sup> Groves 1983, p.174.

<sup>881</sup> No.226 Minute from Mr. Makins to Sir J. Anderson (Washington), Washington, 14 November 1945, CAB 126/276 1945 DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II regarding the meeting with General Groves and Harrison. Cf. Also Groves 1983.

<sup>882</sup> Groves 1983, p.174. No.226 Minute from Mr. Makins to Sir J. Anderson (Washington), Washington, 14 November 1945, CAB 126/276 1945 DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II regarding the meeting with General Groves and Harrison.

tion that he took the monopoly possibility seriously and believed in it for a long time.<sup>883</sup> Perhaps due to this degree of mistrust, Groves insisted on drafting a list of the important questions that were to be addressed, i.e., raw materials, and civilian uses of the new technology. Somewhat reluctantly however, he had to accept that his decision was only as important as John Anderson's and James Patterson's (the US Secretary of War). For example, he did not take kindly to Canadian participation in the post-war research negotiations, but in the end it was up to John Anderson to include who he saw fit.<sup>884</sup> The raw materials question was important to Groves in so far as the supply from the British needed to be secured, whereas the civilian use of atomic technology was just a means of beating around the bush while allowing the Americans to keep as much secret as possible. The fact was that at this point there were no civilian applications available anyway. As for the question of raw materials, it seemed to the British delegation that Groves was expressing an interest in the recent discovery of uranium in South Africa which did not yet fall within the remit outlined by the CDT.<sup>885</sup>

John Patterson chaired the second round of negotiations that started on 15 November. Patterson emphasised the point that President Truman had authorised these talks in the spirit of the Quebec Agreement, and on the recommendation of American scientists. John Anderson, meanwhile, enquired as to the Americans' views concerning the commercial use of atomic energy, as the fourth article of the Quebec Agreement had, as we have already seen, left this rather arbitrarily in the hands of the US President. Anderson pushed forward his advantage at this point too, now that John Patterson had opened the door a crack and there was some momentum, to say that Britain would be building her own research and production plants.<sup>886</sup> Were the British domestic project to come true it would mean a *de facto* sharing of the limited raw material supply. It would also mean that there would be installations beyond American control and security. There were of course risks to be had within the United States too, but Americans trusted their own security measures more than those of others. In reply, Patterson said "he would be prepared to recommend to the President that the United Kingdom should be given a free hand to develop atomic energy for industrial purposes".<sup>887</sup> This remained in line with the Washington Declaration, which was being signed at the very same time as these talks were going on. Harrison and Groves did not like this in the slightest. They demanded quid

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<sup>883</sup> Gowing 1965, p.140; Herken 1988, p. xiv; 97-100. Groves, 1983, p.125-130.

<sup>884</sup> No.226 Minute from Mr. Makins to Sir J. Anderson (Washington), Washington, 14 November 1945, CAB 126/276 DBPO, ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>885</sup> No.226 Minute from Mr. Makins to Sir J. Anderson (Washington), Washington, 14 November 1945, CAB 126/276 DBPO, ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>886</sup> No.232 Record of meeting held at the War Department (Washington) on 15 November 1945 at g.30 a.m., 15 November 1945, CAB 126/133. DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II Also cf. appendix 5: Quebec Agreement.

<sup>887</sup> No.232 Record of meeting held at the War Department (Washington) on 15 November 1945 at g.30 a.m., 15 November 1945, CAB 126/133. DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

pro quo, but John Patterson insisted that he for one supported fair play with the British.<sup>888</sup>

But Groves would not let this go so easily and, in the spirit of the aforementioned fair play, he suggested that if Britain were to pursue her own atomic project, then the newly found raw material in South Africa would have to be shared with the US (making it significantly harder for the British). The British attempted to use it as a carrot at this point, making it clear that were the cooperation to continue, these resources would naturally enough be shared. Likewise they assured the Americans that experts and scientists would be exchanged, but this was not enough for General Groves. He kept on returning to the issue of raw materials and would not budge. Only when the British promised first that raw materials would be shared in the future, did Groves appear to calm down.<sup>889</sup> So the American side was not unanimous. Groves' insistence on the raw materials might have seemed semi-obsessive from the British perspective, and this is precisely what I am presenting here because it has been largely overlooked in the literature so far. In terms of the American grand narrative, it would seem that Groves was acting as a true patriot, albeit a difficult one. It is hard to find much else to explain his motives, except that his behaviour and actions were a matter of their own. In his autobiography, "Now It Can Be Told", Groves explains that his priority at all times was security, and to protect US interests.<sup>890</sup> Groves' character has been studied much, but this has taken more of an academic turn only recently. The interpretation largely remains one of him being a stubborn patriot, although his anti-British, anti-socialist or at least anti-Bevin stance has also been noted for instance by Leinonen.<sup>891</sup> I imagine his actions did not totally go unnoticed among the British delegation either, who nevertheless chose to ignore his behaviour, judging from the filed source material.

At the end of this round of talks, both parties agreed to draft the intended agreement about cooperation, with the odd proviso from the Americans that whatever was agreed here, might nevertheless be subject to change if internal US legislation later required it.<sup>892</sup> Although the British did not comment on this proviso at the time, it would come back to haunt them later. Meanwhile, in fact on the same day, Attlee, Truman, and Byrnes met to discuss other matters than atomic cooperation. Attlee raised the possibility of embarking on a joint defence programme vis-à-vis protecting the Commonwealth and India, only to be met with vague answers from Truman. Attlee had mentioned the Commonwealth to perhaps show the Americans that even if Britain did not have the resources and power comparable to those of the US or USSR, its influence was still global.

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<sup>888</sup> No.232 Record of meeting held at the War Department (Washington) on 15 November 1945 at g.30 a.m., 15 November 1945, CAB 126/133. DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II21

<sup>889</sup> No.232 Record of meeting held at the War Department (Washington) on 15 November 1945 at g.30 a.m., 15 November 1945, CAB 126/133. DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II.

<sup>890</sup> Groves 1983, p.404-406.

<sup>891</sup> Leinonen 2012, p.113.

<sup>892</sup> No.232 Record of meeting held at the War Department (Washington) on 15 November 1945 at g.30 a.m., 15 November 1945, CAB 126/133. DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

Meanwhile, Byrnes tried to sideline the matter by suggesting that the question of civil aviation was a more pressing concern - especially while Britain's loan negotiations were still under consideration for renewal.<sup>893</sup> And as if to add insult to injury, Byrnes brought up Palestine again, as if suddenly remembering this item that was worth throwing into any bargain to be struck with the British. He asked to know more about who would be in the Palestine committee.<sup>894</sup> This was clearly a case of the US embarking on a form of atomic diplomacy where it could take advantage of the weaker and more dependent position of the British. From the British perspective, Byrnes' tactics were most likely considered those of an amateur bully.

On the morning of 16 November 1945, a top-secret meeting was held at the US War Department and the Canadians were invited to join. It soon became clear that the longer draft concerning atomic collaboration was still under revision, whereas the shorter version was ready for the heads of state to sign, just as John Anderson had hoped for in the previous meeting. However, it was again General Groves that dragged his feet, even if everyone else present had mutually agreed on it. He objected to the part that said "*there should be full and effective cooperation in the field of atomic energy*". Groves wanted it reworded to "*full and effective cooperation in the field of **basic scientific** research*". John Anderson resisted this rewording, however, and in the end John Patterson ruled in favour of the British wording.<sup>895</sup> According to Groves, this endangered US interests, and he was also concerned that the wording had been chosen without first consulting Secretary of State Byrnes. Groves knew Byrnes would have been against the idea too, as he duly was when he heard about the details. In his autobiography, Groves blames the wording on the lawyer, Robert Patterson, who was of the opinion that the rewording would make no difference.<sup>896</sup> If Groves is right about Byrnes, then it would explain a lot of the US Secretary of State's actions. If he had indeed been so opposed to Anglo-American cooperation, it might have been that all the mistakes and delays were intended policy, and not simply down to error and inexperience. Either way, the memorandum for a full and effective cooperation was eventually signed the same day. The document also mentioned that the CPC and CDT would continue their tasks, and that the CPC would henceforth be in charge of coordinating all cooperation.<sup>897</sup> There was no

<sup>893</sup> No.234 Note of conversations between the Prime Minister, the President and Mr. Byrnes, Washington, 15 November 1945, PREM 8/116. DBPO ser.I. vol.II.

<sup>894</sup> No.236 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 16 November, 2 a.m.), Washington, 16 November 1945, E 8841/15/31 (actually Attlee to Bevin) regarding the number of members in the Palestine committee. In addition Attlee mentioned that the issue about the atomic control commission's possible veto-rights could be covered later as the Washington talks would be over.

<sup>895</sup> No.238 Record of Meeting held at the War Department (Washington) at 9 a.m. on 16 November 1945, 16 November 1945, CAB 126/133. DBPO ser.I. vol.II.

<sup>896</sup> Groves 1983, p.404-406.

<sup>897</sup> No.239 Minute by President Truman, Mr. Attlee and Mr. Mackenzie King, The White House, Washington, 16 November 1945, PREM 8/117 (About the cooperation). Footnote 2, Bullen 1985, reveals that "According to F.R.US. 1945, vol. ii, p. 68, signature by President Truman and Mr. Attlee took place at 10.15 a.m. Mr. Mackenzie King signed in Ottawa on 17 November." DBPO, ser.I, vol.II. See also the appendix 8 "Brief memo about cooperation"

additional information about the intentions or extent of the full and effective cooperation, however, thus the new agreement was no different from those made in Quebec or Hyde Park<sup>898</sup>. All the same, it did seem at this point that the British had finally secured their main goal - close, effective and full cooperation with the Americans in the field of atomic energy and weapons.

The longer memorandum about atomic cooperation was also considered over the morning talks, and both parties agreed that, were it ever to come to fruition, it would replace the Quebec Agreement. Being in written form, however, the Americans wanted it to be as informal as possible; the argument being that only then would it be able to get through Congress. Why Congress would not support this kind of agreement was not actually discussed though.<sup>899</sup> Perhaps this was because the American atomic project was partly in a state of flux, and various aspects remained unclear at that time. It is true that international agreements would have to be ratified in Congress, but because the matter was supported by the military and Government, and thus considered of national interest, this would probably have been enough to persuade even the most stubborn Congress. It was true that there was a degree of mistrust and anti-British sentiment there<sup>900</sup>, but then again information was so limited (which in turn proscribed how much Senate or Congress could even begin to discuss these matters) that control would have largely rested with the military. Besides, overall responsibility for atomic affairs still lay with the military, and the less Congress or Senate were involved, the more it would remain with the military (and thus Groves). Nevertheless, since the spring of 1945, a temporary civilian committee had already been established to consider the role of a post-war atomic project, and no doubt Groves and the American delegation were well aware of this. So far the committee, proposed by Henry Stimson and established by Truman, had only been taking care of information and PR issues related to the matter, but this remit was likely to expand. After all, the British had been told that US domestic legislation might later change atomic policy so that it would affect and perhaps even preclude transatlantic cooperation. This created a useful loophole for the American delegation, so that they could cancel all cooperation should it become necessary. Indeed, Groves claims in his autobiography to have known at the time of signing the declaration that any 'secret' cooperation agreed upon would have been acting against the UN Charter.<sup>901</sup> Putting something on paper merely created a *modus vivendi* without any real formal commitment. In this way, the US had raw materials to gain from a kind of fake cooperation. Be that as it may, Anderson and the British delegation accepted the informal agreement as, in his belief, formalities could always be settled later.<sup>902</sup>

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<sup>898</sup> Cf. Appendix 8.

<sup>899</sup> No.238 Record of Meeting held at the War Department (Washington) at 9 a.m. on 16 November 1945, 16 November 1945, CAB 126/133 DBPO, ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>900</sup> Anstey, 1984, p.419-421.

<sup>901</sup> Groves, 1983, p.405-406.

<sup>902</sup> No.238 Record of Meeting held at the War Department (Washington) at 9 a.m. on 16 November 1945, 16 November 1945, CAB 126/133. DBPO, ser.I,vol.II.

What mattered was that cooperation was seen to be working. This gesture of good-will, which has also been interpreted as a blunder, became a defining factor in later cooperation. Although the situation looked great from the British point of view, which was perhaps why Anderson did not want to press the matter further, it was in fact quite uncertain.<sup>903</sup> The sources do not reveal any further explanation for Anderson's actions.

The United States had thus gained a lot from the talks held in Washington, while not committing to anything. Short-term gains were made by not letting a hostile Congress interfere, as it might have stopped all cooperation right from the start. In his book "The Iron Curtain", Frazer Harbutt quotes one member of Congress who says it was crucial that Congress never know just how important the British had been in atomic research.<sup>904</sup> And yet this motive seems somewhat unlikely when we consider that the Government's White Paper on the Tube Alloys project would have been readily available when Henry de Wolf-Smyth's atomic report was reprinted. There was of course plenty of information there about just how much the British had contributed to atomic research.

As the talks wound up, Anderson and Groves agreed on a memorandum together to consider how the cooperation would continue in practice, which was then presented to the chair of the CPC (the Americans had initially drawn up a paper which had forgotten to include the Canadians). Due to the apparent 'misunderstanding', this meant that negotiations lasted well into the night. Groves did not want to authorise the parts about exchanging information, and meanwhile the Canadians were worried that the US might hoard raw materials. Perhaps this is why the final draft of the memo focused mainly on how raw materials would be shared.<sup>905</sup> Another undated memo about the Washington negotiations, circulating among members of the British Cabinet just before Christmas, betrays the anxiety and mistrust that was present at this stage, and how the Americans were (whether intentionally or not) actually holding up the negotiations.<sup>906</sup> These problems seem to have been skimmed over in previous research. For instance, Margaret Gowing only covers the short memo about full and effective cooperation to any extent - with the Groves-Anderson memorandum relegated to an appendix of her official history. The implications of this are that any contradictions between the short and long versions of the memorandum have not been properly examined.<sup>907</sup>

Originally, the Groves-Anderson memorandum was about the plans to create a new document on cooperation that would eventually replace the Quebec Agreement. It was a commentary on the willingness of cooperation, which stipulated that signatory states would neither use atomic weapons against each

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<sup>903</sup> Gowing, 1974, p.76-77.

<sup>904</sup> Gowing 1965, p.166-167. Gott, 1963, p.240-241.

<sup>905</sup> Unfortunately drafts about the difficult negotiations are not available, but the final memo is.

<sup>906</sup> No.240 Memorandum of conversations in Washington, 16 November 1945, CAB 130/8, circulated also in Cabinet Office 12 December 1945 as GEN 106/2 (footnote 1 Bullen 1985, p.628) DBPO ser.I, vol.II. See also No.241 Memorandum to the Chairman of the Combined Policy Committee, 16 November 1945, CAB 134/7. DBPO ser.I.vol.II.

<sup>907</sup> Gowing, 1974, p.76-77.

other, nor inform third parties about atomic knowledge without the mutual consent of all parties. What really stood out, however, were the statements about attempting to secure all possible raw materials for the use of the CDT (located in the US); and that “full and effective cooperation” would now be conducted only in “*basic* research”. Everybody’s interests were to be respected equally,<sup>908</sup> but there was a lot of room for manoeuvre, and most of this worked in the Americans’ favour and restricted the British. They were the wordings that Groves had wanted, and it meant the short and long memoranda contradicted each other. Was this mix-up deliberate or entirely accidental? During the small hours of the morning it might well have been the case that a few words would have been missed by any expert. But this did not alter the fact that the contradiction played into the Americans’ hands. With the possibility of American legislation changing the terms of cooperation, with the chance that it might stop altogether, the situation was definitely not as good as the British might have thought.

This was ignored by the satisfied British delegation that headed home, and Attlee instead informed Parliament about what the good news.<sup>909</sup> The shorter memo, more favourable to the British cause, had been signed by no less a person than the President of the United States, who evidently outranked General Groves. For this reason, the longer Groves-Anderson memo was not ratified.<sup>910</sup> Secretary of the State Byrnes would later claim that he had not even heard about the Groves-Anderson memorandum,<sup>911</sup> even though Truman had told Attlee that Byrnes was the American delegate ultimately in charge of atomic matters.<sup>912</sup> This makes Byrnes’ comments somewhat implausible, unless he had been totally left out of the loop by his staff. And if that had been the case, it perhaps makes it necessary to reconsider Byrnes’ whole role in American post-war policy. In effect, the two-part negotiations had left matters slightly open, and there was still plenty of work to be done. Soon the British would see that the talks in Washington were far from conclusive and would become just another phase in the uphill struggle of trying to secure the future of Anglo-American atomic collaboration.

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<sup>908</sup> No.241 Memorandum to the Chairman of the Combined Policy Committee, 16 November 1945, CAB 134/7. DBPO ser.I.vol.II. Especially paragraph 5.

<sup>909</sup> Botti 1987, p.13 referring to Attlee’s statement in the House of Commons 22 November 1945.

<sup>910</sup> Cf. Appendix 8. Also printed in F.R.US 1945 vol.ii.

<sup>911</sup> Herken, 1988, p.65. Of these two, Groves-Anderson memorandum would have been more favourable for the Americans, were they to maintain their monopoly.

<sup>912</sup> Herken, 1988, p.39.



#### 4 PHASE THREE: NEW YEAR 1946 HERALDS A MORE REACTIONARY POLICY

The Washington Conference was thus considered a success among British officials, the Cabinet, and among many Parliamentarians as well. However, the euphoria from this sense of achievement did not last for long, as the international situation kept deteriorating and it soon became clear that although atomic foreign policy had been established on paper, it was far from happening in practice. American public opinion was changing too, and was starting to see Britain as “socialist”, and therefore as less of an ally.<sup>913</sup> Then there was an alarming piece of news from Byrnes, the American Secretary of State. He had called to inform the British that there would be an urgent meeting of foreign secretaries in Moscow. Not only did this show that the meeting had been secretly prepared in advance without prior consultation, but that Britain would also have to attend without any forward-planning or coordination with the Americans first. Britain needed to be there too, as Byrnes had put the atomic question on the agenda, much to the irritation of the British, particularly Bevin. The Americans claimed that the reason for calling the meeting so suddenly was to address the stalemate that had resulted from the last Council of Foreign Secretaries at the conference in London. According to the American officials, the main emphasis would be on negotiating the various peace agreements that had not yet been settled, but of course this included atomic matters. It is possible that the British attempts to lure the Americans into conducting a more proactive atomic foreign policy had been working, but what this would mean in terms of Anglo-American relations and with regard to atomic matters remained to be seen. Just as they thought they had secured secret Anglo-American atomic cooperation for the future, it must have alarmed the British to discover that UN atomic control was one of the items on the agenda for Moscow. Then again, the clear get-out clauses of the Washington Declaration should have meant that this did not come totally out of the blue either.

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<sup>913</sup> Anstey 1984, p.425-426.

The present chapter therefore covers a new phase in British atomic foreign policy that began in the last weeks of 1945 and lasted a month or so into 1946. During this period, partly due to increasing American activity, and partly due to the British executive's inability to capitalise on what it thought had been achieved in Washington, Britain lost some of the initiative it had maintained until then. Not only was the executive caught out by the Conference of Foreign Secretaries in Moscow, but Parliament did not discuss or really manifest itself with regard to atomic foreign affairs either during this period. In practice this means that chapter four deals with the hurried preparations for the Moscow conference, as well as the negotiations themselves, and covers them in the context of general foreign policy as well. I conclude the chapter by emphasising how the Moscow conference marked a different phase in British atomic foreign policy because it forced the Government (or part of it) to react, if somewhat reluctantly, to the fact that the Americans were going ahead with their own plans anyway. This reaction consisted of grabbing the issue of a bidirectional foreign policy by the horns, as it were, and wrestling it to the ground. The pretence of internationalism was dropped by the British executive during this phase. In other words, Britain faced the likelihood that it would henceforth be a junior partner in any future collaboration, if there was to be one at all, and for this to happen they had to play the game by the Americans' rules, particularly since they depended on the US for a number of other ways, such as for loans, food, and technology to name but a few.

#### **4.1 American initiative: an unpleasant surprise**

Before the Washington negotiations the British had been putting pressure on the Americans in many ways, while making very sure they were being subtle about this.<sup>914</sup> For instance, as we saw in the previous chapter, they hinted that Britain might soon embark on her own domestic atomic research plans and they used carefully managed publicity and public opinion about this subject as leverage. A British domestic research project would certainly have endangered the Americans' own project by forcing them to share the limited raw materials, thus not giving them much room for manoeuvre, and so the Americans eventually agreed to the negotiations that Attlee had repeatedly asked for, in spite of Britain's precarious economic dependency on the US. Cooperation was promised in the wording of the declaration and so the British had considered Washington a success, but this euphoria was short-lived.

Only ten days after the negotiations in Washington had ended, Byrnes called for the next Council of Foreign Secretaries to be held in Moscow. Moreover, he did this without mentioning anything about it to the stymied British beforehand. Only when Byrnes had already contacted Soviet Foreign Secretary Molotov, did the British Foreign Office receive an extremely urgent telegraph

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<sup>914</sup> Weiler 1987, p.60-62.

from Sir Alexander Clark-Kerr, the British ambassador in Moscow. Clark-Kerr informed the FO that the American ambassador had just shown him “text of a personal message from Mr. Byrnes which he handed Mr. Molotov late last night”<sup>915</sup>, and that it was about reconvening the Council of Foreign Secretaries every three months, as Byrnes had suggested in Potsdam. It was now the turn of Moscow, and perhaps since the onus would be on the Russians to invite delegates, Clark-Kerr reasoned, Byrnes had wanted to check first with the Soviets if the idea was acceptable before then telling Bevin. Whether or not Bevin believed this, the conference was arranged for Tuesday, 11 December 1945 and matters to be discussed were related to the occupation and government of Japan, the unrests in China<sup>916</sup>, the tense situation in Persia (as the Soviets had still not withdrawn troops in spite of Persian requests), organising elections in the Balkan states, and other urgent issues. Clark-Kerr also added that the American Ambassador Averell Harriman had said “Molotov beamed with pleasure” when he got Byrnes’ message. In the US ambassador’s personal opinion, Byrnes apparently did not want to restrict the agenda of negotiations beforehand.<sup>917</sup> This was alarming news, as it could have meant that atomic matters would be brought up, and at the same time made it difficult to prepare adequately for every eventuality, if there was no restrictions to the agenda. If anything the initiative seemed to have been given to the Soviets as they had been initially consulted, and it indicated that the Anglo-American special relationship was not a priority for Byrnes. Earlier information from various sources,<sup>918</sup> added to Bevin’s sense of unease too, which is apparent in his words below.

“I am apprehensive that Mr. Harriman in his desire to bring his present negotiations with the Soviet Government to a successful conclusion may advance too far to meet the Russians”.<sup>919</sup>

However, Byrnes may have contacted the Soviet Union first in an effort to compensate for the failure of the last meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London, at least Gregg Herken considers this to have been the reason.<sup>920</sup> Meanwhile, George Kennan has noted in his memoirs, albeit afterwards, that Byrnes’ ulterior motive was to gain prestige in the domestic arena,<sup>921</sup> and thus

<sup>915</sup> No.244 Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow) to Mr. Bevin (Received 24 November, 4.37 p.m.), Moscow, 24 November 1945, FO 800/446, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>916</sup> Deterioration of the relations between the troops of Jieng Jieshin and Mao and the evacuation of the remaining Japanese occupational forces for instance.

<sup>917</sup> No.244 Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow) to Mr. Bevin (Received 24 November, 4.37 p.m.), Moscow, 24 November 1945, FO 800/446, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II. Clark-Kerr also mentioned that he had gained the information confidentially from the American ambassador, and implied that this should be kept in mind when addressing the issue: No.245 Clark-Kerr to Bevin 24 November 1945, 6.08 AM. DBPO ser.I Vol.II. (point 5.)

<sup>918</sup> See for instance No. 182. Letter from Mr. Roberts (Moscow) to Sir O. Sargent, Moscow, 27 October 1945, U 8658/5559/70 and No. 183 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 30 October, 5.50 a.m.), Washington, 29 October 1945, U 8653/5559/70 DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>919</sup> No. 184 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 6 November 1945, U 8658/5559/70 DBPO Ser.I Vol.II

<sup>920</sup> Herken 1988, p.43-53.

<sup>921</sup> Kennan 1967, p.287-88.

would have also been a major motive in his foreign policy. A good account of this can be found, for instance, in Jukka Leinonen's works.<sup>922</sup> Indeed, when Clark-Kerr reported to Bevin that he had shown "surprise" on hearing this news, he said that Harriman had suggested that "probably Mr. Byrnes had thought the Russians had been upset by the Prime Minister's visit to Washington and that the time had come to redress the balance."<sup>923</sup> I also offer the additional explanation that this might have also been considered a payback of sorts by the Americans for the British having informed Stalin just before the talks in Washington, without the prior consent of US officials.<sup>924</sup> The British telegram to Stalin was possibly a stratagem to pressurise both the would-be superpowers with a single telegram, but one must also remember the outstanding Anglo-Soviet Treaty, made in 1942, and the fact that public sentiment, and to some extent Parliament, was still in favour of cooperating with the Soviet Union. The danger remained, however, that if Molotov so much as mentioned atomic matters, there would have been a breach of the Anglo-American joint agreement. After all, the deal, even if it was only a *modus vivendi*, was that atomic matters required consultation between the British and the Americans in advance.

Clark-Kerr reported more the following morning in a "most immediate, top secret and personal telegram". Not only did he express concern about the irresponsible activity of the Americans, but hoped that Bevin would eventually understand why the Americans had done what they had.

"I much hope that you will overlook this lapse from Anglo-American good manners established during the six years of war and that you will fall in with Mr. Byrnes' proposal to come to Moscow, where, for myself I should welcome a meeting between yourself, Molotov and Stalin on their ground. [...]"

At any rate the door which was ajar as a result of the United States Ambassadors' visit to Sochi has now been pushed wide open, whether we like it or not, and it seems to me that we stand to gain by breaking the deadlock which must have been preoccupying you as it has me."<sup>925</sup>

Harriman had already visited Stalin in Sochi on 27 October, 1945 in an attempt to improve relations with the Soviets, and particularly to support American interests in Japan. This meeting had been reported to the FO and to Sir Orme Sargent<sup>926</sup> by Frank Roberts<sup>927</sup> in a letter. The American Ambassador and Stalin had mostly discussed the occupation of Japan. The Soviet Union wanted to participate in the occupation, much to the annoyance of the Americans, who drew attention to the recent discouraging experiences from the Balkans to illustrate why a joint occupation would not be a good idea. It had been at this point that

<sup>922</sup> Cf. Leinonen 2012, for instance p.42-43.

<sup>923</sup> No.245 Sir A. Clark-Kerr (Moscow) to Mr. Bevin (Received 24 November, 6.25 p.m.), Moscow, 24 November 1945, FO 800/446. DBPO ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>924</sup> See for instance No.209 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 29 October 1945, FO 800/438. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>925</sup> No.245 Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow) to Mr. Bevin (Received 24 November, 6.25 p.m.), Moscow, 24 November 1945, FO 800/446. DBPO ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>926</sup> Second in ranking in the FO. Succeeded Alexander Cadogan as the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1946.

<sup>927</sup> British minister to the Soviet Union.

(according to Roberts) Stalin had referred to spheres of interest, and alluded to the fact that if the US were trying to keep Russia out of Japan, then perhaps “each of the victors could then run its own spheres in its own way”. Roberts also reported that Harriman seemed critical of Byrnes’ way of conducting foreign affairs, especially with the Russians.<sup>928</sup>

The British reacted rapidly to this alarming news, and the prospect of improved American-Soviet bilateral relations that might even lead to a bilateral policy. On 26 November Bevin finally received a letter from Byrnes, which included an invitation to the meeting. But as far as Bevin was concerned, it was too late, and his reply to Byrnes via the Teletype machine of the American Embassy in London was tellingly blunt.

“I regret that I was not consulted before you approached Molotov. Had I been, I could have avoided difficulties arising. It is almost impossible for me to attend a conference at the time suggested. I have consulted Prime Minister Attlee and we both agree that to have another Foreign Secretaries conference without adequate preparation would only lead to another failure. Past experience proves this.”<sup>929</sup>

Besides drawing attention to an evident lack of tact on the part of the Americans, Bevin was pointing out that rushing things like this would cause real problems. Such an intense schedule meant there was a limited time for the British to prepare, and this would make it very hard to achieve anything concrete. This kind of behaviour also made it patently obvious that there was no joint plan whatsoever.<sup>930</sup> In a way, Bevin was implying that there was a need to join forces against the Soviets, who were now even more hostile to Britain than ever;<sup>931</sup> and without the necessary preparations beforehand this would clearly not occur. Some scholars see this as confirming claims that the Americans, at this point, really did have no intention of presenting a united front against the Soviets.<sup>932</sup> As we see from the above quote, Bevin was also adamant that the Prime Minister be consulted beforehand too; but he was also concerned about the openness of the agenda. He agreed that meetings like these were required, but without proper planning and coordination in advance they could do more harm than good. For example, he felt that France and China should have been invited to the Moscow conference too, if the meeting was really to be about peace treaties.<sup>933</sup> This would also have been in line with the agreement that had been made in Potsdam, which stipulated that the Council of Foreign Secretaries should involve all five countries. Interestingly, Frank Roberts had suggested a

<sup>928</sup> No.182 Letter from Mr. Roberts (Moscow) to Sir O. Sargent, Moscow, 27 October 1945, U 8658/5559/70DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>929</sup> No.247 Record of a teletype conversation between Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes on 27 November 1945, 27 November 1945, FO 800/446DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>930</sup> No.247 Record of a teletype conversation between Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes on 27 November 1945, 27 November 1945, FO 800/446DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>931</sup> No.182. Letter from Mr. Roberts (Moscow) to Sir O. Sargent, Moscow, 27 October 1945, U 8658/5559/70DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>932</sup> For instance Anstey 1984, p.433.

<sup>933</sup> No.247 Record of a teletype conversation between Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes on 27 November 1945, 27 November 1945, FO 800/446DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

few months earlier<sup>934</sup> that the Soviet Union was making a test case for “Big Three” cooperation to further its own foreign policy ends. But it was not just the Soviets that were causing Bevin so much trouble; the Americans themselves kept changing their policy, and this could have had unprecedented results were the Soviets to ask for something unexpectedly. Truman, for example, was giving out mixed signals, as he had only recently made a public statement (29 November 1945) to the effect that he deemed Big Three meetings would not be necessary. Bevin therefore demanded a statement from Byrnes that would clarify US foreign policy goals. Byrnes’ reply was that the proper forum for discussing these matters was the UN, which did not help at all. What was it that the Americans wanted? According to Bevin, publicly announcing a meeting of the Big Three or Five in Moscow “would produce complete bewilderment both in Parliament and in the public here.”<sup>935</sup> It only gave more fuel to the fire of British suspicions about the ambivalence of American foreign policy. This anxiety was expressed in a stinging telegram to the Americans, in which the British directly asked them what it was that they had actually wanted to achieve in Washington, if it really was the case that they wanted the conference in Moscow at such short notice. Bevin drew Byrnes’ attention to the past meetings they had had with the Russians where the Americans had been quite inflexible. Had, for instance, their attitude towards the Balkans changed so much now that the deadlocks of the previous meetings could be solved? Bevin assured him that Britain would do its utmost to solve any problems, but it was not to be pushed around. Therefore the best policy would be to send an agenda to the British and only after that could the dates for the next conference be confirmed. In addition, he demanded the agenda be kept secret.<sup>936</sup> Perhaps Bevin had simply been caught off guard, or he was afraid of losing the prestigious sheen that the Washington Declaration had given to Britain’s image of herself as a keeper of both atomic secrets and world peace. The open and vague agenda was particularly offensive in this respect, as it meant that it would be harder to take the initiative and push for favourable decisions, especially as it was in Britain’s interests as the weaker party, to show a united front with the US.

Ideally the British wanted to postpone the second Council of Foreign Secretaries until 1946, and for it to be held in London, as this was where all the relevant parties were already going to be attending the preparatory meeting of the UN anyway. Bevin also pointed out to Byrnes that the Soviet Union would be gaining an unnecessary advantage were western leaders to visit Moscow. Moreover, the meeting had been scheduled by Byrnes for just before Christmas, and because he had already stated that he wished to be home by Christmas, it

<sup>934</sup> No. 182 Letter from Mr. Roberts (Moscow) to Sir O. Sargent, Moscow, 27 October 1945, U 8658/5559/70DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>935</sup> For Truman’s speech about the differing views of policy cf. No.252, Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 1 December 1945, FO 800/446 and No.254 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 4 December 1945, FO 800/446DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>936</sup> *Ibid.* : “...it is only right and proper that I should have now from the United States Government a clear statement as their policy, and see how far it fits in with ours and know exactly what I am expected to decide.” DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

would mean that the Soviets needed to do little more than delay the negotiations for the Americans to feel pressurized into an agreement that could be unfavourable.<sup>937</sup> Then again, the Foreign Office were well aware that the British needed to talk with Byrnes about the plans for atomic energy control, and this would eventually oblige them to join the talks in Moscow whether they liked it or not.<sup>938</sup> Byrnes replied to Bevin by first apologising for putting the British to all this trouble, but emphasised that the negotiations were nevertheless necessary. He also promised to deliver the intended agenda as soon as possible. As for explaining his behaviour in contacting Moscow first, Byrnes claimed that it was simply to know about the practicalities of whether a meeting would be able to happen there or not in the first place. He then went on to propose how they would address the issue of atomic energy control and the UN.

"First of all I think that you and Mackenzie King and I should agree as to the proposal we are going to the Assembly with reference to the atomic bomb. When we agree I believe it wise that we should advice [sic] Molotov of our proposals. If we do not we are going to risk the success of the first meeting of the Assembly".<sup>939</sup>

Byrnes was implying that the Soviets were unlikely to be surprised about plans for atomic control, and thus might be more amenable than the British thought.<sup>940</sup> However, this idea had not been discussed beforehand with the other signatories of the Washington Declaration. In other words, Byrnes was acting independently and without a tripartite agreement that should have included Britain and Canada.<sup>941</sup> Byrnes had even made it clear to the Earl of Halifax that, were Bevin to actually decline attending the conference in Moscow, he would be able to brave it alone.<sup>942</sup>

By 28 November 1945, in spite of his bad feelings about the Moscow conference, Bevin gave the first inklings that he thought it might be as well to attend, even though he ostensibly was against them right up until the beginning of negotiations. At the very least, he conceded that the stalemate from the London conference might be resolved, and in this he was supported by officials.<sup>943</sup> For example, Clark-Kerr sent a telegram to this effect.

<sup>937</sup> No.247 Record of a teletype conversation between Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes on 27 November 1945, 27 November 1945, FO 800/446 DBPO Ser.I Vol.II. "...*Christmas in Russia isn't until January 6th so they'll be in no hurry themselves. I can't afford to have another failure.*"

<sup>938</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Telegraph from FO to Washington 27 November 1945. Labelled as "top secret".

<sup>939</sup> No.247 Record of teletype conversation between Bevin & Byrnes on 27 November 1945. DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>940</sup> No.256 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 6 December 1945, FO 800/446, footnote 1 p.654. DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II: referring to not printed response from Halifax to Bevin's points sent to Byrnes. Halifax reported that now both, Byrnes and Truman had definitely made up their minds about having the conference, and atomic matters on the agenda.

<sup>941</sup> No.254 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 4 December 1945, FO 800/446. DBPO, Ser.I Vol.II

<sup>942</sup> No.256 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 6 December 1945, FO 800/446, footnote 1 p.654. DBPO, Ser.I Vol.II

<sup>943</sup> No.251 Letter from Mr. Winant to Mr. Bevin, London, 29 November 1945, FO 800/446 DBPO, Ser.I Vol.II. Winant's list had 9 points. It included a point that keep-

"I have sent you a telegram about atomic energy (my telegram No.5192)... I feel strongly that the only hope of persuading the Russians to approach the matter in reasonable mood lies in preliminary heart to heart talks between yourself, Molotov and Byrnes. 2. This is another argument in favour of a meeting here. Please do not think that I have trumped it up."<sup>944</sup>

So it was that by 6 December 1945, when negotiations began, a reluctant Bevin<sup>945</sup> found himself in Moscow, having considered the various pros and cons<sup>946</sup> such as the need, as Clark-Kerr had pointed out, to tell the USSR something about the atomic bomb. Unlike in London, the atomic question in Moscow worked as a trump card in Byrnes hand. However, it was played against Britain, a country that had until then perhaps somewhat patronisingly considered herself a close ally of the US. The final straw had been the threat of negotiating bilaterally with the Soviets, should Britain opt out, and Byrnes' claims that the Soviet Union had to be told about the atomic bomb with all three states represented, to avoid the same disappointing outcome as the conference in London.<sup>947</sup> Byrnes seemed not to have taken into account his own role in causing the problems in London and having decreased the chances of atomic matters being resolved peaceably. His stab at atomic diplomacy had merely shown the USSR that the US would attempt to use the atomic bomb as a diplomatic weapon. And if this was the case, then so would the Soviets.

It was clear that the Americans were going to set the foreign policy agenda from hereon, and thus also dictate the rules of conduct too. Establishing bilateral connections with the Soviet Union to advance their own agenda was understandable, as British interests were obviously not the priority. In spite of Bevin's protests, there was no way of avoiding the fact that the British needed the Americans more than the other way round. So Britain had to play second fiddle to the US - as long as the Americans successfully pursued a more active stance. This, in turn, led to the British developing a more reactive stance vis-à-vis Anglo-American relations. Although the Moscow conference marked a clear tipping point, the change to a reactive stance nevertheless took some time to fully occur. Parliamentary criticism about it, for instance, was only really voiced later in 1946.

The Soviet Union took advantage of the situation too, by changing the agenda and emphasis on the matters it considered most important. This annoyed the Americans as well as the British,<sup>948</sup> as at this point Bevin was able to

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ing the council of foreign secretaries alive just for the sake of it existing in order to possibly handle possible acute problems which might occur.

<sup>944</sup> TNA FO 800/438. Clark-Kerr to Bevin 3 December 1945 No.5195. (SIGNED O.T.P)

<sup>945</sup> No.249 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 28 November 1945, FO 800/446 DPBO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>946</sup> No. 250 Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow) to Mr. Bevin (Received 29 November, 8.52 p.m.), Moscow, 29 November 1945, FO 800/446 DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>947</sup> No.256 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 6 December 1945, FO 800/446 DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II: Commenting Byrnes' earlier answers conveyed by Halifax 5 December 1945.

<sup>948</sup> For instance see No.262 Minute by Mr. Dixon on the Moscow meeting, Foreign Office, 7 December 1945, FO 800/446 DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II.; and No.263 Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow) to Mr. Bevin (Received 8 December, 4.45 p.m.), Moscow, 8 December 1945,



pitch in some terms. He insisted that any matters related to Germany or France should not be covered without the French being present, and that the Americans should guarantee that this happen. Bevin also made it clear that he expected high-ranking Americans to participate in the UN meeting to be held in London.<sup>949</sup> This was partly because the FO considered Britain to be in a leading position among “middle ranking” countries;<sup>950</sup> and serving their interests abroad, at least on paper, should indirectly enhance Britain’s prestige. She could thus represent the European powers. In a similar effort to maintain prestige, Britain would mention the Commonwealth whenever possible. In particular, meetings were wanted with the highest officials to prevent any loss of face. With these requests taken into account, the British could finally accept Byrnes request to publicly announce the talks.<sup>951</sup> However, the British demands to include Canada, China and France in the talks went unheeded. The decision was a disappointment, but it was accepted without much scrutiny. Bevin instead promised that he would try to serve their interests in the best possible way, and that should a topic crop up that was of importance to the above states they would hear about it and be consulted first before any action was taken.<sup>952</sup> This was hardly the prestige that Bevin had envisioned, but there was not much else he could do about it.

Byrnes wanted to announce the forthcoming talks as being on the same level as Yalta and Potsdam. The British were extremely reluctant to say this out loud but Byrnes nevertheless won. He somewhat naïvely argued that by publicly presenting the agenda, the Soviet Union would not be able to change it anymore. He also mentioned at this critical point the ongoing loan negotiations that were about to be concluded with the British. He regretted to inform the British that information about the loan had somehow been leaked to the press, and that US popular sentiment was against financing the loan.<sup>953</sup> The American press were interpreting it as an attempt by the British to get the US to finance their empire or socialism at American expense.<sup>954</sup> This hurt the British quite badly, and they interpreted it as, more or less, a veiled threat (i.e., if you do not comply we will stop loans and your finances could be in danger.) This was the second time in the short period of time covered by this thesis, in which such direct

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FO 800/501 DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II: in which also Molotov expressed his regrets due to the British invitation having been delayed.

<sup>949</sup> No. 256. Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 6 December 1945, FO 800/446 , DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>950</sup> Vickers 2004, p.165, even if the source to which Vickers refers to considers material dated to 1950, it is logical to assume that this attitude had been also available earlier.

<sup>951</sup> For instance No.261 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 7 December 1945, FO 800/438 DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II:

<sup>952</sup> No.259 Mr. Bevin to Mr. Duff Cooper (Paris), Foreign Office, 7 December 1945, FO 800/446 and No.260 Mr. Duff Cooper (Paris) to Mr. Bevin (Received 7 December, 11.45 a.m.), Paris, 7 December 1945, FO 800/446 DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II. The French considered the questions relating to Germany of utmost importance to their interests, but had expressed their understanding to Bevin’s difficult position. Similar sympathies had been expressed also by the Canadians.

<sup>953</sup> No.257. The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 6 December, 7.40 p.m.), Washington, 6 December 1945, FO 800/512 DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II

<sup>954</sup> Anstey 1984, p.427-429. Weiler 1989, p.58. Barker 1983, p.20.

pressure had been put on the British. This was all in all, an extremely delicate matter. Criticism of the loan negotiations back home were problematic enough already. Likewise pro-Soviet commentary, reported for the public in the United States could have hampered the British cause, as the matter was also of American domestic interest and thus politics. Scoring points from the public (and possible voters) would have been easy by resisting the loan, or by demanding harder terms, as the public sentiment in the United States was against financing socialist/imperialist Britain and her foundering empire.<sup>955</sup>

Byrnes' explanations might have been partly truthful, but he had also made sure not to mention the US interests in, for example, monopolising the occupation of Japan, among other signs of a nascent 'spheres of interest' foreign policy.<sup>956</sup> It is difficult to subscribe to the idea that Byrnes had only bilateral Anglo-American relations in mind when he was considering the meeting in Moscow. Even if having the conference there was just to acknowledge and appease the Soviets, so that they did not feel left out, and to keep the negotiations going, it is hard to think that such an important meeting would be planned purely on the whim of the US Secretary of State alone. He required the machinery of government to set this up. As for President Truman, with the mixed messages that he was giving out, it is hard to believe he would have been kept out of the loop, especially if he was against such plans. Direct evidence may not have been found, but the staggering amount of questionable decisions and actions leads one to consider whether US foreign policy at this time was either intentionally like this; or in the hands of a newly elected government that was making amateur decisions; or was in fact a combination of both these things.<sup>957</sup>

It seems only prudent to consider that the United States might have been using atomic diplomacy against the British. And yet, according to the sources available, the British barely considered this a possibility. They had every reason to believe that atomic diplomacy under the auspices of the UN was a viable option, especially since this is what Parliament had been asking of the Government to avoid the threat of an atomic apocalypse,<sup>958</sup> and indeed Attlee had also publicly professed this to be the best way to ensure a lasting world peace.<sup>959</sup> Pressure to go along with the Americans also came from the fact that the agenda of the forthcoming talks were being published in advance; and this required Britain to participate if it wanted to maintain its image and prestige as being one of the nations who would decide on the future of the new technology.

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<sup>955</sup> Weiler 1989, p.58.

<sup>956</sup> No.265 Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow) to Mr. Bevinxs (Received 8 December, 8.7 p.m.), Moscow, 8 December 1945, FO 800/446 DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II. Clark-Kerr had mentioned that the Far East would most likely dominate the negotiations, and that the question would most likely also be the most fruitful matter for the Americans in the whole agenda. In matters related to Europe and Middle East Britain might have a say, too.

<sup>957</sup> About Truman's alleged inexperience see Brookshire, 2003. p.3-5; Harbutt 1986, p.99 and Herken 1988, p.41. See also Lewis-Gaddis, 2007, p.19.

<sup>958</sup> For instance: HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc273-285.

<sup>959</sup> For instance: TNA FO 800/548 GEN 75/12 International Control of Atomic Energy, a memorandum by Prime Minister 5 November 1945.

Eventually a telegraph from Winant<sup>960</sup>, along with the remarks given earlier by Clark-Kerr did persuade Britain to fully participate. The British politicians and officials nevertheless showed their reluctance and a certain degree of truculence whenever they could, in spite of being drawn in by the appeal of possibly reaching an atomic solution with the USSR.<sup>961</sup> Indeed, this now seemed reason enough to participate, even if it might have thrown Anglo-American cooperation off course a bit. Surprisingly, none of the sources at my disposal seem to consider this. Perhaps it was thought that settling the atomic question with the USSR would take adequately long enough for Britain to have by then actually become a state with atomic capability herself, instead of just having the reputation of being one. And perhaps the Soviet Union would soften its own stance towards Britain and be more agreeable when negotiating at home, now that it had the prestige of the other two Great Powers travelling there to conduct negotiations. More importantly going to Moscow might also help with handling the matter later in UN meetings as it would have necessitated pre-acceptance from the Soviets. The final argument for participating, as Clark-Kerr (and Byrnes himself) had warned, was of course that the Americans and Soviets could perfectly well meet up on their own without the British anyway.<sup>962</sup> The Americans' growing enthusiasm in establishing a control mechanism could be explained in part by Truman's publicly made promise to take care of the matter right from the first meeting of the United Nation's general assembly. And for this to be possible, the matter would have most likely required a pre-agreement with the Soviets to ensure successful negotiations. This meant a little more than a simply realist attempt to halt the spread of atomic weaponry was required, and if that meant ditching Anglo-American cooperation, then it would be ditched.

But perhaps the British were not just showing reluctance to save face and maintain prestige; it could also have been an attempt to win more time to prepare for the negotiations. After all, the preparations had started after the Teletype conversation between Byrnes and Bevin. Straight after this, Bevin had sent an extremely urgent and secret telegram to Halifax in Washington. This included instructions for (bilateral) negotiations about atomic matters with Byrnes before the subject of international atomic control would come up in the United Nations' General Assembly to be held in 1946.<sup>963</sup> And by the end of November 1945, Winant and the other British officials had also started drafting a preliminary agenda for the meeting. The major issue was the American proposal for

<sup>960</sup> No.251 Letter from Mr. Winant to Mr. Bevin, London, 29 November 1945, FO 800/446, DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>961</sup> No.249 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 28 November 1945, FO 800/446, DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II. Americans growing interest about the possible control organ could be explained with Truman's promise of establishing such an organ in the first meeting of the United Nations. In order to make this possible, it would be beneficial to the cause to pre-arrange some principles with the Soviets in advance.

<sup>962</sup> No.250 Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow) to Mr. Bevin (Received 29 November, 8.52 p.m.), Moscow, 29 November 1945, FO 800/446, DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II. The message considers the pros and cons of the negotiations.

<sup>963</sup> No.248 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 27 November 1945, U 9442/6550/70, DPBO, Ser.I Vol.II.

the international control of atomic energy, and establishing a mechanism for this;<sup>964</sup> but preparing for the peace treaties to be made with former enemy states were also important. The Soviets were also interested in an international control mechanism for atomic technology but, just as Bevin and his staff had supposed, the matter was last on the Soviet agenda.<sup>965</sup>

This meant that more or less all the other issues had to be covered before the atomic question and UN plans could be discussed. This if anything, was an example of the Soviets claiming the higher ground in terms of a strategic position for the forthcoming negotiations. The practice of requiring the agenda to be agreed upon before moving on to the next point had already been used in previous meetings of the foreign secretaries and met with little success. This should have been noted by Byrnes and his staff, too. They replied with the proposal that it would be possible to move on to the next issue on the agenda without a final agreement on the previous issue. As practical as this proposal was, it is somewhat surprising that Byrnes had changed his view on this totally from previously. A possible explanation could be rigorous consultation with his own officials (who were not that happy about the plans either<sup>966</sup>) or the fact that the atomic question was deemed more important than other issues on the agenda. In a way Byrnes' tactics of threatening (the Soviets) with the bomb had changed, and instead of using it as a 'weapon' in the negotiations - in the sense of an indirect *argumentum ad baculum* (we have the bomb and you do not) - he attempted to lure the Soviets with promises of cooperation and control. The upshot of this would in fact have benefited the atomic monopoly of the US and possibly prevent the USSR (not to mention Britain) from gaining atomic weapons. Therefore, despite the claims of previous research (for example Herken),<sup>967</sup> the atomic bomb had not ceased to be a political weapon or an instrument of diplomacy at all. I claim that "atomic diplomacy" was not just about the London Council of Foreign Secretaries and Byrnes' clumsy 'cowboy stunt' of unsuccessfully trying to press the Soviets with the threat of the atomic bomb. Instead, by giving the impression that they wanted to regulate the new technology, and by giving vague promises about sharing it for peaceful uses, the Americans used the atomic bomb as more of a carrot than stick to bring the Soviets to the negotiating table. Moreover, it gave extra leverage over the British, who were in many ways path-dependent on the US. For instance, by flashing the atomic card on the agenda, the reluctant British, worried about losing their 'special position' were more or less drawn in to negotiations which had been hastily put together, and were in many ways against British interests. The Brit-

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<sup>964</sup> No.251 Letter from Mr. Winant to Mr. Bevin, London, 29 November 1945, FO 800/446, DBPO, ser.I, vol.II

<sup>965</sup> No.251 Letter from Mr. Winant to Mr. Bevin, London, 29 November 1945, FO 800/446, DBPO, ser.I, vol.II

<sup>966</sup> No.318 Note by Mr. Dixon of conversations with Mr. Bohlen and Mr. Harriman on 20 December 1945, FO 800/501. Written on 21 December 1945, DBPO Ser.I,vol.II, also Bullen, footnote 5 p.804. Ibid.Herken, 1988, p.71-74: some of the Americans had requested negotiations with the British in advance.

<sup>967</sup> Herken, 1988, p.48-49.

ish were thus forced into a reactive stance instead of maintaining the initiative on atomic affairs and Anglo-American relations surrounding them.

Whether this was done on completely on purpose or not, is another thing, and would require extensive analysis of the American sources. From the British point of view, however, this was worrisome enough in itself, particularly because of the timing, just after the seeming success of Washington. The US were thus using both the stick and carrot in atomic diplomacy, and Britain was particularly susceptible to this. There was so much vested interest in atomic research and development already, as well as in the many related complex issues.

Besides the atomic question, there were the other issues that contributed to the switching of positions and change of pace in Anglo-American relations. One was the ever-changing international situation, and the other, more importantly in terms of being a diplomatic tool, was the loan repayments. These had been implicitly brought up by Byrnes in Washington, along with the question of civil aviation, usually just as the British were on the brink of making progress with their own agenda.<sup>968</sup> It was quite possible that he raised these issues precisely to get concessions from the British. And there was also British domestic policy to take into account as well. Public commitment to atomic control measures via the UN also put pressure on participating in the Moscow talks. Were the Government not to participate it would have appeared anti-Soviet, anti-American, and against the internationalist and open foreign policy the Government had so far been advocating. In the same way the British thought that Canada should also know about these talks given as they had done so much already for the atomic project too.<sup>969</sup>

The British therefore got down to preparing properly for Moscow, as Clark-Kerr's telegraphs to Bevin confirm.<sup>970</sup> He suggested, among other things, that the British point of view should be made clear to the Soviets on certain key issues in advance. Two of these issues were British interests in the Middle East, and cooperation with France.<sup>971</sup> The British were also not happy about the pressure the Soviet Union was exerting over Turkey.<sup>972</sup> On the latter topic, Bevin believed Soviet aggression to be a bluff, in order to gain the upper hand in the forthcoming talks, even if it was a familiar Soviet policy to seek warm-water ports.<sup>973</sup> Harbutt has claimed that these kinds of pressure tactics described above had been made possible by Byrnes' earlier compromises, which had given the Soviets more room to campaign, for instance, in Turkey and Persia;

<sup>968</sup> No.234 Note of conversations between the Prime Minister, the President and Mr. Byrnes, Washington, 15 November 1945, PREM 8/116, DBPO series I, vol. II.

<sup>969</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Telegraph from FO to Washington.

<sup>970</sup> TNA FO 800/438, Telegraph from Moscow (Clark Kerr) to FO (Bevin) supporting the Moscow talks 3 December 1945.

<sup>971</sup> For instance No. 264 Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow) to Mr. Bevin (Received 8 December, 6.40 p.m.), Moscow, 8 December 1945, FO 800/446, DBPO, ser.I, vol.II. See also No.266 Foreign Office Brief on Moscow telegrams Nos. 5259 and 5260, Foreign Office, 8 December 1945, FO 800/446, DBPO, ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>972</sup> No.267 Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow) to Mr. Bevin (Received 9 December, 3.50 p.m.), Moscow, 9 December 1945, R 20684/44/44, DBPO, ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>973</sup> No.270 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 10 December 1945, R 20684/44/44, DBPO, ser.I, vol.II.

which, in turn, had affected the Soviet stance towards the British. Harbutt believes the reason behind this was a mixture of Soviet expansionism and Stalin worrying about British diplomatic influence.<sup>974</sup>

Among contemporary historians, Harbutt claims that Pierson Dixon saw the matter in the same way, emphasising Britain's role in checking the limits of Soviet expansionism. Harbutt goes on to claim that, according to Dixon, the Soviets saw the situation similarly, and considered the British to be an obstruction to their aspirations in the Balkans, Dardanelles, Iran, and the Mediterranean.<sup>975</sup> Dixon's views have to be taken with a grain of salt, as neither he nor anybody else had any certainty on these issues; but they nevertheless represent a sentiment transmitted in many sources. Likewise they seem to reflect the British notion of themselves as masters of the art of diplomacy and being able to direct and persuade others despite their own limited (physical and geographical) resources. Nevertheless, the British understandably asked for information from the Americans about the possibly pursuing a joint policy in Moscow, and wanted to know who would be in the American delegation going there.<sup>976</sup> This was partly so they would be better able to prepare for the negotiations, but also shows that in spite of their alleged diplomatic prowess, the British still felt they needed support from the Americans.

So the offhand comment made by Byrnes that bilateral negotiations might be possible after all cheered up the British.<sup>977</sup> Preparations were made concerning UN atomic control, and about the peace treaties,<sup>978</sup> and Bevin had even prepared for questions related to Japan, a topic he considered to be of the utmost importance for the Americans.<sup>979</sup> The one thing that still bothered the British however, was the exclusion of Canada from the atomic control plans, courtesy of Byrnes. According to the Washington declaration, the Canadians should have been included in these talks, if they were really to be about international atomic control mechanisms. Sidelining them looked like an attempt to streamline the organization, even if Canada had been included in the Washington declaration, and played its own part in the Manhattan project, too. After all, it was

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<sup>974</sup> Harbutt 1986, p.118-120.

<sup>975</sup> Harbutt 1986, p.121-123. On the crisis in Iran, see also Leinonen, 2006 p.149-152.

<sup>976</sup> TNA FO 800/438 FO to Washington 7 December 1945.

<sup>977</sup> No.274 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 December, 5.10 a.m.), Washington, 11 December 1945, U 9884/6550/70, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>978</sup> No. 266 Foreign Office Brief on Moscow telegrams Nos. 5259 and 5260, Foreign Office, 8 December 1945, FO 800/446, DBPO ser.I vol.II. On planning of the peace negotiations cf. No.272 Draft Brief on Future Procedure for Peace-Making, Foreign Office, 10 December 1945, U 9930/5559/70, DBPO ser.I vol.II. What was interesting in the British plans was that one of the drafts mentioned the possibility of having two separate peace negotiations. One covering the Balkan region, and Finland (involving UK and USSR). The other set of negotiations would consider Germany and Italy, and the parties present would be all big three, and in addition, France. This would have enabled underlining spheres of interests better, at least for the British.

<sup>979</sup> No.271 Memorandum by Mr. Bevin for the Far Eastern (Ministerial) Committee, Cabinet Office, 10 December 1945, F 11651/6311/23, DBPO ser.I, vol.II. The memo was brought along to Moscow. The policy in the memo stated that in matters related to Japan, the American interests would come first.

still contributing to the joint project and was a member of both the CPC and CDT.

Another point to consider with regard to Canada was that even if Britain did not seem to consider Canada's role as that important, the fact that Canada was still a part of the Commonwealth was a diplomatic advantage nonetheless. During the post-war years, the Commonwealth card was played often by Britain to gain a 'larger say' than its core strength would otherwise allow, especially with regard to trade. So perhaps dropping Canada might have been an intentional move by the US to divide the British Commonwealth's level of representation among the 'atomic powers', thereby cutting its 2/3 majority.

Another point worth considering here is Truman's promise to establish an atomic control commission by the first meeting of the UN's General Assembly. This meant a degree of planning was required, as until there was Soviet acceptance, the establishment of a control commission would clearly founder. Not only would this be a loss of prestige for the United States and for Truman, but the failure would also mean that the atomic question would still be open, and the situation would remain volatile, and the United States would not have control of, or knowledge about the plans, resources and scientific knowledge of other countries, except for what might be gleaned from intelligence reports. Neither would Britain, of course, but judging from at least the bidirectional policy plans of the early autumn, this might not have been such a bad thing either, as the sentiment for maintaining a monopoly, or oligopoly (were Britain and Canada to be counted in), had been mentioned as a temporary but welcome solution. The British also had some intelligence information and estimates as to the amount of potential raw material for atomic energy there was, which said that it was rather limited. Britain also controlled, via the Commonwealth, most of the known resource sites or had trade agreements and a monopoly on these materials, which were allocated for American use only by British agreement, and via the CDT. Sources dated later in 1946 also reveal that apparently Britain had good intelligence, and rather sound plans for the resources found outside the borders of the Commonwealth.<sup>980</sup>

Moreover the matter had been considered so delicate that the Government, the leader of the opposition, and the speaker of the House of Commons had agreed to keep questions pertaining to atomic raw materials off the floor of the House already by the early autumn of 1945.<sup>981</sup> This testifies to the fact that the Government must have been wary of Parliament's ability to interrogate the

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<sup>980</sup> Cf. TNA FO 800/526 Private Papers of Sir R. Campbell and Mr. Neville Butler 1944-1946: Tube Alloys/Atomic Energy June-November 1945. The whole folder is about the raw material deals and plans.

<sup>981</sup> TNA FO 800/538 PM's personal minute ser. M.101/45, copy of memo to Lord Addison & copy of Attlee's letter to Churchill (suggested by Bevin), Churchill's reply, about limiting parliamentary questions on raw materials 8 October 1945; PM's personal minute ser. M.106/45 to Lord Addison about limiting the questions in parl. Concerning raw materials, reporting on seeing the speaker 12 October 1945 (also in CAB 104) Bevin wanted N. Butler to see this minute; Attlee's note to Churchill, speaker agree's to limiting questions. (Bevin wants Butler to see) 12 October 1945.

executive to the point that it might negatively affect certain international arrangements.

Nevertheless Bevin's anger continued unabated. He was bitter about the arrangements and agenda alike, and made it clear to Byrnes that he would have to go through these matters thoroughly with Molotov.<sup>982</sup> Byrnes shrugged this off and said that he was already prepared for this, and that, if necessary, further adjustments and fine tuning could be done once in Moscow.<sup>983</sup> This concluded more or less all the preparations for the conference, except for negotiations between the western allies about the possible structure and organisation of the UN's atomic control committee. The last days before the conference were therefore used for the benefit of exchange of thoughts. The British were wary of the Americans "selling" the Balkans in exchange for Japan.<sup>984</sup> Halifax had, however, warned the FO that, even if the area was more important for the British than it was for the Americans, it would not be a good thing to withdraw support for the Americans on the matter, should push come to shove.<sup>985</sup> This commentary from Washington summed it all up, and described the change in positions once again. By possibly upsetting the Americans, Britain could lose their support on matters far more important.<sup>986</sup> The first of these might have been the loans, then there was other financial support, foreign policy and, of course, the atomic question. So the negotiations would be happening in Moscow as planned by the Americans, and Britain would be attending.<sup>987</sup>

## 4.2 The rise of the UN control plans

The agenda of the Moscow meeting was complex and there were numerous major issues to cover. I suggest, however, that it was the possibility of the atomic question being covered which really drew the British to Moscow, like a moth to a flame. The conference formed the tipping-point in the third phase in which

<sup>982</sup> No.268 Mr. Bevin to Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow), Foreign Office, 10 December 1945, FO 800/446, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>983</sup> No.269. Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 10 December 1945, FO 800/446. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>984</sup> No.281 Brief for the United Kingdom Delegation at Moscow, Foreign Office, 12 December 1945, R 21263/5063/67, DBPO ser.I, vol.II. This was issued for briefing the delegates for the forthcoming meeting.

<sup>985</sup> No.285 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 14 December, 6.45 a.m.), Washington, 13 December 1945, R 20934/81/67, DBPO ser.I, vol.II. The British interest in the Balkan region can be explained in their interest of securing the Mediterranean, which in turn, served as the pathway to the nexus of the empire, the Suez channel, route to India. Balkan's geopolitical location was also close to both Persia and Turkey, important strategically for Britain.

<sup>986</sup> No.285 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 14 December, 6.45 a.m.), Washington, 13 December 1945, R 20934/81/67, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>987</sup> No. 279. to Attlee 12 December 1945 DBPO ser.I, vol.II.: "...I should certainly propose to take my full part in the discussions, and I think this will be necessary to bring the Americans and the Russians together."



the British lost their initiative in atomic matters, especially in relation to the Americans. This meant a drastic change in the Anglo-American atomic relationship which, in turn, affected each country's foreign policy too. The loss of prestige, the hurt feelings, and the drafts made throughout the conference were rather revealing, but they were only part of this phase. The meeting aimed for international control, even if this was only a decoy to ensure an American monopoly of the technology. Then again, it did correspond to Attlee's initial support of internationalism, and seemed a natural follow up to the Washington Declaration from (at least) the public's perspective. In practice this meant for the British that a dichotomy was once again in full effect. UN control and internationalism, on the one hand, was a top public priority, while bilateral cooperation was the top private priority. The results of the Moscow conference would show the British that the Americans had taken the initiative by giving the British neither quarter nor time to prepare. The secret results from Washington seem to have lulled Britain into a false sense of security, and this led to British atomic policy becoming more reactive.

The chief atomic matter to be addressed in Moscow was how to create an international atomic control mechanism. As we saw in chapter three, this was because firstly an internationalist foreign policy of cooperation had been promised, and was still largely supported by the Labour majority in Parliament and indeed the general public. After all, Britain had already become a member of the UN. Even in the face of a relatively hostile USSR, there might well have been protests if this internationalist policy was not followed through.<sup>988</sup> According to the Mass Observations studies, the population actually saw both the great powers in rather unfavourable light.

TABLE 1 What are your feelings about the Americans now?

	Men %	Women %	Over 40 yr. %	Under 40yr. %	Total %
<b>Favourable</b>	29	15	24	19	22
<b>Unfavourable</b>	50	42	37	54	46
<b>Indetermined</b>	15	23	26	13	19
<b>Don't know</b>	6	20	11	14	13

Mass Observations, MO FR 2493

TABLE 2 What are your feelings about the Russians now?

	Men %	Women %	Over 40yr. %	Under 40yr. %	Total %
<b>Favourable</b>	30	17	21	25	23
<b>Unfavourable</b>	41	43	50	34	42
<b>Indetermined</b>	23	27	25	26	25
<b>Don't know</b>	6	13	4	15	10

Mass Observations; MO FR 2493

<sup>988</sup> Anstey 1984, p.434.

Secondly, the atomic question was seen as a threat that needed to be resolved as soon as possible in the wider context of foreign affairs. But there was also the other unofficial result of the Washington conference about secret cooperation that mattered just as much, if not more. It made the two-headed atomic foreign policy more concrete, and confirmed British hopes that there would be full and effective Anglo-American cooperation in the future. The promise of atomic capability via this cooperation had perhaps momentarily allowed Britain to maintain illusions of grandeur on the world stage, but now this promise was in danger of being taken away, and access to the new technology was to be limited and defined. Britain was now being ranked by people like Byrnes alongside the Soviet Union, a country that was considered an "atomic rival", who would rather do this than follow up the secret, realist atomic foreign policy with the UK which had been drafted in Washington. Byrnes' enthusiasm for pursuing the internationalist approach worried the British. Now all of a sudden the Americans wanted to follow up on the idea of atomic control, which had admittedly been mooted in the Washington talks, and touted by the British earlier - but they had not expected it to come to anything more substantial. Now the idea was to be covered with the Soviet Union, without further consultation between those who had issued the Washington Declaration. One reason was the aforementioned rapid schedule to which the Americans had publicly committed themselves when Truman had given his speech. Another was that the Americans thought that making some concessions to the Soviet Union would gain their favour. According to Truman's statement to the press on 20 November 1945, the new control commission was not to be under the Security Council of the UN, but to report directly to the General Assembly. Bevin was not against this idea, it having been initially Attlee's as well, but it was of course the details that would matter. Considerations for the matter should be frank, and the Americans should be prepared for any negative reaction from the Soviets regarding the atomic question. In his comment on the agenda for Moscow, Bevin supported the idea of the commission reporting to the General Assembly, but wanted matters relating to weapons and the actual technicalities of control to the Security Council.<sup>989</sup>

Judging from the British sources at least, the Americans appeared to be more interested in establishing this control commission than fulfilling the rest of the agreement negotiated in Washington, such as the Groves-Anderson memorandum. Though the British were worried about this, the sources do not pinpoint it as the particular source of concern. The ACAE, for example, met at this time but did not cover the subject, or if they did, Chatham House rules, or other limitations prevented such concerns being transcribed. With the benefit of hindsight, it is easier to say that alarm bells should have been going off already, but the British still felt that they largely had matters under control and there was no pessimistic mention of the atomic initiative slipping into American hands. It was not until the spring, when more of the problems had become public

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<sup>989</sup> No.248. Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 27 November 1945, U 9442/6550/70, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

knowledge, that this was pointed out (at least in Parliament). Prime Minister Attlee had supported Bevin's stance with Byrnes, and this is confirmed in a memo by Philip Noel-Baker (the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs). Attlee was concerned, however, that the UN control commission should have people with scientific expertise in it.<sup>990</sup> This just seemed to make common sense - for example, were control measures to be defined, and inspections carried out, only trained experts would be able to understand matters of significance.

Surprisingly, one of the leading British experts on atomic policy, Alexander Cadogan, was against scientific advisors playing a significant role.<sup>991</sup> This might have been because such scientists may have been from those countries without atomic knowledge themselves, and it might lead to a trickle-down effect of atomic knowledge via other atomic advisers. Another plausible reason for Cadogan's view is the fact that scientists were not politicians, and might not therefore fully understand the political factors of the matters they would be considering. Consulting them too much (especially if the negotiations were to be preliminary), would thus inevitably lead to further problems. Perhaps the executive was also aware that there may have been a number of scientists harbouring internationalist or idealist sentiments. For example, the executive had recently sought out Raymond Blackburn's scientific informant after the time he had asked too many too delicate questions.<sup>992</sup> Although it is uncertain if the British were aware of it at the time, Robert Oppenheimer and other scientists also had their disagreements with the authorities in the US.<sup>993</sup> They had considered the ethical and moral issues of their inventions, established an alliance of sorts to advocate these views, and asked for the weapons to be banned. There had been press coverage of these views as well. For example, Oppenheimer had purportedly resigned from his leading research position in Los Alamos stating to the US Senate Committee that there were no counter measures against the atomic bomb, and that the only defence would be "proper international organisation"<sup>994</sup>

Be that as it may, Bevin's concerns about the atomic control commission (mentioned a page earlier) formed the backbone of information that Halifax conveyed to Byrnes on 29 November 1945. According to Halifax, Byrnes even seemed amenable to Bevin's suggestions;<sup>995</sup> and promises were made by Byrnes that atomic cooperation would be coordinated better with the British in future, much to their relief. The Joint Staff Mission also reported back that the CPC had finally met on 4 December to be told that the American State Department rather

<sup>990</sup> Calendar notes to No.248, (Noel-Baker's commentary to the memo) on 26 & 29 November 1945 reveal that the PM agreed. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>991</sup> Calendar notes to No.248, (Noel-Baker's commentary to the memo) on 26 & 29 November 1945 reveal that the PM agreed. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>992</sup> TNA CAB 104, Rickett to Bridges 25 October 1945, a copy of a memo from the 5th meeting of GEN-75.

<sup>993</sup> Groves 1983, p.63.

<sup>994</sup> *The Times*, 19 October 1945, "U.S. Scientists And Atomic Bomb. Suggested Legislation opposed".

<sup>995</sup> Calendar notes to No.248, (Noel-Baker's commentary to the memo) on 26 & 29 November 1945. DBPO ser.I, vol.II. Halifax reporting to the memo delivered to Byrnes on 29 November 1945.

than Department of War would be leading the negotiations henceforth. Now that the war was over this was regular business, the Americans assured the British, hence it had become a political rather than military matter.<sup>996</sup> But this turn of events had other more subtle repercussions: firstly the US Secretary of War, Patterson, had been more favourable to the British than Byrnes had ever been, and this change would mean Byrnes was now in charge of atomic affairs; secondly there was a power struggle going on about atomic matters within the US administration, unbeknown to the British. General Groves no longer had the full support of all the parties involved, and some members of the American executive felt it was important that atomic affairs no longer be led by the military.

Perhaps the best piece of news to come out of Washington (for the British) was that an agreement was to be formulated, as stipulated in the Groves-Anderson memo, that would officially confirm and replace what had previously been merely informally outlined in the Quebec Agreement. A sub-committee to prepare drafts was established and Groves (for the US), Makins (for Britain) and Bateman or Pearson (for Canada) were proposed as its members. In preparation for the sub-committee meeting that was to happen in the next few weeks, Makins requested instructions from Britain. At the same time, the British expressed their interest in joining the Americans in their forthcoming atomic trials, and Groves promised to look in to the matter. He also reviewed the status of CDT cooperation for its participants.<sup>997</sup> This was a promising piece of news for the British in term of atomic affairs, and somewhat made up for Patterson no longer being in charge. Nevertheless this is not very thoroughly explored in the sources I have at my disposal. Meanwhile, Attlee's cabinet responded to the requests for further information and sent instructions for the representatives who were negotiating. The telegram sent on 15 December asked the British representatives to formulate an agreement so that misinterpretation would be impossible for either the Americans or British. For example, with regard to the sharing of raw materials, Attlee felt that the drafting and formulation of the points regarding the exchange of information, development, planning, and applications of atomic technology that were to be obtained in exchange to be too vague.<sup>998</sup>

This shows that the British had taken note of what had gone wrong in previous negotiations. They could see there was a need to reduce the amount of wriggle room for the Americans, so that they could not say that they had simply mislaid their copies of an agreement (which would have supported the British case), as they had done with the Tube Alloys exchange. This also shows how the British executive was hardening its attitudes in terms of the atomic question and world politics, with a realist attitude becoming ever more scantily clad in

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<sup>996</sup> No.255 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 5 December, 10.50 p.m.), Washington, 5 December 1945, CAB 126/335, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>997</sup> No.255 No.255 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 5 December, 10.50 p.m.), Washington, 5 December 1945, CAB 126/335, DBPO ser.I, vol.II. DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>998</sup> No.287 Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington), Cabinet Office, 15 December 1945, CAB 126/341, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

the last vestiges of internationalism. It also shows that even though in Washington the British had settled for a *modus vivendi* and caved in without formally consolidating the Groves Anderson memo as a straightforward agreement, they had learnt from the suddenness of Moscow being sprung upon them to no longer trust the Americans in quite the same way again. Attlee's memo also seemed to make it clear that the Groves-Anderson memo was not to be seen as a binding contract, and indeed nor had it been meant to be so.<sup>999</sup> It was rather the expression of serious intentions to solve the matter in a certain way. Attlee claimed that it had been due to the haste in which the memo had to be drawn up in Washington, due to so much time being wasted at the Americans behest on the wording of the declaration, that the actual deal was not sealed more effectively.<sup>1000</sup> So the British executive were now wary of American policy and plans, and yet they did not come to anything more than a reactive attitude to the Americans taking the initiative in atomic matters from this point on. Ideally, Attlee wanted the forthcoming agreement to be formulated in such a way that cooperation should be defined in wide-ranging and effective terms. For instance, the British should be able to access plutonium as well as receive help in building their own plants for production in return for granting the Americans continued access to atomic raw materials. A wide-reaching cooperation would thus help everybody, Attlee argued, rather than limit one for the benefit of the other. In that respect, in terms of commercial matters and patents, the British side would be ready to make some concessions at their end too. Attlee also stated the case that if the US was only ready for *ad hoc* based exchange of raw materials, then the CDT's purchase rights for raw materials should be clarified,<sup>1001</sup> and Britain should regain her share of the joint resource pool.<sup>1002</sup>

In Attlee's opinion, the paragraph in the Groves-Anderson memo which stipulated that all exchange and cooperation must be mutually beneficial should be taken away too.<sup>1003</sup> Were this to be left in, the US could have torpedoed the whole collaboration, just as Groves probably hoped for, by claiming that it did not benefit from the exchange of information, technology and know-how. It was clear to the British that, besides raw materials, the Americans had gained the scientific expertise of British scientists, such as Penney the explosives expert, and the Americans should acknowledge this. The problem was that the

<sup>999</sup> Cf No.241 Memorandum to the Chairman of the Combined Policy Committee, 16 November 1945, CAB 134/7 (ie. Groves-Anderson memo about the tion): "We recommend that the following points be considered by the Combined Policy Committee in the preparation of a new document to replace the Quebec Agreement..." DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>1000</sup> No.287 Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington), Cabinet Office, 15 December 1945, CAB 126/341) DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>1001</sup> The purchase rights are included in CANAM 475 telegram which is not included in DBPO collection.

<sup>1002</sup> See Anglo-American Declaration of Trust June 13, 1944, [http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclear-weapons/history/pre-cold-war/manhattan-project/declaration-of-trust\\_1944-06-13.htm](http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclear-weapons/history/pre-cold-war/manhattan-project/declaration-of-trust_1944-06-13.htm) It is noteworthy that the CDT was to be in effect if not terminated or revised, even if revision was recommended for post-war conditions.

<sup>1003</sup> No.287 Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington), Cabinet Office, 15 December 1945, CAB 126/341, DBPO ser.I, vol.II.

Groves clause would have given the US too much room for manoeuvre, and they could have denied any ongoing mutual benefit from Anglo-American co-operation, having already gained those benefits earlier.

The Anglo-American sub-committee met regularly and effectively until the beginning of January. A first draft of the intended agreement was formulated, and a copy was readied for the President of the United States and PM Attlee to sign. This document was meant to remove all restrictions limiting future co-operation.<sup>1004</sup> It would have probably angered General Groves, as he had opposed similar arguments made already during the Washington talks.<sup>1005</sup>

But at this point, British atomic policy was momentarily sidetracked. From a rather surprising Australian source, the British gained almost first-hand knowledge of the views of Soviet scientists from a Professor Ashby via a Mr. Warner.<sup>1006</sup> Ashby had contact with some of the most important Soviet scientists, and gladly shared what information he had received from them. Apparently they had hoped that information relating to atomic energy would be shared; but there were also some of them, like Professor Kapitza, who had confided to Ashby that, were atomic secrets in Soviet hands, they would be very unlikely to share them. According to Ashby's report, it seemed most Soviet scientists did not see any harm in keeping the information secret. The headway made in atomic research in the West had been somewhat startling for the Soviets, but some were also claiming that Soviet research in Sverdlovsk was getting there.<sup>1007</sup> This 'headway' or advantage seemed a good thing to bear in mind for future talks, noted Mr. Warner. However, apart from this, there was no further reference to Ashby in the Documents on British Policy Overseas (DBPO) collection. They could nevertheless bring this knowledge, together with the good news from the CPC and CDT to the negotiations in Moscow.

The focus of the talks was to be on the control measures that would be put in place. Bevin mentioned to Halifax that he was reluctant but ready to tackle the matter now with the Soviets, and was well aware that in all likelihood something would have to be given away. It was really the vagueness of the American proposals, given for example by Truman in his speech on 20 November<sup>1008</sup> that alarmed the British the most. Bevin wanted the control commission to be established under the Security Council rather than the General Assembly, and the reporting duties of the committee bothered him too. In his opinion, weapon related technology should be an issue that for the Security Council, and

<sup>1004</sup> Calendar Notes 1. in regard to No.287. DBPO, series I, vol. II, p.718.

<sup>1005</sup> Groves, 1983, p.404-405. Though Groves mentions them in his own work "Now it can be told", Gowing, for instance does not refer to these drafts. Neither have they been included in the DBPO series.

<sup>1006</sup> No.258 Memorandum by Mr. Warner, Foreign Office, 6 December 1945, U 10230/6550/70, DBPO, series I, vol. II.

<sup>1007</sup> No.258 Memorandum by Mr. Warner, Foreign Office, 6 December 1945, U 10230/6550/70, DBPO, series I, vol. II. This was about the talks with Professor Ashby.

<sup>1008</sup> Herken, 1988, p.67. In his talk, according to Herken, Truman had emphasised hurrying the arrangements to be done via the UN. He also made a statement that further special meetings would not be necessary before the UN meeting. After he had bypassed it to establish the Moscow conference, Byrnes altered Truman's statement to say that Truman had only meant special meetings between heads of states.

there were other details of the talks that he would have liked to discuss with the Americans the alternatives a bit more thoroughly beforehand.<sup>1009</sup> In practice, this would have meant discussing which 'great' powers would have had a say on these matters, and Bevin had in his mind an oligopoly (of the West). The General Assembly presented a problem, because it was not yet certain which of the minor powers, satellite states and others would form the actual General Assembly. The Soviet Union's influence in Eastern Europe, for example, was one factor that weighed heavily in this respect. Byrnes mostly concurred with Bevin<sup>1010</sup> on this point, he said, but it was only 11 November when Halifax was able to send Byrnes' comments and written proposals to Bevin. Included were explanations from Byrnes' assistants that despite his blunt expressions Byrnes did want to have discussions as equal partners, and not to give advantage or preference of any sort to the Soviet Union. At this point he announced that Conant would join him in Moscow as his technical advisor, and he urged the British to bring their own expert too.<sup>1011</sup> This can be interpreted in two ways: either the Americans had something concrete in their mind, or they were seeking to add prestige to the talks. Considering that the British had received no info about scientific advisors being consulted at the time of their own talks in Washington, the change nevertheless underlines a change that was occurring in American preparations. Naturally the talks in Washington might have simply taught the Americans a thing or two, who according to the British sources attended Washington in a quite of an *ad hoc* manner.

American officials were of course considering how best to inform the Soviet Union about plans for the new control structures. Byrnes wanted authority and prestige to be taken into account and rigorously selected information put in the drafts to be conveyed to the Soviets. The main purpose was for them to accept the negotiations. Despite the rigorous tone of the notification draft, Byrnes wanted there to be some room for diplomatic manoeuvre too, however.<sup>1012</sup> It is hard to see any point behind notifying the Soviets except to highlight the US's own importance, or to implicitly inform the British that the American line towards the Soviets was about to harden. The proposal itself for establishing a control mechanism, was the last of three notifications altogether. The rather pompous wording emphasised that the US was willing to honestly work together with the other nations of the world to establish an international means for controlling and sharing the new technology so that it could be used in science safely and only to better the world. Misuse of the new invention would

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<sup>1009</sup> No.248 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington), Foreign Office, 27 November 1945, U 9442/6550/70, DBPO series I, vol.II.

<sup>1010</sup> Bullen, 1985, footnote 5. DBPO, series I, vol. II, p.644.

<sup>1011</sup> No. 274 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 December, 5.10 a.m.), Washington, 11 December 1945, U 9884/6550/70, DBPO series I, vol.II. This had arrived first, even if it had been meant as a follow up to No.275, which had been a general statement about the talks about atomic control.

<sup>1012</sup> No.275 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 December, 4.20 a.m.), Washington, 11 December 1945, U 9885/6550/70, DBPO series I, vol.II.

therefore be prevented by establishing the control mechanisms.<sup>1013</sup> There was no mention about the related economic plans, but instead a return to the statement Truman had issued on 3 October 1945, to infer that, having already met with Britain and Canada, now was the time for consulting other nations “in an effort to to effect agreement on the conditions under which cooperation might replace rivalry in the field of atomic power.”<sup>1014</sup> In the same vein the proposal also mentioned the utmost importance of having these talks for the benefit of all the peaceful nations of the world.<sup>1015</sup> This was intended to persuade (primarily) the Soviets to subscribe to the idea of being consulted more as an important partner than as an actual participant in the negotiations themselves about the atomic control mechanism. The rhetoric therefore needed to be carefully worded so that the Soviets did not feel any loss of prestige over this. As a consequence, the text butters up the Soviet Union in flattering peace-loving terms as being at least as important as those who had invented the new technology. At the same time, the rhetoric is close to what the Soviets were using themselves at the time so that, were the Soviet Union to not support the idea of establishing international controls, it would no longer be counted among the peace-loving nations of the world.

Another important point to consider is that the proposals indicated that the British, the Canadian and the Americans had met to talk only about international atomic control in Washington. This meant that the realist discussions were understandably not being made public, and shows that political games were still being played behind the scenes of world affairs as much as ever. This portrayal had been what Truman and Byrnes both wanted, even if the exact wording might have been that of officials.<sup>1016</sup> It was done not only to avoid undue concern from the Soviets, but also because the US attitude to atomic affairs was changing. The emphasis of the proposals was about regulating and controlling the new technology first, and only then in very limited terms about possibly sharing this great discovery for the benefit of others. The British too were publicly committed at home to an internationalist atomic policy, and so there was no mention of any secret deals from them either even though, to the executive, the secret plans did appear to be going ahead.

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<sup>1013</sup> No.276 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 December, 4.15 a.m.), Washington, 11 December 1945, U 9886/6550/70, DBPO series I, vol.II. This was the 3rd telegram.

<sup>1014</sup> The first time Truman presented the idea of international atomic control to Congress was on 3 October 1945 cf: Documents on American Foreign Relations, vol.VIII 1945-1946, p.545-546. Though at that time Truman had only referred to wanting to clear the matter first with Britain and Canada, who were American’s atomic partners in the matter: “I therefore propose to initiate discussions first with our associates in this discovery, Great Britain and Canada, and then with other nations, in an effort to to effect agreement on the conditions under which cooperation might replace rivalry in the field of atomic power.” Truman had also promised the congress that the talks would not include any details about preparing or manufacturing the bomb, or about sharing the required knowledge.

<sup>1015</sup> No.276 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 December, 4.15 a.m.), Washington, 11 December 1945, U 9886/6550/70, DBPO series I, vol.II.

<sup>1016</sup> No.276 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 December, 4.15 a.m.), Washington, 11 December 1945, U 9886/6550/70 DBPO series I, vol.II.



The US basically wanted the USSR's backing for the first meeting of the UN to be held in January 1946. And, on behalf of the US Government, Byrnes would add a more detailed proposal for a full exchange of views with the Soviet Government about establishing the control mechanism to find out if these ideas would be acceptable.<sup>1017</sup>

The British got to read the same pre-drafted proposal and, even if they did have the chance to comment on it before the meeting itself in Moscow, it seemed they were essentially being treated no differently to the Soviet Union. In other words, they were receiving a message in which they were the object of policy, rather than actually planning and proposing the policy together with the Americans. The backbone of my argument is that, despite Bevin asking repeatedly for a detailed proposal on the matter, the British had not received one until now. Again, the Americans' proactiveness had forced the now sidelined British government to react. The public side of American policy was regulated and controlled atomic cooperation through the UN, but it also served the US hard-line interests of striving for a monopoly in atomic weapons. There was nevertheless some relief for the British when Byrnes's assistant Cohen apologised and, though it might have seemed otherwise at the time, assured them that they were not going to simply be on the receiving end of atomic matters from now on.<sup>1018</sup>

The American proposals identified at least four potential flashpoints and interrelated areas which would need atomic regulation. The first concerned the ever expanding exchange of scientists and information, as well as technology and material. The second centred around the exchange of information about atomic raw materials themselves. The third concerned the exchange of technological and engineering (as opposed to scientific) know-how.<sup>1019</sup> And it was only the fourth and last that addressed the issue of safety and the prevention of atomic mass destruction. Unlike previously, Byrnes now seemed amenable to the idea that only by successfully addressing the first point would the second, then third, then finally the fourth (and most important) fall into place. Moreover, he added that even if the control measures were to eventually fail, they should nevertheless be attempted. Within certain limitations, he claimed that the US Government wanted to foster international cooperation in the field of scientist exchanges; but Byrnes did not care to specify what these limitations actually were. Byrnes also mentioned that the US would definitely not like to be the only one responsible for world safety in this respect, but would prefer wider cooperation with the Soviet Union and others. Finally, at the end of his proposal Byrnes even mentioned that the US would like to discuss these points with the Soviet Union both within the UN *and* outside it!<sup>1020</sup> Although this was evidently

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<sup>1017</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>1018</sup> No. 274 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 December, 5.10 a.m.), Washington, 11 December 1945, U 9884/6550/70DBPO series I, vol.II

<sup>1019</sup> De facto everything related to the use and applying of atomic power in any way, civilian or military.

<sup>1020</sup> No.276 No.276 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 December, 4.15 a.m.), Washington, 11 December 1945, U 9886/6550/70 DBPO series I, vol.II.

a nod to the Soviets so they felt included, it could also be interpreted as intentionally leaving Britain out.

The second message included the US proposal for the UN General Assembly to establish the atomic control commission, for according to the charter of the UN, this should have been the organ to decide such things. The commission would report to the General Assembly which would in turn convey the information to UN members as well as possibly the Security Council, and the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The commission could ask these two councils to act were there a reason to do so. The organisation of the commission would be such that each member of the Security Council (plus Canada) would be represented on it. Each representative on the control commission would have the right to whatever assistance was required; and the control commission would be responsible for developing its own rules and practices and recommending staff officials. The commission should be able to act swiftly and precisely to promote peaceful uses of atomic energy and develop it further. Likewise it should promote and advance measures of control and regulation in order to remove weapons of mass destruction, especially atomic weapons, from national arsenals. To this end, the commission should have the right to inspect, supervise and to control atomic weapons among all those states who would subscribe to the commission. Although the commission could not force other UN organs into something, it could issue proposals for actions within the rights granted it by the UN charter.<sup>1021</sup>

This would have rendered the commission outside the veto clause of the Security Council, and it probably benefited the Americans more than the USSR, as they had better support within the General Assembly than the Soviet Union. In addition, the United States had better resources to support and influence other member states. Although it may have failed in trying to get separate voting power for each of the Soviet republics, the USSR nonetheless had its influence too, although more of the stick than carrot variety, as the Eastern Bloc was only in its nascent form at this stage. The British, admittedly with the support of the many Commonwealth countries, were nevertheless now forced to compete with not just one, but two Great Powers in the UN.

This most recent proposal was actually surprisingly close to what Attlee had proposed in the early autumn when he spoke of the need for a change in world politics with the coming of atomic weaponry.<sup>1022</sup> What had caught Bevin's eye especially, was the mention of removing atomic weapons from national arsenals. He was somewhat sceptical that the Americans would follow this through, but were it indeed so then he would be prepared to do his utmost to ensure it happened. Attlee received a summary of the main points of British

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<sup>1021</sup> No.277 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 December, 7.35 a.m.), Washington, 12 December 1945, U 9897/6550/70, DBPO series I, vol.II. This is 4<sup>th</sup> message in the series.

<sup>1022</sup> Compare for instance to No.192 Memorandum by Mr. Attlee on the Atomic Bomb, 10 Downing Street, Whitehall, 28 August 1945, PREM 8/116; and No.196 Letter from Mr. Attlee to President Truman, London, 25 September 1945, D.O. 35/1772: WG 960/5DBPO ser.I vol.II.

atomic foreign policy from the FO in which Bevin had added the observation that even if Soviet acceptance was gained, they would be hard pushed to get it before the UN in time for January 1946. For this reason, it would make sense to follow the American lead in persuading the Soviet Union to accept at the Moscow conference, especially since the Soviets had asked for this topic to be last on the agenda.

The documents show that the British were particularly concerned that the Soviets would capitalise on the American sense of urgency and haste to get an agreement sorted by January 1946, and that they would press matters to their advantage by delaying the Moscow conference as long as possible. Nevertheless Bevin conceded that the Soviets had probably been insulted by not being consulted about the Washington Declaration in advance.<sup>1023</sup> Apparently the original draft of the memo had been put together by Butler the previous day, while Bevin mostly just added a few comments to it. This was a sign of effective continuity within the regime - indeed, it would have been impossible to prepare for the Moscow conference without the staff being up to date, and thoroughly prepared for any possible outcome. And in return for this hard work and readiness, they would have had a much greater influence over atomic policy than has previously been claimed. It also belies the trust that the British high-ranking politicians and officials had in their own diplomatic abilities.

Bevin agreed it would be beneficial to discuss matters with the USSR outside the United Nations so that the Soviets might feel greater prestige, but he warned Attlee that the US were planning to have these discussions without actually considering specifically what they would actually be discussing.<sup>1024</sup> Bevin thus agreed to the American idea of attempting to tie the Soviet Union to the control commission without actually giving them the room to discuss whether it was actually needed in the first place. At the same time, he was quite aware that this might also be a means for the US to retain their atomic monopoly. Bevin also made it clear to Attlee that, as the whole idea had come from Washington, it would be better to let Byrnes try to sort things out with the Soviet Union. With regards to the formalities relating to the commission, Bevin added that he had prepared for several eventualities. He saw it as imperative to extend the principles of the previous tripartite agreements to the General Assembly of the United Nations. These stemmed of course from the Washington Declaration, so it might have been difficult to include the Soviets in this, or gain their support for the idea, but Bevin did not see this as entirely necessary. In Moscow the emphasis would be, in his opinion, on negotiating an understanding about the matter on a general level, so that the detailed work could only then be started and proposals drafted, after the USSR was *de facto* behind the idea of the control commission. Another British idea, floated by the FO, suggested that if the Sovi-

<sup>1023</sup> No. 279. Minute from Mr. Bevin to Mr. Attlee, Foreign Office, 12 December 1945, FO 800/438 DBPO Ser I, vol.II.: concerning the talks in Moscow: "...I should certainly propose to take my full part in the discussions, and I think this will be necessary to bring the Americans and the Russians together."

<sup>1024</sup> No. 279. Minute from Mr. Bevin to Mr. Attlee, Foreign Office, 12 December 1945, FO 800/438, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II

ets did persist in stalling, then perhaps a new declaration, in the vein of Washington, could be made which they might want to sponsor. In this way they would be less vexed about the tripartite agreement made in the Washington Declaration that would find it easier to accept as providing the basis for the control commission.<sup>1025</sup>

The downside would be that Britain would possibly lose prestige as one of now three “keepers” of atomic secrets - were there to be a joint declaration with the Soviets too. In Bevin’s opinion, the General Assembly should make the resolution to create the commission, but once created, it would be better for it to be governed by the Security Council. This was, after all, the body within the UN which already dealt with such issues as disarmament. The actual paragraphs in the UN Charter to which the US had referred in their argument for the General Assembly would still apply, according to the British, because the Security Council was required to report to the General Assembly already anyway. The British proposed that the members of the committee would come from each of the five permanent members of the Security Council, and change regularly.<sup>1026</sup> Strangely enough (coming from the British), this meant that France would be included, but Canada left out, despite it having been a member of the tripartite agreements made in Washington. Anglo-French cooperation agreements were binding to some extent, indeed the British owed their wartime supply of heavy water to French refugee scientists who had helped them. But perhaps Commonwealth Canada was left out so that the Soviets would be more likely to back the idea. The Security Council would have been more appealing to the Soviets too, because it would have meant that they not only had veto rights, but were better represented than in the General Assembly. The veto-clause of the Security Council might have also been appealing to the British themselves as well.

However, it is interesting that in their counter-proposals the British do not reveal the ideas behind them, nor comment on the American ideas in any way.<sup>1027</sup> There is naturally the element of diplomacy, i.e., bargaining for the sake of it to see how much can be achieved, and to ensure that one is not being taken advantage of, but it is surprising that there seems to be no further deliberation on this subject in the British draft. Ensuring that Britain gained as much control as possible from the negotiations must have been one factor, as well as Bevin’s expectations that the Soviets would prefer the commission to be under the control of the Security Council, as they would have a greater say in this body. Before the Moscow conference, Attlee in turn had a chance to comment on the plans and proposals laid out in the memos compiled by Butler and Ward.

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<sup>1025</sup> No. 279. Minute from Mr. Bevin to Mr. Attlee, Foreign Office, 12 December 1945, FO 800/438, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II

<sup>1026</sup> No. 279. Minute from Mr. Bevin to Mr. Attlee, Foreign Office, 12 December 1945, FO 800/438, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II The United States had wanted Canada to be a permanent member.

<sup>1027</sup> A more thorough study of each of the agent’s UN policy might help in establishing grounds for the analysis of the reasons for this proposal, and likewise more intense study of the UN structures and operating structures could be of use.

There seemed to be greater American enthusiasm for the international control plans than there had been in Washington, and yet this approach was at the same time tempered with more realism. Earlier, for instance raw materials had to be interminably debated before the technical issues could have even be mentioned. Now the British felt this hard line had softened a bit, and the two English-speaking nations almost shared the same views about the control plans. Attlee stated wryly that perhaps the Americans had finally woken up to the reality that they would not be able to survey the Ural mountains for raw materials before the Soviets themselves. The British delegation would also not be sending their scientific advisors to Moscow, as the negotiations were likely to be of a tentative nature they thought. Were the Americans really interested in discussing technical details, then the British said they would be “ready” (whatever that meant). In sum, Attlee expressed his overall support for Bevin’s aim to secure Soviet acceptance, and his stated position regarding the structure and position of the would-be control commission.<sup>1028</sup>

This meant that Bevin, now backed by the PM, had his guidelines ready for Moscow. Although the British had noted that the Americans had changed their style of conducting matters somewhat, it was shrugged off with everything else that was going on - such as the US loan debate in Parliament that Lord Keynes had just negotiated. And though the Americans seemed to have considered matters at greater length than maybe they had for Washington, the British still thought their plans hasty, and were thus hoping to manoeuvre skilfully between the two giants and perhaps in this way direct the forthcoming talks. Preparations were also made for the peace talks part of the negotiations, but there was a surprising emphasis on the atomic control commission. This suited the British Labour government as public opinion in Britain still saw the Soviets as an ally.<sup>1029</sup> And the atomic question of course remained a threat and danger that needed to be solved urgently and peacefully in the international context. So though the Moscow talks were greeted with little enthusiasm in Parliament.

### 4.3 The conference in Moscow sidelines the British

The Moscow Conference of Foreign Secretaries finally began on 16 December 1945. The British government had, in the meantime, gained support from Parliament for the loan agreement; but this had taken a long time for Lord Keynes to secure. The Americans wanted Britain to commit to multilateral trade, to the Bretton Woods system, and to support the establishment of the IMF (International Monetary Fund), and these were all hard for Parliament to swallow. Each of these clauses that had to be accepted if the loan agreement from the US was

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<sup>1028</sup> No.280 Minutes by Mr. Butler and Mr. Ward, Foreign Office, 12 December 1945, FO 800/554. DBPO series I, vol.II.

<sup>1029</sup> Anstey 1984, p.434.

to be confirmed.<sup>1030</sup> The loan agreement had been in the spotlight in Britain for such a long time, that this was one of the reasons these high-ranking negotiations about an important matter nevertheless met with little response in public.

The situation in Persia, the pressure exerted by the Soviets on Turkey, and the Soviet demand for the British to withdraw their troops from Greece were all alarming factors for which the British delegation were given special instructions in preparation for the conference. It was thought that Turkey was being used by the Soviets to try and break up Anglo-American collaboration in general, and to win the country over to Russia's sphere of influence, just as the FO had noted was happening to both Finland and Poland.<sup>1031</sup> Bevin, however was in good spirits, in spite of his misgivings about Byrnes and being unsure as to whether he would be able to come back with a definitive and binding agreement about Anglo-American cooperation. Bevin's private secretary Dixon in fact wrote in his diary the latent fear shared by most of the British executive in the know, that "the Russians will gain, we shall gain nothing, and the Americans will give away our interests to the Russians for the sake of a settlement".<sup>1032</sup> The Moscow meeting thus started in an atmosphere of anticipation. The atomic question was indeed last on the agenda, just as the British had feared; and as he was the host, Molotov was chosen as the chair of the meeting.<sup>1033</sup> The Agenda confirmed there would be 14 meetings altogether,<sup>1034</sup> and the Americans circulated their initial plan for the peace treaties, and their proposal for an Allied Council for Japan and the Far East Commission. In these organs there was no room made for the Soviets. As for the rest of the meetings, they would cover peace negotiations, US interests in controlling Asia alone, Soviet interests in bargaining on this point to get their own sphere of interest established and recognised, and then finally the atomic question - which had been the main reason for the British to participate in the first place. Though the meetings varied in terms of precise agenda, it is not necessary to go into detail with them. It is more useful to divide the agenda between matters related to the atomic question, and those that were not related. These other issues are nonetheless important as they reveal more effectively how the British were played out in the field of interna-

<sup>1030</sup> Bullock 2002, p.453-455. The voting had eventually been favourable for the Government (and accepting the loan) by the division of 343 to 200. Remarkable is that 169 members of Parliament did abstain from voting. They could have apparently voted the loan agreement down.

<sup>1031</sup> No.288 Brief for the United Kingdom Delegation at Moscow, Foreign Office, December 1945, R 20943/44/44, DBPO series I, vol.II.

<sup>1032</sup> Bullock 2002, p.455. With the commentary "we shall gain nothing..." Dixon and Bevin meant British interests in Turkey, Greece and Persia. For example securing the Mediterranean was important for securing the Suez Channel, which in turn opened the sea-route to India, the jewel of the empire. The channel was naturally of strategic importance on its own, too, and Persian oil, as well as at least options for bases in the Mediterranean were of strategic importance in terms of security and by keeping the Soviets within a reach, should push come to shove.

<sup>1033</sup> No.289 British Record of the First (Formal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Sunday, 16 December 1945, at 5.30 p.m., 16 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO, Ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>1034</sup> No.290 Agenda as agreed at First Meeting, 16 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO series I, vol.II.

tional relations, which in turn affected the atomic question. For instance, in Moscow it was about to come clear that the British would henceforth be the junior partner in any Anglo-American cooperation.

#### 4.3.1 The peace treaty negotiations

It soon turned out that almost everything was quarrelled about, and as the confrontations became increasingly heated, the chair was given to Bevin. The draft tabled by the Soviets emphasised the settling of peace treaties and (more importantly for the USSR) spheres of influence.<sup>1035</sup> This was not to the liking of the Americans and the British,<sup>1036</sup> even if it did give each of the Big Three an influential role, as it neglected important issues related to other states who were not present.<sup>1037</sup> Because these Soviet proposals were thus more or less turned down, Molotov left American proposals to control the Far East and Japan on the table, bluntly adding that the Soviets would 'look into them'; and similar answers were given to the American suggestions for solving the Korean question<sup>1038</sup> and Northern China.<sup>1039</sup> Atomic energy appeared to be a distant item on the agenda, and the negotiations had already seemed to grind to a halt. The British delegation started to consider pressurising the others by threatening to go home if there was no progress.<sup>1040</sup> The Americans had perhaps not expected such bold delays from the Soviets.

Bevin also telegraphed home to Attlee about the arguments between the US and USSR over the peace treaties and spheres of influence.<sup>1041</sup> The Soviets were insisting on official recognition of the satellite states they had established (e.g., the Baltic countries). Meanwhile the British wanted recognition of states in the Commonwealth; in the case of India this was about to succeed, despite re-

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- <sup>1035</sup> No.295 British Record of the Second (Formal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Monday, 17 December 1945, at 4 p.m., 17 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.
- <sup>1036</sup> No.295 British Record of the Second (Formal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Monday, 17 December 1945, at 4 p.m., 17 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II. An example of the spheres of interest policy is for example the peace treaty with Finland, which the Soviets wanted to keep in their own hands only. Molotov commented that naturally it would be possible to hear the opinions of the others outside the protocol. The American scrutiny about the peace treaties was odd in terms that they had just practised similar approach on the occupation of Japan.
- <sup>1037</sup> No.298 Memorandum circulated by the Soviet Delegation at the Second Meeting, 17 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II
- <sup>1038</sup> No.299 Memorandum circulated by the United States Delegation at the Second Meeting, 17 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II (Concerning the control of Korea).
- <sup>1039</sup> No.295 British Record of the Second (Formal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Monday, 17 December 1945, at 4 p.m., 17 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.1945
- <sup>1040</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 10, p.742 DBPO Ser.I Vol.II. Cadogan had for instance written home to his wife on 17 December 1945 and had mentioned having discussed with Bevin and said he had proposed using the threat of going home. Bevin had replied to have thought of the same.
- <sup>1041</sup> No.305 United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow) to Foreign Office (Received 19 December, 1.20 p.m.), Moscow, 19 December 1945, U 10190/7714/70, DBPO, Ser.I Vol.II.

sistance from Molotov.<sup>1042</sup> But progress remained painfully slow: there was Austria to be freed of all occupying forces, and the occupation of Northern China to be ended as soon as possible. Meanwhile the Americans did not want anybody else in their “backyard” in the Far East, while the British felt they should be included in decision-making regarding the Far East as it affected the many parts of the British Empire in Asia.<sup>1043</sup> Finally, to the horror of the British delegation, the Soviet Union also raised the thorny topic of Germany’s occupation. For example, what was the purpose and intention of the German troops in the British occupied territory? Simultaneously, in customary diplomatic fashion, they presented another related issue which might have in fact been the main point and demanded more war reparations from the areas occupied by western troops.<sup>1044</sup> Britain had precisely hoped to avoid the Germany-related issues, because it had promised not to negotiate on these matters without the French. So, at this point, Bevin used Molotov’s own trick on himself, and demanded time to ‘look into’ the Soviet proposal. The frustrating upshot of all this was, of course, that atomic matters were postponed, with Byrnes all the time growing more impatient (as Bevin had feared) with the realisation that he might not get back in time for Christmas after all.<sup>1045</sup> If this was the kind of ‘cards on the table’ foreign policy which Bevin had promised the public and Parliament, then it was going to prove problematic. But, as I have suggested, it was definitely not only the Labour government’s fault, as there was much path-dependency, and of course none of this politics was happening in a vacuum.

The British played a minor role in the conference, even if Bevin was chairing. As Bevin feared, the US seemed to give in about some of the forthcoming practicalities and arrangements regarding the peace negotiations. Byrnes had also informed Bevin in an advance private meeting between the two that he did not intend to mention the Soviet pressure on Turkey. He preferred to avoid the Persian question too, because the USSR might attempt to grasp the oil resources there for itself. Bevin expressed his concern about Turkey, Greece and Persia, and his annoyance at the way the Soviet Union was attempting to pull the rug from underneath Britain’s feet. He indicated to Byrnes that there was a severe

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<sup>1042</sup> No.306 British Record of Fourth (Informal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Wednesday, 19 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO, Ser.I.Vol.II.

<sup>1043</sup> No.307 British Record of the Fifth (Formal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries, held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Wednesday, 19 December 1945, at 5 p.m., 19 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II. No.310 Memorandum circulated by the United Kingdom Delegation at the Fifth Meeting, 19 December 1945, U 1374/20/70; and No. 311 Memorandum circulated by the United Kingdom Delegation at the Fifth Meeting, 19 December 1945, U 1374/20/70 (British proposals on the control of Asia) Britain wanted for instance to include Australia and the New Zealand to the regional control or surveillance activities. DBPO Ser.I Vol.II

<sup>1044</sup> It was interested in dividing up what had been left of German fleets. No.315 Memorandum on certain German affairs circulated by the Soviet Delegation at the Sixth Meeting on 20 December 1945, 20 December 1945, U DBPO Ser.I, Vol.II.

<sup>1045</sup> No.313 British Record of the Sixth (Formal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Thursday, 20 December 1945, at 3 p.m., 20 December 1945, U 1374/20/70 DBPO, Ser.I, Vol.II



risk that this kind of “politicking”<sup>1046</sup> could lead to unnecessary competition which could deteriorate into a straightforward clash between spheres of interest between the US and USSR.<sup>1047</sup> Unfortunately Bevin did not get anything out of this private meeting with Byrnes except this chance to air his feelings. The Americans were becoming more proactive and unpredictable; and with this, Britain was increasingly forced to the sidelines. Infuriated by Byrnes’ lack of response, Bevin telegraphed Attlee and let him know the situation. Attlee replied sympathetically in his telegram, and (referring also to Bevin’s previous telegrams)<sup>1048</sup> agreed that “the situation revealed in these telegrams is disturbing.”<sup>1049</sup> Molotov’s proposal to restrict the peace treaty negotiations to the Big Three was particularly alarming. In Attlee’s opinion, Britain should demand wider representation, a greater global consensus and, naturally, the inclusion of the Dominions. Leaving the French out of any agreement concerning the European situation seemed a catastrophic idea as far as he was concerned - the French of course needed to have their say. Attlee considered even denying Molotov’s proposal completely as that might best serve the interests of the Commonwealth, as well as score points with those countries not currently being represented.<sup>1050</sup> It was as if the interests of the smaller nations were now being put on the table as if Britain’s new role was their champion.

“I think it would pay us handsomely refuse to agree, from the points of view of the future of the British Commonwealth and our chances of ever in the future commanding respect for any views we may wish to express in international affairs.”<sup>1051</sup>

The telegram revealed two things: Britain felt her status as a Great Power to have somewhat diminished; but her new role was to use what international status there was remaining to represent other powers. Attlee’s idea seemed to be to increase Britain’s soft power through improving her prestige and representing an international policy that distinguished itself from the unfair game that the other two powers were playing. This corresponds to the line that Rhiannon Vickers and others<sup>1052</sup> have described as being the core of Labour’s foreign policy. Attlee’s statements would therefore also help his domestic policy.

As Bevin’s attempts to meet with Byrnes had not helped to relieve the situation, he also tried a private meeting with Stalin, but this did not go much bet-

<sup>1046</sup> As described by Palonen 1993, 10-15; Palonen, 2003, p. 174-184.

<sup>1047</sup> No.294 Record of a conversation at the United States Ambassador's Residence, Moscow, on 17 December 1945, 2.45-3.45 p.m., 17 December 1945, U 1374/20/70 DBPO Ser.I, Vol.II. This was about the meeting between Bevin & Byrnes.

<sup>1048</sup> No.301 British Record of the Third (Formal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Tuesday, 18 December 1945, at 4 p.m., 18 December 1945, U 1374/20/70; and No.305. United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow) to Foreign Office (Received 19 December, 1.20 p.m.), Moscow, 19 December 1945, U 10190/7714/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1049</sup> No.316 Foreign Office to United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow), Foreign Office, 20 December 1945, U 10190/7714/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1050</sup> No.316 Foreign Office to United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow), Foreign Office, 20 December 1945, U 10190/7714/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1051</sup> No.316 Foreign Office to United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow), Foreign Office, 20 December 1945, U 10190/7714/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1052</sup> Vickers 2004, p.196-197; Schmeer 1992, 2-6; 16-21,28-29.

ter despite mutual assurances of joint interest and good will.<sup>1053</sup> As the talks went on, the British were pushed even further to the sidelines. When Bevin then met with Molotov, after similar promises of goodwill, there was only talk about the situation in Greece,<sup>1054</sup> and then a mutual frank exchange of thoughts on a number of difficult matters.<sup>1055</sup> In the formal meetings the situation was similar. The Soviets drawing attention to the German troops in British territory angered Bevin, so to solve the matter a commission was agreed to be established. But Molotov pressed on with his demands, and asked for Soviet citizens to be returned to the Soviet Union. The Americans pointed out that they had already returned roughly two million native Soviets from occupied Germany.<sup>1056</sup> Then Molotov asked again for more war reparations; at which point Bevin remarked that the Soviets had already grabbed more than they could even transport to the Soviet Union. This last comment brought the negotiations to a sudden halt, at which point all the delegates took a much needed break. Surprisingly it seemed to have an effect, as straight after this the peace negotiations concerning Japan, Korea and Austria were suddenly agreed upon, and with only the minimum of adjustments. Moreover, the Soviets promised to clarify their monetary issues regarding the Bretton Woods system. Deciding the policy of the forthcoming peace negotiations was to now become the major role of the Great Powers. The next conference would be held in Paris, and signatories would be allowed for all those states who had declared war. Those states who had actually fought were to sign first (but after the Big Three of course).<sup>1057</sup>

After this meeting Bevin telegraphed home, and surprisingly he reported (perhaps somewhat prematurely) that the meetings had finally led to something conclusive. Britain had gained some recognition on behalf of India and the Dominions concerning the peace negotiations too. Bevin may have felt that Molotov had taken advantage of Byrnes' over-optimistic aim to be home for Christmas,<sup>1058</sup> but he was aware that hard work by the American Foreign Secretary had eventually taken matters forward, and Bevin felt that the best possible

<sup>1053</sup> No.308. Record of a meeting at the Kremlin on 19 December 1945, at 10 p.m., 19 December 1945, U 1374/20/70 (meeting between Stalin and Bevin) DBPO Ser.I Vol.II. Stalin had attempted to convince Bevin that the British would not need to worry about the question of Turkey. Bevin, in turn, expressed the British good-will and friendship with the Soviet Union by promising to extend the agreements that were in force between the two states by 20 or even by 50 years! Ibid.

<sup>1054</sup> There had been internal restlessness in Greece between the Communists and the right wingers already during the war. As the war had ended, the clashes started again, leading to British intervention force being sent in.

<sup>1055</sup> No.300 Record of Meeting in Moscow on 18 December 1945, 18 December 1945, U 1374/20/70. DBPO Ser.I Vol.II. (Molotov and Bevin).

<sup>1056</sup> No.321 Memorandum circulated by the United States Delegation at the Seventh Meeting, 21 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II

<sup>1057</sup> No.320 British Record of the Seventh (Informal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Friday, 21 December 1945, at 2 p.m., 21 December 1945, U 1374/20/70. See also No.323 Draft agreed by Drafting Committee after the Seventh Meeting of the Three Foreign Ministers on 21 December 1945, for submission to the Three Ministers at the Eighth Meeting on 22 December, 21 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I Vol.II.

<sup>1058</sup> Bullen, footnote 27, p.815-816, mentioning the main points of Bevin's draft telegram home (No.83 Worthy) on 22 December 1945, DBPO series I, vol.II.

compromise was about to happen.<sup>1059</sup> There was a lot of fine-tuning to do, but a draft had already been promised for France and China. Likewise the case of Korea had been confirmed; but in exchange the Communist governments of Bulgaria and Romania were asked to be recognised. At first the Americans had responded by requesting that free elections be held, which had slowed the meeting down, but eventually even this hurdle was eventually cleared.<sup>1060</sup> There is no other commentary about this sudden jump forward in the talks, which is rather surprising. Indeed, the British delegation seems to have taken the advance *an sich* and not asked themselves why this was now happening.

Perhaps Bevin's telegram home was prescient rather than premature, as the next meeting also seemed to sweep by without a hitch. The question of German troops in British occupied territory no longer bothered the Soviets, but in return Molotov wanted to resolve the occupation of China. Byrnes responded that he was still reading the "Russian" proposals. The British considered this to be reasonable, even if a policy of spheres of interest was now quite apparent, as the talks were now finally beginning to move onto preliminary ideas about atomic control (even including some of Britain's initial ideas). Having been able to defend the role of the Dominions and lever in the topic of India,<sup>1061</sup> Attlee congratulated Bevin on his success. These minor victories understandably raised British spirits and contributed to an improvement in the overall atmosphere of the negotiations. Bevin's private secretary, Dixon, added to this with favourable reports from his own discussions with Byrnes' assistants Harriman and Bohlen, who were expressing their apologies for Byrnes' *abrupt* manners on the evening of 20 December at the Molotov's reception. They put his behaviour down to his inexperience, and they stated a willingness to make amends. In fact, they promised to warn the British in advance were Byrnes to pull any more stunts like that. In his talk with Dixon, Harriman also added that Byrnes was far too impulsive and was sometimes not following the line of policy agreed in advance. This was thought to originate from Byrnes' years in the US Senate where this kind of unpredictability had in fact worked in his favour to help him seize moments; whereas Harriman thought Byrnes did not grasp the difference here, and the true importance of these international talks perhaps escaped him. This was certainly borne out by his flippant 'atomic bomb in the pocket' remark in London, and his evident indifference to thorough preparation for the negotiations beforehand.

Dixon accepted the apology but pressed his case, having now been given this opportunity. He pointed out to Harriman that actually, from the British

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<sup>1059</sup> No.324 British delegation to Foreign Office 22 December 1945. DBPO series I, vol.II.

<sup>1060</sup> No.325. British Record of the Eighth (Informal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held in M. Molotov's office in the Kremlin, Moscow, on Saturday, 22 December 1945, at noon, 22 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO series I, vol.II.

<sup>1061</sup> No.330 Foreign Office to United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow), Foreign Office, 23 December 1945, U 10281/7714/70; DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II Cf. No.334 Foreign Office to United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow), Foreign Office, 23 December 1945, U 10287/7714/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

perspective, the whole Moscow conference seemed planned in advance to intentionally exclude them.

"I said surely the original approach to the Russians about this Conference without consultation with us was deliberate."<sup>1062</sup>

Dixon's report went on to note that Harriman agreed with him on this, adding

"[...] that this had been an 'experiment' which they realised had been a mistake. The U.S. Government was absolutely solid with us on essential and wanted to go along with us on major problems."

Having read this, Bevin evidently considered this to be a giveaway on such a scale that he marked the document "Prime Minister only should see this. E.B."<sup>1063</sup> Herken has noted, too, that some of the Americans had in fact demanded negotiating with the British in advance.<sup>1064</sup> So all in all it seems that Byrnes neither had total support back at home, nor in the field either. A minute from Isaiah Berlin to Clark-Kerr gives further backing to this notion too.<sup>1065</sup> The comments and explanations for Byrnes' character and experience are an important factor in evaluating whether he was actually trying to pull off atomic diplomacy against the British, or whether it was just a serious of unfortunate events due to his inexperience. Based on the evidence already presented here however, it seems implausible that Byrnes was really quite so incompetent and impulsive as his colleagues made out. Either he was one of the worst ministers ever, or there was a plan full of apologies behind all of this. The British anyway accepted the apologies, and a renewed belief in American goodwill flickered back to life once again. Dixon's having confronted the Americans and elicited apologies from them was evidently seen as a sort of victory by the British. It was not common that one of the most important members of a US administration was deemed inexperienced and disowned in such a manner by his own senior staff. At least it was certainly not common to voice these kinds of opinions out loud to the representatives of even a friendly state. But perhaps the British delegation and FO heard what they wanted to hear (i.e., "mistake") from the Americans when in fact it could have been intentional. Although this cannot be explored here, this could be a matter for extensive research and rereading of the sources. Though Byrnes' odd behaviour had been explained to some extent, the British worries were far from over. FO reports from Moscow revealed that so-called 'public opinion' there laid the fault for the delays and problems in the negotiations at the feet of the British. American journalist Eddie Gilmore had also reported hearing that the Soviets would have been willing to negotiate

<sup>1062</sup> No.318 Note by Mr. Dixon of conversations with Mr. Bohlen and Mr. Harriman on 20 December 1945, 20 December 1945, FO 800/501. Written on 21.12.1945, DBPO Ser.I,vol.II, also Bullen, footnote 5 p.804. Ibid.

<sup>1063</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1064</sup> Herken, 1988, p.71-74.

<sup>1065</sup> TNA FO 800/501 A Minute from I.Berlin to Sir A.Clark- Kerr 21 December 1945. It mentions that Byrnes had fostered even antipathy towards the British and their interests. See also Calendar Note I to NO.318. (Same document).

without the British.<sup>1066</sup> This piece of information is hardly surprising, however, when one considers it would have been in the Soviet Union's interest. Indeed, it may well have been an intentional plant that would have flattered the Americans too. Whether the Americans picked up on this is another matter though.

The tenth of the 14 meetings covered China.<sup>1067</sup> Drafts of the peace treaty had been sent to France, and it had accepted them. Of the remaining non-atomic matters to be cleared up there was only the Balkan elections and Persia that remained.<sup>1068</sup> Another private talk between Bevin and Stalin on this matter did not seem to help, even if the latter afterwards seemed a bit more open to other ideas,<sup>1069</sup> because it was actually Molotov who was being most stubborn.<sup>1070</sup> Persia was the biggest setback for the British as it proved they had nothing to throw back in the face of the Soviet Union's challenges, and Persia was vital for both countries plans for international security.<sup>1071</sup> Persia might also have been used as leverage concerning the fate of Turkey, especially since Byrnes had now stated that there would be no support in this matter from the Americans.

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<sup>1066</sup> No.328 Minute from Mr. Roberts to Sir A. Clark Kerr (Moscow), 22 December 1945, FO 181/995/1, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II. The comment made by Gilmore was written in the Marginal according to Bullen, 1985, footnote 3, p.939. DBPO Ser.I, vol.II. Gilmore was the leader of the Associated Press's Agency of Moscow and close to Harriman.

<sup>1067</sup> Molotov insisted on American withdrawal. Byrnes' reply was that the American troops would leave after disarming the Japanese troops in the area, as China had requested the United States to do. Using this as a crutch Molotov appealed more time for the Soviet troops in the area, too. Byrnes' reply about him not being aware that presence of US troops would require military presence of the Soviets was a sharp comeback that ended the argument. No.337. British Record of the Eleventh (Informal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Monday, 24 December 1945, at 3 p.m., 24 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1068</sup> No.337. British Record of the Eleventh (Informal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Monday, 24 December 1945, at 3 p.m., 24 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1069</sup> No.340. Notes of a conversation at the Kremlin, on Monday, 24 December 1945, at 7 p.m., 24 December 1945, U 1374/20/70 (between Stalin and Bevin) DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1070</sup> No.349. British Record of the Thirteenth (Informal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Wednesday, 26 December 1945, at 3 p.m., 26 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II. Molotov had not even wanted to discuss about the Persian question on the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, and kept on expressing his dissatisfaction on the German matters, too. No.341 British Record of the Twelfth (Informal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Tuesday, 25 December 1945, at 4.30 p.m., 25 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, *ibid.* No.350. Memorandum circulated by the United Kingdom Delegation at the Thirteenth Meeting, 26 December 1945, U 1374/20/70 (Bevin, about the German matters), *ibid.* During a break from the meetings he Molotov had told to Bevin that the matter would sort itself out in a one way or another. Bevin naturally reported the meeting: cf. No.353, Note of private conversation between the Secretary of State and M. Molotov held at Spiridonevka Palace on the evening of 26 December 1945, 26 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, *Ibid.*

<sup>1071</sup> Middle-East was suitable base for reaching possible air-offensives with bomber force to the Soviet heartland should a military conflict come reality. The importance had been highlighted by the Soviet Union having been able to establish a cordon around itself with buffer states. In addition to this aspect, the area had oil resources important for Britain, as well as strategic position for securing India (sea route and other). With a foothold in the Middle East US or Britain could threaten Soviet heartland. Therefore the negotiations were so important.

But the end of the Moscow conference was approaching, with the declarations due to be signed on 27 December. Molotov attempted to change the wording of documents at the last moment so that those written in Russian would be written in more pro-Soviet terms regarding Bulgaria, but this was noticed, and so explained away as a mistake, and finally the papers were signed.<sup>1072</sup> In non-atomic matters the British had thus survived and even gained some minor successes. But generally speaking, it had been about American and Soviet spheres of interest. The British delegation may have now gained first-hand experience of changes to US foreign policy, but no further alarm was considered necessary, not even when Byrnes' had been criticised by his own senior staff. There now remained the atomic question.

#### 4.3.2 Atomic matters in Moscow

As the end of the conference approached, it was finally time for atomic matters to be addressed. The Soviets had intended it to be last on the agenda, as it would force the US to be more amenable in wanting to get to the end, and they did not hesitate in using this to their own advantage. Another side-effect of this strategy was to push Britain further away from the two Great Powers, and as it pressed on so many important matters for the British it became extremely hard for them to do anything else but react.

As promised, Byrnes had already taken up the atomic question privately with Bevin earlier (between the first and second of the 14 meetings). Bevin thus heard about the questions related to the control commission that Byrnes was planning to ask.<sup>1073</sup> He then asked that Byrnes delay taking up the matter in the conference itself until 19 December, so that he would have enough time to consult London beforehand. One reason for this was because he wanted to include a clause that stipulated the commission would perform its own tasks step by step and independently, as formally agreed in the Washington Declaration previously. He also stressed his view that the Security Council should be in charge of the commission. Byrnes' concern with that idea though was that he feared the Soviets might use the Security Council veto clause inappropriately, and for their own benefit. He nevertheless agreed to look further into Bevin's proposals, and this seemed to satisfy the British.<sup>1074</sup> The meeting on the second day of the conference was possibly the worst for the British, and as mentioned above, they briefly even considered returning home;<sup>1075</sup> but straight after the meeting they also sent home the American proposals for the position of the commission within the UN as well as the hierarchy within it, that Bevin had discussed with Byr-

<sup>1072</sup> No.355 British Record of the Fourteenth (Formal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Thursday, 27 December 1945, at 1 a.m., 27 December 1945, U 1374/20/70 DBPO series I, vol.II.

<sup>1073</sup> No.296 United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow) to Foreign Office (Received 17 December, 7.30 p.m.), Moscow, 17 December 1945, U 10120/6550/70 DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1074</sup> No.296 United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow) to Foreign Office (Received 17 December, 7.30 p.m.), Moscow, 17 December 1945, U 10120/6550/70 DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1075</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 10, p.742. DBPO series I, vol.II Cadogan's letter to his wife, 17 December 1945.

nes the day before. Eventually the Americans had an answer for the British about controlling the commission via the Security Council, pointing out it was mostly going to take care of civilian matters, not military, and therefore it should be the General Assembly. Moreover, if the General Assembly was establishing the commission, it would have been somewhat alarming if the body responsible for creating it was not the same as the one responsible for it.<sup>1076</sup> Most likely the Americans were indeed keen on preventing the misuse of vetoes, just as Byrnes had said, but this was not covered in the British delegation's report back home. Instead it asked for further comments and instructions from Attlee, mentioning that perhaps Canada should have a bigger role, or were that not possible, for it to be at least mentioned somehow.<sup>1077</sup>

The third meeting surprised the British because Byrnes introduced the American proposal about atomic control in spite of what he had promised. Perhaps it was lucky for the British that Molotov was also taken aback by it as well, as he also wanted more time to familiarise himself with it and so they did not have to discuss it just then after all. Molotov also asked whether the British had already been told of this proposal, and Byrnes denied it.<sup>1078</sup> Bevin lost his temper totally with Byrnes at this point and telegraphed home to Attlee to complain. Again Byrnes claimed that it was all just a misunderstanding, but it seems Bevin was starting to have his doubts. In spite of this he was pleased to note that, to accommodate some of Britain's comments, the US had altered the proposal it was planning to make to the UN about the control commission.<sup>1079</sup> On the major point of it reporting to the General Assembly (and not the Security Council), the revised American draft remained unchanged.<sup>1080</sup> Molotov clearly suspected the proposal to have been coordinated in advance; most likely this was his normal suspicious attitude, but it could also have been a leak from somewhere, or the Soviets listening in to the meeting between Byrnes and Bevin. The last option seems to have also been quite possible, with the benefit of hindsight over what was to happen in the USSR over the coming years. The British

<sup>1076</sup> No.296 United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow) to Foreign Office (Received 17 December, 7.30 p.m.), Moscow, 17 December 1945, U 10120/6550/70 DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1077</sup> No.296 United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow) to Foreign Office (Received 17 December, 7.30 p.m.), Moscow, 17 December 1945, U 10120/6550/70 DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1078</sup> No.301 British Record of the Third (Formal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Tuesday, 18 December 1945, at 4 p.m., 18 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II. The gamey politics emerged as Byrnes had claimed British delegation knew nothing about the draft beforehand. They had, however suggested amendments the previous day and had been prepared for the draft in advance. On the other hand, Byrnes did not play along with Britain either, as he had denied Britain any waiting time for receiving comments from home. Maybe he had thought that as had been the case in almost every proposal and draft, the Soviets would have demanded more time to get to know the draft, in which case British delegation could have received its commentary from London.

<sup>1079</sup> "Big Three" would jointly present it to France and China, and all five members of the Security Council would then support the proposal together with Canada. Likewise the proposed rules for the commissions activities and practical actions were along the previous comments gained from the British delegation.

<sup>1080</sup> No. 304 United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow) to Foreign Office (Received 19 December, 4.7 p.m.), Moscow, 19 December 1945, U 10219/6550/70, DBPO, ser.I, vol.II. De facto, Bevin to Attlee.

meanwhile appear to have been increasingly seeing this as a hard slog in terms of dealing with Byrnes (and his wish to be home by Christmas), and the Soviets' delaying tactics. However, one can also see that Bevin's attitude towards the Soviet Union was now that of a hardliner and realist. This has been mentioned in previous research and noted to have been the prevailing line in the FO<sup>1081</sup> too. Labour's foreign policy had thus altered quite a bit in the few months since they had been elected to government at the start of the autumn, and not only with regard to atomic matters.

While Bevin was talking with Stalin, Attlee sent him via telegram his comments on Byrnes' proposals for the control commission. He was more satisfied with this version, as it did not differ so much from the points expressed in the Washington Declaration, and he promised to convey the details of it to Canada. Establishing the commission under the General Assembly would have to do were there no chance for a better option, after all the commission itself would have members from the Security Council (which was apparently a good thing). Another up side was that this way the Security Council would remain the forum for solving problems instead of possibly creating more by attempting to tackle the hairy subject of atomic control. At the end of his telegram, Attlee granted Bevin free rein to do what he felt necessary. His only additional wish was that Bevin somehow gain the trust of the Soviets.<sup>1082</sup> Attlee was indeed quite renowned for being a good delegator of responsibilities, in fact he later described this aspect of his character himself.

“ ‘If you have a good dog don't bark yourself’ is a good proverb and in Mr Bevin I had an exceptionally good dog [...].”<sup>1083</sup>

Bevin's role in British foreign affairs was thus seen to be quite important, especially during the first years of Labour government.<sup>1084</sup> Meanwhile, Margaret Gowing points out that atomic matters were mainly Attlee's concern, though discussed among his Cabinet's inner circle.<sup>1085</sup> This telegram would thus lend support to the idea that Bevin not only had a prominent role in British atomic foreign policy and the Cabinet, but had Attlee's unwavering support, even if Bevin's mandate was one of executing rather than formulating. Moreover, it again reveals how international diplomacy, especially at the highest levels, re-

<sup>1081</sup> Saville 1993, p.6-7; 12; 27-33. Leinonen 2012, (referring to Deighton) p.114.

<sup>1082</sup> No.309 Foreign Office to United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow), Foreign Office, 19 December 1945, U 10146/6550/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vo.II PM commenter the US proposals to Bevin.

<sup>1083</sup> For instance in Jefferys 2013, p.76.

<sup>1084</sup> Howell, 2006. p.68-69, 71, and especially p.76-77, with Attlee's own view on the matter: “Foreign affairs are the province of the foreign secretary. It is in my view a mistake for the Prime Minister to intervene personally except in the most exceptional circumstances. There's a lot in the proverb. ‘If you've got a good dog don't bark yourself.’” Newer research estimates Bevin as a key-figure, and Attlee's supporter inside the Labour party, already in 1930's. Pearce, 2002, p.4-5. Saville 1993, p.102-106 provides a more critical analysis and states that though Bevin was not a pushover by any means, he relied much on the work of the Foreign Office staff. Vickers 2004, p.161-162 considers both the critique and praise.

<sup>1085</sup> Gowing 1974 p.19-23. Gowing adds that in six years atomic matter appeared in front of the full cabinet less than times.



quires power to be delegated effectively to those actually in the negotiations. This was especially the case given that communication at the time was via telegram, despite some technical innovations like the Teletype. The result was that there was so much going on in the Moscow conference that there was no time to consult London on every point covered. Adding to this was the fact that Byrnes did not seem to want to give the British time to do this anyway. Meanwhile, because Molotov was at home for the negotiations, he had plenty of time to read the proposals and confer with his staff and Stalin.

As mentioned already in 4.3.1, a number of high-ranking American officials disapproved of Byrnes' actions. Indeed, they called for a meeting with the British to rectify the matter on 21 December. Members of the British delegation met with Conant and Cohen to discuss atomic matters, as Molotov had delayed the meetings. The Americans revealed that they had just realised what a big mistake they had made. The Security Council might actually be the incentive to get the Soviets on board to establish the control commission and regulate the new technology. The two Americans, one of them a high ranking official and the other an atomic specialist, also mentioned that it had been an accident to leave the points out which would have made the proposal analogous to Washington Declaration, and that American actions had been hampered by internal pressures from home.<sup>1086</sup> This seemed to please the British delegates and was reported back home as progress, with the Washington-style points that had been left out duly passed over. This confession should perhaps have raised a bit more alarm however, as it was evidently not a coincidence anymore.

When considered on their own, all the minor errors and accidents by the Americans were on a relatively minor scale, and each of them had been apologized for accordingly, with a moral concession of a sort to the British. But when they are taken together, we see that the number of errors was quite large, and nearly all of them had to do with atomic matters. This went from "misplacing" the agreement regarding the transfer of Tube Alloys research data to the Americans back in 1943, right up to the latest batch of mistakes in Moscow. It is reasonable at this point to ask what the American sources make of all this. Was it that the inexperience of both Truman and Byrnes was of such a magnitude that the whole administration was struggling to find a common set of denominators for their politics? Was it really that domestic policy, public opinion polls and forthcoming elections would have had so much of an effect? If this was the case, then it is perhaps time to ask why those senior American experts and officials present were so lacking the political teeth that they were somehow not able to adequately perform their task of advising those in power. Indeed, we could go to great lengths to find such explanations, or perhaps we should simply ask ourselves: was all this actually intentional?

By the ninth meeting, on 23 December, the atomic control commission was starting to crop up in the discussions. The Soviets tabled a proposal of their own,

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<sup>1086</sup> No.319 United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow) to Foreign Office (Received 21 December, 2.47 p.m.), Moscow, 21 December 1945, U 10273/6550/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II (Bevin to Attlee).

which agreed in general on most of the issues. The main difference was, however, that they too wanted the commission to report to the Security Council. The delegations then agreed to resume the subject the following day based on the Soviet proposal.<sup>1087</sup> For the British, the situation was looking a little brighter as, even if there had been some horse-trading, as there had now been advances for British interests on both the peace treaty<sup>1088</sup> and the atomic fronts. Indeed, their idea of the control commission being under the Security Council was picked up by the Soviets. But it might have been that the Americans too had wanted this - suggesting something else only to then make 'reluctant' concessions to actually get what they wanted in the first place. However, the vast amount of American sources would need to be checked for this and it may well be that there is no proof of such a plan existing. So, until such proof is found, we will for the time being assume that the American plans had not been that thorough and that the British were making a fair point in their attempt to coordinate the proposals. As arranged, the atomic question was thus taken up the following day in the tenth meeting. Byrnes and Bevin delivered a new proposal to Molotov which suggested that the control commission be established on the initiative of the General Assembly, and that it would be effective by taking into account the complexity of the issues surrounding atomic energy. The commission job would be to foster the basic exchange of information about atomic energy for peaceful ends and to develop control mechanisms to safely guarantee this; and it would aim to remove atomic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction from the national arsenals of all nations via inspection and supervision. The work would be done step by step, and in addition the committee would follow the principles of the UN charter. This meant it should submit its reports and recommendations to the Security Council, and make them public. In certain cases these reports would also be circulated to ECOSOC, the General Assembly and to all member states of the UN. The control commission's members would come from the permanent member nations of the Security Council, from Canada, and from the circulating member nations of the Security Council. Each representative of the committee would have the right for assistants of his/her own choosing.<sup>1089</sup>

Byrnes seemed somewhat perturbed that the Soviets still wanted the control committee reporting to the Security Council, but Bevin rode to the rescue with a proposal that stated the Security Council should give orders only if the matter related to security. Other than that, the commission would be its own,

<sup>1087</sup> No.326 British Record of the Ninth (Formal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Saturday, 22 December 1945, at 5 p.m., 22 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II. See also No.327, Memorandum circulated by the Soviet Delegation at the Ninth Meeting, 22 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, Ibid.

<sup>1088</sup> Attlee congratulated Bevin for his success in defending the role of the Dominions, and for being able to include India in the peace negotiations. No.330 Foreign Office to United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow), Foreign Office, 23 December 1945, U 10281/7714/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II No.334 Foreign Office to United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow), Foreign Office, 23 December 1945, U 10287/7714/70, Ibid.

<sup>1089</sup> No.333 Text of the 'clean draft' on atomic energy communicated by Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes to M. Molotov at the end of the Tenth Meeting, 23 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

independent organ. Bevin used the situation to his advantage at this point, and reminded the US Foreign Secretary that this would also be a good opportunity for the spirit of the Washington Declaration to be evoked here.<sup>1090</sup> One interesting point about the proposal was that Byrnes had evidently returned to the idea of cooperating in stages, or step by step. Herken claims this was due to massive pressure from home, and from those who had been disagreeing with Byrnes' previously hasty approach.<sup>1091</sup> Another interesting point in the proposal was the idea of banning all atomic weapons. This would have meant that the US, being the only country with any atomic weapons at this stage, would actually lose out in realist terms. It was perhaps hoped that this would ease international tension and raise the morale of world politics. On another level, it would show moral leadership and goodwill *par excellence*. But Byrnes did not have total support for his plans, and there had been no talk as yet about what would happen in the inevitable transition period right up until the international ban, when the US would still have its atomic weapons (and the upper hand in realist terms). It is also noteworthy that Byrnes had probably not consulted Conant and Bohlen before the tenth meeting, as otherwise he would have heard about their support for a Security Council directed control commission, and he would have thus been less perturbed by the Soviets.

Christmas eve passed by with Molotov continuing to resist the inclusion of any policy proposals from the Washington Declaration, for the simple reason that the Soviet Union had not been one of the signatories. In answer to this, Bevin insisted on including them at least in spirit. It was thus Byrnes' turn to attempt to alleviate the situation. His proposal was that the Washington Declaration would be referred to occasionally, but not form the basis for this agreement. But this made Molotov react even more extremely, by stating that he did not want this information to be made public at all.<sup>1092</sup> This was a bitter pill for the British to swallow, having seen the Washington Declaration as giving them a certain prestige. Should no reference be made to it, then all the hard work for the declaration would be lost, as well as Britain's public image as world peacemaker and one of the keepers of the atomic secret. Later in the meeting, however, Molotov did accept some of the alterations suggested by Byrnes. Again, it seemed the interests of the Soviet Union, and bilateral negotiations with the Americans had taken precedence over British interests.

Byrnes' plan<sup>1093</sup> to clarify the atomic question had thus succeeded to some extent, and the Soviet Union's backing for the idea of international control un-

<sup>1090</sup> No.323 Draft agreed by Drafting Committee after the Seventh Meeting of the Three Foreign Ministers on 21 December 1945, for submission to the Three Ministers at the Eighth Meeting on 22 December, 21 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II.

<sup>1091</sup> Herken 1988, p.74-77; 81-86. Leinonen has considered that Truman and the Senate committee of Foreign Affairs protested because of Byrnes acting independently and stubbornly instead of him actually going against what had been agreed as such. Cf. Leinonen, 2012, p.181-182.

<sup>1092</sup> No.337. British Record of the Eleventh (Informal) Meeting of the Three Foreign Secretaries held at the Spiridonevka Palace, Moscow, on Monday, 24 December 1945, at 3 p.m., 24 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II.

<sup>1093</sup> Byrnes' intended plans see for example Herken 1988, p.69-71. Although Byrnes had seen the possible solving of the atomic energy question as a key to opening up Soviet

der the UN was secured. Nevertheless, the news from the US was that some politicians were worried about the wording of the statement from Moscow. For instance, Senator Vanderberg and his colleagues at the State Department and Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) feared that the American chance to veto would be gone were the Moscow Declaration to become the basis of the atomic control plans. The safety clauses about how the cooperation would progress - after atomic weapons had been removed from national arsenals - were only in the fourth paragraph. They were also particularly concerned as this paragraph had been modelled on the Washington Declaration.<sup>1094</sup> It thus seemed that neither Byrnes' ideas, or those of the British, had the full support of the US. American foreign policy was becoming increasingly proactive and unpredictable.

With the Moscow conference drawing to a close on 27 December, a multi-paged statement was issued about the decisions taken. A peace conference was to be held in May 1946, and the Great Powers were to play a major role there. In the light of Attlee's idealistic statements of the autumn, Moscow had been a moderate success. The Big Three had decided on establishing a Far Eastern Commission, and they supported the greater role of the United States in the Allied Council in matters concerning Japan. Korea was to become an independent state, with the support of the United States in the South, and the support of the Soviet Union in the North. All foreign states were to withdraw their troops from China as soon as possible. Romania and Bulgaria were publicly encouraged to have free elections and to develop democracy within their borders, the former was required in order for the West to recognise the the Romanian and Bulgarian governments. The only outstanding business was a declaration to establish the UN Atomic Control Commission in January 1946 upon the terms that had been decided at the tenth meeting.<sup>1095</sup> For the British, things were generally better than they had seemed before the Moscow talks, in terms of the peace treaties at least. Even if the Americans had shown a certain degree of bilateralism with the Soviets, it was just as evident that the British had a say on some issues too.<sup>1096</sup> The only stone remaining in Bevin's shoe was the matter of Persia, and to this effect he sent a stinging telegram to Molotov straight after the conference<sup>1097</sup>. In addition, the British thought that the French had become too arrogant with regards to their position in the demands they were starting to

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views on other international matters and problems, in whereas the Soviet Union had, with the lead of Molotov, turned things around: the clearing of other matters would be required in order to talk about the atomic question.

<sup>1094</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 3, p.913. DOBPO series I, vol.II. The British received the report from Mr.Ward in the United States.

<sup>1095</sup> No.356. Report of the Meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, Moscow, 27 December 1945, U 1374/20/70, DBPO ser.I,Vol.II.

<sup>1096</sup> No.361 Extract from Cabinet Conclusions C.M.(46)1 of 1 January 1946, 1 January 1946, U 166/20/70, DBPO, Ser.I,Vol.II

<sup>1097</sup> No.357 United Kingdom Delegation (Moscow) to Foreign Office (Received 28 December, 12.30 p.m.), Moscow, 28 December 1945, E 10173/20/34, DBPO Ser.I,Vol.II (Copy of Bevin's letter).

make on the British (who also had their own position to think about.<sup>1098</sup> Italy and Turkey also sent their complaints via the British representatives.<sup>1099</sup>

These messages both criticised British performance in the negotiations as having been too weak, but at the same time they indirectly testified to Britain's enduring influence among other nations by the fact that they were still relying on Britain to speak for them. The initiative in Anglo-American relations may have thus shifted more into American hands, but the British bought the explanation of Byrnes' inexperience without questioning the comments of his delegation any further. In fact, Moscow was seen as having far better results than was initially expected, even if the British had now been forced into a more reactive stance than ever vis-à-vis the Americans' more proactive atomic foreign policy.

#### 4.4 Further information please - a weak parliamentary response?

Attlee's trip to Washington was discussed in a two-day Commons adjournment debate initiated by the Government (22-23 November 1945).<sup>1100</sup> It was high time, as the Washington talks had been all over the press;<sup>1101</sup> and the opposition's much requested foreign policy debate had already been postponed due to the trip. Attlee opened the debate by presenting himself as the initiator of the talks, but dwelt more on the procedures than the content of the talks themselves. He stressed the importance of the clause which called for the removal of atomic weapons from national arsenals and then repeated the Washington Declaration. He added that decisions on the peaceful uses of atomic energy had yet to be made and so these could not yet be shared, as the technical details could still very well be used for making bombs. After all, Attlee thought that what the world needed most at this time regarding atomic affairs was more in terms of trust and security, than detailed technical information.<sup>1102</sup>

Anthony Eden (Warwick and Leamington, Conservative) expressed his suspicions about the prospects of peace, especially with regard to the Soviet delegation's behaviour that had been reported in relation to Attlee's trip.<sup>1103</sup> Anthony Nutting (Melton, Conservative) considered the way the world was beginning to split into spheres of influence and postulated that perhaps the So-

<sup>1098</sup> No.361. No.361 Extract from Cabinet Conclusions C.M.(46)1 of 1 January 1946, 1 January 1946, U 166/20/70, DBPO, Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1099</sup> No. 358. Sir N. Charles (Rome) to Mr. Bevin (Received 29 December, 2 p.m.), Rome, 29 December 1945, U 10452/50/70; And: No.359. Sir M. Peterson (Angora) to Mr. Bevin (Received 31 December, 6.45 p.m.), Angora, 31 December 1945, R 22/22/44; DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II.

<sup>1100</sup> For the whole two day debate cf. HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc601-714; HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 cc759-846.

<sup>1101</sup> *The Washington Post*, 10 November 1945: "Attlee Flying To Capital Atom Parley: London Newspapers Intimate Possible Participation in Talks by Stalin"; *The New York Times*, 11 November 1945: "ATOM BOMB POLICY MAPPED AS TRUMAN, ATTLEE OPEN TALKS..."

<sup>1102</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc601-9.

<sup>1103</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc609-19.

viets could gain atomic information in exchange for cooperation and favours done in return.<sup>1104</sup> Meanwhile, in the typical vein of party speeches from their leaders, Clement Davies (Montgomery, Liberal) was next. He attacked Churchill for his view that Britain needed to have her own atomic bombs and to cooperate with the United States;<sup>1105</sup> whereas Brigadier Christopher Peto (Barnstaple, Conservative) complimented Churchill's speech made on 7 November, which proposed the importance of security, and not giving in to any form of appeasement.<sup>1106</sup> As for Kenneth Pickthorn (Cambridge University, Conservative) and Wilson Harris (Cambridge University, Labour), they considered that mere phrases of goodwill would not do much good. International laws might well fail like indeed the old ones had, and so facts and objective views were required instead. Harris criticised the fact that the "secrets of Washington" had not been reported to the House in any way. In his opinion the world situation was not good, but perhaps it was precisely because Britain was dwelling too much on the bomb that other issues with the USSR were not being addressed; and if they were dealt with first, then this would also sort out the atomic question.<sup>1107</sup> Frederick Lee (Manchester Hulme, Labour) agreed that the atomic bomb was not the main cause of the world's problems. The press, he argued, had done much to divide the former Allies on this issue, but he also emphasised his faith in Parliament.

This Parliament can go down in history as a great Parliament which played a tremendous part in bringing the world to a sense of reality, security and idealism, which has never been known in the last 100 years.<sup>1108</sup>

He, and Henry Usborne (Birmingham Acock's Green, Labour) supported idealist and internationalist approaches to world problems like trade union cooperation, and eventual world government.<sup>1109</sup> Fred Peart (Workington, Labour) was inclined to agree with these two, and emphasised that a spheres of interest policy should be avoided at all costs, even if safeguards against aggression were required. He added that atomic matters should not poison international relations, but perhaps American capitalist and imperialist policy would, and in that case a socialist foreign policy would be the best solution.<sup>1110</sup> This was one of the "third approach" suggestions that became more prominent later on over the spring of 1946. Meanwhile, Daniel Lipson (Cheltenham, Labour) went one step further and proposed that sharing the atomic bomb with Russia could even help world peace.<sup>1111</sup> William Gallacher (Fife, Communist) said that, judging from Churchill's comments that Britain and the US were only 4 years ahead of other countries in atomic technology, it seemed inevitable that they too would soon have the bomb, which made political solutions more important than ever.

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<sup>1104</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc628-31.

<sup>1105</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc634-6.

<sup>1106</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc 682-4.

<sup>1107</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc639-46 (Pickthorn); (Harris) cc657-61.

<sup>1108</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc670.

<sup>1109</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc666-70 (Lee); (Usborne)cc678-82.

<sup>1110</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc687-91.

<sup>1111</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc691-4.

Gallacher also believed that Churchill's comments advocating an atomic arms race were highly irresponsible.<sup>1112</sup> Ernest Popplewell (Newcastle-upon-Tyne West, Labour) and Seymore Cocks (Broxtowe, Labour) were also in favour of communicating with the Soviets.<sup>1113</sup>

The debate was resumed on 23 November, with Bevin stating, among other issues, that Britain would discuss anything openly in the UN, and that any suspicions should be brought up there. The UN was going to meet in January, so there was no point having a special meeting beforehand to discuss the atomic bomb. Bevin stated that, in spite of unfair allegations, Britain would not automatically bias herself towards the western bloc - there was only friendship there. However he did add that Cabinet secrets should be kept as secret.<sup>1114</sup> He also responded to Eden's comments with one possible solution for world problems.

"[...] I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that the coming of the atomic bomb and other devastating instruments has caused offensive action to jump ahead both of defence and of the machinery of diplomacy, and the instruments capable of settling world affairs. He had a remedy with which I heartily agree. The right hon. Gentleman called it the surrender of sovereignty. [I do not want to use that word.]"<sup>1115</sup>

Arthur Salter (Oxford, Conservative) commented that, in spite of the noble intentions contained in Bevin's last comment, judging from earlier speeches and actions from Truman, Molotov, Churchill, and indeed Bevin himself, the competition and arms race had already begun and would cause more problems in the future. This is why he supported the Washington Declaration as the basis for atomic policy, in spite of its ambiguities, while remaining aware of the leading role of the United States. Canada, the US and Britain should only be seeking backing for their atomic control proposals from the Soviet Union, he believed.<sup>1116</sup> The remaining comments ranged over other foreign affairs as well, with William Teeling (Brighton Conservative) warning in realist terms about the continuing threat of Japan, and Major Hugh Fraser (Stoke, Conservative) claiming that Britain could only remain Great if her foreign policy was backed up by sanctions and the support of her Dominions. Then there were more internationalist opinions, such as Niall Macpherson (Dumfriesshire, Liberal National) stipulating that a foreign policy priority should be to ensure the atomic bomb is never used again. Meanwhile, R.A. Butler (Saffron Walden, Conservative) pondered how a "sheathed sword" might be used in diplomacy briefly, which led to William Gallacher to ask if the bomb was going to henceforth be used as a diplomatic weapon.<sup>1117</sup> The rest of the commentaries were answered by Philip

<sup>1112</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc699;701.

<sup>1113</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc711-2 (Popplewell); (Cocks) 705-8.

<sup>1114</sup> HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 on open talks and removing suspicions: cc760; 761-63; on secrets: cc771

<sup>1115</sup> HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 782-7. Eden indicated that he did not refer to "sovereignty" which Bevin apologized, but continued to emphasise giving up certain sovereignty for better world.

<sup>1116</sup> HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 cc 787-92.

<sup>1117</sup> HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 Teeling: cc797-800; Fraser: cc805-810; Macpherson: cc822; R.A. Butler: cc829 ; Gallacher: cc829.

Noel-Baker on behalf of the Government. He insisted that the return to peace would take time and effort, and that the UN would not meet for a special session just now, but would handle these issues later. He mentioned that, according to the PM, Attlee and the Soviets had already been consulted, and that the next time these matters would be considered would be before the General Assembly. In response to Michael Foot's question as to whether Britain had an ambitious foreign policy he stated that the United Nations and atomic control were an ambitious enough foreign policy.<sup>1118</sup> Again, this answer clearly committed the Government to the United Nations. So the dichotomy remained, and Bevin, just like the rest of the Government, was not laying all his cards on the table in spite of what had been promised. On the grander scale of things, the adjournment debate after Washington shows Parliament's continued interest in atomic foreign policy and comments that were either internationalist or realist, with very little in between. This underlines the pressure on the Government to pursue internationalism, as there was no widespread support for a realist policy in Parliament. Allen Scholefield's (Crewe, Labour) plea in the adjournment debate is a good example of the views held by many MPs at this time.

"I appeal to our Prime Minister, and I know I shall not plead in vain, to lead the world to peace. We believe he can do it. We have the utmost faith and confidence in him. We appeal for a declaration by this Government on the following lines: 'That this great country of ours is willing to limit its own national sovereignty.'<sup>1119</sup>

The talks in Moscow were thus seen by many parliamentarians to offer the Government a golden opportunity to do just that.

On 30 November there was one more adjournment debate about atomic matters. It was related to scientific manpower, and was initiated by Raymond Blackburn - who had caused such a furor only a month earlier. At this point his comments on atomic matters can be placed in a number of thematic categories.<sup>1120</sup> There were some related to domestic atomic developments (category five), some that were general remarks (category one), and others in connection with foreign affairs (category three). Blackburn started by asking for scientific advisors to be appointed to the Government, such as Churchill had done when he appointed Lord Cherwell as his scientific adviser during the war. He suggested that such advisers could join the House of Commons, especially considering there were far more legal than scientific experts in the House. In fact, he informed the House, he had calculated that there were roughly 80 barristers in the Commons and virtually no scientists. Some MPs protested at this point and claimed to be scientists, but Blackburn shrugged them off and claimed that he had done his research on the matter: after consulting the Association of Scientific Workers and other bodies he could confirm that there were not a single MP who was primarily a scientist. After this silenced any protests, Blackburn then proceeded to show he had also been keeping up with atomic research, referring to a certain professor Kapitza's (Kapitya) work. According to Blackburn, Britain

<sup>1118</sup> HC Deb 23 November 1945 vol 416 cc837-846.

<sup>1119</sup> HC Deb 22 November 1945 vol 416 cc638-9.

<sup>1120</sup> See chapter 1 for the full list of these categories



should invest heavily in fundamental atomic research as a basis of applied research so as not to fall behind the US and USSR. He also urged that the amount of atomic research in universities should be increased as well.<sup>1121</sup>

After a few recaps of the situation in universities and higher education in general, Herbert Morrison then answered on behalf of the Government. There would be a bill coming that would address atomic matters, he assured the House, and a committee to plan these things. It was not directly linked to the Cabinet's Scientific Advisory Committee, as that would also continue, so in that respect atomic research and planning had been tackled. More information would soon be published and everybody could rest assured that the Government held atomic research to be of the utmost importance. It would also be essential, Morrison added, that the scientists have a certain freedom, and not be guided as strictly as they had been under Lord Cherwell. The discovery of atomic energy, according to Morrison, had come about precisely because Ernest Rutherford had a penchant for "roaming" the lab.<sup>1122</sup> It seemed the more information Blackburn had available, the better he was able to put pressure on the Government to release information about specific related plans. In comparison, other MPs' questions lacked the punch. In this particular case, for example, I did not find any mention of Professor Kapitza in the executive sources made before Blackburn's comments; but from the beginning of December 1945 Professor Kapitza's research appears there out of the blue, as well as in the FO files, supplemented with Professor Ashby analyses.<sup>1123</sup>

After the flurry of parliamentary activity following Blackburn's comments and the deliberations over the Washington talks, there was little other mention of the atomic question in December 1945 and January 1946. Most of the parliamentary instances that touched on the subject in December were related mainly to the topic of returning to peacetime than the atomic question as such. Nevertheless, there was a two-day motion of censure, initiated by the opposition on 5 December which revealed that many MPs were dissatisfied with the Government performance all round, and that there was increasing parliamentary pressure. To begin with, Oliver Lyttelton<sup>1124</sup> (Aldershot, Conservative) moved for the motion<sup>1125</sup> and 100 Members requested a turn to speak, but only 30 could be accommodated according to the Speaker.<sup>1126</sup> The main argument of the motion was that the Government was not doing what it should be - organizing the full scale return to peace.

"That this House regrets that His Majesty's Government are neglecting their first duty, namely, to concentrate with full energy upon the most urgent and essential tasks of the re-conversion of our industries from war-time production to that of peace, the provision of houses, the speedy release of men and women from the Forces to industry, and the drastic curtailment of our swollen national expenditure and deplores the

<sup>1121</sup> HC Deb 30 November 1945 vol 416 cc1836-43.

<sup>1122</sup> HC Deb 30 November 1945 vol 416 cc1855-64.

<sup>1123</sup> No.258 Memorandum by Mr. Warner, Foreign Office, 6 December 1945, U 10230/6550/70, DBPO, series I, vol. II. This was about the talks with Professor Ashby.

<sup>1124</sup> MP who had been used for planted questions by the Government.

<sup>1125</sup> HC Deb 05 December 1945 vol 416 cc2334-454.

<sup>1126</sup> HC Deb 05 December 1945 vol 416 cc2334.

preoccupation of His Majesty's Ministers, impelled by Socialist theory, with the formulation of long-term schemes for nationalisation creating uncertainty over the whole field of industrial and economic activity, in direct opposition to the best interest of the nation, which demands food, work and homes."<sup>1127</sup>

On 6 December, after the adjournment debate had been postponed for two hours, Churchill picked up the motion for further debate.<sup>1128</sup> This ended in division across the House by the evening and the motion was rejected by a recorded vote of 381 noes to 197 ayes. Interestingly the Government's leading atomic advisor, John Anderson, was among those voting on behalf of the motion.<sup>1129</sup> Also Lyttelton was the MP who would plant questions for the Government later in January.<sup>1130</sup> The voting figures not only show that Parliament was again supervising and pressurising the Government, but that the division went mainly along party lines too. Whether this would remain an issue divided along party lines, however, was uncertain.

The Conference of Foreign Secretaries in Moscow did not attract much attention in Parliament. This was possibly due to its last-minute scheduling and the pace of the talks themselves, but also due to the Christmas recess of Parliament. In December there were only 14 days of sittings altogether and there were only five parliamentary instances related remotely to atomic affairs, as much of the limited parliamentary time devoted to atomic matters was used to cover the ever increasing number of parliamentary questions, both oral and written. One of them occurred in the House of Lords on 3 December 1945, and related to the hydroelectric powerplant plans for Scotland, and whether they would be required in an atomic age.<sup>1131</sup> This instance thus belonged to the thematic categories of domestic developments (category five) and the miscellaneous, peaceful potentials of atomic energy (category six). One of the instances in the House of Commons also belonged to category six. Peter Freeman (Newport, Labour) had asked in a written question how many animal tests had been required to investigate the effects of atomic energy, and where these tests had been conducted. Home Secretary James Chuter Ede replied that he had not been aware of such tests being carried out.<sup>1132</sup>

The three remaining cases were all oral questions, and related to atomic foreign policy and defence. On 3 December 1945, Raymond Blackburn "asked the Prime Minister what steps are being taken to associate the U.S.S.R. and France with the proposals to be laid before the Assembly of the United Nations by the U.S.A., Britain and Canada for the control of atomic energy."<sup>1133</sup> Attlee answered that just as stipulated in the Washington Declaration, Britain was now consulting with the other members of the tripartite declaration to decide just how this matter should be presented to the UN. He also hoped to be able to

<sup>1127</sup> HC Deb 5 December vol 416 cc2335-2338.

<sup>1128</sup> HC Deb 06 December 1945 vol 416 cc2530-99.

<sup>1129</sup> HC Deb 06 Dec 1945 vol 416 c2641.

<sup>1130</sup> TNA CAB 104, Draft reply for question by Mr. Gammans 28 January 1946 (E. Bridges for N.Brook). See also HC Deb 29 January 1946 vol 418 cc682-684.

<sup>1131</sup> HL Deb 03 December 1945 vol 138 cc207-55.

<sup>1132</sup> HC Deb 20 December 1945 vol 417 cc1647-8W

<sup>1133</sup> HC Deb 03 December 1945 vol 416 c1908

make a full statement on the matter. Of course, this was not enough for Blackburn, and using the well-known strategy of presenting the second, more pertinent part of the question as a supplementary one to the first,<sup>1134</sup> he drove his point home.

“May we take it that, in the meanwhile, it would be in accordance with the policy of His Majesty’s Government for the permanent members of the Security Council to be associated at the earliest possible opportunity with the proposals to be laid before the Assembly of the United Nations in January?”<sup>1135</sup>

To this, Attlee could only reply that it seemed “rather to anticipate the decision.”<sup>1136</sup> This last example once again reveals the importance of oral questions in Parliament’s supervision of the executive. It also shows how background information is vital if one is to formulate the questions well. Moreover, the timing of the question was such that it showed that Blackburn, with his great interest in atomic matters, was one MP at least who was interested in what was going on in Moscow. Connecting the dots between the Washington Declaration, the UN control plans, Moscow, and enquiring about whether the Government was going to emphasise the Security Council’s role in the atomic control commission, it is clear that this was putting pressure on the Government. It had publicly declared a UN-focused policy, and the seriousness of this commitment was now at stake. Supporting the control measures before the talks with Soviets would show that Britain was sincere about this policy. Furthermore, allowing the Soviets and France to be included in controlling the commission indicates that there was wide support for internationalism.

The less directly related instances of the atomic question cropping up were in the lengthy debates about the loan agreement from the US, but they are not covered extensively here, even if the Americans seemed to be using them as both stick and carrot against the British. In general, MPs were annoyed about the harsh terms the Americans were offering. This was noticed by the Government as well.<sup>1137</sup> Together with the motion for censure, the lengthy debates about the loan also used up much of the limited parliamentary time for discussing atomic matters. This would be one reason to explain the dearth of instances in this period; another was MPs waiting to see the outcome of the Moscow talks. Indeed, Cyril Osborne (Louth, Conservative) seemed to fear a poor outcome, judging from his oral question about whether the Government had considered moving armament factories to the Dominions, out of the range of atomic at-

<sup>1134</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.78-79; 84, 86; 109-111. Asking additional question, ie. supplementing the original was allowed when asking oral questions. This made it possible to hide the actual point, as the Government representatives knew only of the pre submitted questions. In preparing answers for the ministers, the possible “supplementary questions” were also considered, at least if the topic was delicate.

<sup>1135</sup> HC Deb 03 December 1945 vol 416 c1908

<sup>1136</sup> HC Deb 03 December 1945 vol 416 c1908

<sup>1137</sup> HC Deb 12 December 1945 vol 417 cc421-558. No.2 Letter from Sir W. Eady (Treasury) to Mr. R.H. Brand (Washington) [Brand MSS/197], Treasury Chambers, 22 December 1945, [Brand MSS/197], DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

tacks.<sup>1138</sup> This would have been quite a realist precaution to take; so it is interesting that Attlee's reply denied all realist intentions.

"No, Sir. I favour a more positive approach to this problem."<sup>1139</sup>

Attlee did not reveal what this approach was, but again the timing would lead one to suppose that he was hoping for a favourable outcome from Moscow, regarding the UN control plans. What he did not reveal, of course, was that there was also secret cooperation brewing, should these plans fail. In that case Britain would perhaps have a deterrent to use. Osborne was not convinced however. In his supplementary question he expressed his worries, and said that he had heard from high-ranking military sources that a "dozen well-placed bombs could put us at great disadvantage" and therefore before an effective form of world government was established, Britain's security still relied on armaments (which should be protected).<sup>1140</sup>

Only one of the instances related to the Moscow conference directly. When Malcolm Bullock (Waterloo, Conservative) asked on 12 December 1945 whether the Government had any statement to make about the forthcoming negotiations in Moscow, Bevin agreed to give a short summary at the end after the other questions, in which he apologised for the short notice, and then read a part of the original statement issued on the matter.

"I apologise to hon. Members that it was not possible to make in this House the first announcement of the forthcoming meeting at Moscow. The final arrangements were made at very short notice and for reasons outside my control the announcement had to be released in the early hours of 8th December. [...] The meeting will provide an opportunity for the British, Soviet and American Governments for informal and exploratory discussions on a number of matters of current concern to the three Governments, and also for an exchange of views on the subject of the control of atomic energy."<sup>1141</sup>

Churchill complimented Bevin on these plans and underlined the importance of the "Big Three" in showing a lead in world affairs.<sup>1142</sup> But the topic did not go any further, and Parliament adjourned for the Christmas Recess from 20 December to 22 January 1946. In January demands for more detailed information about atomic research were voiced in a four lengthy handlings of oral questions in the House of Commons, and there were two additional miscellaneous instances in the House of Lords. The first of the four instances in the Commons was when Viscount Hinchinbrooke (Dorset South, Conservative) asked if Britain would be aiming to collaborate with the US in their atomic tests in the future, and whether it was "desirable and consistent with the principle of joint experimentation developed during the war."<sup>1143</sup> Attlee replied that continued cooperation was indeed one of the topics that was under consideration in talks

<sup>1138</sup> HC Deb 05 December 1945 vol 416 cc2319-20

<sup>1139</sup> HC Deb 05 December 1945 vol 416 cc2319-20.

<sup>1140</sup> HC Deb 05 December 1945 vol 416 cc2319-20.

<sup>1141</sup> HC Deb 12 December 1945 vol 417 cc381-2

<sup>1142</sup> HC Deb 12 December 1945 vol 417 cc381-2

<sup>1143</sup> HC Deb 28 January 1946 vol 418 cc541.

with the US. This was then followed with a surprising and blunt supplementary question from David Gammans (Hornsey, Conservative) asking if Britain had any rights to an atomic weapon. Attlee avoided an answer by abruptly pointing out that this was a totally different question. This then led to a third conservative MP expressing his annoyance at such evasiveness.<sup>1144</sup> This last interception is covered in later chapters more fully, because they cover the increasing critical sentiment in Parliament and the campaign against atomic testing, which is the proper context for that comment.

Another kind of criticism came on 29 January from the same Oliver Lyttelton who had begun the motion of censure a month earlier, but this was in the form of an oral question. Lyttelton wanted to know whether Britain had arranged for any atomic research to be conducted at home. Attlee tried to keep the answers short, referring mainly to his answer on 29 October 1945 in which he had announced domestic research plans, even if this had primarily been to put pressure on the reluctant Americans to negotiate about Anglo-American cooperation. Attlee stated that all forms of atomic energy would be looked into and raw materials and other resources would be obtained as soon as possible, with the Ministry of Supply in charge and the project under public control.<sup>1145</sup> This means Gowing's comment about hiding the project under the Ministry of Supply figures<sup>1146</sup> is not entirely correct. The expenses might have been hidden there, but it was stated out in the open that the Ministry of Supply would be in charge of British atomic research! When Raymond Blackburn pressed Attlee on whether the focus would be on weapon applications, Attlee responded only that the intention was to produce raw material for all atomic research. In answer to Ralph Glyn's question about when the research facility would be up and running, Attlee stated that he could not say for now.<sup>1147</sup> During the same day that these questions were being fielded, David Gammans asked the Prime Minister what arrangements had "been made with the U.S.A. regarding the pooling of information with Great Britain"<sup>1148</sup> (regarding what was known about atomic bombs up to this point). Gammans then went on to ask about the British being invited to the atomic tests, which is also covered in the following chapters (as it explores that context more fully). The question about the pooling of the information was a difficult one, as Attlee's regime had committed to an internationalist policy and no secret deals. Stating publicly that information was being pooled would have caused great alarm both at home and abroad. Both UN control plans and the fragile Anglo-American cooperation (that was beginning to tentatively take shape with the redrafting of the Quebec Agreement and Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire) could have been scotched by Soviet and American anger respectively. Especially since the Americans were becoming more and

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<sup>1144</sup> HC Deb 28 January 1946 vol 418 cc541.

<sup>1145</sup> HC Deb 29 Jan 1946 vol 418 cc682-683.

<sup>1146</sup> Gowing 1974 p.48-55.

<sup>1147</sup> HC Deb 29 Jan 1946 vol 418 cc682-683.

<sup>1148</sup> HC Deb 29 Jan 1946 vol 418 cc684.

more tempted by having a monopoly in atomic matters,<sup>1149</sup> even if Byrnes had made thinly veiled attempts to disguise this by making suitable noises about UN control. So for these reasons, Attlee answered as evasively as possible.

“We have throughout worked in close consultation with the United States Government on this, as on other aspects of atomic energy. As regards the second part of the Question, I would refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to the hon. Member for South Dorset (Viscount Hinchinbrooke) yesterday.”

But Gammans was not content to let this go and pressed further.

“In view of the fact that the early experiments were very largely started in this country and we shared our secrets with the United States, does the answer of the Prime Minister mean that the United States acknowledges our right to share in the results of these experiments?”<sup>1150</sup>

He was clearly asking here whether the United States was actually prepared to share this knowledge with Britain. Attlee was in a tight spot here and attempted a diversion, but eventually he had to say that Britain did not have direct access to that information at the moment.

“No, Sir. My answer states that we are working in close cooperation with the United States. The answer I gave yesterday showed we are in close consultation on the question of these experiments.”<sup>1151</sup>

The follow-up to this came a couple of days later, on 31 January, though it did not shine the spotlight of interrogation quite so specifically on the US not sharing atomic secrets with Britain. Instead, Blackburn’s focus was on the promise of cooperation.

“[He] asked the prime minister whether he is satisfied that the contemplated scale of the British research and production in relation to atomic energy is sufficient to ensure the industrial future of this country in five or ten years’ time against competition by any other Power: and when it is contemplated that Britain will be able to manufacture plutonium at the minimum significant rate, say, 100 grammes per day.”<sup>1152</sup>

Attlee answered that he would favour cooperation with others over competition, and that the Government would work so that production and research would be sufficient.<sup>1153</sup> This became the defining approach also in the late winter and early spring, but little did Attlee know quite how difficult atomic affairs would prove to be.

Whereas parliamentary activity with regard to atomic affairs was generally limited in December, it was more significant in January. Though Parliament was hampered by limited time, recess, and lack of information it focused on asking for more information about practicalities from the Government. Atomic

<sup>1149</sup> Harbut 1986, p.176-177. Public sentiment did not support these views, the idea of international control grew stronger from August 1945 onwards, cf. Erskine, 1963, p.164-167.

<sup>1150</sup> HC Deb 29 Jan 1946 vol 418 cc684.

<sup>1151</sup> HC Deb 29 Jan 1946 vol 418 cc684.

<sup>1152</sup> HC Deb 31 January 1946 vol 418 cc1100-1101.

<sup>1153</sup> HC Deb 31 January 1946 vol 418 cc1100-1101.

matters had become more specific and they required expertise on the part of the questioners. This meant it was harder for Parliament to discuss the topic so widely, and easier for the Government to exercise control over it, as policy had now been devised and implemented, even if it was still somewhat up in the air. The atomic policies advocating both UN control and secret cooperation now seemed to be under way. The period of waiting had now begun before the next turn of events and the corresponding reaction in British atomic foreign policy.

## **5 PHASE FOUR: SITTING ON THE FENCE - EMERGING PROBLEMS IN ANGLO-AMERICAN ATOMIC COLLABORATION (FEB 1946 - MARCH 1946)**

February and March marked a fourth phase in the post-war period that was characterized by ambiguity and sluggishness in British atomic foreign policy as if the country was sitting on a fence, waiting for something to happen, before knowing what to do next. The US had taken a proactive stance in Moscow, and the British had now been forced on to the back foot. A chance to consolidate the promised cooperation with the United States still existed, and Britain seemed also to have gained a place, if she so wished, at the forthcoming US atomic trials on Bikini Atoll. At the same time, the United Nations had started its work, and the intended atomic control commission had the support of the Big Three. Atomic affairs had thus moved on to more concrete technical matters. Another upshot of this, however was that Parliament could not so easily obtain atomic information and thereby supervise the Government. In addition, Britain hardened her stance towards the Soviet Union, and American support for this was seen as vital. In effect, this 'common enemy' approach was also used as part of British attempts to cement closer ties with the US and pursue atomic matters together more closely as well. James L. Gormly was already claiming in March 1946 that the Grand Alliance had collapsed, even if the Cold War had not yet quite started.<sup>1154</sup>

But there was a shock in store for the British. The Americans had first stalled cooperation for no reason, and then only some time later they suddenly claimed this was because it required UN approval under article XIV, paragraph 102 of the UN Charter, which required this for any new agreements which had promised full and effective cooperation. The basis for this was that there had been a spy scare caused by the exposure of some British atomic scientists belonging to a Russian spy ring in Canada. It proved the perfect opportunity for the reluctant Americans call off the collaboration for security reasons, and matched growing public sentiment in the US that was against sharing the new

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<sup>1154</sup> Gormly 1987, p.154-55.



technology. It also would have bought the Americans time to secretly alter domestic legislation to make Anglo-American atomic cooperation nigh impossible. The British executive could do nothing about this except sit on the fence at this point, being only able to react to the constant flow of new developments and simultaneously juggle with the bidirectional approach to atomic foreign policy that still lingered and hindered any proactive policy. The Government had, however, managed to curb parliamentary interest in atomic matters (which appeased a US that was loathe for anything to be made even semi-public). The downside of this was that there were eventually awkward demands for Britain find a third way in atomic foreign policy.

To try and resolve this deadlock, the FO went through other aspects of foreign and financial policy. Britain became more aware that the US was attempting to guide world affairs via economic policy. At the same time, the American domestic legislation that was under preparation was not seen as a particular threat to Anglo-American collaboration. Even the appeal to the UN Charter was seen as just some kind of another delay of some sort too, rather than anything more permanent. Perhaps British officials thought it was just part of a strategy to affect the ongoing negotiations about cooperation that were happening at that time in the Combined Policy Committee meetings. Meanwhile, Parliament continued to monitor Government activity, as the budget estimates were debated more fully in March and some further information made available. Defence, and the future role of the armed forces played a key role in these debates, relating as they did to Britain's possible atomic capability. But in fact, matters were discussed touching on all six thematic categories, even if this phase was marked by an overall decrease in parliamentary activity (see table of parliamentary instances in appendix 1. Meanwhile, support for the Soviet Union in terms of foreign policy, and especially atomic matters, faded almost completely due to Soviet aggression. Another tendency found in parliamentary coverage was the growing general criticism of how the Government was conducting affairs, raising reasonable doubt about the alleged consensus of the post-war British politics. There was also growing scrutiny of American policy.

International atomic control was a topic that made a comeback in parliamentary discussions in this phase too, an example being the question of raw materials, inspired by American Acheson-Lilienthal report. The case of international control had been, after all, "legitimized" by earlier debates centred around ratification of the UN Charter, and the declarations issued in Washington and Moscow, and the ensuing press coverage. After all parliamentary coverage of a topic was often proportional to the amount of press coverage (especially in foreign affairs).

## 5.1 Realism ensues - attempts to revive secret cooperation by any means

### 5.1.1 Taking stock of American policy

The aftermath of the Moscow conference was eventually rather tame, and the results were, if slightly alarming in terms of Byrnes' fluctuating policy, at least tolerable for the British. Byrnes's often troublesome activity had also actually brought some concrete results. The proposal about the international control organ to be established for supervising and regulating the use and research of atomic technology had even gained Soviet acceptance, even if it was a *modus vivendi*.<sup>1155</sup> There was also no denying that the Moscow meetings had moved negotiations about the peace talks forward, which had been totally stuck since the first round of the Council of Foreign Secretaries in London. In addition to this, certain acute international problems had been alleviated, even if this was at the expense of British prestige.

Soviet pressure on Britain continued throughout the winter however, as did its attacks via the media. The Americans in turn, appeared to be anxious to get out of Europe, and instead focus on their own spheres of interest. The high-ranking American officials' criticisms of Byrnes, and Byrnes' concessions to the Soviets puzzled the British. The scarcity of food in Britain, as well as the difficult financial situation were causing major domestic worries, and drove the point home that remaining as the kind of Great Power Britain had been for so long, might prove an impossible task in the current situation. The British nevertheless tried to maintain close relations with the US, whilst protecting their own interests and independent policies at the same time. For instance, speaking on behalf of "smaller states" seemed one way to improve regional status and thus international standing.<sup>1156</sup> Dependency on the Americans was inevitable, or else a total change of policy would have been required. Cooperation with them, and attempts to "guide" them, were seen as the way out of this sticky situation.

Within the Anglo-American axis of cooperation, atomic collaboration was one of the most important parts. The shift from early internationalism to post-war realism had happened in Washington with the secret plan; and it was a dominating current in Government despite the largely internationalist results of Moscow conference. If the the two states could be tied together by this atomic 'bond', perhaps other issues could be solved, too, and vice versa. In addition, being an atomic partner would help secure Britain's position as the most favourable partner of the United States. This would mean that in the international competition of power and prestige, Britain would remain on the winners' podium, even if it would only get the bronze medal.

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<sup>1155</sup> Not to be mistaken for the later *modus vivendi* between the British and Americans 1947/48.

<sup>1156</sup> See for instance Kaplan 1957, p.53-57 about classical division in international relations and prestige being an important factor in competitive Great Power politics.

However, being one of the “guardians” of the atomic secrets seemed to be a problematic goal in itself as well. The promising results of the Washington negotiations seemed to have been fleeting after all; the intended agreement, confirmed by heads of states and fleshed out in the Anderson-Groves memorandum, never actually materialized. The work had been slow and difficult. At the same time, important raw materials kept on flowing to the US storage facilities, as had been agreed by earlier CDT agreements. The Americans somehow took these to be still in full effect while the CPC and other older agreements were seen to be conveniently out of date. In addition, the Americans were pressurising the British in many other ways. They brought up topics such as military bases in the Caribbean, civil aviation, and trade and economic matters - as will be presented below. The other matter, that was complicated in itself, was the establishment of the international atomic control organ within the UN. Finally, the world situation was not good. The Soviets refused to withdraw from Persia, and they continued to put pressure on Turkey too.<sup>1157</sup> Britain had to rely more and more on a reactionary foreign policy, adjusting her own plans according to the others’ to stay one of the Big Three, even if that meant as merely a junior partner of the US. It seems the British had come to realize the steady shift towards bipolarity in world affairs. Later in the spring this was made apparent in Parliament by some MPs too. The tripolar Great Power system seemed, after all, to have been specifically for war-time purposes only. This is why it was essential to grasp the big picture of US foreign policy in order to consolidate a special relationship that would help serve British interests (especially atomic cooperation). To this end, a thorough coverage of the wider frame of British foreign policy related to the US is covered in this section as well.

The American public and administration had a largely negative view of the British it seemed.<sup>1158</sup> So while Foreign Secretary Bevin was preparing for the conference in Moscow, the British Ambassador to the US, Lord Halifax, sent a review to the FO of American foreign policy. This review had been put together by the British chargé d’affaires John Balfour, and aimed to help the British improve their position with the Americans. Balfour brought up the notion, that the US held the Soviets as their peer in terms of power and as the only country which could threaten America’s global status or (extended) security. The Pacific Ocean and South America were considered to be within the US sphere of interest, in fact as its ‘backyard’. Any attempt by the Soviets to gain a position of some sort in these areas, or activity considered as such, was regarded as an infringement by the Americans. Likewise, the activities of the USSR in Eastern Europe and its apparent ambitions in the Middle-East were not seen in a posi-

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<sup>1157</sup> Soviet troops were supporting Persian separatists who supported establishing a state of Azerbadjan. USSR for instance prevented the Persian army’s movements to the problem areas. In the question of Turkey, the Soviets were claimed to pressure Turkey to allow more leverage and room for Soviet (naval) mobility in the Meditarrean and Black Sea region. Possibly the Soviets were also after military bases in the region. Cf. Harbut, 1986, p. 116-122.

<sup>1158</sup> For instance: Weiler 1987, p.58.

tive light by the Americans.<sup>1159</sup> Interestingly, the British had not been informed of this growing anxiety with Soviet policy in the US administration, judging at least from the sources used for the present study.

It was apparent to Balfour that the US wanted to take care of its own business within its self-proclaimed backyard.<sup>1160</sup> According to the public statements about US foreign policy aims, it sought to take care of any problems within the auspices of the UN, sought a policy of peace, supported a liberal economic policy, and wanted to establish a fair system of free-trade around the globe. Stability was to be attained through the aforementioned trade and economic policy, while the UN was seen by most as the tool to take care of American-Soviet issues. Despite these high moral goals made in public, the US also wanted to secure its own interests and premier position around the world. A variety of international arrangements had thus been made, so that if the notion of "one world" coined by Roosevelt, was to ever break down, the US would be ready for that eventuality too. Balfour said that the Americans urgently wanted to create a multilayered safety network before the Security Council of the UN was in full force and might prevent this. However, despite the preference for a security policy via the UN and economic ties, the US did not seem to shy away from a direct power policy too, as the issue of the Balkan states had shown. Soviet activity there had prompted a swift and even harsh response from the Americans.<sup>1161</sup>

The British should have had every reason to wonder whether the UN was a proxy, and simply a means for the US to steer other states' interests towards their own after having first secured their own preferential position in the world. But just as with atomic affairs, this was not a consideration in Balfour's report. Balfour did not, for instance, take note of the fact that despite their hurry to create a safety network for themselves, the Americans were less concerned about making sure atomic cooperation was up and running before any possible UN interference. Balfour was nevertheless aware that American policy was not only characterised by "bipolarity", but also a certain degree of bidirectionality. Political realism and a direct power policy did not go hand in hand so easily with the idealistic notions that Roosevelt had espoused. Balfour mentioned that, if anyone, Roosevelt had been the one to juggle these two approaches most effectively, whereas the current regime was far from ever grasping the notions behind such a bidirectional policy.

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<sup>1159</sup> No.1 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 21 December) No. 1588 [AN 3853/35/45], Washington, 12 December 1945, [AN 3853/35/45] (Received only on 21 December 1945) DBPO, series I, vol.IV. This message conveys Balfour's memorandum for Bevin.

<sup>1160</sup> Korea was an example of the US alone not being able to push through the arrangements they preferred. The case example of Korea is anyways useful in depicting the head strong sphere of interest policy or at least the attitude behind it, the Americans had.

<sup>1161</sup> No.1 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 21 December) No. 1588 [AN 3853/35/45], Washington, 12 December 1945, [AN 3853/35/45]. (Received only on 21 December 1945) DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

"9. The present Administration lacks the inspired leadership which marked the regime of Mr. Roosevelt - Whereas the late president, with an admirable sense of timing and how far he could guide the American public opinion in any given direction, would point the way for the country to follow, Mr. Truman and his associated are disposed to chart their course in the manner best calculated to propiate what they conceive to be the prevailing sentiments of Congress and of important pressure groups."<sup>1162</sup>

In other words, Roosevelt had understood how far unilateral decisions could be taken, before it was time for international cooperation. According to Balfour's report, Truman's regime and foreign policy was kept on a (short) leash by Congress and public opinion. Balfour mentioned the recent loan negotiations with Britain as an illustration of this. In their attempt to please Congress and the public, the American delegation had dictated terms for the loan agreement which were completely unviable for Britain and meant it was unable to counter the Soviet threat in Europe. Balfour's review of American policy is stinging in its accuracy, but somehow implicitly conveys the impression that, with the right kind of policy from the British, this state of affairs could be altered.

Halifax subscribed wholeheartedly to Balfour's review. With the pro-British Roosevelt gone, there was indeed uncertainty and ambivalence, if not downright contradictory interests in the Truman administration. The former isolationism had given way to the policy of "America first", and those who had supported international cooperation before were now inclined to "outsource" this all to the UN, thereby decreasing American responsibility and accountability in turn. Halifax could see that the Americans were finally interested in world affairs, which for the British was in principle a good thing for the world (as the British were no longer able to lead alone). However, it was clear that the US had become interested in world affairs in a mostly self-interested way. All the same, it was better than total isolationism, as it could intervene in some areas where the British had interests, but no resources to pursue them. And in spite of "America first" being likely to have some repercussions for the British later, Halifax thought they should encourage the US to take even more responsibility in the world, and "help" it to do so, as that would best serve British interests.<sup>1163</sup> Recognising the inevitable stronger position of the United States, and Britain's own limits, was one of the key points in the commentaries of not only Halifax, but Keynes as well. However, Halifax had the added belief that British diplomacy was somehow still superior, and could maybe influence the Americans enough to preserve Britain's world status in many other respects. It might also explain why the British response to the recent turn of events was to carry on sitting on the fence.

In many respects, Balfour felt that the Americans were rather oversimplifying the international tasks and duties Britain had. For example, the US

<sup>1162</sup> No.1 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 21 December) No. 1588 [AN 3853/35/45], Washington, 12 December 1945, [AN 3853/35/45]. (Received only on 21 December 1945) DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

<sup>1163</sup> No.1 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 21 December) No. 1588 [AN 3853/35/45], Washington, 12 December 1945, [AN 3853/35/45], DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

seemed keen to criticise Britain for alleged imperialist attitudes that would unnecessarily cause conflicts around the world; and yet the US evidently had 'imperial' interests of its own in Latin America, for example, where it had imposed an economic system geared in its favour. Nevertheless, some Americans seemed to think that keeping Britain moderately strong would enhance America's relative power, and so Balfour thought this might be something the Americans wanted to keep up. At the same time, it was clear to Balfour from the recent talks in Moscow that the Americans preferred horsetrading with the Soviets than the British, while remaining outraged if the Soviets and British appeared to be doing so as well. The Americans saw themselves as the mediators bargaining for peace and prosperity; and using the British as leverage to advance American interests<sup>1164</sup> did not seem to be a problem at all. In fact it should be possible to take advantage of the good relations and contacts of the British throughout the world.<sup>1165</sup>

As we have seen, the British likewise felt they could benefit from certain advantages of the US position, but where British foreign policy differed from American was that it acknowledged having the weakened position. Britain's ideals and own interests were important to pursue in themselves, but it was perhaps more pressing to guide the giant ally to pursue them. The age-old realist approach of being prepared for the worst possible scenario was the best policy for the British to have. It was clear, for example, that the loan agreements had been quite brutally directed against British interests to secure a dominant economic position for the US, even if Keynes had eventually managed to make the most of these negotiations in spite of criticism from home. What made matters poignantly worse was the evident wealth and abundance of food in the US at the same time as the Americans were prepared to call back their loan. Britain had to agree to the terms of the Bretton Woods system, that many parliamentarians felt were geared more to US interests than any other single nation's, and open her markets for external trade. But the huge costs of the war, not to mention reconstruction, made it implicitly necessary to follow the American terms. For example, getting food aid required doing favours in return.

One example of this was that Britain was asked to reduce her volume of trade with Argentina,<sup>1166</sup> which confirms Balfour's analysis of the US wanting to be the top dog in their alleged 'backyard'. Bevin duly promised the US to clear up the situation (even if this was, to some extent, a delaying tactic) by agreeing to put on hold the favourable arrangement that Britain had had until then, selling Argentina her military surplus in exchange for important supplies

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<sup>1164</sup> For instance better trade relations and the support for the peronists.

<sup>1165</sup> No.1 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 21 December) No. 1588 [AN 3853/35/45], Washington, 12 December 1945, [AN 3853/35/45]. DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

<sup>1166</sup> Likewise the United States seemed to take badly the intended British arms-trade with Argentine. The United States had claimed it be a threat for the American safety. Bevin had attempted to appeal to the long history of Argentine-Britain trade-relations, even to a sense of gratitude or debt that the British had for Argentine, which had offered Britain more than fair trade-deals throughout the war, in order to help to secure British food supply.

of meat. But this was annoying for the British, as it was an important trade deal that was vital for the post-war British economy. The Government was now also aware of mounting scrutiny from Parliament over the US taking economic advantage.<sup>1167</sup>

The Bretton Woods agreement, with all its related requirements, was thus viewed with some scepticism and wariness by many of the executive (and a growing number in Parliament), and the British wanted to avoid committing to it until the loan renewal was fully accepted by the US Congress. It was becoming more and more evident that the Bretton Woods system was for those with vested interests rather than for the benefit of the world.<sup>1168</sup> This is illuminating, as it shows that in almost every other agreement or deal with the US, the British had doubts about American intentions. But when it came to atomic matters, the British preferred to give the US the benefit of the doubt. Judging from the written source material, the British still felt they had things under control right up to the end of this fourth phase in the Anglo-American relationship. In economic terms, victory in the Second World War had been Pyrrhic for Britain.<sup>1169</sup> She was left battered and broke, no matter how delicate and effective her diplomacy

<sup>1167</sup> No.2 Letter from Sir W. Eady (Treasury) to Mr. R.H. Brand (Washington) [Brand MSS/197], Treasury Chambers, 22 December 1945, [Brand MSS/197], DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

No.5 Letter from Economic Relations Department to Chanceries Overseas [UE 6518/1094/53], Foreign Office, 7 January 1946, [UE 6518/1094/53]Ibid. The British debt had mentioned to be £3 500 000 000 and that foreign possessions had been liquidated during the war for the worth well over £1 000 000 000. The end of the letter describes bitterly that those states, who had lost early in the war, had fared rather well economically, in whereas those, who had waged war until the end were doing poorly. About the food aid and British-Argentine relations see: No.7 British Food Mission (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 11 January, 12.10 p.m.) No. 6483 AMAZE Telegramic [UR 229/104/851], Washington, 9 January 1946, [UR 229/104/851] (received 11 January 1946) Ibid. At the same time, knowing about the poor food supply in Britain, Argentine had expressed its interest in gaining the Falkland Islands. No.8 Sir D. Kelly (Buenos Aires) to Mr. Bevin (Received 22 January) No. 7 [AS 452/311/2], Buenos Aires, 10th January 1946, [AS 452/311/2]Ibid. About the possible arms trade with Argentine: No.11 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 574 Telegramic [AS 6749/48/51], Foreign Office, 16 January 1946, [AS 6749/48/51]; Ibid. About the American interest in preventing British fighter plane sales to Argentine, see No.30. Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 1417 Telegramic [AS 688/2/2], Foreign Office, 12 February 1946, [AS 688/2/2] Ibid. (also footnote in Bullen 1985, p.110-111); Concerning food supply: No.29 Memorandum by Mr. Perowne on Argentina [AS 909/126/2], Foreign Office, 11 February 1946, [AS 909/126/2], Ibid.

<sup>1168</sup> On the progress of Bretton Woods: No.14 Draft Memorandum on exchange of telegrams between the Treasury and the UKT.D. (Washington) on the setting-up of the Bretton Woods organisations [UE 288/6/53], Foreign Office, January 1946, [UE 288/6/53], DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

<sup>1169</sup> Charmley 2001, p.6-8, states that the debt was about £3,5 billion in 1945 currency, in addition about a quarter of the national assets had been spent in war efforts.. Bullock 1984, p.49-50 mentions £3,3 billion pounds of loans, before the war the £476 million. According to Bullock the war had cost £7,3billion (in 1945 currency). This is also confirmed by Carr 1993, p.135-136. The concept of "Financial Dunkirk", used by Lord Keynes to define the British economic situation, especially with the cut of the lend-lease was more than apt. Cf. Bullock, 1984, p.121; Morgan 1992, p.65; Morgan 1984, p.144-145.

was. There was only so much that her soft power<sup>1170</sup> could do, while all the time it was becoming clear that a realist basis for power was increasingly desirable. American foreign policy was progressively focusing on policies which aimed at undermining the relative power of others, not only in what the US considered its backyard, or its sphere of influence, but on a global scale too. To the dismay of the British, the first meeting of the IMF in Savannah (1946) confirmed this. By wanting to lead the international economy, the US also wanted to establish for itself a network of economic support and establish a block of followers; and it seemed that this was to be achieved no matter what the cost.<sup>1171</sup>

As suggested briefly earlier, atomic foreign policy matters did not only depend on economic and financial issues. There was, for example, the question of civil aviation that the Americans kept referring to. In spite of this misleading label, this topic was in fact related to covert military cooperation and planning, and not just commercial interests. The Americans wanted to attain certain British-held military airbases for their own civilian and military use. They also wanted to have the right to close other bases in the event that, for example, their military might need them for training.<sup>1172</sup> This request was brought up by the US, apparently out of the blue, when they were supposed to be discussing atomic cooperation in Washington; and the Americans had hinted that a favourable outcome to it would probably improve the British chances of securing a favourable resolution for the loan agreement from Congress. Bevin had first delayed answering these requests, and now was even considering rejecting them. He argued that other countries had to be taken into account in any possible decision made about the future of civil aviation.<sup>1173</sup> Barker mentions, however, that Bevin's hand was swayed in the end by the Chiefs of Staff who thought that a maximum level of cooperation with the US would be more than desirable.<sup>1174</sup>

At this point the situation was not good from the British point of view. The USSR was pressurising the British from one side, and the alleged ally was demanding more and more for its money on the other, and even then it was only giving vague promises of any money. Britain was closer to famine every day and people were without proper housing, so the Government was in a very tight position. The prioritisation of matters in Labour's policy was difficult

<sup>1170</sup> On soft power see for instance Nye, 1990.

<sup>1171</sup> No.57 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 29 March) No. 214 Saving Telegramic [UE 1400/69/53], Washington, 27 March 1946, [UE 1400/69/53] about the economic negotiations on 16 March to 22 March 1946. DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

<sup>1172</sup> No.23. Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 1174 Telegramic [AN 3931/101/45], Foreign Office, 5 February 1946, [AN 3931/101/45] Bevin had discussed about the bases twice with Byrnes before the latter had returned to the United States. No.25 Letter from Mr. Wright (Washington) to Mr. Mason [AN 408/101/45], Washington, 5 February 1946, [AN 408/101/45], Ibid.

<sup>1173</sup> No.3 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 12873 Telegramic [W 16381/24/802], Foreign Office, 23 December 1945, [W 16381/24/802] DBPO, series I, vol.IV. No.4 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 13118 Telegramic [W 15978/182/802], Foreign Office, 30 December 1945, [W 15978/182/802], Ibid. No.12 Note by Mr. Cribbett of a meeting between Lord Winster and Mr. Bevin [W 853/8/802], Ministry of Civil Aviation, 16 January 1946, [W 853/8/802], Ibid.

<sup>1174</sup> Barker 1983 p.53.



when the US was putting so much pressure on the fledgling Labour government. The British needed American support to survive, but the US now had a policy towards the UK that was beginning to provoke severe antipathy. This change has gone largely unnoticed, except by James L. Gormly.<sup>1175</sup> The Americans seemed aware too that the British wanted to strengthen the Anglo-American relationship to their own ends, and perhaps they were using this knowledge against the British. Britain's only hope was in delaying and subtly redirecting the Americans, whilst advocating in public their own interests (those which could be anyway) to gain support. It was hoped this policy would change sentiments among the American public, and pressure the US government in that way. This was done, for instance, via the impressive British propaganda office located in the US. Peter Weiler has suggested that this office actually did not have much impact on changing American policy, at least in relation to the Soviet Union.<sup>1176</sup> The fact was, however, that the options were running out for British and so they could not afford to pass up this opportunity.

In view of this narrowing of options, the executive (mainly from the FO) considered any alternative means they could think of to bring the two nations closer together. One of the most urgent problems was that the United States was presently assessing the strength of other states mainly in terms of their economic and military power. The fact that Britain had very little to offer except the markets of the Commonwealth and some important raw materials meant that the US were able to drive very hard bargaining deals which usually left Britain worse off. However, on the positive side, the British still considered themselves masters of diplomacy, and it seemed the US wanted Britain to remain relatively strong and independent. If they acted in the right way, the British thought they might be able to push the Americans in a more favourable direction without them noticing. For instance, if the Americans thought that Britain was dangerously weak in Europe, they might want to support Britain more to create a stronger "Euro-bloc" to counter the Soviets. Likewise, American interests in the Middle East could be exploited in a similar way. In giving the "right kind of information" to the Americans, Britain might be able to use US support to help keep Arab Nationalism and the Soviets out of the region. Britain had to somehow show herself as being both strong and weak at the same time - strong enough to be a worthy ally, and yet weak enough to attract support. Britain also needed to present herself as the state of the future. Emphasising the past was the worst thing the British could do, as it would only underline their weakened present position, and evoke an imperial past that the Americans would rather happily consign to the dustbin of history. In this way, Britain was attempting to project soft power in the form Nye (1990) has described. Britain had to do this without making the Americans feel inferior. One concrete example of a way to do this would be to show the Americans that the Common-

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<sup>1175</sup> Gormly 1987 p.108-112; 130-137; 144-148, supports my views on Moscow conference to have been American change in policy, agreeing with the soviets against British interests and pleas.

<sup>1176</sup> Weiler, 1987, p.60-61, see also Anstey 1984.

wealth was not one homogenous entity that would challenge US hegemony, but rather a resource that could be used for its variety. The Americans would have noticed from the “Evattism” of the Australian PM taking independent actions, for example, that the Commonwealth was not a power bloc like the US or the USSR. At the same time, it would also show that Britain still had a cultural weight and value, and not only prestige. These were the views presented by Halifax and Balfour, and Bevin wholeheartedly supported them.<sup>1177</sup>

Balfour’s review shows that, by February 1946, British policy had now swung quite far towards realism, compared to September 1945 when the Government had been talking about a policy of “cards on the table”. The list of realist features present in Halifax and Balfour’s message was, in fact, almost exhaustive. There was no way round the fact that if the Anglo-American relationship was to be improved, something above and beyond the FO’s publicity program was needed to bring the Americans round.

### 5.1.2 Reflections on atomic efforts

The talks about replacing the Quebec Agreement and Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire, as agreed to in Washington, had been underway since late 1945. The first step was for the ACAE to meet on 4 December and 8 December to draft instructions for the British members of the CPC as to how to proceed with drafting the new agreements. Alexander Cadogan, Denis Rickett and Nevile Butler were the people who were most heavily involved at this stage.<sup>1178</sup> The note by the joint secretaries for the conclusions of the 9<sup>th</sup> ACAE meeting made it clear that instructions must be ready before Moscow, and that they were to replace the temporary Anderson-Groves memorandum.

“Since the Foreign Secretary will be leaving for Moscow very briefly it is very important that we draft instructions for our representatives on the Combined Policy Committee, in regards to the points which we should wish to secure any final agreement, should be submitted to the Ministers as soon as possible. [...] The Anderson-Groves memorandum cannot be regarded as binding either party and was not intended to do so. It merely sets out a certain field which must be covered. In the short

<sup>1177</sup> Bullen, 1985, footnote 8, p.40, DBPO, series I, vol.IV. As an example of “new British foreign policy” and of “fair play” the British wanted to present the Americans to the clarifying of the claims which had been made by Guatemala, and presented to the British Honduras. Britain promised to leave the solving of the dispute to the Security Council of the UN, and they also promised to comply with any decision made..No.6 Extract from Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing St. on 8 January 1946 at 11 a.m. C.M. (46)3 [CAB 128/5], [CAB 128/5]; DBPO, series I, vol. IV. No.17 Mr. Leake (Guatemala) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 February) No. 12 [AS 859/45/8], Guatemala, 25 January 1946, [AS 859/45/8]; DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1178</sup> TNA FO 800/549 ACAE (45) 9<sup>th</sup> meeting 5 December 1945. Draft Minutes of a meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday 4 December 1945, including a minute about the atomic files and classification; TNA FO 800/549 ACAE (45) 61 Cabinet Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy 8 December 1945, Cooperation between the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, note by joint secretaries (Rickett & Clarke) covering draft instructions to Washington.

time available it was impossible to make it as specific on all points as we should wish any final agreement to be.”<sup>1179</sup>

It was extremely important to draft the new and final agreements between the governments and make them confidential. The British thought this would remove some of General Groves’ suspicions. The pooling of raw materials would be made explicit, and it was necessary that, this time, the new agreement should not be vague at all, in case the “development, design, construction and operation of plants, would be too general in character.” Any distinction between exchange of basic information and other information should be avoided. Britain would also like full-scale assistance on building her own “piles”<sup>1180</sup> for research and production. More importantly all information related to military applications should be acquired. In return Britain would continue to pool resources. The paragraph in the Washington talks that referred to “mutually advantageous cooperation” would not be accepted. A handwritten attachment from Neville Butler to Alexander Cadogan also expressed some concerns about “John Anderson’s crew”, as he got the impression that they were “not very informed by the hastily prepared Anderson-Groves memo”. For instance, Britain should ensure that no Commonwealth owned raw materials would be given to the Americans without their complete help with developing atomic energy in return. At the same time, Butler thought the British might be pressing Roger Makins to ask for more from the Americans than was practical at this stage, so it was altered in the more polished version of the draft. Should the Americans insist on only *ad hoc* exchanges of information, the raw materials should be offered for resale to the “Trust” (CDT). That would mean liquidating the resource pool, a hardnosed argument, but the only one the British could make. In addition, Butler mentioned that the attempts to keep the agreements confidential might require a limited circulation of information; and perhaps secrecy vis-à-vis the USSR was desirable<sup>1181</sup>. There was also a warning with the instructions, based on a consultation with Gerald Fitzmaurice (second legal adviser to the FO) which asked if the British had taken note of article 102 of the UN Charter, which may require these kind of agreements to be public. As yet it was doubtful this would be the case, the FO said, but they would look into it.<sup>1182</sup> As it turned out, both this article and the ‘resale argument’ would indeed return to haunt the British.

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<sup>1179</sup> TNA FO 800/549 ACAE (45) 9th meeting 5 December 1945. Draft Minutes of a meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday 4 December 1945, including a minute about the atomic files and classification.

<sup>1180</sup> Pile was the early expression given for an atomic reactor. As the concept “pile” was the one used throughout the sources by contemporaries, it will be used as such in this work too.

<sup>1181</sup> TNA FO 800/549 ACAE (45) 61 Cabinet Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy: Cooperation between the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, note by joint secretaries (Rickett & Clarke) covering draft instructions to Washington, 8 December 1945.

<sup>1182</sup> TNA FO 800/549 ACAE (45) 9th meeting 5 December 1945. Draft Minutes of a meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday 4 December 1945, including a minute about the atomic files and classification.

Some scholars consider the fact that most of Attlee's foreign policy decisions, and especially those related to atomic matters, were not full Cabinet matters.<sup>1183</sup> And yet Gen 75 (also dubbed the "Atom Bomb Committee" by Attlee) met 16 times altogether from 1945 to 1946. Judging from the ACAE records, there was no mention of Gen 75 meeting again in 1945 after November,<sup>1184</sup> yet it seems the eighth meeting of Gen 75 was in fact on 18 December, when it met to discuss building a pile for the production of plutonium. This was not reported however until it turns up in the minutes of Gen 75's tenth meeting overall, and the first meeting of 1946 (February 15). The tenth was also held to consider a domestic research project and large scale atomic production. The ministerial committee noted from documents prepared for the meeting that Britain currently had no experts in building reactors, or "piles" as they were then known. It was thus recommended by Gen 75 (and urgently suggested by Attlee) that an "experimental pile" be built first in Harwell, after which the policy could be reviewed.

"[F]ull development of all uses of atomic energy cannot start until the experimental pile is completed."<sup>1185</sup>

These remarks highlighted two things: British dependency on the US, and the prioritisation of atomic weapon research. Commercial and civilian uses of atomic energy were mentioned usually separately.

Then there were the new drafts intended to replace the Quebec Agreement and other vague agreements about cooperation that had gone before. Based on four drafts, it seemed the CPC was on the brink of making the British atomic capability via Anglo-American collaboration a reality. The first annexed draft covered the CPC, the second the CDT, the third the agreements between heads of state, and the fourth instructions about the final negotiations for the British members of the CPC.<sup>1186</sup> In brief, the drafts stated there would be no use of atomic weapons against other signatories, or third parties without prior consultation with the other signatories. The document also promised to "use every endeavor" to provide raw materials from "the remaining territories of the British Commonwealth and other countries". These supplies would be then used "in such quantities as may be needed, in the common interest, for scientific research, *military* and humanitarian purposes."<sup>1187</sup> Meanwhile, annex three mentioned that the Quebec Agreement and Hyde Park had been taken into account, along with the new drafts in Washington, to provide "for the continuation of

<sup>1183</sup> Saville 1993, p.102-103.

<sup>1184</sup> cf. the folder TNA FO 800/548 Advisory Committee on the Use of Atomic Energy: minutes and reports: no meetings of Gen 75 in December. Also TNA FO 800/585 shows meetings in January 1946.

<sup>1185</sup> TNA FO 800/585, Gen 75/23 Large Scale Production 16 January 1946; Gen 75/24 Large Scale Production Note by the Prime Minister, 23 January 1946.

<sup>1186</sup> TNA FO 800/585 Gen 75/25 Cooperation Between the US UK and CANADIAN GOVERNMENTS a Note by the secretary of the Cabinet E.Bridges 11 February 1946.

<sup>1187</sup> TNA FO 800/585 Gen 75/25 Cooperation Between the US UK and CANADIAN GOVERNMENTS a Note by the secretary of the Cabinet E.Bridges 11 February 1946. Annex I. The italics to emphasise "military" is my addition.

cooperation in the field of atomic energy between the Governments of the United States, United Kingdom and Canada". By mentioning Quebec and Hyde Park, it included the purpose of building a bomb, underlining the military emphasis of these plans. In the third paragraph of the same annexe there was even a promise of free access to the commercial use of atomic energy.

"In the view of this memorandum of agreement, I hereby determine and declare that it is fair and just, and in harmony with the economic welfare of the world that there should be no restrictions placed upon the Government of the United Kingdom in the matter of the development and use of the atomic energy for industrial or commercial purposes."<sup>1188</sup>

At the tenth meeting of Gen 75 (15 February),<sup>1189</sup> Attlee presented memo 25 (Gen 75/25) about atomic cooperation. And after also examining the drafts that had been prepared to replace the previous agreements on atomic cooperation, he deemed them satisfactory.<sup>1190</sup>

According to the sources, Gen 75 was also supposed to meet on 1 March 1946. This was after the bad news from the CPC meeting, but the designated folder for these papers, FO 800/585, has no record of the meeting itself, only an agenda with "Minute handed over to United Nations" written across it. According to the agenda, the topics to consider were whether the forthcoming atomic agreements should be made public, cooperation with Canada, the exchange of information, and where production plants should be located in the UK.<sup>1191</sup> There was surprisingly no mention of the bad news from the CPC, but perhaps this was because it was discussed elsewhere than in the Gen 75 meetings.

The next notes come from the twelfth meeting, held on 20 March, when international atomic control was back on the table. It was agreed that the international exchange of information should not be limited to just atomic matters. But the promise to exchange basic atomic information did not seem to indicate whether the Soviet Union could be trusted to cooperate. Indeed, the past actions of the USSR made this prospect seem quite unlikely. The Chiefs of Staff were

<sup>1188</sup> TNA FO 800/585 Gen 75/25 Cooperation Between the US, UK and CANADIAN GOVERNMENTS, E.Bridges 11 February 1946. It included Anderson's Memorandum for the PM about cooperation (9 February 1946), and 4 annexes: (I) "Draft memorandum of agreement between US, UK and Canadian Governments"; (II) "Draft devised for declaration of trust"; (III) "Draft exchange of letters between the President and Prime Minister", to supercede the one signed by Truman and Attlee in Washington 1945; and (IV) a draft telegram to Washington with minor adjustments on previous drafts.

<sup>1189</sup> The documents were circulated to Attlee, Morrison, Bevin, Greenwood, Dalton, Cripps, Wilmot and Addison. Only Greenwood was absent from the meeting. Also Neville Butler, H.G Lindsell, Alexander Clutterbuck, and secretary of the meeting Denis Rickett were present. This responds to Kenneth Morgan's view of the inner circle of the Cabinet, but not precisely to John Saville's claims that the information about atomic matters was even more limited.

<sup>1190</sup> TNA FO 800/585 Gen 75/10<sup>th</sup> Meeting, note by Bridges 13 February 1946; GEN75/10<sup>th</sup> Meeting. Agenda for the meeting on 13 February (Held actually on 15 February 1946); Note on the GEN75/10<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 15 February 1946.

<sup>1191</sup> TNA FO 800/585 Gen 75/11 27 February 1946, Meeting Agenda for 1 March 1946; see also FO 800/585 26 February 1946 "Meeting notice" which states that the [11<sup>th</sup>] Gen 75 meeting should be held on 1 March 1946.

also adamant that, no matter what, they should not exchange information about bacteriological weapons. This, in turn, then led to a discussion on the uselessness of banning the atomic weapons in the world. After all, if the US and Britain signed such an agreement they would be left without atomic weapons while any state that had chosen not to accept the agreement (i.e., the USSR) might still have them or be about to procure them. Added to this, was the prospect that inspections of such non-signatory states would be impossible. Bevin suggested that as the American line of policy was already hardening, Britain should abstain from making any such internationalist proposals in case the US, in response, might make propositions that might endanger British plans. Instead Britain should try to influence the US so that these kinds of control proposals would actually *not* be made.<sup>1192</sup> There was just one more meeting of Gen 75 before atomic cooperation completely broke down in the summer of 1946. This was held on 5 April, specifically about the control of atomic energy in the United Kingdom.<sup>1193</sup> The one time Gen 75 met again after that was on 25 October 1946.<sup>1194</sup> Apparently the role of Gen 75 was more marginal than has sometimes been considered, and the most important decisions and deliberations were actually often made elsewhere, and were not written down. The ACAE had, however, met intensively in February to prepare the necessary briefings for Gen 75 and to guide the CPC. Meanwhile, the Sub-Committee of the CPC finally met at the end of January 1946 to draft the new agreements. The Joint Staff Mission<sup>1195</sup> (JSM) sent the drafts concluded in this meeting, and Denis Rickett answered personally to Roger Makins in Washington on 2 February and promised that further instructions would arrive soon. These instructions were sent based on the Gen 75 meetings covered above.<sup>1196</sup> One noteworthy document in these numerous messages, besides the two missing from the folder<sup>1197</sup>, was the telegram (ANCAM 528) from Makins to Rickett (4 February 1946), which mentioned that the secret agreement between Roosevelt and Stalin about the Kurile Islands had been discovered. The implication was that American ideas about the Anglo-American agreement being an executive order might have

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<sup>1192</sup> TNA FO 800/585 Note of Gen 75/12th meeting on 20 March 1946.

<sup>1193</sup> TNA FO 800/585 Note by Bridges about the meeting of Ministers (Gen 75/13 Meeting) to be held on 5 April 1946, agenda attached; Note of the Gen 75/13th Meeting on 5 April 1946.

<sup>1194</sup> TNA FO 800/585 26 October 1946 Gen 75/15th Meeting on 25 October 1946. It mentioned only briefly about the new needs for the domestic project because "the refusal of the Americans to give us the "know-how". There was also a mention that perhaps decisions should be postponed until further approach would be made to Truman!

<sup>1195</sup> The JSM was a cooperative military organ established for coordinating military affairs and war efforts together with the Americans.

<sup>1196</sup> TNA FO 800/527 ANCAM 523 JSM Washington to Cabinet Offices (Makins to Rickett) 1 February 1946; ANCAM 524 1 February Makins to Rickett; ANCAM 525 From Makins to Rickett 2 February 1946; ANCAM 526 Makins to Rickett 2 February 1946 conveying the new drafts; CANAM 530 Rickett to Makins (personal) 2 February 1946; ANCAM 527 Makins to Rickett (re-draft of the declaration of trust) 2 February 1946; Roger Allen(?) to Butler, a handwritten commentary about the telegrams 3 February 1946.

<sup>1197</sup> TNA FO 800/527 Documents 46/29 and 46/31 have been removed from the folder.

changed.<sup>1198</sup> This, in turn, led to John Anderson's minute to Attlee and Gen 75 about the new draft agreements,<sup>1199</sup> and reveals the important role of the ACAE and the officials in Washington. Most of the time their recommendations seem to have been followed without much questioning.

But even if Gen 75 did not meet to cover CPC matters in detail itself, British officials did throughout January 1946, possibly because of parliamentary pressure from elsewhere.<sup>1200</sup> By the first days of 1946, the FO had thus received quite a lot of information about the CPC negotiations over replacing the Quebec and Hyde Park agreements. The good news was that the Americans seemed relieved that the Soviets had accepted the idea of a control commission under the UN. The bad news was that Anglo-American cooperation, and British atomic plans were unravelling. In fact, the British delegation seemed to think the Americans would not support publishing the replacement agreements. According to the minutes sent by Ward, the Americans were reluctant, in the face of contrary public opinion, to proceed with Anglo-American cooperation, and even the option of secret deals seemed unlikely. In response to Neville Butler, the memo went on to note that any further attempts to pressure the Americans to be more cooperative, or to support the British cause in public might, in fact, cause a backlash and be detrimental for the whole atomic collaboration, and thus the British atomic project.<sup>1201</sup>

Denis Rickett's minutes to Neville Butler (2 January 1946) included three drafts for telegrams to be sent to CPC delegates and mentioned that the new draft wordings of the intended agreement papers appeared to be better for the British than previous drafts. In all the draft telegrams he also remarked on Groves' reluctance to cooperate and worrisome insistence on gaining resources from the Commonwealth. Overall, the minutes stressed that it was of the utmost importance that the agreement be secured, but it was essential that both Gen 75 (ministers) and the ACAE be consulted in detail once a final draft was ready.

"Agreement is clearly so important for ~~our~~ the future that a little extra time spent on it will obviously be worth while."<sup>1202</sup>

The last version of the draft telegrams for the CPC (via the JSM) stipulated that paragraph 8 of the intended new agreement would say "this memorandum of

<sup>1198</sup> TNA FO 800/527 ANCAM 528 Telegram from Makins to Rickett 4 February 1946.

<sup>1199</sup> TNA FO 800/527 Draft Minute to the Prime Minister from John Anderson about the drafts (Dated only February); Gen 75/25 Cooperation between the US, UK and Canadian Governments.

<sup>1200</sup> TNA FO 800/527 CANAM 536 (46/32) Rickett to Makins 12 February 1946. There were not too many parliamentary atomic matters in January and February, but if Rickett referred to them is unclear. Cf. Appaneditx 1.

<sup>1201</sup> No.360 Minute by Mr. Ward, Foreign Office, 1st January 1946, FO 800/541 (answering to a memo by Butler on 28 December 1945, footnote 1, Bullen 1985, p. 919-920). DBPO, series.I vol.II.

<sup>1202</sup> TNA FO 800/527 A Minute from Rickett to Butler 2 January 1946. The word "our" was struck out by Butler and replaced with "the" by Butler; 4 January 1946 Rickett to Makins telegram no.1 4 January 1946; Rickett to Makins telegram no.2, 4 January 1946, additions for the cooperation memorandum.

agreement supersedes the agreement signed by President Roosevelt and Mr. Winston Churchill at Quebec on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1943". The later telegrams from Rickett to Makins (4 January 1946) added comments on the drafts. One of these interestingly shows that the British wanted to borrow a small team of American engineers to help with the start up of the British project.<sup>1203</sup> All this meant that, despite some minor difficulties, the British believed they were on the brink of achieving their goal of Anglo-American atomic collaboration at this point. Even the aforementioned UN Charter was no longer a problem.

"We do not think that the US Government could seriously maintain that future executive agreements will not require to be registered under Article 102 of the Charter, but we recognise the force in many of your arguments..."<sup>1204</sup>

The CPC negotiations continued to be scrutinised in an intense exchange of telegrams and memoranda among the British officials until 22 January 1946. These messages were mainly about making revisions and alterations on the proposed draft documents covered in the Gen 75 notes above.<sup>1205</sup> But in the last one it is apparent that the British are trying to get round General Groves. Groves had thought the British had the rights to raw materials from South Africa, which was actually not the case at all, but the British did not want to disabuse him of this notion so were careful not to respond either one way or the other to him. The negotiations were considered finally to be advancing again, though it was anticipated that the UN might cause some problems. Meanwhile, the press claimed the US delegation was sabotaging the UN negotiations intentionally. The British had their eye on article 102, but they considered it to be of little importance. Even if the article was breached, they believed the international sanctions would be minimal. Then again, it meant that while disagreement with the Americans continued, the matter could not be brought up in the UN.<sup>1206</sup> By abstaining from commenting on the raw material situation in South Africa, Groves might be inclined to fall in line, as he would think there was more to gain from cooperating with the British. The British did not seem to pay interest to the fact that the UN clause forbidding secret agreements to be made would be to the American advantage, were they to eventually want to decline cooperation.

In spite of the bad news, the British continued in their attempts to clarify the situation with the Americans. Just getting to plan the documents together, not to mention getting them signed, would have been a victory in terms of pres-

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<sup>1203</sup> TNA FO 800/527 A Minute from Rickett to Butler 2 January 1946. The word "our" was struck out by Butler and replaced with "the" by Butler; 4 January 1946 Rickett to Makins telegram no.1 4 January 1946; Rickett to Makins telegram no.2, 4 January 1946, additions for the cooperation memorandum.

<sup>1204</sup> TNA FO 800/527 Rickett to Makins (CANAM 501), 4 January 1946.

<sup>1205</sup> TNA FO 800/527 Makins to Rickett (ANCAM 503) 10 January 1946; Memorandum by Butler to Makins 12 January 1946; Minute from Butler to Makins 12 January 1946; Telegram from Franks and Archer to Chadwick (CANAM 511) 12 January 1946; JSM to Cabinet Office (ANCAM 509) 17 January 1946; Makins to Butler (Ref: 24/-/46) 22 January 1946.

<sup>1206</sup> TNA FO 800/527 Makins to Butler (Ref: 24/-/46) 22 January 1946.



tige for Britain on an international scale. Britain would have gained public accolade as an atomic state, and it would have bound the United States publicly to cooperation. And after making the matter public, declining it afterwards would only have had a negative effect on American diplomacy and the country's reputation, which the US could ill afford at this crucial stage. But why would the US want to commit to this cooperation publicly? US public opinion was against it, which was critical, because it was also election year; plus the Soviet reaction would most likely have been hostile, and it would have probably scuppered all hopes of the UN atomic control plan (which at that point still stood a real chance of happening). Public confirmation of strengthened cooperation would not have necessarily been all good for the British either. As shown in earlier chapters, the British Government had promised its electorate to conduct an open foreign policy, for peaceful ends and with all the nations of the world. Revelations that it had in fact been secretly preparing for an Anglo-American atomic monopoly might well have caused a major political crisis at home. These matters had been scrutinised by Parliament, and the Government had already publicly committed itself to the principles laid out in the UN charter. Not only would revealing secret cooperation hamper relations at home, but also Britain's image abroad.

At approximately the same time, in the opening weeks of 1946, the UN held its first General Assembly (10 January) and Security Council (17 January) meetings. As had been planned in Moscow, the General Assembly established the UN Committee for controlling atomic energy. However, the committee faced lots of opposition and was greeted with much suspicion. In fact, the Americans had established their own commission to consider the international control of atomic energy, with Dean Acheson in charge. The American committee had similar views as the UN committee, however it specified two kinds of atomic cooperation: "potentially dangerous" and "not dangerous" (apparently this was weapon-related), of which only the later was recommended. Gowing claims, however, that the report of this Committee got trampled under the stampede of worries that were soon to appear with the rapidly deteriorating world situation.<sup>1207</sup> But even if this was the case, the establishment of an American committee could be seen as a sign of American ambivalence, or double standards.

While the UN London Conference was being held, Bevin and Byrnes met privately to discuss the control committee's intended course of action. Byrnes had promised Bevin this chance to talk about atomic matters since Moscow. The US Secretary of State would have preferred the committee to be based in Washington, but Bevin countered that they would hardly remain 'international', if all such bodies were based in the US. So Byrnes proposed Canada instead, but maintained that the US would be much "safer". This corresponds well to the idea that Byrnes was using scaremongering over spies to his advantage. At the end of the talk, Byrnes eventually confessed that there had become some problems with the Soviets, as they seemed to disagree about what was meant by

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<sup>1207</sup> Gowing, 1974, p.87-88.

“basic information would be exchanged”. The British also received the information that a new bill, known as the McMahon Bill, was being prepared in the US about the control of atomic energy. It was expected to address domestic atomic control matters in the US, and preliminary reports informed the British it might, more specifically, be about atomic affairs becoming a civilian matter, and thus no longer the responsibility of the military.<sup>1208</sup> By now, the British were well aware that the US government liked their atomic policy to either follow, or at least correlate with public opinion. At this point, the UN control measures appeared feasible, even if there were the numerous practical problems mentioned above to cope with. Likewise, the McMahon Bill did not seem to raise any worries as, not only did it appear to be limited to domestic matters, but the formulation of the Bill seemed favourable in terms of the exchange of information.<sup>1209</sup>

So even if the international situation seemed rather difficult for the British in January 1946, atomic policy seemed to be thriving, as both Anglo-American bilateral cooperation and international control plans seemed to be progressing apace. There are no direct mentions of why atomic cooperation and planning was, in many ways, the focus of attention at the expense of other issues, but closer, critical reading of the sources reveals that the British were making a considerable effort to maintain their position in the world, despite limited resources, and the warnings of experts like Keynes. British prestige was seen as an essential tool in promoting British interests around the world, and atomic technology was implicitly seen as the key to achieving this. In addition, the alignment of American and British views on foreign policy needed to be strengthened, even if this meant harsh terms for the US loan agreement. Margaret Gowing’s (1965, 1974) classical work emphasises this heavily too.<sup>1210</sup> The possible jackpot was cooperation with the Americans, and a chance to share in regulating the world’s access to atomic technology and promoting its peaceful uses.

In London however, Byrnes picked up on the earlier request he had made in the autumn concerning the US possibly acquiring British military bases in the Atlantic and Pacific. Bevin kept on delaying the matter, and promised to take it up with the Dominions. Byrnes responded by appealing to all the expensive preparations that had been made already during the war. Moreover, he men-

<sup>1208</sup> No 10. Record by Mr. Lawford of a conversation between Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes [FO 800/571], Foreign Office, 15 January 1946, [FO 800/571], DBPO, series I, vol.IV. About McMahon Bill and the US public opinion regarding atomic matters cf. Bullen 1985, footnote 4, p.41-42. DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

<sup>1209</sup> McMahon Bill: paragraphs 1,B(1) ja 1,B(2): “It is the purpose of this Act to effectuate these policies by providing, among others, for the following major programs; (1) A program of assisting and fostering private research and development on a truly independent basis to encourage maximum scientific progress; (2) A program for the free dissemination of basic scientific information and for maximum liberality in dissemination of related technical information...” Also: 9A and 9B expressed support for the international tion: “Basic scientific information... may be freely disseminated... the term “basic scientific information” shall include, in addition to theoretical knowledge of nuclear and other physics, chemistry, biology and therapy, all results capable of accomplishment...”.

<sup>1210</sup> Vickers 2004, p.183.

tioned that Stalin was considering Japanese revisionism as a real possibility.<sup>1211</sup> This was an outright case of pressurising the British with a potential military threat, and a sign, once again, of the new kind of stick followed by carrot measures the Americans had been showing elsewhere. But Bevin did not falter. Instead he replied that civilian bases, suitable for military use, would be built instead. These would be useful in times of crisis for military planes, and yet at the same time be a way to work around the UN requirement of reporting alliances to the Security Council. In response, Byrnes continued to haggle, arguing that the British would win over the American public if Britain accepted its terms. This kind of deal was apparently reported in public, unlike those issues where the US might be making any concessions. Bevin promised to get back to him on that matter. In response to this American attempt to use public opinion in their favour, the British tried to bind the Americans by making this into a form of secret cooperation, in the hope that it would then form a precedent for atomic cooperation. Britain would keep possession of the bases, and it would mean the Americans would have to keep on cooperating and coordinating with them.<sup>1212</sup> Moreover it might have created a template for secret Anglo-American cooperation in spite of UN commitments, and without annoying the Soviet Union.

There was another bilateral exchange of messages on 23 January. Bevin sent a letter to Byrnes about the fact that Britain might produce fissionable material on British soil, something that had already been raised in Parliament in October 1945, as a stratagem for pressuring the Americans to have the Washington talks. Wallace Akers, the leader of the Tube Alloys Directorate, had originally proposed this idea in an ACAE meeting in late August 1945, when he had suggested going beyond the "experimental stage". The idea had been talked down by John Anderson however, reminding him of British commitment to the Quebec Agreement.<sup>1213</sup> Attlee planned to raise the matter in Parliament again on 22 January 1946, in order to forestall any inaccuracies about the intended plans, to which Byrnes had reacted with a request to delay commenting on matters until the UN control commission was ready. Bevin replied that Attlee was ready to delay his speech for a while longer, and then Attlee sent his draft of the related speech to General Groves. Roger Makins, in turn, promised to bring the decision to the attention of the CPC on behalf of the British delegation.<sup>1214</sup> A

<sup>1211</sup> No.15 Note of a meeting held in the Foreign Secretary's Room on 22 January 1946 at 9.30 a.m. [AN 3931/101/45], Foreign Office, 22 January 1946, [AN 3931/101/45], DBPO series I, vol.IV

<sup>1212</sup> No.15 Note of a meeting held in the Foreign Secretary's Room on 22 January 1946 at 9.30 a.m. [AN 3931/101/45], Foreign Office, 22 January 1946, [AN 3931/101/45], DBPO series I, vol.IV.

<sup>1213</sup> TNA FO 800/547 Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy. Sir J.Anderson's proposal for an Experimental Establishment

<sup>1214</sup> No.16. Letter from Mr. Bevin to Mr. Byrnes (London) [FO 800/582], Foreign Office, 23 January 1946, [FO 800/582], DBPO Ser.I,vol.IV. Bullen mentions that the opening and concluding remarks had been removed from the letter that had been filed to the archives. Bullen,1985, footnote 1, p.61 About Attlee's final draft to be sent for Groves by Makins and the British decision cf. : Bullen 1985, footnote 5, p.61 DBPO series I, vol.IV.

statement was then issued on 29 January, via a planted question asked by Oliver Lyttelton<sup>1215</sup> and answered by Attlee.

“The House will recall that on 29th October last I announced that the Government had decided to set up a research and experimental establishment at Harwell, near Didcot, to be concerned with all aspects of the use of atomic energy. This establishment will require fissile material for its work, and the Government have accordingly had under consideration the most suitable organisation for the production of such material for this and other purposes. The object in view will be to make available as speedily as possible material in sufficient quantity to enable us to take advantage rapidly of technical developments as they occur, and to develop our programme for the use of atomic energy, as circumstances may require. The production of these materials will be a responsibility of the Ministry of Supply and the appropriate organisation is being set up within that Department.”<sup>1216</sup>

Attlee continued by adding that the Lord Portal and Professor Cockcroft were to be jointly in charge of this new establishment. He did not say when the establishment would be up and running, however. William Warbey (Luton, Labour) was concerned about whether or not the plant, and indeed the production of all fissionable materials, would be under public control, and how the Government were planning to go about this. Attlee assured him that it would be under public control. At this point Raymond Blackburn interjected with one of his inimitably inimical questions.

“Captain Blackburn: Will the Prime Minister consider issuing at an early opportunity a statement on the purposes for which the research is taking place as between research on the construction of the atomic bomb and various peaceful developments?”

The Prime Minister: If my hon. and gallant Friend had followed my reply he would have seen that at present the object is to provide materials for atomic research.”<sup>1217</sup>

Though Attlee rebutted Blackburn somewhat efficiently, atomic research and raw material production for research meant *de facto* military uses, as civilian uses for atomic energy were still far away, as Lord Cherwell had previously pointed out.<sup>1218</sup> Margaret Gowing considers in *Deterrence and Independence* Attlee’s reasons for delivering the message, and yet she claims there was no talk about atomic matters.

Of course, the planted question was an attempt to put pressure on the Americans, by giving them a dose of their own ‘public opinion’ medicine. And it was accompanied with convenient coverage in *The Times* of comments made by Byrnes at the first UN General Assembly meeting where he claimed that science was not a monopoly and that no nation alone could solve the problems

<sup>1215</sup> TNA CAB 104, Draft reply for question by Mr. Gammans 28 January 1946 (E. Bridges for N. Brook): “The question by Mr. Lyttelton is an arranged question and the Prime Minister’s Office have already in their possession a draft reply, prepared after consultation between Sir John Anderson and the Ministry of Supply, agreement to which was obtained in Washington and Ottawa.”

<sup>1216</sup> HC Deb 29 Jan Vol. Ser. cc.682-683.

<sup>1217</sup> HC Deb 29 Jan Vol. Ser. cc.682-684.

<sup>1218</sup> HL Deb 16 October 1945 vol 137 cc287. HL Deb 28 November 1945 vol 138 cc68-137

caused by the atomic bomb.<sup>1219</sup> By drawing attention to the possibility of continuing independent atomic research on a national level, the British executive were not issuing a statement to simply appease domestic criticism, or put pressure on Byrnes. In practice it would mean that Britain would require a share of raw materials for atomic research of her own. This was, after all, what had been agreed by the CDT, and this extra demand for raw materials would have taken from US resources, and interfered with any atomic plans the US might have had. It does not, however, explain why postponing the statement was important. Why was it so important to keep British domestic research out of the public eye? Was it for American domestic reasons, and the upcoming elections? In this respect, it might be useful to consider the American sources, as those from Britain at my disposal, which come from the Cabinet, FO, and the private papers of Butler, Bevin, and Attlee, do not mention anything more about Lyttelton's question or the reasons behind it except that it was planted.<sup>1220</sup>

One possible explanation is the domestic policy of the US. It might have caused problems or awkward questions for Truman's administration about how much of the claimed monopoly was true. Moreover, public opinion was against cooperation, so indirectly revealing that not everything was in American hands might have caused a public furore and criticism from the more hawkish US officials. Meanwhile, denying all connection to a British project might have caused resentment in terms of abandoning former allies and possibly even accommodating the Soviets. The third option is that the Americans were simply considering their own moves. The UN's plans for international atomic control would have led to an embargo on atomic knowledge, and actually helped keep atomic knowledge in American hands. Moreover, it might have prevented the dissolution of the CDT, thereby keeping the very limited atomic resources within American reach. The written British sources do not reveal any such suspicions of delaying tactics however.

Following the American initiative, Bevin decided to meet with the American Senator Vanderberg and John Foster Dulles in London. The topic was the debriefing of the Moscow conference. For example, Byrnes had been criticized about his actions in Moscow and about the way he handled things within his own office,<sup>1221</sup> but Bevin considered that the negotiations had actually gone quite well in the end - the western powers had actually needed to concede very little. Bevin nonetheless made it known that he was worried about Soviet aggression, and saw that a hardening of American policy towards the USSR might really help to avert possible war in Turkey and Persia. Bevin was at least certain that this was the case in Turkey, and if war did break out, even the US would have trouble staying out of it. As a final touch, Bevin mentioned that if the American loan could not be renewed, then Britain would do without it if needs

<sup>1219</sup> *The Times* 24 January 1946 "Control of the Atom". According to my research *Times* alone covered atomic matters in 80 pieces in January.

<sup>1220</sup> This might require its own investigation, but in the scale of the dissertation, it has to be left alone for now.

<sup>1221</sup> Herken, 1988, p.85-87. Senator Vanderberg is mentioned as one of Byrnes' most vocal critic.

be. He said this, of course, knowing full well that dependency on the US loan had been used as leverage against the British. Keynes later confirmed Bevin's view, though he added that it would also have meant giving up the idea of being a Great Power, and that Britain would henceforth have stayed out of foreign affairs. Bevin understandably wanted to keep reports of this discussion and his comments in as limited a circulation as possible.<sup>1222</sup>

This was a case of very direct, and perhaps even blunt diplomacy from Bevin. He was also giving members of the American opposition tools for political campaigning in the forthcoming US elections. He was not criticising the US to the point that it might be taken as insult or ingratitude, but he made it very clear that, if the US was really all for world peace, then it would have to actually assume the role it kept on reminding others about. Byrnes was not the direct focus of this criticism, even if the opportunity may have presented itself here. Instead, Bevin had his sights set higher and was showing that Britain wanted true cooperation, instead of being content to be some kind of stick in the mud relying on past grandeur. By claiming the loan was unnecessary, Bevin was saving face, for even if Britain had survived, the Labour government would not have. Also, Britain had already given in on so many issues, that mounting domestic scrutiny about the increasingly bad terms of the loan agreement was starting to grate. It also shows how much had been invested in the loan in spite of Britain's show of bravado that the country would be fine without it. But it was also a clear warning sign to the Americans (especially those that kept trying to hamper the loan plans) that Britain was not prepared to let the US continue using the loan as a bargaining chip *ad infinitum*. All the same, the fact that Bevin clarified the matter with Keynes directly afterwards does show the loan was a real cause of worry.

In effect, this concern led to numerous ways being devised for bringing the loan agreement to fruition. The fact was that the US were taking so long to handle the matter that it also gave the British ample opportunity to do so. Halifax had telegraphed Bevin at the end of January, and suggested issuing a statement of some sort to show support for Truman. The goal was to gain a favourable reputation and a more positive view of British policy in the US. Another tactic worth considering, according to Halifax, would be to focus on the kind of cooperation that was effective and already working. For instance, agreements on Palestine, the UN atomic control commission, oil, the lend-lease, and telecommunications were all examples of the positive achievements that could result from a fruitful Anglo-American cooperation; and they cast Britain in a favourable light. These could (and indeed did) help in other matters of joint interest too, such as the civilian aviation issue, which had finally been successfully agreed on in Bermuda, and was also worth mentioning.<sup>1223</sup> The point was

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<sup>1222</sup> No.18 Record by Mr. Dixon of a conversation between Mr. Bevin, Senator Vandenberg and Mr. J. Foster Dulles on 24 January 1946 [FO 800/513], Foreign Office, 26 January 1946, [FO 800/513], DBPO ser.I, vol.IV. About Keynes' comments to Brand

<sup>1223</sup> No.20 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 31 January, 3.35 a.m.) No. 661 Telegramic [UE 434/1/53], Washington, 30 January 1946, [UE 434/1/53],

that Britain could materially contribute to the Anglo-American alliance, rather than be constantly in need of support. The negotiations about the bases, in various locations of the world were also progressing steadily in February.<sup>1224</sup> Also an earlier request for help regarding the British food shortage had met with a favourable response from Truman. Cooperation (and aid) on this front was steady, if not exactly gushing.<sup>1225</sup> All in all, the multifaceted nature of Anglo-American cooperation in British foreign policy thus appeared to be working quite well, and the British saw it as a sign of the ties becoming stronger.

Even atomic cooperation appeared to have taken a few small steps forward. The drafting of the CPC documents was taking its time, and perhaps to pressurise them or simply to highlight the importance of the atomic projects, the British had informed the Americans about their plans to produce fissionable material for their own project from the joint raw material and resource pool - coordinated via the CDT (one of the few wartime agreements the Americans had not deemed obsolete). The British plan to produce fissionable material had been in existence since December 1945, but then its implementation had been postponed. Now the time had come to take action, and the British began by focusing on plutonium enrichment in "graphite piles", as these could be put to both military and (potentially) peaceful use. To this end, it had been agreed that one pile should be built. The Chiefs of Staff had actually wanted two, so that an

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DBPO ser.I,vol.IV. The talks about the civil-aviation begun on 15 January 1946 on Bermuda. See: No.21 Memorandum by Lord Winster on Anglo-American Civil Aviation discussions at Bermuda C.P. (46)37 [W 1759/8/802], Ariel House, 1 February 1946, [W 1759/8/802] Ibid. The solution was prevented for a while a view of the British that both the expanding rights of the civilian aviation as well as the question of suitable bases could not be handled at the same time. A solution was achieved after the Americans gave up their demand that the British would pressure Canada to similar agreements. In addition the tough prerequisites the Americans had demanded for the maintenance and supply, had been fixed to more lenient. Thus the British promised to open bases for civilian aviation. The opening of civilian bases for (American) military aviation was yet to be considered and it was to be put on vote together with the Dominions. No.28. Extract from Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing St. on 11 February 1946 at 11 a.m. C.M. (46)14 [CAB 128/5], [CAB 128/5] Ibid. The agreement created free practices for civilian aviation and traveling.

<sup>1224</sup> No.23. Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 1174 Telegramic [AN 3931/101/45], Foreign Office, 5 February 1946, [AN 3931/101/45] Bevin had discussed about the bases twice with Byrnes before the latter had returned to the United States. No.25 Letter from Mr. Wright (Washington) to Mr. Mason [AN 408/101/45], Washington, 5 February 1946, [AN 408/101/45], Ibid. It reports the US interest in gaining bases and certain Wes-Indian islands in their hands to be a more of an emotional than power-political reaction. The public opinion demanded the Islands to be in the Americans hands, as it had been the Americans who had fought for them. Important, according to the analysis, was that the US idea of establishing a circle of defence bases was conveniently coinciding with this demand. The rather sharp analysis mentioned that most likely the Americans had not taken into account the heavy costs that maintaining the bases would require. In addition the British did consider the whole idea also as a blatant leverage, a favour to be given in return for the US administration supporting the giving the loan for British.

<sup>1225</sup> No.22 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 1150 Telegramic [UR 789/104/851], Foreign Office, 4 February 1946, [UR 789/104/851], DBPO, series I, vol.IV. On 6 February 1946 Truman had declared 9-point food relieve-program in order to help Europeans to fight the food shortage. Cf. Bullen 1985, footnote 8, s.84-85 DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

atomic weapon could be built more quickly, but due to limited resources, the Gen 75 Committee had decided one was enough, and the construction of the second pile was thus postponed. Roger Makins was instructed to hurry along the construction work [of the experimental pile] at the chosen site in Harwell, and to inform the Americans about the matter.<sup>1226</sup> This is a groundbreaking find, as it has been generally accepted, until now, that the British government decided on making atomic weapons only in 1947.<sup>1227</sup> Judging from the information revealed here, however, it seems the decision was actually being mooted at least two years earlier, which casts the whole of early British atomic proliferation in quite a different light. It shows that Britain's atomic policy was heavily influenced less by Churchill, than by the officials and specialists who briefed the political leadership.<sup>1228</sup> It also shows that there had been a truly different approach from the start. It was actually by December at the latest, that atomic weapons became this approach's penultimate goal; with the ultimate goal being to gain the support of Truman and his administration to secure the loan.

The Joint Staff Mission in Washington had commented on the advantages of this project to the Cabinet. At the same time it mentioned (apparently for the benefit of the Americans) that Britain had begun to draft legislation for the domestic control of atomic energy, and in accordance with the requirements of the UN.<sup>1229</sup> The JSM also commented on the talks it had conducted with the US Chiefs of Staff regarding military cooperation, and possibly even a joint defence initiative. Attlee had been urging Truman to carry out these plans from as early as the autumn of 1945,<sup>1230</sup> but Truman's response had so far been to state that the matter was under consideration. Now at last there was positive news: the Americans were still strongly inclined to cooperate on defence, and all that was related to it (such as training, intelligence, technology and doctrine). The Americans had also mentioned that doing any of this in public might be impossible due to UN issues. Moreover public opinion in the United States was geared against British favouritism (no matter how much image-enhancing the British

<sup>1226</sup> Gowing 1974, vol.I. s-167-172. Also: Bullen, 1985, footnote 5, p.70-71 DBPO series I, vol. IV. The research literature emphasises the atomic weapons were only mentioned much later and decision to build them was made in 1947.

<sup>1227</sup> Gowing 1974, p.182-184, referring to Gowing for instance Barker, 1983, p.76-77. Gowing 1974, p.212-213 also mentioned that informing of the British atomic weapon plans was done only in 1948, with the help of, again, planted parliamentary question asked by Dr. Santo Jeger.

<sup>1228</sup> For instance see TNA FO 800/547 GEN96/3 Cabinet International control of atomic energy draft report by the officials 24 October 1945 (bolding and italics are mine). The officials in this apparently refers to ACAE.

<sup>1229</sup> No.19 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 30 January, 6.35 p.m.) ANCAM 520 Telegramic [FO 800/583], Washington, 30 January 1946, [FO 800/583], DBPO, series I, vol. IV. Calendar note I p.72 added that fissionable material was also scouted and sought after from South Africa, moreover possible exchange of information with the dominions was also considered.

<sup>1230</sup> No.189 Mr. Bevin to Mr. Balfour (Washington), Foreign Office, 17 August 1945, FO 800/512 (to be conveyed to Truman) and No.234 Note of conversations between the Prime Minister, the President and Mr. Byrnes, Washington, 15 November 1945, PREM 8/116, DBPO series I, vol. II.



publicity office did); so any such cooperation would have to remain secret.<sup>1231</sup> The British delegation reported on what they considered to be a truly sincere attitude that prevailing among the Americans. They seemed to have prepared for the negotiations thoroughly, and so the British delegation asked for further instructions to capitalise on what looked like a very promising possibility. Interestingly, the some of the American delegation had apparently talked about this without even their own President knowing of it. Admiral William D. Leahy, Truman's Chief of Staff and Commander-in-Chief of the US Army and Navy was one such delegate; as was General Dwight Eisenhower (Chief of Staff of the US Army); and Fleet Admiral Chester Nimiz (Chief of US Naval Operations). They were apparently supportive of Britain being the US' most favoured nation, in spite of the American public. Moreover, even though the Combined Chiefs of Staff would go underground in the interests of peace, all three "were equally of strong opinion, however, that ways and means should be found for continuing full collaboration under the cover of other activities". Some pragmatic options were offered, such as combining operations under the US/Canadian Joint Defence Board. At home this was greeted with some enthusiasm, but the JSM delegation was instructed to be sure that the UN Charter and its paragraphs or articles would not be violated.<sup>1232</sup>

By February Bevin reported his views on the progress of Anglo-American cooperation to Attlee. He emphasised that the UN alone would not be enough to keep Britain secure. Only cooperation of the closest kind with the US would suffice. For instance, integrating weapons and weapon systems would not only cut expenses but also ease the arms trade.<sup>1233</sup> This is another remarkable find in my research. It shows that British foreign and security policy had actually come full circle, and that the ideas of internationalism were already somewhat lost. This was very much like the policy of the Labour government's predecessors. It seems that though it was the change which enabled a different approach, the requirements of continuity were such, that it eventually became the stronger element. This was the kind of policy the "officials" had been recommending all along to the Labour government, rather than the internationalist approach envisioned in Labour's election manifesto. As mentioned in earlier chapters, path dependency meant that too much had been invested (literally as well as metaphorically) to throw all these previous efforts away. This, in turn, explains the relatively quick positive response from the British regime to the rather surpris-

<sup>1231</sup> For this the Americans had numerous alternatives planned. For instance a joint board with Canada, the United States and Britain, which would enable easy exchange of thoughts about tactical doctrines. Second option was that all Canada and the US might establish a joint defence organ, which would, via proxy by Canada, share the fruits of collaboration with Britain. Third, and possibly most realist option was collaboration with expanded diplomatic powers, so that each representative would have direct contact with highest ranking officials, and chiefs of staffs. General Eisenhower had already deployed his own man on such assignment.

<sup>1232</sup> No.26 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office JSM 182 Telegramic [U 1561/218/70], Washington, 9 February 1946, [U 1561/218/70], DBPO series I, vol.IV. See also Calendar notes I, ii, iii, iv Bullen, 1985p.95-96.

<sup>1233</sup> No.32 Minute from Mr. Bevin to Mr. Attlee PM/46/16 [U 1561/218/70], Foreign Office, 13 February 1946, [U 1561/218/70], DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

ing suggestions of secret cooperation from the US armed forces. It also showed that despite previous worries, the British might in fact not be alone, and that American ambivalency in politics could still be overturned in favour of closer cooperation. Byrnes evidently did not represent everybody within the governmental machinery of the US, even if the power of the armed forces was waning. At least some Americans recognised the Soviet threat as well, and Britain gained some support in spite of populist pressure on US foreign policy. It was hoped this support could be used to move the collaboration forward and get it beyond the negative opinions of General Groves that were presented earlier. Perhaps even the UN machinery could be bypassed if the desire to cooperate was great enough. Then again, this made the situation perhaps more volatile, and as the US appeared to harden its line with the USSR, as Byrnes had mentioned, the remnants of the internationalism Attlee had one advocated as the basis of his foreign policy were mostly shrugged off by the pragmatic Bevin. This subscribes to Alan Bullock's view of Bevin as a pragmatist,<sup>1234</sup> and it reveals the very real possibility that there had been a concrete change in British policy, perhaps at the point where Attlee gave Bevin free rein over foreign policy.<sup>1235</sup>

John Anderson, chairman of the Combined Policy Committee, also reported to Attlee about the progress of atomic energy cooperation at roughly the same time (9 February 1946). This report was given in the Gen 75 meeting covered earlier, after the British had already revealed their interest in investing in the domestic research and development project. Having met again in Washington, the CPC attempted to create the basis of a new agreement for cooperation as had been decided in Washington. The Groves-Anderson memorandum would be the template for this. In December 1945 Anderson reported back to Attlee about the requirements for the lines of policy that would craft the agreements. An "agreement committee" within the CPC had been established in December. It consisted of Roger Makins, General Groves, and the Canadian Lester Pearson. Discussions began in earnest from the start of 1946, and three different drafts to replace both the Quebec Agreement and the Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire were drawn up. The first draft was about the mutual understanding between the Governments of the United States, Canada and Britain,<sup>1236</sup> the second was a reformulated draft on the Declaration of Trust<sup>1237</sup>, and the third was a draft on the exchange of letters between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Britain, regarding the fourth article of the Quebec Agreement.<sup>1238</sup>

<sup>1234</sup> Bullock 1984, p.86-87; about Attlee, Bevin and Cabinet see also Childs 2001, p.5-6

<sup>1235</sup> For example: Howell 2006 p.76-77.

<sup>1236</sup> "A draft memorandum of agreement between..."

<sup>1237</sup> The draft is not included in DBPO print.

<sup>1238</sup> The fourth article was about the possible economic benefits from the development and cooperation within the field of atomic technology. In the Quebec Agreement the British had agreed to negotiate about possible commercial benefits on the terms decided by the president of the United States, and with respect to the privileges of the United States. Quebecin agreement, printed in Gowing, 1965, appendix 4, p.439-440. A footnote in the printed source-series claims that the draft was similar as had been in the Quebec Agreement too. Though it had a small opening for the British to devel-

The draft about mutual understanding focused mostly on the exchange of information and recommended continued use of existing channels, practices, and organs. The exchange of information should be full and effective between all three states, and it should happen according to their respective requirements and needs. This exchange would be interpreted and coordinated by the CPC, through the required specific arrangements, which would be reconsidered from time to time.<sup>1239</sup>

The drafts also had a clause that stated there would be no use of atomic weapons against other signatories, or third parties without prior consultation with the other signatories. The exchange of information with outsiders would be limited, and based on mutual understanding between the signatories, and even then it would need to be considered together. Anderson was rather satisfied with these outcomes and the formulation, as well as the wording of the drafts, in particular concerning the exchange of information. It was after all, what had been decided and promised all along. He proposed swift action, as public sentiment against the exchange of information (and cooperation) clearly existed in the US as well. The United States also proposed an alternative for the CPC<sup>1240</sup>, as well as keeping all cooperation secret. Meanwhile, Anderson stipulated that any comments or mention of the previous agreements had been removed from the new drafts. The idea was not to reveal, for instance, the secret raw material agreements made with third parties, should these drafts ever become new documents, and be made public.<sup>1241</sup>

The attempt to keep the source of raw materials and possible competing interests a secret is understandable in light of the fact that this kind of information would need to have been reported to the UN control organ. The secrecy is not only an indication of a realist policy here, but also the expression of not actually investing in the UN plans (or believing they would work). In addition, by omitting any mention of previous agreements made, the whole past history of cooperation would have been erased from any official documents. Thus, the British case, which was definitely based on path dependency, the coordination of research and development and the division of labour, would have been lost too.

As mentioned above, the situation thus seemed at this point to be advancing favourably for the British with regard to Anglo-American cooperation. At the same time, with the news coming from Moscow there seemed every reason to believe that the US was hardening its stance towards the Soviets. Apparently Byrnes had attempted to push for even closer cooperation in the exchange and

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op also the commercial side of the new technology. Bullen 1985, footnote 6, p.97, DBPO, series I, vol.IV

<sup>1239</sup> *"There shall be full and effective cooperation between the three Governments in regard to the exchange of information concerning atomic energy required for their respective programmes of atomic development. This exchange will be implemented by arrangements approved from time to time by the Combined Policy Committee"*. No.27 Minute from Sir J. Anderson to Mr. Attlee [U 3829/20/70], Cabinet Office, 9 February 1946, [U 3829/20/70], DBPO, series I, vol.IV. Underlining by the author of this piece of work.

<sup>1240</sup> No alternative was mentioned.

<sup>1241</sup> No.27 Minute from Sir J. Anderson to Mr. Attlee [U 3829/20/70], Cabinet Office, 9 February 1946, [U 3829/20/70], DBPO, series I, vol.IV.

control of information within the UN and met with harsh resistance from various officials and Congress. The American diplomatic corps appeared to have been nervous about the situation that these contradictions had caused. Moreover, the American ambassador in Moscow was about to be changed, which also caused some dispute amongst the Americans.<sup>1242</sup> The tabula rasa and ambivalence of before seemed to have given way to a shared opinion about the USSR, that had long been sought after. Moreover, there were more than promising signs of a real "special relationship" forming, and of Anglo-American atomic cooperation in the future. Byrnes' actions had apparently not caused too much damage, and the British efforts to clear up these problems had paid off. The worries about a transatlantic rift forming between the two English-speaking nations had been unfounded, and Byrnes' series of one-sided actions and his ambivalent attitude seemed like something that could be solved with effective British diplomacy. Perhaps it reassured the British too much, however, and might have naïvely led them to believe that American views were easy to influence. The downside of this was that British policy had been forced to become more and more reactive, but this detail was probably lost in all the confusion. There are no remarks in the source material, for instance, that all the initiatives had ended up coming from the US side. What was written down and thus seen as important, were the rather vague promises, which were far from becoming actual reality.

In Parliament, the Atomic Energy Bill was on its way to be prepared for second reading. It addressed the control of domestic atomic research and development, and was thoroughly commented on by various MPs. The UN control commission was also still very much in the sights of the executive too, perhaps even more so than previously. Parliament also sharply criticised the previous year's foreign policy, and emphasised that the development of atomic energy (both for civilian and defence uses) must remain a top priority. The vulnerability of the British Isles was debated again too, emphasising the need for an atomic deterrent. The summer recess limited parliamentary activity over August and September, though the important role of the Ministry of Supply in atomic research did not go unnoticed. Extremely difficult questions related to how Britain planned to acquire and process atomic raw materials were made by some parliamentarians despite attempts by government officials to limit the opportunities for even asking about these matters. This is, however a topic worth of some follow-up research.

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<sup>1242</sup> No.31 Letter from Mr. Roberts (Moscow) to Sir O. Sargent [FO 800/527], Moscow, 12 February 1946, [FO 800/527], DBPO Ser.I,Vol.II.

## 5.2 Anglo-American deadlock

### 5.2.1 Hiding behind the UN Charter

The CPC met again on 15 February 1946. The British had been eagerly waiting for a chance to tackle the final issues and to seize the opportunity of sealing the future of Anglo-American atomic cooperation on favourable terms. What the meeting had in store for the British however, was not the result that had been expected. Instead, the meeting was a devastating shock for the British delegation. US Secretary of State Byrnes and War Minister Patterson had completely changed their minds. All cooperation was now strongly opposed. The secret additional agreement that had been presented as a possibility in the previous meeting, was now suddenly out of the question. This change was based, according to the Americans, on the UN Charter's paragraph XVI, article 102.<sup>1243</sup>

"1. Every treaty and every international agreement entered into by any Member of the United Nations after the present Charter comes into force shall as soon as possible be registered with the Secretariat and published by it.

2. No party to any such treaty or international agreement which has not been registered in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article may invoke that treaty or agreement before any organ of the United Nations."<sup>1244</sup>

It was Byrnes who had again brought up the UN Charter. The Americans argued that since it had come into effect, all bilateral agreements now also needed to be ratified before the UN.<sup>1245</sup>

"[I]n his opinion the revised agreements in their present form would certainly have to be registered with the Secretariat of the UNO. He felt that there could be no question of the United Kingdom, and United States or Canada evading this obligation. Pearson [Canadian delegate] said that the Canadian Government shared this view."<sup>1246</sup>

This would mean they would be made public and would certainly damage both the US and UK governments' internationalist credentials, both at home and abroad. It might also have set a precedent for Parliament to challenge the Government in atomic matters. But it was not just the UN that risked revealing shameful secret agreements. Byrnes also added that, as far as he knew, Presi-

<sup>1243</sup> No.34 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 17 February, 1.35 a.m.) ANCAM 536 Telegramic [U 3830/20/70], Washington, 17 February 1946, [U 3830/20/70], DBPO ser.I, vol.IV. The same telegram can also be found in TNA FO 800/527.

<sup>1244</sup> Charter of the United Nations; 26 June 1945 Chapter XVI, article 102.

<sup>1245</sup> No.34 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 17 February, 1.35 a.m.) ANCAM 536 Telegramic [U 3830/20/70], Washington, 17 February 1946, [U 3830/20/70], DBPO ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1246</sup> TNA FO 800/527 ANCAM 536 17 February 1946 JSM to Cabinet Office (from Halifax and Field Marshal Wilson to Anderson). Butler's copy of the message filed in the FO800/527 had no markings or commentary whatsoever. The circulation of the message was confined to 17 persons or instances.

dent Truman had asked the McMahon committee on Atomic Energy about the proposed drafts, and “that this would amount to publication”.<sup>1247</sup> The Americans then went into greater detail as to why making these agreements would be so harmful. Firstly, the Soviets would be likely to get agitated. Secondly, this kind of deal would have to be ratified before the Senate and Congress. Ratification would have meant opening the veil of secrecy that had surrounded atomic matters in the US up to that point too. General Groves was understandably against this, probably on the grounds that it would be yet another civilian regulation taking power over atomic matters away from the military. Thirdly, such a formal and public Anglo-American alliance might have also rendered the UN control commission ineffective, in so far as the Soviets would be more likely to protest against the control plans if the “alliance” had been made public.

However, the obligation to report any major pacts between UN member states did not concern agreements that had been concluded before the UN Charter came into effect. The Quebec Agreement and Hyde Park Aide-Memoire were thus exempt. As presented above though, there were many other forms of cooperation which could have also been interpreted as alliances. Juridical matters aside, the military base arrangements, for instance, could at least be considered as a *modus vivendi* or something roughly equivalent to an alliance. Why the UN article was suddenly brought up at this point in the context of atomic matters is hard to say, even if we take into account the arguments just mentioned. Why was it only just in the previous meeting that the Americans had expressed their interest in this kind of secret cooperation and now withdrawn it? A similar article had existed already for some time before this,<sup>1248</sup> and using loopholes in the charter had been encouraged up to this point. An excellent example of similar plans, which were still in effect, was Byrnes’ proposed arrangements about possible joint civilian airbases which would also be suitable for military use. Likewise the military plans for the joint Anglo-American defence initiative were still in progress; and then there was the CDT agreement that was supposed to be outdated. The Americans did not seem to have any problems in accepting these US-friendly fruits of cooperation. Article 102 must have been known to both parties for quite a while, for if it was not this would have been a serious sign of incompetence. British negligence can be understood because the other cooperation plans, not related to atomic matters, were proceeding well. It is the sudden change in policy of the Americans that is most surprising. Hiding behind the UN Charter all of a sudden did not make a lot of sense. Especially since the United States had been recently getting closer to the British and their foreign policy, now that they were developing a common enemy in the Soviet Union. This sudden interest in respecting the UN charter, and appealing to internationalism is rather suspect, as the world situation and Great Power rela-

<sup>1247</sup> TNA FO 800/527 ANCAM 536 17 February 1946 JSM to Cabinet Office (from Anderson and Halifax to Field Marshal Wilson).

<sup>1248</sup> “The Charter of the United Nations was signed on 26 June 1945, in San Francisco, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and came into force on 24 October 1945.” Charter of the United Nations.

tions were at a much lower ebb than they had ever been in the autumn of 1945, when internationalist policy seemed more of a possibility.

This raises the possibility that the UN Charter was being used as a proxy to take care of awkward business. American sentiments about atomic cooperation had generally not been that supportive. Although there had recently been the favourable gusts of support for cooperation, there always seemed to be the basic reluctance in the background. The changes back and forth could have been partly due to inexperienced leadership, but that does not explain everything. The idea of atomic monopoly, and the belief that the US could maintain it for the next 5 to 10 years was perhaps there too. For the American public, the story of the atomic bomb had been mostly portrayed as the fruit of tremendous efforts by the US alone. The British effort had been recognised only vaguely in the initial statements made by Truman when the atomic bomb was actually used. The British were also thus keen to get their side of the account across, and published in a revised version of the de Smyth official history<sup>1249</sup>.

If the UN Charter was useful in arguing against a collaboration that had not been wanted in the first place, it would also be useful in delaying such a form of cooperation until the right form came along, or until the situation became clearer. In this context, delay would have meant waiting out the American domestic situation (whether that was elections, or legislation related to atomic affairs) or international matters under the UN. At the same time raw materials kept flowing to the US project. Were something to appear which would have prevented Anglo-American cooperation in the near future, committing to concrete plans at this stage would have complicated things. Likewise it would have been wise to secure the flow of resources for as long as possible, by not terminating cooperation abruptly. The British had flashed raw materials as their trump card already. But we must give the Americans the benefit of the doubt. The fact that UN controls might have worked (simultaneously combined with the possibility of monopoly) might also have affected a change in American hearts. The unexpected Soviet support for the control plans in Moscow might have had an effect, even if this was then followed by Byrnes having problems with the Soviets later on. As UN control began to appear more feasible, and likely to actually support the American monopoly of atomic weapons for at least a little while longer, then why would the Americans want to endanger either? Why share any more details about the technology than strictly necessary? This line of thought also had moral arguments backing it up, as if the main idea was to eventually ban atomic weapons, why would the British also need them? Then again, this train of thought did not really justify ensuring a continuation of the raw material supply when the only existing application for the new technology was the atomic bomb. Perhaps the only way it could have been justified was that there would have been peaceful development and research plans for the benefit of all, once the UN control system was up and running. It might be that more information about such ideas can be found in the US sources. At least

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<sup>1249</sup> De Wolf Smyth, 1946 p.vi-vii. The British account, originally printed in Government White Paper on Tube alloys was attached in the fifth printing in autumn of 1945.

the British sources at my disposal show that these possibilities were not being pondered that much.

Moral grounds and the Senate were actually the reasons the Americans gave for their change of approach. The explanation was that the Senate had been preparing the Royall-Marbury Bill about how atomic energy would be controlled but it had been put to one side when international control started being discussed. The Senate then considered atomic energy again with the May-Johnson Bill, but it was again shelved when scientists argued that it would have damaged international scientific cooperation, and even the creation of the UN control commission. The last phase of the Senate's plans had then been the McMahon Bill, which was put before the House just before Christmas 1945. It seemed to be more lenient towards international scientific cooperation and research than the previous bills.<sup>1250</sup> Needless to say, General Groves had been satisfied with the wording of international cooperation in the May-Johnson Bill, as it placed the most senior positions in the hands of the military. According to Herken, Groves considered the chances for international cooperation on atomic energy as virtually zero, and as about as likely to happen as prohibiting all wars.<sup>1251</sup> It is interesting that the Senate had been told to resist any new cooperation, but had apparently not been informed about previous cooperation with the British, or their role in the Manhattan project. Gordon Arneson, who served as Secretary to the Secretary of War's Interim Committee on Atomic Energy 1945, and member of staff from the US delegation to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission, 1946-48, has claimed that this had been done intentionally. According to Arneson, it was a deliberate attempt aimed to prevent Anglo-American atomic cooperation.<sup>1252</sup> This might be an attempt to whitewash the Senate's decisions afterwards, but it could be an accurate claim too. The date of publication of de Wolf-Smyth's book on atomic co-operation, sheds some additional light on this, at least from the British side. The preface of the book (6<sup>th</sup> Printing 1946) says that

"For the fifth printing of the Princeton edition two new Appendices have been added—Appendix 7 giving the text of a statement by the British Information Service, and Appendix 8 giving the text of a release by the Canadian Information Service."

The fifth printing was published on 1 November 1945.<sup>1253</sup> Although the Quebec Agreement and Hyde Park Aide-Memoire were not referred to directly in the British statement, the establishment of the CPC by the agreement between Churchill and Roosevelt was mentioned, and there was information about the important role of the British in the Manhattan project, which was described as a tripartite operation. It is reasonable to believe then that the Senate would have had access to information on British involvement, as the British Government's

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<sup>1250</sup> About the plans cf. Herken 1988, p.115-116, p.118-119. About May-Johnson Bill and the critique: the problems: p.120; 123.

<sup>1251</sup> Herken 1988, p.120; 123.

<sup>1252</sup> Herken 1988, p.147, footnote

<sup>1253</sup> De Wolf Smyth, 1946, p.vi-vii.



white paper was published in the book, along with the widely reported and now infamous “Blackburn Debate”.

Be that as it may, Byrnes had to clarify whether it would be possible to go round the UN rules (naturally within the limits of the legislative bills). He had promised to take this up with President Truman but, until he had additional information, Byrnes proposed carrying on as earlier. In practice this would have meant nothing happening, besides raw materials being shipped to the US. The British were not satisfied about this, as it made their position untenable. They appealed to the Washington Declaration, and to the fact that their own, independent research and development plans would encounter major problems due to this kind of delay. Byrnes expressed his sympathies, but claimed that he for one had not been informed about any possible British plans.<sup>1254</sup> This is despite the fact that the British had in fact informed the Americans about their plans. On hearing this, the Americans actually asked the British to refrain from commenting on the building that would be required for the start of the project. As a final insult, Byrnes left in the middle of the meeting so that it had to adjourn without a conclusion. A further meeting was promised as soon as possible, but the situation now looked rather grim. The message to Anderson made it clear there were now problems with the Americans, and yet Wilson and Halifax appeared oddly optimistic.

“I doubt whether Byrnes and Patterson have yet given serious thought to the problem but I think they will do their best if and when they do to cooperate in finding a satisfactory solution.”<sup>1255</sup>

Halifax and Wilson made some comments about article 102, asked if it could be avoided somehow, and wondered whether the draft arrangements should be published. They eventually decided it was to be done if the Americans were ready to face the consequences (not specified) of doing so.

“Americans have got a good many hurdles to jump before they get so far, and on present form we are not too confident of their finishing the course.”<sup>1256</sup>

In addition to this bad news, Frank Roberts from the Moscow Embassy had sent a telegram to the FO with a brief recap of Stalin’s speech made on 9 February 1946. Stalin had stressed that the USSR would be stepping up production of iron, steel and its heavy industries. The Foreign Office highlighted the margins in the fourth paragraph of the report. Stalin had noted here the “importance of geological prospecting to augment the supply of raw materials”.<sup>1257</sup> As this was then filed in relation to the atomic collaboration, it suggests that the British had interpreted this to mean that the Soviets too were gearing up for their own

<sup>1254</sup> No.34 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 17 February, 1.35 a.m.) ANCAM 536 Telegramic [U 3830/20/70], Washington, 17 February 1946, [U 3830/20/70], DBPO Ser.I.Vol.IV.

<sup>1255</sup> TNA FO 800/527 ANCAM 536 17 February 1946 JSM to Cabinet Office (from Halifax and Field Marshal Wilson to Anderson).

<sup>1256</sup> TNA FO 800/527 ANCAM 538 17 February 1946 JSM to Cabinet Offices (Halifax and Wilson to Anderson).

<sup>1257</sup> TNA FO 800/527 No.107 SAVING. 17 February 1946 From Moscow to Foreign Office.

atomic programme, at the same time as their own cooperation was faltering. Interestingly, Document No.46/37 from the series was removed from the folder on 25 March 1985.

Going back to Anglo-American cooperation, Professor James Chadwick had relayed information to the Americans about what Britain would need for her own research project. In addition to this, the British asked for concrete help with their project (as agreed in Washington). All the time during the "clarification period" over the winter, however, the only concrete help seemed to be coming from the other direction across the Atlantic. There were still British scientists working in North America, and raw material deliveries continued to flow to the United States. As General Groves got more agitated about these requests, the British pointed out that, in view of the Washington Declaration and the negotiations had there, theirs was a fair request. Reluctantly General Groves promised to take the matter up, but the British still did not gain any concrete support for their project. This left the British with very little options except to state that the matter would be continually brought up, and urgently. It would not be left on the table to wait, again.<sup>1258</sup> The tables had therefore turned once more, and the promised cooperation that had seemed so close just a short while ago, was now facing problems of the most severe kind.

Among themselves, the British considered whether there was any possible way to get round the UN articles, and in spite of their pressing comments, they also considered ways and means to keep the door open for further negotiations.<sup>1259</sup> After the alarming meeting of the CPC, the British also looked into the American domestic legislation regarding atomic energy. Roger Makins and Denis Rickett<sup>1260</sup> discussed the McMahon Bill, but came to the conclusion that even if it was to prohibit the export of fissionable material from the United States, and prevent American citizens from participating in the production of fissionable material abroad, there was no need to worry as it seemed to concern mostly domestic control. In their opinion, the US was still on the lookout for finding the best possible means to tackle the issues related to the control of atomic energy and matters related to it.<sup>1261</sup> The domestic legislation was not seen to be related to the CPC and Anglo-American cooperation, but there was some concern among the British. On 19 February the JSM sent a telegram to the Cabinet about what had recently been happening in American atomic policy. The British experts thought that the most likely reason for the Americans to be prevaricating was that both the important American ministers involved, Byrnes and Patterson, did not know enough about previous atomic cooperation

<sup>1258</sup> No.35 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 17 February, 1.50 a.m.) ANCAM 537 Telegramic [FO 800/582], Washington, 17 February 1946, [FO 800/582], DBPO, Ser.I,Vol.IV.

<sup>1259</sup> No.34 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 17 February, 1.35 a.m.) ANCAM 536 Telegramic [U 3830/20/70], Washington, 17 February 1946, [U 3830/20/70], DBPO Ser.I,Vol.IV (refers to ANCAM 538 telegram, not printed in DBPO cf.Bullen, 1985 footnote 13 p.120,).

<sup>1260</sup> Rickett was Attlee's private secretary, and Makins worked in the British Embassy in Washington. He was responsible for the atomic matters.

<sup>1261</sup> Bullen, 1985 DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Calendar note I, p.120.

between Britain and the US. And even if Byrnes had argued against cooperation on the basis of articles in the UN Charter, the real reason, the British felt was the Senate and its negative views. The report stated that during the last three months the Senate had become legislatively more powerful, especially in atomic matters. Roosevelt's past policy, which had been secretive, had also caused a backlash of sorts among American politicians, as well as the general public and media at large. Simply put, most people in the United State seemed to favour clearly led, straightforward policies with no preferences or special privileges given to anyone.<sup>1262</sup>

Two points are particularly interesting here. Firstly, the British idea of there having been a longer trajectory (past history) was used to create legitimacy for the future, and prioritised it over the idea of starting anew. This was not a new idea among civil servants or the diplomatic corps, but a permanent part of government machinery. But when it is compared to the Labour party's initial pledge, the fact that the Government was subscribing so wholeheartedly to political realism like this reveals how drastic a change had occurred since the autumn of 1945. Moreover, it reveals clearly how important the permanent parts of government could become. By controlling the information, they recommend, and they pick out what is required to make those executive decisions. It might be an indirect influence, but it's absolute. Secondly, the British had noticed the change from war to peace in the United States - wartime executive decisions and powers had given way to the more deliberative policy of peacetime. It is also worth considering that the politics practiced by President Roosevelt with his rather narrow circle of advisors might have indeed created a similar kind of division of information that had hampered the British in the early autumn. Without knowing about the background and the context, it would be understandable, even from the British point of view, why a short-sighted policy, or a policy at least appearing as such, was being practiced. Would the policy have been any different if more information had been available is a different matter; but then one could also ask how much relevant information had been withheld too.

The British believed that the Americans were pursuing a "new" and transparent policy. This approach appeared to have the favour of Truman, and indeed the President had been under some amount of domestic political pressure to follow this approach. Truman had been willing to commit to the forthcoming recommendations of the McMahon committee and he seemed to think that the committee would be able to take into account all the essential features

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<sup>1262</sup> No.36 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 20 February, 2.14 a.m.) ANCAM 540 Telegramic [U 3830/20/70], Washington, 19 February 1946, [U 3830/20/70]. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Roosevelt had kept many things as a secret, and at this point some of these arrangements had seen the daylight. An example was the deal to let the Soviet Union have the Kuril-islands. These kind of secret arrangements had caused scrutiny and even antipathy, cf. Bullen 1985, footnote 14, p.100 DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. (referring to ANCAM 528 telegram 4 February 1946, not printed in DBPO). On Roosevelt's tendency to be the only one in the know, just as had been the case with Churchill see for instance Leinonen, 2006, p.260. On Byrnes and "popular foreign policy" cf. Leinonen, 2006, p.261-264.

of the matter. In this light, Byrnes' fear of the Senate now became understandable for the British. It may well be that the Senate was not able to access significant information either, or act according to this information, even if it was conveyed. Therefore it was also understandable that the US generally wanted to abstain from all kinds of commitments, even if article 102 could have been bypassed. The British nevertheless felt that finding such a loophole to bypass it, would have been an extremely good thing.<sup>1263</sup>

Just why it would be a good thing, the sources do not really reveal. Perhaps finding such a loophole would help mitigate the "moral considerations" the US might have had about cooperation. If it could be legitimately justified, it would then be harder to break off the cooperation later. Such a loophole would also be extremely useful for covering both American and British backs, in relation to the UN, were cooperation to be continued in secrecy. If wartime cooperation was ever to be revealed in more detail, then such a loophole could also be used as a defence. At the same time it could be used to measure the actual willingness of the United States to cooperate. If the Americans were still interested in cooperating, they could be expected to greet a possible loophole with joy.

In their thorough review the British also considered that both Byrnes and Truman still had every chance to try to convince the Senate of the importance of Anglo-American cooperation. Meanwhile, the aggressiveness of the USSR would enhance the pragmatism of the US, and increase support for Britain. By informing the Senate about the importance of British cooperation, Byrnes and Truman would also help in the UN Control Commission negotiations. Whether it was because Truman and Byrnes were lacking in either competence, opportunities or just plain will-power to resist political pressure from the Senate and the public, the British felt that in every case, a nudge in the right direction would not be amiss. It was well-known that there would in any case be vocal opposition to any suggestion of sharing atomic knowledge.<sup>1264</sup> Perhaps this rather glum appraisal of the American leadership was simply due to British hopes having been dashed, while their fears had become reality. The fear of once again being left alone, as in the bleak situation of the Battle of Britain, must have left its mark across every rank of the British establishment. Being prepared for the worst had proved itself the best policy in the recent past, after all. What all these considerations seemed to ignore, however, was that the US might actually be conducting its policy intentionally, and in its own interests. There is a certain kind of self-assuredness, or even arrogance that comes across from the source material, as most of the time, and by most of the members of the executive, the Americans seemed to be talked of in terms of being objects rather than subjects. The British, in their own eyes, understood everything better, and for everybody else's good too.

<sup>1263</sup> No.36 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 20 February, 2.14 a.m.) ANCAM 540 Telegramic [U 3830/20/70], Washington, 19 February 1946, [U 3830/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1264</sup> Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 20 February, 2.14 a.m.) ANCAM 540 Telegramic [U 3830/20/70], Washington, 19 February 1946, [U 3830/20/70], DBPO, Ser.I, vol.IV.

The British report thus recommended applying more pressure on the Americans to make some form of a public statement in favour of atomic cooperation. This, in turn, could then be presented to the UN. It would most likely meet with stiff resistance and sharp criticism, but with a strong show of Anglo-American solidarity from the British, perhaps this storm could be ridden out. One of the possibilities the British had considered was that one of the existing agreements could be simply rephrased and adjusted to be fit for presentation to the public. Unfortunately however, none of the existing agreements could be extended to cater more for British interests. Publishing a vague statement of a document would just hamper, not only the bilateral cooperation, but also international cooperation (and control). Besides these options, the British did point out that the Americans might have actually made their minds made up. Therefore it was of utmost importance to be prepared to continue with what little the British already had in the way of cooperation. In reality this meant only cooperating in the field of raw materials. The British had deemed the Quebec Agreement a thing of the past, after all, even if General Groves was adamant about the clauses on the exchange of raw materials remaining in effect. By following the CDT clause, there remained the possibility to at least keep the door open for covert *ad hoc* arrangements through the CPC committee. But nobody seemed to pay attention to the fact that if the Quebec Agreement was taken to be outdated, then so would the Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire, the CPC, and the CDT.<sup>1265</sup> This report reveals how the British were trying to consider as many possible outcomes as possible. Also the chance of the cooperation failing was considered briefly, and again the British determination to pursue their own interests in the field of atomic energy at almost all costs becomes also evident.

According to the report, the Americans kept an eye on the Senate, so that possible conflicts could be avoided. As the British had brought their own proposals and reports about their intended domestic project to the CPC meeting, Byrnes decided to walk out as was just mentioned. The matter was therefore not added to the agenda. Yet, despite this the British somehow kept expecting that the Americans would take into account British plans to produce raw materials at home and be against this. The British also considered dismantling the CDT and reallocating the raw materials already acquired, as there seemed to be heavy resistance to the project. Likewise, a new meeting of the CPC was to be organized as soon as possible so that the problems mentioned above could be solved and to keep up the contact for negotiating.<sup>1266</sup>

Reallocating the raw materials was mentioned as being one of the few ways the British might be able to pressure the Americans, on whom they had become rather dependent. General Groves, in particular, feared losing the beneficial arrangements the Americans had enjoyed up to that point for gaining raw

<sup>1265</sup> Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 20 February, 2.14 a.m.) ANCAM 540 Telegramic [U 3830/20/70], Washington, 19 February 1946, [U 3830/20/70], DBPO, Ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1266</sup> Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 20 February, 2.14 a.m.) ANCAM 540 Telegramic [U 3830/20/70], Washington, 19 February 1946, [U 3830/20/70], DBPO, Ser.I, vol.IV.

materials. British attention focused nevertheless on waiting for the Senate to come up with something, though they did not have the slightest idea of what this might be. The delay was duly noted, even that it might be intentional, but the reasons behind it were not considered. It was clear, even for the British, that there was something outside the CPC that would be deciding future plans. The British had to wait and react only when they knew what that was. The initiative had been lost, and there were fewer ways to gain the upper hand with the US, especially now, as Parliament could not be used in these attempts, due to the public commitment to an internationalist policy.

Groves eventually agreed to alter the CDT terms in the new agreement drafts, though he also pressed for some minor alterations the British thought at the time to be harmless.<sup>1267</sup> But what happened next was far from harmless. The next events were in fact perhaps among the most harmful for the cooperation from the British perspective, and they are covered below in 5.2.2.

### 5.2.2 Spy scare as scapegoat?

Further negotiations to solve the deadlock were hampered by the atomic spy scandal, which was conveniently leaked<sup>1268</sup> to the press in the US. Apparently straight after the abruptly adjourned meeting of the CPC, Byrnes had been questioned in a press conference about an incident relating to atomic technology and espionage that had happened in Canada. Byrnes was reported as assuring the public that atomic know-how remained safely and exclusively in American hands.

“as far as he knows, the “know how” for producing the Atomic bomb remains exclusively in the possession of the US This statement caused caused surprise among the journalists who asked whether he meant to say that Britain and Canada did not have the know how. Byrnes replied that this was the fact.”<sup>1269</sup>

Truman’s statements about the nature of the tripartite cooperation were also surprising, but the telegram from Washington did not go into details. Instead, it reported that the question of security was now more important than ever. General Groves and Herbert Hoover (head of the FBI) had been summoned to report before a secret session of the McMahon committee because of this incident. Roger Makins concluded that this was increasing American reluctance to give Britain what she wanted.<sup>1270</sup> An urgent meeting was proposed to come up with some specific arrangements that might salvage what there was left to salvage, and to recommend action for the PM in time for the next Gen 75 meeting. The

<sup>1267</sup> TNA FO 800/527 ANCAM 542 JSM to Cabinet Office (Makins to Rickett) 19 February 1946.

<sup>1268</sup> *The New York Times* 16 February 1946: “Canada Seizes 22 as Spies; Atom Secrets Believed Aim”; *The Christian Science Monitor* 19 February 1946: “US Says Atom Spies Are ‘Under Control’”; *The Washington Post* 25 February 1946: “Canadian Atom ‘Spy Ring’ Unfolds Tons of Evidence”; *The Washington Post* 22 March 1946, “Spy scare”; *The Washington Post* 23 March 1946, “Atom Spy Ring Hearings Set For Four Cities”;

<sup>1269</sup> TNA FO 800/527 ANCAM 544 JSM to Cabinet Office (Makins to Rickett).

<sup>1270</sup> TNA FO 800/527 ANCAM 544 JSM to Cabinet Office (Makins to Rickett).

considerations related to fine tuning drafts of the CDT arrangements and what Byrnes had told the British.

“Mr. Byrnes and the State Department are clearly convinced that, in peace-time conditions, they will not be able to keep the new arrangements secret, and that even if they were not directly published they would be almost certain to become known to the press and public either by leakage or through information which would have to be passed to the Senate Committee on Atomic Energy.”<sup>1271</sup>

The document, signed by Sir Orme Sargent, and accepted by Attlee, also mentioned that the Americans would not change their minds, and as the drafts had been meant to be kept secret, they would not be concluded. The British commitment to the UN Charter was also mentioned as a reminder. After further heavy consideration, the memo recommended continuing on the basis of the old agreements as, with the way things stood, the new ones no longer seemed possible. This would be a better option than throwing everything away, and perhaps it would help secure what had been already verbally arranged. Britain could argue for this using the tripartite minutes from Washington that the heads of state had signed in 1945. British problems with the Canadians would be kept separate from all this.<sup>1272</sup> These possibilities were still considered until the end of March as drafts for possible unofficial arrangements to be made were circulated. In the end it was recommended that all new arrangements should be attempted.<sup>1273</sup>

Not only had the leak to the press halted negotiations abruptly and made the new agreements unfeasible, but it was also timed to coincide with the US administration's attempts to wrestle atomic control from the Army to Civilian officials.<sup>1274</sup> The incident grew rapidly on a scale that was hard to contain in any way, and spy scare stories abounded. Eventually, it was the Canadian premier, MacKenzie King who issued a formal statement on the matter. He acknowledged that research related to atomic technology in Ottawa had regrettably ended up in foreign hands. Surprisingly, the Soviet Union confirmed that it had gained minor pieces of information via spying. The matter had, however, been leaked to the press already before the Canadian statement was issued. It was the American media which pressed the Canadians to come out with the matter in the middle of their own investigation, thus possibly damaging the process. As to be expected, the US press and public reacted rather wildly to this news. The reporting was colourful and did not really encourage the Americans to relax their grip on the new technology, thus damaging British interests. Indeed Byrnes, as Makin already noted in his telegram to Rickett, had given the wor-

<sup>1271</sup> TNA FO 800/527 A letter from Rickett to Butler 26 February 1946.

<sup>1272</sup> TNA FO 800/527 A letter from Rickett to Butler 26 February 1946; (46/31) a memo about “Atomic energy the proposed new US -UK- Canadian Agreements” attached to the letter.

<sup>1273</sup> TNA FO 800/527 28 February 1946 Rickett to Butler including a draft note from Attlee for informing the CPC delegates. Also TNA FO 800/527 GEN. 75/31 Cooperation between the US UK and Canadian Governments, 27 March 1946.

<sup>1274</sup> For instance *The Washington Post* 22 March 1946 “Drive Begins to Split Atom from the Army”.

ried American public a notification that, as far as he knew, atomic know-how remained safely and exclusively in American hands.<sup>1275</sup>

The incident was most unfortunate and happened at the worst possible time from the British point of view. The delicate negotiations of the Combined Policy Committee (CPC) would be severely harmed by this. In addition (and unbeknownst to the British), the anti-cooperation, pro-security hardliners had gained more support in the Senate. The spy scare had thus played in to the hands of those who wanted a US monopoly of atomic technology, as if the spy had British connections, then security was a legitimate reason to keep stalling cooperation. The spy scare was based mostly on the Soviet cipher Gouzenko's defection to west. Gouzenko had revealed that the Soviet Union had gained some information about western atomic research. It has been suspected that the leak to the press was made by General Groves. At least he certainly made the most of the situation for his own ends - security issues meant there was more reason to keep atomic secrets in military hands for now.<sup>1276</sup> Herken claims that Groves used the spy scandal as a way to ensure US domestic legislation would be as rigorous as possible, especially with regard to the sharing of information at home or abroad. Likewise, Groves wanted to keep the military's hold on atomic technology, and it seemed to have an effect as Senator Vanderberg proposed (with Groves) that the McMahon Bill should establish a military council to evaluate the decisions made by any civilians put in charge of atomic research.<sup>1277</sup>

Extremely alarmed, and evidently needing time to think about what to do next, Attlee finally rejoined the atomic discussion after a long period of silence. He sent Halifax and Wilson (via JSM) written instructions by the beginning of March. These emphasised securing atomic cooperation in the future. He conceded that the Americans were reluctant to make secret additional agreements, and he also admitted that the UN Charter did mean Britain's hands were tied, at least in the moral sense.<sup>1278</sup> On a concrete level, the actions of the US Senate and the McMahon committee had severely damaged the British chances of securing cooperation. Attlee thus suggested publishing the previous drafts which had been agreed to in earlier phases of the negotiations; that is, if the Americans were to accept this.<sup>1279</sup> Making the agreements public would have ensured that

<sup>1275</sup> Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 20 February, 2.14 a.m.) ANCAM 540 Telegramic [U 3830/20/70], Washington, 19 February 1946, [U 3830/20/70], DBPO, Ser.I, vol.IV. Calendar Notes I (21 February 23 February 1946) About the Soviet reactions to the Canadian formal complaint cf. Bullen, 1985 footnote 10, p.124. 21 February ANCAM 544 telegram (not printed in DBPO) by Roger Makins. About the press comments see for instance: *The Washington Post*, 20 February 1946. "Atom Secret Safe, Byrnes Believes, Despite Spy ring: Bomb Production 'Know-How' Still Ours Alone".

<sup>1276</sup> Cf. Herken, 1988, p. 115-116.

<sup>1277</sup> Herken 1988, p.134.

<sup>1278</sup> Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington) CANAM 546 Telegramic [U 3832/20/70], Cabinet Office, 6 March 1946, [U 3832/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1279</sup> Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington) CANAM 546 Telegramic [U 3832/20/70], Cabinet Office, 6 March 1946, [U 3832/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Cf. Calendar Note II, p.145 in DBPO, in where as Halifax reveals his annoyance about the stalemate of the negotiations. At the same time he mentioned the leading Ameri-



everyone in the US who needed to would know about the promises made for Britain, and moreover, they would know that the cooperation would continue to be, that it was, and that it had been, a two-way street. Publishing these would have also bound the US closely to Britain, and in public. The problem was that the Americans were not so keen on publishing the plans, as we have already seen.

The other suggestion mooted by the British (about publishing a vague declaration of sorts) would only mix things up, Attlee said. And it would be even more risky now, while the UN control commission was meeting. Whereas it would be totally different to say out loud that existing cooperation, which had a longer history, would simply be continued- and it would be a natural follow-up. The Washington Declaration had given the impression that Britain, the US (and Canada) were already in this together. In the current state of world affairs detailed revelation of the Americans and the British sharing not only information and knowledge, but also raw materials, could be detrimental, and would most likely raise a negative reaction.<sup>1280</sup> Attlee seemed to forget again that the continuity would be only in principle, as the British themselves had considered the earlier agreements outdated. Raw materials was also one of the few leverages the British had, so not mentioning that, and instead underlining how important the British were for the Americans and the Manhattan project, the British would lose their minimal advantage. Then again, were Britain to pursue an independent project and keep her own clandestine raw material deals secret, keeping the focus away from raw materials was actually a wise choice. Parliament in Britain would have no doubt demanded a debate about the Government's secret arrangements were the matter to be made public. Moreover, for a country that was considered poor as a church mouse, giving away valuable rare materials was not good policy. Information about such plans might have led to unforeseen difficulties for the Government.

In his instructions Attlee nevertheless emphasised that despite difficulties, the benefits of this hard-won labour should not be thrown away. For instance the informal exchange of information between individuals within the framework of the CPC could be a solution of a sort, even if not the kind of victory that a formal agreement would have been. It would be a good thing to keep the exchange of resources covered up, and it should be continued to be coordinated between himself and president Truman directly. Despite these instructions, the negotiations would not progress. The Cabinet instructed the JSM about the requirements of the British project, believing they had every right and justification to pursue it. But it required help from the Americans, which meant that any progress would have to be made on their terms. The production could not

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<sup>1280</sup> can scientist, Dr. Vannevar Bush to have been a supported of the cooperation, and that even Dean Acheson was supporting the cooperation, but Byrnes and Groves kept on opposing and stalling by all possible means. Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington) CANAM 546 Telegramic [U 3832/20/70], Cabinet Office, 6 March 1946, [U 3832/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Cf. Calendar Note II, p.145 in DBPO, where Halifax reveals his annoyance about the stalemate of the negotiations.

be reallocated to Canadian soil, as that would mean that Canada would be as entitled to the raw materials as Britain. What would be most important to get from the Americans at this point, were the principles and technology behind the Hanford Pile, to help Britain to prepare her own enrichment processes. Without this knowledge, Britain might as well withdraw from the raw material pool altogether. Before doing this however, it would be good to try and press the matter further with the Americans once more.<sup>1281</sup>

This counts as a zero-sum game, an essential feature in political realism. The resources, technology and suitable sites were scarce, and competition had advanced to such a point that a third partner's interests could be brushed aside to advance one's own interests. Anything gained by others was taking away from oneself. Attlee was thus suggesting the British representatives seize what had at least been gained up to this point. This was to be secured more or less in any possible means. Then again, Attlee's telegram considers the crisis within the context that the US would still eventually be interested in pursuing the co-operation. This is bit difficult to understand at this point, when there had already been one delay after another, no sign of interest from the Americans, and direct arguments that were preventing any cooperation. A similar tendency can be seen already in the previous sources. The reasons behind this change, or the cause for ambivalency was somehow not considered in detail, at least according to the sources at my disposal. It may well be, however, that informal talks had been conducted and that these matters were considered in personal discussions. At this point even an informal and vague oral agreement would seem to have been enough for Attlee.

Part of Attlee's proposals were contradictory, like wanting to publish the drafts of the agreements, but then noting that publishing them would cause international problems. Similarly he thought the Americans would accept his proposals at the same time as understanding that publishing the plans would need American agreement in advance. Likewise, the argument for continuing existing cooperation despite the UN is odd, as elsewhere he considered the Quebec Agreement and its amendments to be outdated. Equally the comment about the personal exchange of information as a basis for the Government's project has desperation written all over it. One explanation might be that perhaps by considering all options like this he was preparing a reaction to whatever the US would do, but this only underlines the fact that Britain had been forced into a reactionary relationship with the US as she continued to sit on the fence. Indeed, despite all their efforts the British were not able to pick up the negotiations and carry on with their agenda. Yet again a change of hearts on the US side had forced the British to react, with little room for manoeuvre. Yet again, it had happened just when the British had thought they might have achieved their goals. Various informal arrangements were still proposed to the

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<sup>1281</sup> Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington) CANAM 546 Telegramic [U 3832/20/70], Cabinet Office, 6 March 1946, [U 3832/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Cf. Calendar Note II, p.145 in DBPO, in where as Halifax reveals his annoyance about the stalemate of the negotiations.

Americans as an attempt to salvage whatever could be salvaged, though. Other fields of foreign policy cooperation were considered, and the idea of international control was brought up again, perhaps as a backup plan.

### 5.2.3 The cloak of internationalism

While attempting to solve the Anglo-American deadlock, the British had fully prepared themselves for the forthcoming negotiations about UN control. It was seen as important in case the plan of cooperation with the United States did not get anywhere. But international cooperation seemed to be facing as many difficulties as the bilateral. In March 1946, the chosen British representatives, Sir Alexander Cadogan and Professor James Chadwick<sup>1282</sup> were briefed on the forthcoming UN meetings. They were warned about the ambivalency of the US, which could make the forthcoming negotiations difficult. Neither the US, nor the Soviet Union had named their representatives for the control commission or for the meetings that would plan the commission. Not even the actual date of the meeting was set yet, but the British thought it most likely the negotiations would be underway by April at the latest. For this reason, there was a sense of urgency in preparing the British delegates. Their briefing included a review of the intended organ within the UN, in terms of its history and the idea behind it. It emphasised that the basic idea of the control plans and committee were based on good-will, understanding and mutual trust. Because of this, inspection trips would only be initiated after participatory states increased their mutual trust and understanding. Later on, the representatives of the forthcoming organ would have wider powers for controlling atomic energy related matters and questions, conducting research, and carrying out inspections at production plants and so forth. Its major purpose, however, would be to prevent the manufacture of atomic weapons. Hence, according to the preliminary memo, cooperation with both the United States and Canada would be imperative. This could help in preventing any loose and uncertain planning, which in turn could render the whole committee ineffective. Hasty plans should not be made to “try to reach the moon” the British memo stated, and is probably referring to the UN control plans themselves. However good the intentions might be, the risks of over-ambitious plans failing was too high and should be avoided at all cost.<sup>1283</sup>

This last comment about uncertain plans being just as dangerous as cancelling plans altogether, can be seen as a nod towards (with a degree of moral justification) for any lingering realist notions of sharing in an atomic oligarchy via bilateral cooperation with the US. Indeed, the instructions also considered the fate of the US atomic arsenal should such an opportunity present itself. The arsenal might have a deterrent value that could help enforce international control. The British also came to the conclusion that so-called “honest states” as well as the Security Council should have atomic weapons at their disposal. This

<sup>1282</sup> Bullen 1985 footnote 1, p.160, DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1283</sup> No.50 Minute by Mr. Butler [U 3123/20/70], Foreign Office, 16 March 1946, [U 3123/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

should be made widely known, so that potentially aggressive states would be made aware, and be persuaded to decide against hostile activity for fear of possible atomic strikes.<sup>1284</sup> So it seems the UN control plans were now no more than a cloak wrapped around the ugly but more concrete political realism of being prepared for the worst. Paradoxically it was as if the advocates of this idea were at the same time already dismissing it, and preparing for the worst rather than taking the initiative. And it was clear who counted as possible aggressors (USSR) and who were “honest states”, even if not directly mentioned. This was thinly veiled political realism, as the most important founders of the would-be organisation were already (a) preparing for the failure of the system, and (b) securing their own interests and position.

The instructions given to British delegates were complemented with a statement from the ACAE, which considered the practicalities and future functions of the UN control commission in detail. It suggested that the actions of the control committee advance in three stages. The first stage would concern the sharing of basic information and raw materials; at the second, the commission would cover control and safety measures and guarantees; and at the third stage, it would establish the means to enable large scale international atomic research projects in the future. Of these three, the US would surely consider the safety guarantees to be the most important. Before the US would share any information, and give up its advantageous position, safety guarantees would have to be confirmed. From the British point of view, the information intended for the peaceful use of atomic energy would be the most beneficial stage, and be most likely to give them the information which was at the moment beyond their own reach. An exchange of technical details was not likely to happen right now, but this did not rule out providing a fully functional means for that exchange of information to happen<sup>1285</sup> for a more propitious moment in the future. The exchange of information for peaceful uses was, however, the main British motivation, and the ACAE felt that they would most likely gain important knowledge of things, such as technical know-how, which was still considered a secret by many in the US.

Interestingly, and in contradiction to the Government’s policy of preparing for the worst, the ACAE saw the removal of atomic weapons from national arsenals as the solution. This had been one of the points agreed in Moscow over Christmas - only then would control turn to either the manufacture or use of atomic weapons (or both). The ACAE, however, was now putting the emphasis on controlling the manufacture of atomic weapons. The intended control bodies should be extremely active and vigilant in their actions to achieve this and an effective sanction mechanism should back it up. It would be difficult in practice, but nevertheless technically possible. Heavy emphasis should be laid on detecting possible raw material processing plants, as enriched raw material would be

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<sup>1284</sup> No.50 Minute by Mr. Butler [U 3123/20/70], Foreign Office, 16 March 1946, [U 3123/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1285</sup> No.50 Minute by Mr. Butler [U 3123/20/70], Foreign Office, 16 March 1946, [U 3123/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

easier to conceal.<sup>1286</sup> These sentiments illustrate again the bidirectional approach of the British executive. If Anglo-American cooperation and British atomic weapons were to not be possible, then the worldwide removal of other nations' weapons should be possible. This also went some way towards assuaging the fears expressed in Parliament, that Britain would be much more vulnerable to atomic attack than either the USSR or US, both of which had vast land masses across which population and industry was more spread out. It made sense that if Britain had no deterrent, then she should support a peace policy.

Because of Britain's perceived vulnerability to atomic attack, cooperation with the United States was generally seen to require great risks at the expense of British defence. These should not be made, unless there were considerable benefits offered in return. At the core of this focus on internationalism was the idea that the US should not be exploited too heavily, and nor should the USSR be pressed so hard; and that the system would work efficiently for the benefit of Britain. Later on, Bevin confided in Cadogan about his worries concerning the Soviet attitude to the safety inspections. Especially as the Soviets were expected to reveal their own development projects in return for the Americans sharing their basic information.<sup>1287</sup> To these ends the British had already talked with Professor Ashby and asked him about the progress of Soviet atomic project as well as their scientists' attitudes to atomic research. Ashby's opinion was that Soviet Union was quite awestruck by it, as the military strength it fought for so long to build up had been dramatically challenged with a single bomb, that could render vast armies (like the Soviet Union's) obsolete.<sup>1288</sup> Indeed a British bomb, built with American help, would have been a cost effective way of gaining both prestige and strategic advantage, in the form of a deterrent, despite limited resources.

According to Butler's memorandum, the Soviet Union was afraid to reveal its fears, and kept up an aggressive policy to save face. The positive attitude towards international control was possibly related to its position as an underdog, and agreeing to it might be simply a bargaining ploy, as the Moscow Conference had shown. Actual international cooperation via the UN was something quite different however, and quite possibly a challenging prospect for the USSR. It was essential, therefore, to find out what the Soviets really thought about UN control. For instance, the inspection of raw material resources would be a real test of how much the USSR was really willing to cooperate. The British were sceptical, as even the visits agreed under wartime Allied cooperation had been extremely hard to carry out, but they were nevertheless willing to pursue UN control further.<sup>1289</sup> Indeed, as the bilateral negotiations for Anglo-American

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<sup>1286</sup> No.50 Minute by Mr. Butler [U 3123/20/70], Foreign Office, 16 March 1946, [U 3123/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1287</sup> No.50 Minute by Mr. Butler [U 3123/20/70], Foreign Office, 16 March 1946, [U 3123/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1288</sup> No.50 Minute by Mr. Butler [U 3123/20/70], Foreign Office, 16 March 1946, [U 3123/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1289</sup> No.50 Minute by Mr. Butler [U 3123/20/70], Foreign Office, 16 March 1946, [U 3123/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

cooperation were at a halt, Britain now took the opportunity to gain maximum benefit, more information, and more security via the UN atomic energy control mechanisms. After all, these might also help with Britain's own domestic research and development plans. However, most of the idealism, or internationalism, voiced so strongly during the autumn of 1945 had been abandoned. Instead of international cooperation and trust being the priority, it was now all about pursuing national interests by every means available. For instance, going back to the the memo from Butler, it was noted that the US might opt to keep a small national arsenal of atomic weapons in any future scenario. This would make a case for the USSR to also opt for national atomic weapons; and should that be the case, then it would be essential to share and distribute the rights for atomic weapons equally to all three states.<sup>1290</sup> Thus by March 1946, the British executive had three different plans for atomic development: (1) Anglo-American cooperation, (2) atomic cooperation and control within the UN mandate, and (3) other more conventional forms of cooperation with the US, should the first two options fail.

The briefing for what could be achieved within the UN was only speculative though, until the US or Soviet Union revealed their cards; and cooperation within the UN appears still remained the secondary choice. Bevin was sceptical of the UN plan becoming reality, even if he thought it a good option. He believed the Soviet Union would demand for information to be shared first, before they would be willing to subscribe to safety guarantees, while the US would want safety guarantees before sharing.<sup>1291</sup> The Americans did come forth by mid-April. From their end, UN control had been looked into by the Lilienthal committee. They were mostly of the same opinion as the British but, unlike the ACAE, the Americans recommended the "denaturing" of fissionable raw materials. This would be done to make it impossible to use in manufacturing weapons. Also, the Americans again wanted to have very clear wording about what was precisely meant by the 'exchange of information', so that there could be no reinterpretations made. The British atomic expert, James Chadwick, suggested that the exchange of information could first consist of sharing written reports, and then other forms could be defined later. The Americans were informed that the ACAE was also preparing this matter in Britain, with the focus on similar issues. As for the ACAE's recommendation to forbid the manufacture of atomic weapons, the idea was ignored by Acheson's committee. According to Cadogan, the US Senate recommended that the Lilienthal committee's report be the basis of future actions. The Americans were, however, still waiting for a statement on the matter from President Truman, and this could take up to a month at least.<sup>1292</sup> However, Cadogan also mentioned that the report did not respond to

<sup>1290</sup> No.50 Minute by Mr. Butler [U 3123/20/70], Foreign Office, 16 March 1946, [U 3123/20/70], DBPO Ser. I vol IV.

<sup>1291</sup> No. 54 Mr. Bevin to Sir A. Cadogan (New York) No. 21 Telegramic [U 3218/20/70], Foreign Office, 22 March 1946, [U 3218/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1292</sup> No.68 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 14 April, 12.3 a.m.) No. 2379 Telegramic [U 4081/20/70], Washington, 13 April 1946, [U 4081/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV

the official line of the US Government. Instead it was seen as an instrument for public debate. James Byrnes also regarded the report in a negative light, and said that the matter would only be taken up again after the President had made a statement, and the political situation had cleared up.<sup>1293</sup>

But even these warning signs were ignored by the British. The negative attitude of the US Government, compared to the rather positive Lilienthal committee, who were all for the exchange of information,<sup>1294</sup> should have caused some alarm bells to go off among the British. specially as the plans for new cooperation clauses were still being held up in the CPC. Only when they heard that the Lilienthal committee had been sidelined from all the decision-making related to the UN and atomic energy control plans, did the penny finally drop. The Americans had surprisingly appointed Bernard Baruch as their representative for the UN control commission.<sup>1295</sup> This appointment shows that the hard line was winning favour in the US, and indicates that the US Government wanted to keep control of atomic information as well as the decisions related to it. Lilienthal himself, despite his controversial 60 page report that was written with Dean Acheson, was later appointed head of the US Atomic Energy Commission.

#### 5.2.4 Internationalism is dropped

While preparations for the possible UN negotiations were going on, Anglo-American cooperation had been sitting on the shelf for some time already. In light of this, the British attempted to get closer to the US in other respects so as to secure at least some kind of 'special relationship' as this might help the atomic collaboration later on. The aforementioned negotiations, for instance, about granting the US some military bases in the Pacific had been in progress since February. In addition, Bevin had suggested urgent unofficial negotiations about the military bases to be held between the respective military experts in Washington. Byrnes agreed to this but added that the US would also be interested in gaining military bases in India.<sup>1296</sup> For a Britain that was already facing the idea of Indian independence, this seemed to make things more complicated and, besides, Indian territory might not be Britain's to give away anymore. But the talks that continued in March did still concern the United States possibly acquiring further military bases outside the Pacific. Before this took place, Bevin consulted his advisors on the matter. The actual bargaining over the matter lasted for a long time. Byrnes, for instance, wanted the British to aid the Americans in gaining access to the airbases on the Portuguese Azores. They would

<sup>1293</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 1 p.232, in DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1294</sup> Gowing, 1974, p.87-89.

<sup>1295</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 8, p.233. (Report by Makins 30 March 1946, not printed in DBPO) DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1296</sup> No.38 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 1683 Telegraphic [AN 3932/101/45], Foreign Office, 22 February 1946, [AN 3932/101/45]DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. No.43 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 1 March, 4.15 a.m.) No. 1301 Telegramic [AN 3932/101/45], Washington, 28 February 1946, [AN 3932/101/45], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

remain as civilian airfields and nominally in Portuguese control, but the upkeep and *de facto* control would be in American and British hands. Bevin supported the idea, even if there were not much resources to spare.<sup>1297</sup> The strength of the idea would be in that it would not be a military alliance as such, and thus would be easier to gain acceptance in the UN too. A similar plan as a strictly military agreement under both countries respective flags would have been more likely to encounter scrutiny, both internationally and domestically. So the new form of deal had its benefits. It could be used to avoid international repercussions, such as allegations of ganging up on USSR, and also as a loophole for justifying the cooperation, without being interpreted as a military alliance or a formal agreement reportable to the UN. Had this deal been accepted, it would have been a useful tool for arguing against the Americans, had they appealed to the UN Charter as their reason for not cooperating. It is interesting here that the Americans were keen on bending the rules when it suited their interests, but not with regard to atomic collaboration. The Americans wanted to share the maintenance costs and the British decided that this might be arranged in more detailed negotiations in London, as well as backing for their other plans.<sup>1298</sup>

Despite this rather good progress<sup>1299</sup>, Lord Halifax reported that American policy was changing yet again.<sup>1300</sup> According to Halifax the new line favoured strengthening the American position above all, and did not sit well with the British suggestion of joint defence plans. In addition, the Americans had brought up the airbases again, and hinted that rapid and favourable results in this case, would help with the handling of the British loan in Congress. The small amount of good news was that the Americans preferred a long-term solution on the matter.<sup>1301</sup> In addition, the British seemed to regard American interest in the military bases as an indicator that they were open for cooperation anyway. Therefore the negotiations about the bases continued throughout the spring and summer of 1946. The British were of course looking at the results of

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- <sup>1297</sup> No.47 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 2139 Telegraphic [Z 2218/250/36], Foreign Office, 6 March 1946, [Z 2218/250/36], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.
- <sup>1298</sup> No.53 Memorandum by Mr. Hoyer Millar [Z 2856/250/36], Foreign Office, 21 March 1946, [Z 2856/250/36] DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. The US proposal about bases in Azores included an idea about keeping a military base under the Portuguese flag, despite the base being in western use. No.58 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 2995 Telegramic [Z 3060/250/36], Foreign Office, 28 March 1946, [Z 3060/250/36]. About gaining support see No.69 Memorandum by Mr. Bevin D.O. (46)58 [AN 1657/101/45], Foreign Office, 13 April 1946, [AN 1657/101/45], DBPO, Ser.I.Vol.IV
- <sup>1299</sup> No.64 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 10 April, 7.40 p.m.) No. 2291 Telegraphic [AN 3935/101/45], Washington, 10 April 1946, [AN 3935/101/45] DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. For instance joint use of the bases in case of a possible war had already been agreed to in the negotiations which had started on 13 March.
- <sup>1300</sup> No.61 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 3203 Telegraphic [AN 3935/101/45], Foreign Office, 3 April 1946, [AN 3935/101/45], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. The Americans wanted to negotiate bilaterally with each of the nations of the Commonwealth.
- <sup>1301</sup> No.63 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 10 April, 6.30 p.m.) No. 2290 Telegramic [AN 3935/101/45], Washington, 10 April 1946, [AN 3935/101/45], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.



the negotiations in terms of helping their own defence strategy, as well as contributing to the special relationship.

Judging from the sources of the executive, the British wanted the US to acknowledge the aggressiveness of Soviet policy, and to act accordingly. But the American public did not appear interested in this. They saw the Soviet Union as a potential trade partner, which appeared to practice an anti-imperialist policy, favoured at the time in the US. According to the British, the American administration did seem to monitor, as well as follow public opinion closely, especially as the elections were drawing near. The Democrats in the US required leftist support and votes, and the reception of Churchill's speech among American leftists insinuated that any kind of Anglo-American alliance against the Soviet Union might have been met with a critical response.<sup>1302</sup> At least the tendency to follow public opinion closely, especially in foreign relations is seen to have been a leading one in US foreign affairs.<sup>1303</sup> Concerning this distinct period of time, it also responds well to the analysis of American pre-cold war foreign policy, as presented by Jukka Leinonen. According to Leinonen, Byrnes conducted a "people's foreign policy" on purpose.<sup>1304</sup>

Meanwhile, Britain was facing serious problems in maintaining its position and prestige as a Great Power in Asia and the Middle East.<sup>1305</sup> One possible and cost effective way to rectify the matter would have been the atomic bomb. But on a wider scale, these attempts to maintain a global position were made even more difficult for Britain by the Soviet Union combined with a lack of backing from the United States. Direct campaigning against the USSR was not seen as possible. A more discrete change of policy might, however, have drawn the right kind of attention and respect from the Americans. Subsequently, this might have led to gaining further support from them. In return, the British could show more support for the US in economic and financial matters. Among the options that were considered was the idea about getting the Americans more involved in the Middle East to play them off against the Soviets.

As mentioned earlier though, Britain did have one last trump card to play, once Bevin had laid all his other cards on the table. The former PM, Winston Churchill, a popular figure in the US, was used as an unofficial special envoy. He made a lengthy "private visit" to the United States during the spring of 1946. Churchill attempted to alarm the Americans about the Soviet threat. Naturally his personal views about the Soviet Union also affected his commentary. He had, however also consulted with Bevin about the possible ways and means to persuade the Americans to come to terms and to understand the aims of British policy. In Churchill's opinion, one such possibility would be the ongoing nego-

<sup>1302</sup> No.59 Foreign Office Memorandum [N 6344/605/38], Foreign Office, 1 April 1946, [N 6344/605/38], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. The memo is mostly about persuading the US to help against the aggressive policy of the USSR.

<sup>1303</sup> On polling public opinion in the US see for instance Leinonen 2012, p.294; on state department becoming sensitive for the public opinion according to Byrnes (1947) p.303; world opinion p.306.

<sup>1304</sup> Leinonen 2012, p.212;219;291 as possibly mere rhetorics p.266.

<sup>1305</sup> In general see for instance Carr, 1993.

tiations about the military bases, which could be used in order to consolidate the joint defence initiative. Joint military bases and airfields in the areas of British interest would strengthen the cooperation “in a natural way”.<sup>1306</sup> Throughout his trip, Churchill kept on reporting home about his various meetings, about his notions on American sentiments and thoughts about the world situation. He also attempted to clarify the matters concerning the British loan negotiations apparently for the benefit of the Foreign Office with his personal prestige. For instance he succeeded in meeting both Byrnes and Baruch, and gained promises of both financial and food aid to be delivered. In one of his reports he mentioned that to these ends he had used the fear of socialism to his advantage. Financial aid for Britain would be essential in helping the Government prevent any unwanted side-effects, he argued to the Americans, like red extremism.<sup>1307</sup>

Churchill also reported home about his intentions to speak in Fulton. He had planned to cover the world situation, and informed Bevin about the main points of his forthcoming speech, so that it would not come as a surprise to the Government. He also presented these points to both Byrnes and Truman in advance. Both had welcomed the speech, and had not requested any changes to be made. Churchill emphasised the growing suspicion towards the Soviet Union to be important, and planned to use this for his and Britain’s advantage. He also complimented Bevin about his recent efforts, especially with regards to UN control, which Churchill believed had contributed to gaining support for pro-British sentiments in the US. In conclusion, Churchill stated that should his speech cause any concern or inconvenience, it could be shrugged off as his personal view.<sup>1308</sup> Bevin responded to Halifax on 25 February with a telegram, and conveyed both his personal as well as Attlee’s thanks. He believed that Churchill’s speech would help the British cause in world affairs, and that it would be especially helpful in Anglo-American relations.<sup>1309</sup> Bevin also sent Churchill the terms of the loan negotiations as well as an update about the negotiations of 28 February. Apparently these were to be used to calm Baruch down (if necessary) and to secure the loan.<sup>1310</sup> Due to the talks between Baruch and Churchill, Byrnes developed a more favourable attitude to food aid.<sup>1311</sup>

<sup>1306</sup> Harbutt 1986, p.135-137.

<sup>1307</sup> No.37 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 22 February, 2.40 a.m.) No. 1159 Telegramic [FO 800/513], Washington, 21 February 1946, [FO 800/513]. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Halifax conveyed Churchill’s telegram.

<sup>1308</sup> No.37 No.37 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 22 February, 2.40 a.m.) No. 1159 Telegramic [FO 800/513], Washington, 21 February 1946, [FO 800/513]. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Halifax conveyed Churchill’s telegram. In return for his favours Churchill had requested Arthur “Bomber” Harris to be knighted, and claimed that not rewarding Harris for his war efforts had caused bad blood among American armed forces. Sir Arthur Harris (1892-1984) had been the commander of the RAF in 1942-1945. Chambers Biographical Dictionary, 2004, p.684.

<sup>1309</sup> No.39 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 1815 Telegramic [FO 800/513], Foreign Office, 25 February 1946, [FO 800/513]DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1310</sup> No. 42 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 1908 Telegramic [FO 800/513], Foreign Office, 28 February 1946, [FO 800/513] (conveying information about the loan-plans to Churchill), DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1311</sup> No.44 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 2086 Telegramic [UR 1799/104/851], Foreign Office, 5 March 1946, [UR 1799/104/851], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

Churchill's speech was delivered in Fulton, Missouri on 5 March 1946. He reported back to the Government on 7 March that, when travelling to Fulton, Truman had told Churchill that the US was considering hardening its policy towards the Soviet Union. A recent death of the Turkish ambassador in the US was to be utilised in world politics. The United States was to send the ambassador's body back home on board the Battleship Missouri, which was to be accompanied by a strong naval task force. This would act as a show of force in the Sea of Marmara, and would also respond to Soviet aggression and pressure on the Turkish regime. In addition, according to Churchill, it would also calm down the anxious Turks and Greeks.<sup>1312</sup> This was definitely a piece of good news for the British, who had already hoped for American support in the Mediterranean region for some time. This would also show the Soviets that bullying would not be tolerated.

In his speech, Churchill emphasised the role of the United States as the single most important actor in world affairs. He stressed that the welfare and future of the world depended on democracy prevailing, and on the UN's actions. He had also underlined the importance and long history of Anglo-American cooperation, and role of the western powers as guardians of the atomic weapon. Also in this case, as well as in other matters, the West should maintain the monopoly it had achieved. Likewise, the West should be worried about "the Iron Curtain" that had descended over Europe. Moreover, the West should seek further cooperation in world affairs by all means available. Churchill mentioned cooperation for joint military bases to be a good example. The agreement between Canada and the US about joint defence should be extended to cover the whole British Commonwealth. Churchill also mentioned the British food shortage and need for financial aid. Despite these problems, he assured his listeners that the British were a resource for the world, and especially the US.

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According to footnote 10, p.143 in the series, Halifax reported that Byrnes had promised help with food supplies. On food-aid cf: No.56 Extract from Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing St. on 25 March 1946 at 11 a.m. C.M. (46)27 [CAB 128/5], [CAB 128/5], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. The Cabinet was informed by B. Smith that food supplies were on their way, but there were some problems in practical arrangements. On 10 April 1946 it was apparent that there was no way that all the promised food-aid would arrive. The Cabinet decided to ration bread, were the US to do so as well, No.65 Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing St. on 10 April 1946 at 10.30 a.m. C.M. (46)32 [CAB 128/5], [CAB 128/5], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Rationing bread, though it appears to not be connected, would have actually been an extremely serious sign of crisis. As food help from the US had been promised in public already, rationing might have caused negative sentiments. This, in turn, could have affected the British chances of keeping on the good side of the Americans, and thus gaining other favours. Thus on 12 April 1946, the Cabinet started to look for other solutions. Even cooperation with the Argentine was reconsidered despite American demands otherwise. Cf. No.67 Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing St. on 12 April 1946 at 6 p.m. C.M. (46)34 [CAB 128/5], [CAB 128/5], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. In the end, food aid was requested from Argentine after all. No.66 Sir A. Noble (Buenos Aires) to Mr. Bevin (Received 12 April, 2.35 a.m.) No. 393 Telegramic [AS 2062/235/2], Buenos Aires, 11 April 1946, [AS 2062/235/2], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1312</sup> No.48 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 7 March, 9.50 p.m.) No. 1460 Telegramic [FO 800/513], Washington, 7 March 1946, [FO 800/513] (Churchill's report). DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

Cooperation would help diffuse the potential for conflict in the world, and prove fruitful for all parties concerned. In addition it would increase stability and lead to a better and safer world.<sup>1313</sup> The speech given in Fulton did manage to create a more favourable atmosphere for British notions and views. Perhaps Churchill did have a better grip on American attitudes, which he could also better utilise to emphasise matters that were important for them, so that favourable sentiment would be achieved.

Neither Truman nor Byrnes commented on the speech in the following press conference. They did, however, deny knowing about its contents in advance.<sup>1314</sup> This is understandable, as the speech on its own was hair-raising enough; admitting to having approved of the speech in advance might have caused serious repercussions. Also the British government was avoiding any slippery slopes, as the speech had been given by a private person, with no formal connection to the Government. Apparently, for this reason Bevin did not see it necessary to comment on the speech in public.<sup>1315</sup> When later questioned about it, Attlee referred to Eden's statement on 19 February 1946.<sup>1316</sup> Not commenting on it in public might have contributed to only a nominal interest in the matter in Parliament. Meanwhile the press covered the speech with alacrity.<sup>1317</sup> *The Times* noted, however, on 7 March 1946, the urgency of a different kind of foreign policy for post-war Britain. It referred to the debate about foreign policy in the Commons a fortnight before; to Attlee's radio broadcast on the previous Sunday (2 March 1946); and to Churchill's speech. According to *The Times* all these speeches expressed anxiety over Britain's position in the world since the Bretton Woods Conference and the Anglo-American loan negotiations.

"Britain has emerged from the war with enhanced prestige but much reduced material power. Above all she has suffered a relative diminution of power. Taken by herself, she is far weaker in population and in national resources than the two giant Powers of the United States and the Soviet Union."<sup>1318</sup>

The article went on to say that the US and USSR had both strengthened themselves during the war, or after the war, by acquiring strategically important areas.

<sup>1313</sup> Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech given in Fulton on 5 March 1946.

<sup>1314</sup> Bullen, 1985, footnote 5, p.151 DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Halifax's report by telegram 9 March 1946.

<sup>1315</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 7, p.151. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Canadian Premier MacKenzie King had telegraphed Attlee that he agreed wholeheartedly with Churchill's speech, cf. Bullen 1985, footnote 8, p.152. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1316</sup> HC Deb 21 March 1946 vol 420 c2030.

<sup>1317</sup> Churchill's trip was covered in detail in British and American press. Concerning his speech in Fulton see for example: *The Manchester Guardian* 5 March 1946, "Sinews of peace"; *The Times* 5 March 1946 "Sinews Of Peace". *The Manchester Guardian* 6 March 1946 "Shield against war & tyranny". Churchill mentioned for instance that it would be "wrong and imprudent" to share the experience and knowledge about the Atomic bomb, that the U.S, Britain and Canada now shared, with the new world organisation as it was only in its infancy. *The Times* 6 March 1946, "Mr. Churchill's Speech."

<sup>1318</sup> *The Times* 7 March 1946, "British Foreign Policy".

"Two alternative policies face Great Britain in these conditions and the choice must soon be made between them. The first is to attach herself as a junior partner to one the great constellations of power. This may seem to some the line of least resistance and a safe refuge from future trouble. But yesterday's American reactions to Mr. Churchill's speech show what mixed feelings any such approach would evoke across the Atlantic. The second is to pursue an independent policy, and so to maintain British standing and influence among the Great Powers of the world. Upon the collaboration of these powers rests the hope of international security now re-stated in Uno."<sup>1319</sup>

Britain would require her utmost skill to allocate limited resources effectively and pursue a well-balanced foreign policy to get through these hard times. Her first course of action should be to connect with the other nations of the Commonwealth (there was a meeting of the PMs from the Dominions due in London very soon). This was ahead in the meeting of the Dominion PMs in London in near future. But the Commonwealth alone would not be enough; it never had been and never would be a homogeneous unit. Contacts of a close kind with other countries would be required too.<sup>1320</sup>

The "Iron Curtain speech" is one of the most well-known speeches in post-war history, and it has been analysed extensively. The contents resonate well with the hardening of foreign policy that was taking place in the US, mentioned for instance by Harbut. He has argued that Byrnes began this change of course as late 1945, but the actual change of policy direction only really became apparent in February 1946.<sup>1321</sup> Leinonen also mentions this hardening of policy under Byrnes,<sup>1322</sup> yet, judging from the Moscow conference over Christmas 1945, the change could well have occurred later. Before and during the Moscow negotiations there had been American suggestions about bilateral deals with the Soviet Union. Likewise, the American delegation under Byrnes had been ready to make numerous compromises in the negotiations to gain the trust and favour of the Soviet Union. There were also a few instances of sphere of influence politicking - for instance, regarding the occupation of Japan. In the aftermath of the failed London Council of Foreign Secretaries, Truman had decided that the Soviet Union would now only understand a show of military strength, and yet it has also been argued that the change in US Policy was initiated by Truman only later.

"In July 1946, tired of the Russians pushing the United States around, "here a little, there a little," Truman decided that "it was time to take a stand on Russia." Truman asked Clark Clifford to draft a speech and plan a campaign to educate the public about the Russians."<sup>1323</sup>

It has been stated that besides Truman, the three men who were most influential in reorienting the US foreign policy towards the USSR from cooperation to containment were Averell Harriman, James F. Byrnes, and Dean Acheson. Though again, Truman has also been criticised for his inconsistency in foreign

<sup>1319</sup> *The Times* 7 March 1946, "British Foreign Policy".

<sup>1320</sup> *The Times* 7 March 1946, "British Foreign Policy".

<sup>1321</sup> Harbut 1986, p.152-155;165.

<sup>1322</sup> Leinonen 2003, p.6.

<sup>1323</sup> Larson 1988, p.246.

relations by Deborah Welch Larson. Truman's shifting back and forth was no mean feat.<sup>1324</sup>

The sources used for this work focus primarily on atomic matters and atomic foreign affairs, and foreign affairs in general only take second place. Perhaps for this reason, the British sources at my disposal from the FO or the private papers of Bevin and Attlee do not pay so much attention to the change of US foreign policy. It was in the press and Parliament that the matter was picked up more. Another reason might be that, lately, the British had not had that much inside information about US foreign policy in general until Churchill's report.<sup>1325</sup> For instance, the famous "long telegram" was written by Kennan only on 22 February 1946. This telegram emphasised the possibility of Cold War. According to Harbut, Byrnes had at this point started to pay more attention to the Soviet Union's lengthy occupation of Iran, as well as the pressure the Soviets were imposing on the Shah's regime.<sup>1326</sup> So it might not have simply been due to Churchill's speech, nor any other British actions for that matter, that there was a rapprochement between American and British policy lines at this point. Nevertheless it is still reasonable to ask whether these efforts confirmed or contributed to the change in US foreign policy regarding Soviet aggression. Either way, Byrnes issued a statement to the American press about his new harder line on 28 February 1946.<sup>1327</sup>

Churchill's report back to the British, however, continued with more positive pieces of news. He had noticed the Americans were actually becoming more alarmed at the way the Soviets were treating the British. According to the information he had received, the US would not tolerate the Soviet breaches of agreement in the case of Persia or Korea. for example, and neither would the US stand by and watch the harassment of the Turks and Greeks.<sup>1328</sup> Lord Halifax had confirmed this was happening in the weekly news analysis on 10 March 1946. The recent actions of the Soviets had, according to Halifax, caused a great deal of antipathy in the US Press, and subsequently in public opinion. Churchill's dramatic portrayal of the world situation had impressed the Americans, as well as broadened the debate about US foreign policy and potential new approaches it could take. The aforementioned naval task force, and the information leaks about it had already been seen as a strategic move. In addition, military leave in the US armed forces had been suspended, and demobilization had been halted too. The problematic situation between Turkey and the Soviet Union was seen as critical. As for the internal response, the conservatives especially were pleased with the new approach. This was probably partly because the more hawkish among them believed that a clash with the Soviet Union was inevitable anyway. The internationalists attempted to wave the UN card des-

<sup>1324</sup> Larson 1988 242-246.

<sup>1325</sup> Cf. Harbut 1986, p.152-55.

<sup>1326</sup> Harbut 1985, p.165.

<sup>1327</sup> Harbut 1986, p.172.

<sup>1328</sup> Churchill's report about his trip was conveyed to Bevin by Halifax. No.48 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 7 March, 9.50 p.m.) No. 1460 Telegrammic [FO 800/513], Washington, 7 March 1946, [FO 800/513]. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

perately, and the American left was furious about Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech. Not only was it seen as practically a declaration of war against the Soviets, but it was evidently a British attempt to gain American approval of their 'imperialism' through fear-mongering.<sup>1329</sup>

Like Churchill, Halifax confirmed the view that American policy was getting sharper and harder, or at least he talked about it in terms of the Americans "waking up". What was not totally clear, however, was whether this change was just a reactive response to Soviet excess, or whether it was a real change in policy. Either way, numerous instances had demanded that the US take a greater role in world affairs. But naturally one needs to keep in mind that usually a nation's foreign policy does not change that rapidly without a major crisis or other critical event. With regard to American-Soviet relations, one such significant event had been a verbal note sent by the Americans to the Soviets on 7 March 1946 demanding the immediate withdrawal of Soviet forces from Persia. The press added to this by publishing stories about possible Soviet misconducts in Manchuria. The conversation in the United States was apparently focusing on the question of what to do with the Soviet Union. As for Britain, the loan negotiations project was well underway and progressing favourably, according to Halifax, mostly thanks to Churchill. Even if Halifax himself did not perhaps totally agree with Churchill's view of the world situation, or with his "remedies" for improving it, he no doubt saw them as a necessary "evil".<sup>1330</sup> Churchill reported again to the FO that Baruch had indeed been appointed head of the American delegation for the intended UN control commission and was strictly against any possible cooperation with the Soviet Union.<sup>1331</sup>

The sources at my disposal do not really talk of Churchill's high profile as an informal representative of the Government. However, the consultation between him and Bevin does testify to such a kind of position. Moreover, it is also evidence of the British using each and every mean at their disposal to get closer to the US. Whether this was solely for the purposes of atomic collaboration, is naturally unconfirmed. As for Churchill, it was easier for him to give inflammatory comments of the kind that government officials could not make, even if they agreed with him. John Saville has, for instance, suggested that they did rather wholeheartedly agree with him at this point.<sup>1332</sup> Churchill could also throw his weight around and use his extensive network of contacts for the benefit of the British cause. In addition to the secret deals about limiting certain

<sup>1329</sup> No.49 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 11 March, 12.20 a.m.) No. 1552 Telegramic [AN 656/1/45], Washington, 10 March 1946, [AN 656/1/45], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1330</sup> No.49 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 11 March, 12.20 a.m.) No. 1552 Telegramic [AN 656/1/45], Washington, 10 March 1946, [AN 656/1/45], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1331</sup> Bullen, 1985 footnote 3, p.183. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Churchill had sent his telegram on 19 March 1946. Calendar notes i, reveal that Cadogan had also discussed with Bernard Baruch, and the latter had been adamantly against any carrots to lure the Soviets. Instead Baruch had stated that no limitations for the use of atomic weapons would be signed unless the Soviet Union would sign them too.

<sup>1332</sup> For instance see Saville 1993, p.4-6; 85-88; 93-94, 102.

type of atomic questions in Parliament,<sup>1333</sup> the exchange of information as well as joint planning with Bevin and other members of the executive does clearly testify that Britain trying every possible means to move closer to the US. It also underlines the elements of continuity, now that Churchill and the Government's policy were also much closer.

Now was the time for Britain to capitalise on this suitable change in the political climate. Adding to the argument of there having been close cooperation previously, the US and Britain now had a common enemy in the USSR. Like with atomic weapons, the benefits of this special relationship would help Britain to remain a Great Power despite limited resources.<sup>1334</sup> Also the more ordinary cooperation, such as the plans of sharing military bases, were seen to help in promoting special needs like atomic cooperation, and other fields related to defence and security. But there was one possibility that was hardly considered at all - the possibility that the US would take on the responsibility of leading the world as the British wished, but then choose a policy that was not in line with British interests. In his speech on 16 March 1946, Byrnes mentioned that the USA's foreign policy would be its own business, and as for the atomic cooperation, whatever would be done, would be done through the United Nations. Byrnes also warned the Soviet Union about the tyrannical aspects of their foreign policy, and made it clear that the US would not spend its efforts or resources to advance the position of any other nation. He also warned that sometimes, during exceptional circumstances, some states that had been close should not expect unwarranted support.

*"After every great war there comes a period of anticlimax and disillusionment. Those who fight together expect, when the fighting is over, too much from one another and are inclined to give too little to one another."* <sup>1335</sup>

According to Herken, at the Council of Foreign Secretaries in Paris, which took place in April and May of 1946, the United States emphasised their new, harder line of policy against the Soviet Union.<sup>1336</sup> Whatever the reasons for this were, it was taken as a positive sign by the British. To gain American support for their own ventures, the British made one concession after another. In making compromises and by reacting to American policy instead of producing their own, the British gave more room for American initiatives. But this did not seem to

<sup>1333</sup> TNA, PREM 8/113, Attlee to Churchill, 28 Sept. 1945; Churchill to Attlee, 6 Oct. 1945; Attlee to Addison, 8 Oct. 1945; Attlee to Churchill, 12 Oct. 1945; Attlee to Addison, 12 Oct. 1945.

<sup>1334</sup> See Gowing in Vickers 2004, p.183.

<sup>1335</sup> Byrnes' speech on 16 March 1946 (excerpt). Documents on American Foreign Relations (FRUS), vol. VIII, 1945-1946, p.464. About alliances: "...We do not purpose to seek security in an alliance with the Soviet Union against Great Britain, or in an alliance with Great Britain against the Soviet Union..." About favoritism: "...we will not use our strength for aggressive purposes. Neither will we use it to support tyranny or special privilege." Expectations on cooperation: "After every great war there comes a period of anticlimax and disillusionment. Those who fight together expect, when the fighting is over, too much from one another and are inclined to give too little to one another." The speech was also published.

<sup>1336</sup> Herken 1988, p.135-141. On page 141. Herken considers the conference in Paris to have been the most explicit example of the "new" American policy.



bother the British. Though atomic cooperation had been shelved for now, there was progress elsewhere with the Americans, which would be one plausible explanation for the lack of worry. For if one considers the material covered above, everything appeared to be going along with the British plans, that is taking whatever detours would be required to achieve the greater goal.

### 5.3 Parliamentary response

In Parliament, atomic matters came up only five times. Four of them were parliamentary questions, one written and three oral ones. Of the oral questions the first one was thematically unrelated to foreign policy. Raymond Blackburn wanted to know the location of the German scientist Otto Hahn and asked whether he was still conducting research. Attlee answered that Hahn had been interrogated in Britain and the sent back to Germany. Attlee did not know whether he was researching anything.<sup>1337</sup> Blackburn also wanted to know whether the Government and US had full cooperation yet and were exchanging atomic information for peacetime developments, and whether British scientists had visited Hanford Engineering works yet. Attlee was well-prepared and answered that progress was slow and very little had been done on that front, but he certainly hoped that post-war cooperation would happen. According to his knowledge, British scientists had not visited Hanford thus far.<sup>1338</sup> The other two questions were about the intended atomic tests at Bikini Atoll and about British participation in them, to which Attlee did not answer properly.<sup>1339</sup> These instances are covered later in this work. The last instance then was on 25 February, and was on the slightly irrelevant topic of who could apply for jobs in atomic research.<sup>1340</sup> This could also have been a backhand remark that was related to parliamentary scrutiny over how the Government was conducting its policy with its conservative officials. There was one other instance that was not strictly about atomic matters as such, but was important in that it showed suspicions in the House of Commons about the Government's policy.

“[On 6 February 1946 Francis Douglas (Battersea South, Labour)] asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any more secret agreements made during the war remain undisclosed; when they will be made public; and whether the present Government regard themselves bound by them.”<sup>1341</sup>

Bevin had a legitimate answer, as nothing new had been concluded and Churchill had already mentioned the earlier Atomic agreements in the adjournment debates on 30 October and 7 November 1945 and they were referred to also in Henry deWolf Smyth's book.

<sup>1337</sup> HC Deb 6 February 1946 vol 418 cc1712

<sup>1338</sup> HC Deb 6 February 1946 vol 418 cc1712. This was a different question than the previous about Hahn's location.

<sup>1339</sup> HC Deb 13 February 1946 vol 419 c85W

<sup>1340</sup> HC Deb 25 February 1946 vol 419 cc1536-7

<sup>1341</sup> HC Deb 6 February 1946 vol 418 ccw383

“Apart from the understanding relating to the Kurile Islands, there are no unpublished undertakings by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom to support claims by other Allied Governments to transfers of territory as part of the general peace settlement.”<sup>1342</sup>

This reveals that Parliament grew frustrated with the Government’s policy of revealing as little information as possible, and attempted to press for more. Likewise the comment insinuates that some kind of secret agreements might have been hidden away somewhere by the Cabinet, which would have meant that Bevin could not answer in any other way. Mentioning something else would have been against the internationalist approach which was currently being espoused with the approaching UN negotiations.

There was also one two day adjournment debate about foreign policy in general, in which atomic matters were mentioned. This was initiated by Harold MacMillan (Bromley, Conservative),<sup>1343</sup> who was acting as head of opposition. He demanded an adjournment debate when the Government refused to debate foreign affairs.<sup>1344</sup> Worried about Soviet aggression, MacMillan made it clear that this was an important issue that needed Parliament’s input.

“The broad continuity of foreign policy is a traditional and cherished feature of the modern parliamentary system. It can, in my opinion, best be preserved by the Foreign Secretary of the day eschewing, so far as possible, the bitter conflicts of internal controversy.”<sup>1345</sup>

MacMillan continued that he would have wished the Government to recognise the problems in international relations that had become so apparent during the tough talks in the recent UN meetings. Questions related to Soviet aggression, to Persia, Indonesia, the Levant and Greece, and unsatisfactory Government policy on these issues were highlighted by MacMillan who demanded there be a firmer policy from the Cabinet.

“[O]nly Ministers can know the methods and modalities of conciliation. But let them act, not drift. We say to them: Take comfort and inspiration from the good will and willing cooperation of all your fellow countrymen, but be strong and of good courage.”<sup>1346</sup>

Russian motives were also questioned by Morgan Price (Forest of Dean, Labour), who, in addition to analysing of Soviet intentions, supported MacMillan’s view that the Anglo-Soviet-American alliance was coming to an end.<sup>1347</sup> Brigadier Anthony Head (Carlshilton, Conservative) commented that the idealistic policy that had been supported for instance by William Warbey (Luton, Labour) would require a cataclysmic atomic explosion (organised by no one less than Raymond Blackburn and “his atomic scientists”) to change the world in

<sup>1342</sup> HC Deb 6 February 1946 vol 418 ccw383

<sup>1343</sup> MacMillan stepped up to replace Sir. Edward Campbell who had died on 17 July 1945, declared as elected, and after this by-elections had been ran in which MacMillan had been chosen.

<sup>1344</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1157-9.

<sup>1345</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1158.

<sup>1346</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1159-68.

<sup>1347</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1168-75.

order for it to work. According to Head, the atomic bomb might have changed a lot, but not strategic thinking in terms of dispersion and preparation, nor in terms of a three-power world system, to which the world had now reverted (to according to Head). Britain was among these three. All three should agree to and devise a strategic equilibrium.<sup>1348</sup>

Wilfrid Roberts (Cumberland North, Liberal) did not consider all the UN efforts to have been in vain. For instance, the UN control committee was a good idea, but Roberts had his own personal view of the Soviet Union based on his experiences visiting there.

“Those who have been to Russia must be very conscious of the long memories which the Russians have, and how they remember and resent the ostracism of the long years before the war. They also resent the decision, whether right or wrong, to keep the secret of atomic energy to ourselves — I am not sure whether it is to ourselves or to the United States alone. But to keep this secret from the Soviet Union must seem to Russia a continuation of that old policy of excluding them from important considerations. It will be recognised that the leaders of the Soviet Union believe that both their foreign policy, and their social system, have been completely vindicated by the very acid test of war. It is obvious they now wish to extend their influence, by ensuring that there shall be friendly governments on the whole length of their long frontier.”<sup>1349</sup>

Roberts said that he knew he would be criticised for his views calling for appeasement, but insisted that both the Soviet representatives and Bevin’s attitude in the recent talks in the UN General Assembly were not helpful. A stubborn focus on national prestige and honour should be abandoned, and Britain for one, should make it clear to the Soviets that British foreign policy was very positive, yet at the same time should not abandon any part of it out of some fear of upsetting them.<sup>1350</sup> This can be seen as related to the emerging “third way” policy, even if the comments came from a member of the Liberal party. Emryn Hughes also supported Roberts’ idea.

“I believe too, that we should assure Russia as to our future intentions by withdrawing from the bases in the Middle East and Mediterranean which are a source of contention. After all, these bases and this strategy of the Mediterranean and Middle East were framed before the days of the atomic bomb, and I submit that it is far more important to get the good will of the Russian people than to maintain what a previous speaker has described as recognised British bases. [...] She [the Soviet Union] looks upon them — and quite rightly so — as bases meant for operations against the Soviet Union. We have the atomic bomb and Russia has not.”<sup>1351</sup>

Even more importantly, Hughes followed the line of more independent, internationalist policy.

“What is the use of talking about conscription and the old ideas of military strategy in the days of the atomic bomb? We need a new urge forward in the building of the new world order about which the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary spoke. I submit that we can get that by following a policy aiming at creating a new world

<sup>1348</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1176-7.

<sup>1349</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1181.

<sup>1350</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1182-3.

<sup>1351</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1188.

order of which the guiding idea will be international Socialism, which is the only hope of the people of the world."<sup>1352</sup>

Other MPs like Major Lyall Wilkes (Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central, Labour) supported this and even went so far as to suggest that the nation state was obsolete because of the atomic bomb. He claimed that in spite the atomic bomb, Great Powers seemed to think in old ways, and not like one should in 1946. Territorial claims, spheres of interests, pressure on security and such were not lasting actions. The Soviets were in Turkey, even if it did not exactly help security, because they were alarmed by the bomb. Britain was just as guilty of having her own spheres of interest and related policy, and the fact was that building spheres of influence in the atomic age was insane.<sup>1353</sup>

"The open gloating in the Allied Press over the atomic bomb discovery has put back Russian and British relations for many months, and it 'will take much hard work to revive them. Speeches such as that made by Mr. L. S. Amery that, with the invention of the atomic bomb, Russia becomes vulnerable and a secondary Power, are given an importance in the Soviet Union far beyond the importance they receive in this House."<sup>1354</sup>

Permanent Under-Secretary of the State, Philip Noel-Baker, answered on the Government's behalf, but also asked if Bevin could answer some of the questions in detail the next day. Noel-Baker wanted to focus on the UN meeting. He stated that, indeed, the UN should not be allowed to perish like the League of Nations, but building would take time and effort. Noel-Baker mentioned that having the first meeting of the Security Council focusing on for instance atomic control and military matters would have indeed been better, but it was not to be. In reply to questions about whether the debate had not been important enough for the Secretary of State to attend, he stated that it was, but Bevin was exhausted from the heavy schedule he had been forced to endure over the last few days.<sup>1355</sup> The debate resumed the following day but, except for one mention, atomic matters were not brought up, even if foreign policy was reviewed in general. Seymour Cocks (Broxtowe, Labour) summed up the sentiment that was apparently growing on the Labour side of Parliament.

"Without friendship between Russia, America and ourselves, there can be no peaceful constructive settlement in Europe and Asia and no solution to the problem of the atom bomb, and the whole conception of U.N.O. will fail utterly."<sup>1356</sup>

In response, Bevin mostly reviewed and addressed each of the problems mentioned, and in conclusion attempted to calm the House. He denied any belligerent course of foreign policy.<sup>1357</sup>

Concerning the time period in my research, March 1946 was one of the busiest months for atomic matters in Parliament. There were altogether 15 in-

<sup>1352</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1189.

<sup>1353</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1232-1236.

<sup>1354</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1232-1236.

<sup>1355</sup> HC Deb 20 February 1946 vol 419 cc1253-55; 1260-3.

<sup>1356</sup> HC Deb 21 February 1946 vol 419 cc1338.

<sup>1357</sup> HC Deb 21 February 1946 vol 419 cc1348-66.

stances, and in ten of them more than just one theme was addressed, so altogether there were 34 “discourses”.<sup>1358</sup> Four of these instances relate to foreign affairs in the context of Great Power relations, and in six were also related to the United Nations and control issues. The most prominent themes were general remarks (7) and military matters (9). Three of the 15 instances were adjournment debates, though none of them had much to do with specifically atomic foreign policy.<sup>1359</sup> Only two of the instances were parliamentary questions, a written one in the House of Lords about the risks of fish destruction in atomic bomb tests<sup>1360</sup>, and the other was an oral one, covered at the end of this subchapter.

The natural explanation for the large number of instances is because March was the month in which estimates for the budget were discussed. The atomic question was heavily related to the future sizes of the armed forces, just as it was in autumn 1945. In the autumn however, Parliament had accepted the Government’s pleas at not being able to make any decisions yet, as there was much to take into consideration. The full implications of an atomic bomb for defense were relatively unknown then, but by March 1946 it was expected that Government would finally have something to say. But it did not, as the atomic negotiations with the Americans had ground to a halt by then. There was no interest whatsoever to make this debate public either, even for the sake of pressurizing the Americans. Revealing the secret policy that had been attempted now for a longer time and against what had been publicly promised could have had detrimental results for Government. March was practically the last month the atomic matters were covered in the House of Lords before the next session. The only exceptions were in July 1946. The defence issues related to atomic matters were covered rather widely in general, but this is normal as estimates for the armed forces was one of the few ways Parliament could supervise the Government in matters of defence and foreign affairs.<sup>1361</sup> March 1946 is also an exception, in that ten of the instances in both chambers covered more than one thematic topic and thus belong to multiple thematic groups as I have presented in the introduction. The instances covering multiple themes were not that common in general. The exceptions were in the early autumn of 1945 and March 1946. What this multiple theme instance meant was that in the same instance, parliamentarians and Government representatives might have talked about atomic matters in relation to defence, but also in relation to foreign affairs. In addition someone could have used “atomic” in a rhetorical way, which

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<sup>1358</sup> Cf. Appendix 1.

<sup>1359</sup> HC Deb 08 March 1946 vol 420 cc728-38 about Japanese bonds, with odd mention about Blackburn being atomic specialist (ie. category 6, Misc.); HC Deb 27 March 1946 vol 421 cc531-40 about prisoners of war including an odd mention that those who decided to use the atomic bomb should be called as war criminals, too (Richard Stokes, Ipswich, Labour); HC Deb 28 March 1946 vol 421 cc681-700 about the industrial development of atomic energy (Categories 1,2,5,6).

<sup>1360</sup> HL Deb 06 March 1946 vol 139 cc1213-4. Government stated that Britain had no responsibility in organizing the tests, but these things should have been taken into account by the US

<sup>1361</sup> Richards 1967, p.39.

would mean that the instance could be counted as belonging to group six (miscellaneous matters).

Budget matters, and fiscal issues in general, have been seen as one of the few traditional ways that the British Parliament was able to intervene in affairs, or matters of defence. In effect, the Royal Prerogative could be challenged by using the budget to regulate the Government.<sup>1362</sup> Even a majority Government was vulnerable to external pressure in the form of negative news reporting on the amounts of money cut from one department and lavished on another. The role of the military was always a hot topic, in spite of the bouts of internationalism, and seen as a way of getting a foot in the door of foreign affairs. In this case, the parliamentary debates relating to the Government's white paper on defence (Cmd 6743) mostly took place in March. The Government presented it on 4 March 1946, and according to Attlee it was to be debated before the budget estimates because he himself had insisted on such a chance when he had been in opposition.<sup>1363</sup> Attlee mentioned though that he was somewhat limited in what he could actually say. He also mentioned that the UN and the atomic bomb, as well as other new weapons, would have an influence on how defence and security were perceived.

"Especially, there is the coming of the atomic bomb. Clearly, these events must affect all decisions of our future defence. But time will be needed before we can assess fully this new position, and it is fortunate that we have this time. It gives us a chance of planning during the period of transition. Meanwhile, we have to plan ahead, despite all the unknown factors, to the best of our ability, but we have to recognise that this Defence White Paper is something of a stop-gap."<sup>1364</sup>

This was particularly true at this point, when atomic cooperation, and the UN control commission plans were still both very much up in the air. The Government did not know yet whether it would have the atomic bomb in British hands, and if it would, when that would be. The will was not lacking, however, judging from the instances in the autumn, when the Government had been asked whether Britain having the bomb would dispense with the need for armed forces. Then again, it had also been noted that there would indeed still be cases when perhaps conventional forces would still be needed. They would still be needed even if the UN solution worked out too. Attlee had noted that, during the war, Britain did not have to produce much weaponry and munitions due to American supply, but this kind of dependency was not a good thing at all.<sup>1365</sup> This applied also to atomic matters, even if it was not stated directly in that context. This defence-related dependency is yet another reason why Britain needed good relations with the US.

<sup>1362</sup> Richards 1967, p.39. Budget matters were also always handled with at least some documentation, ie. there was information to base scrutiny and questions on. In foreign affairs the lack of information has been considered as a big problem. Richards, 1967, preface on lack of knowledge and interest; other reasons: p.36-37; 50-52; 63-66; 78-81.

<sup>1363</sup> HC Deb 04 March 1946 vol 420 cc39-146; HC Deb 05 March 1946 vol 420 cc193-294. Both days are counted in to the statistics separately.

<sup>1364</sup> HC Deb 04 March 1946 vol 420 cc40.

<sup>1365</sup> HC Deb 04 March 1946 vol 420 cc45-46.

Ralph Glyn (Abingdon, Conservative) and John Morrison (Salisbury, Conservative) argued that due to the atomic bomb and other weapons, good defence was essential. Toby Low (Blackpool North, Conservative) was of the same opinion, but he added that the development of both the UN and atomic weapons should define what kind of response would be required in the future, especially in terms of defending the Empire.<sup>1366</sup> Konni Zilliacus (Gateshead, Labour) suggested that there was still time to break free from an impending arms race and instead implement the security provisions of the UN Charter.

“That means the permanent members of the Council must agree upon the measures they take to implement the positive obligations of the Charter, and upon their obligations regarding the joint use of force to uphold its authority. They must agree to regulate their armaments, which means limiting and reducing armaments and controlling trade in and manufacture of armaments. Then there are the provisions for controlling atomic energy and abolishing weapons of mass destruction. The Labour Party’s policy goes further, and proposes the establishment of an international police force immediately after the war, side by side with national forces.”<sup>1367</sup>

Most of the debate was about demobilisation in general, or about the armed forces, but there were also a few comments about the atomic bomb. Perhaps the most interesting of them was Commander Harry Pursey’s (Kingston-upon-Hull East, Labour), who urged that there should be an international agreement to ban the atomic bomb, even if they might seem a good deterrent.<sup>1368</sup> Internationalism was evidently still alive in Parliament.

John McGovern (Glasgow Shettleston, ILP) mentioned that national defence would not be needed if a peace policy was the chosen approach, and there was the atomic bomb at large. In fact, talking about weapons was obsolete with the bomb, especially if a peace policy was to fail. McGovern wanted to know whether the UN had already failed and if the Soviets were planning to expand their empire? If at all possible, McGovern proposed a truly universal socialist policy in which there would be no need for competing empires. Also instead of kneeling and pleading to the US, a bold call for cooperation should be made.<sup>1369</sup> Sir Arthur Salter (Oxford University, Independent) also thought that planning for defence was no easy matter now, and especially while the UN control plans were still under consideration. Salter added that much more information would be needed in order to make more than just educated guesses.<sup>1370</sup> The Government’s response related to atomic matters after a long debate focused mainly on considering the atomic bomb’s potential power in naval warfare.<sup>1371</sup> The Lords debate, on 27 March 1946, about the future of the armed forces was rather similar - more information would be required.<sup>1372</sup> Lord Chatfield reminded the

<sup>1366</sup> HC Deb 04 March 1946 vol 420 cc73 (Glyn); 82 (Morrison); cc92 (Head).

<sup>1367</sup> HC Deb 04 March 1946 vol 420 cc121-122.

<sup>1368</sup> HC Deb 04 March 1946 vol 420 cc126.

<sup>1369</sup> HC Deb 05 March 1946 vol 420 cc230-1; cc232-6.

<sup>1370</sup> HC Deb 05 March 1946 vol 420 cc230-1; cc258.

<sup>1371</sup> HC Deb 05 March 1946 vol 420 cc 289-90.

<sup>1372</sup> HL Deb 27 March 1946 vol 140 cc366-434.

House that preparing for the UN solution failing might nevertheless be a good thing.<sup>1373</sup>

These instances underline two main issues: the UN control plans were still very much in focus among parliamentarians, and that there was not much other foreign policy related atomic information available. The commentary was thus rather limited and focused on emphasising the need for further knowledge. Also the Government's attempts to conduct atomic foreign policy, even while facing problems with the Americans, were such that Parliament could not easily access them. In smaller matters, where information was available, such as raw material policy<sup>1374</sup> or certain aspects of defence, parliamentary activity was somewhat stronger. Lord Strabolgi even mentioned the limited understanding and need for more information, and not only in Britain, when debating about defence.

"[B]ut the atomic weapon, which was mentioned by Viscount Trenchard in passing, has made that new doctrine vitally important and necessary. I fail to see that that is yet appreciated by any of the Governments of the Great Powers of the world, and of course I do not exempt my own country in this matter because I think no one here in authority has yet appreciated what this new doctrine has to be. I have noticed that particularly in reading the debates that have taken place at the U.N.O. conferences and so on."<sup>1375</sup>

In addition to these comments, the atomic spy scare, which was a huge thing in the US, was referred to apparently in only one parliamentary question. This was Raymond Blackburn's on 27 March 1946.

"[Blackburn] asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the exaggerated impression now prevailing as to the extent of the recent espionage, he will issue a statement with a view to making it plain that no more than a small fraction of the total of the secret US and British information available with respect to atomic energy can have been involved."<sup>1376</sup>

In reply, Attlee referred only to a statement read by Anthony Eden on 19 February 1946. Blackburn's supplementary question then brought up the McMahon Bill under preparation, and he wanted to know if Britain was preparing something similar. To this the answer was blunt - the matter was under consideration.<sup>1377</sup> This was the prevailing tendency in February and March. There was

<sup>1373</sup> HL Deb 27 March 1946 vol 140 cc366-434 Lord Chatfield (Alfred Ernle Chatfield).

<sup>1374</sup> HC Deb 18 March 1946 vol 420 c1499. This was a question about the uranium deposits in Travancore asked by Raymond Blackburn. The question had been allowed by the speaker despite the agreement of keeping these kind of questions off the floor. In secrecy the Government had been preparing for concluding a deal with Travancore to acquire these raw materials outside the CDT, and without the US knowing, therefore the question was avoided. This, however is a matter worthy of its own research, though it reveals government preparing for the worse TNA FO 800/528 ANCAM 643 8 July 1946 JSM to Cabinet Office (Makins & Munro to Rickett) on leak about secret trade agreements with Travancore for British to acquire Thorium without the Americans knowing. The leak for Americans could endanger the Anglo-American relations. The incident is, again, left out of this work, as handling it would require too much of space and time from the main theme of this work.

<sup>1375</sup> HL Deb 27 March 1946 vol 140 cc412.

<sup>1376</sup> HL Deb 27 March 1946 vol 140 cc412.

<sup>1377</sup> HL Deb 27 March 1946 vol 140 cc412.



not enough detailed information to challenge the Government efficiently. Even the press material from abroad was not enough for these ends. In addition, Parliament also had a tremendous amount of other things to do than just focus on atomic matters. In the wider scale of things, the UN plans were still under consideration, so the chance of internationalism appeared to be alive despite hard debating. In general, there were more and more calls about Britain needing to do things differently or that it was following the US too closely.<sup>1378</sup> This dissent, which had been picked up also in the domestic press became a bit stronger later in the spring and early summer, but again, it also lacked a precise point and enough information to make sharp comments possible.

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<sup>1378</sup> HC Deb 4 Mar. 1946 vol. 420 c145

## **6 FIFTH AND FINAL PHASE: THE BREAKDOWN OF ANGLO-AMERICAN ATOMIC COLLABORATION (APRIL 1946 - AUG 1946)**

The final phase, the period between April and August 1946, was characterised by the executive's last desperate attempts to appeal to the Americans to solve the deadlock in the Combined Policy Committee negotiations. Despite these attempts, the Anglo-American atomic collaboration eventually broke down. The Americans first alleged that this had been due to their commitment to the UN Charter, and afterwards they stated that it was the US domestic legislation which forbade any kind of atomic cooperation. Despite this, the Government continued to attempt to appeal to the Americans repeatedly. Surprisingly, Parliament showed rather little interest in atomic matters during these months, at least compared to the activity of autumn 1945. There were many reasons for this, for instance limited amount of parliamentary time, as well as limited availability of information for the basis of access on matters. The Government also had better control over atomic matters and the foreign policy agenda, having established lines of policy to execute. Despite this, the interaction between the executive and Parliament was still among the factors that sped up the British side of things in the eventual demise of the collaboration.

On 15 April the Americans informed the British in a CPC meeting about their desire to finish all atomic cooperation. Vannevar Bush briefly attempted to help the British and argue against the breakdown, but Byrnes prevented this, and forced Bush to fall back in line. The British response was to pressure the Americans by threatening to dissolve the CDT, and by demanding the return of their fair share of the raw materials located in the US. This could have halted the American project totally. A surprising Belgian raw material scandal, perhaps manipulated in response to the British pressure by the Americans, was avoided, just barely saving the face of the British Government. Nevertheless the British drew up further plans for securing raw materials by secret deals, especially from Travancore in India, in order to be prepared for the breakdown and possible loss of the material stockpiled on American soil.

Attlee's telegrams to Truman were of no use in appealing for the British case. Truman claimed he had not understood the previous deals. He also could not support a British independent project on British soil. At the same time, the McMahon Bill re-emerged from secret committee hearings in the US, prohibiting any international cooperation, and it was accepted by the Senate on 6 June 1946. An official breakdown was now inevitable, and there was nothing that could be done. Further scrutiny might have also endangered British participation in the Bikini trials, which were now even more important, as Britain needed to pursue atomic research of her own. Parliament was not informed about the breakdown of the atomic collaboration, but on the few instances it had been active, it strongly criticised the executive sitting on the fence. An independent British foreign policy was being inquired after. Likewise, the need to distance Britain from the US had repeatedly been expressed in debates concerning foreign policy. There were also questions about the United Nations Control Commission's activities, as well as curiosity in the atomic bomb trials in Bikini. These instances reveal that in a way Parliament had now been ushered away from the crucial atomic foreign policy questions. Parliament did not know why the Government was following the US so much, or that the Government had grown desperate in trying to relieve the deadlock. Then again, Parliament's vigorous watch-dog mentality and the possible threat of losing the support of the majority there, made sure the Government would not inform precisely why was pursuing a foreign policy closer to US interests. Of course there were the international implications to consider as well. The questions about the atomic trials show that despite limited information, by cooperating with press sources Parliament could still throw a constitutional gauntlet down before the Government. Moreover, it shows that even if parliamentary interest was fading, it was still there for atomic matters if information was available for making a case.

The UN control plans are however the most important instances in the parliamentary discourse. These instances do show that possibly Parliament considered that the shift of paradigm had been achieved and the UN policy was the policy now being pursued by Britain in atomic affairs. Questions were presented by parliamentarians about the progress of the UN, and the Government did not give much away. The McMahon Bill was still under committee hearings and Government did not want to press the UN control matters forward too strongly, if there was even the slightest chance of getting the secret cooperation started again. Reinforcing public commitment to the UN at this point could have killed off even the remotest chances for resuming the secret plans with the Americans. When it became evident that the cooperation would not continue in any case, the Government focused on the independent project, and tried to keep the arrangements for this too, off the floor of Parliament. It was especially important to avoid questions about the raw materials and giving away any plans about securing them, as they might have interested the Americans as well and Britain could not afford to annoy the US.

The last phase in Anglo-American atomic collaboration was in many ways an anticlimax. The cooperation did not end with a bang, but with a whimper.

When considering the changes in the British atomic foreign policy, the paradigm is almost the same as it had been at the beginning with the Tube Alloys programme. Britain would go it alone, and would try her utmost to become a state with atomic capability. Realism, continuity, path-dependency and secret deals had prevailed. Parliamentary momentum had carried Britain only so far and then the possibility of an internationalist foreign policy was lost.

### 6.1 Alarming piece of news - the Government's desperate attempts are no use

An extremely alarming piece of news reached the British between 15 and 16 of April 1946. Joint Staff Mission telegraphed from Washington a memorandum compiled by Field Marshal Wilson and Lord Halifax. The meeting of CPC that had been held on 15 April 1946 had not resolved the Anglo-American deadlock which had lasted since the early winter. Quite the opposite, the meeting had, surprisingly, showed that the Americans wanted to opt out of atomic cooperation altogether.<sup>1379</sup> The meeting was covered in a couple of extremely intense memoranda conveyed to Britain via telegram. The importance of these messages cannot be overemphasised. They need to be studied in detail to grasp a better view of the shock they caused and to understand the final phase of the British Anglo-American atomic collaboration attempts.

At the beginning of the meeting, the control and possession of the raw materials were discussed. A separate report about that was also prepared. According to this report, the British thought the Americans were only interested in securing a constant availability of raw materials for their own project. The needs of the British were not their concern. For instance the equal division of the resources, which had been requested by the British was not answered, not even when it had been realigned to cover only the raw material gathered after the victory over Japan had been achieved.<sup>1380</sup> The straightforward response the Americans had eventually given, was that the raw materials should be allocated according to the current requirements. In addition, all the raw material gained during until the negotiations held would belong to the country now in possession of it. In addition to this, the Americans wanted 250 tons of uranium oxides for their use since the beginning of the negotiations. Only after this requirement was fulfilled, would the sharing of raw materials be considered further. Even then all of the "surplus" material would remain in the United States, and would

<sup>1379</sup> No.70 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 16 April, 5.15 a.m.) ANCAM 583 Telegraphic [U 4518/20/70], Washington, 16 April 1946, [U 4518/20/70]). DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1380</sup> Gordon Arneson has stated afterwards that this had been the deal all along [and it was not a result of the negotiations in the final phase]. cf. the oral history interview of Arneson 21 June 1989.

be allocated from there “according to the requirements”.<sup>1381</sup> In practice, all this was against the CDT’s established clauses. Moreover, it would have meant that all of the joint raw material pool, collected together for joint use, would now belong to the US. As the Americans had already stopped the exchange of information concerning practical and technical details, and as they had been against the British establishing their own raw material processing plants, the British did not have a project which would require raw materials. It had been established, planned and was now underway, but according to the American suggestion, it would still take a long time before the British would have a case to demand larger amounts of raw material. So in practice even the “British share” was in a way loaned to the Americans. Progress of the British domestic plans would, in turn, be slow, as the lack of raw materials would have also caused delay, in addition to the halted exchange of information. Now even the plans of exchanging scientific information through the United Nations were in jeopardy as Bernard Baruch, the leader of the American UN delegation in atomic matters, appeared to be against even that. It is also important to keep in mind that during the Manhattan project, the raw materials had been in storage in the US because it was considered to be safer and beneficial for all the parties. Britain had trusted that should the time and need for resources come, they would be available as had been negotiated. Now that the time had –in more than one way- come, things were different: raw material was not to be lifted from the US.

Naturally the British protested. They considered handling of the matter as an extremely unfair deal. They had emphasised that their own plans of sharing the resources were in line with the previous agreements and were fair for all the participants. General Groves had, however, commented that were the British suggestions to be followed, the American project would have to be halted, as the US did not possess raw material reserves other than the joint pool. Vannevar Bush, who had been slightly more sympathetic towards the British, would have agreed to deliver some raw materials for them. Although Bush had also emphasised that keeping the American plants running would be the first priority, he was more inclined to attempt to make a compromise with the British. For these ends a special group to decide on the allocation of the raw materials should be established. Urgent action was required so that the problem would be taken care of in a satisfactory way. The British were adamant that there were not to be any delays like in the past.<sup>1382</sup> Bush’s motives remain unclear, the Americans seemed to disagree among themselves about the attitude towards the British. However, Gordon Arneson has claimed that even Bush was not that supportive of the British case.

<sup>1381</sup> No.71 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 16 April, 5.33 a.m.) ANCAM 584 Telegraphic [U 4518/20/70], Washington, 16 April 1946, [U 4518/20/70], DBPO, ser.I.Vol.IV. In addition the Americans wanted that all of the obtained (confiscated) raw material should be theirs. This is not that odd considering the American operations done for confiscating the material for instance in Belgium, and in ALSOS operations in Germany. Cf. Groves, 1983, p.230-249.

<sup>1382</sup> No.71 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 16 April, 5.33 a.m.) ANCAM 584 Telegraphic [U 4518/20/70], Washington, 16 April 1946, [U 4518/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

"But there were worries on the part of Bush and Connant and others that Roosevelt had probably exceeded his war powers in the Quebec Agreement. Moreover, the Quebec Agreement was an executive agreement which was binding only to the signatories. But with Roosevelt dead and Churchill out of office, the British were still reverting to it and wanting to get the advantage of it. Bush was particularly concerned that we should not aid and abet British postwar economic development in this field. That really wasn't our job. But I often thought we were a little cranky about that."<sup>1383</sup>

Even if the British were to have taken a harder line against the Americans at this stage, the American position was much more advantageous. In addition to having the initiative, they also possessed all the raw materials. Should they not have wanted to share it, there was very little that could have been done. Making the matters public and making a plea would not only have shown how fragile the British position as a post-war Great Power really was, but it would have revealed that the British Government had acted against what it had been publicly promised. This could have caused severe domestic repercussions, and not only among the Labour backbenchers. Vickers, for instance, has mentioned that Labour's members were much more inclined to the left than the Party leaders, and the public did not share the anti-Soviet attitude so strongly at this point. Therefore the Government was torn between two sentiments and had to take into account the US as well as the majority of its Party.

"The Foreign Office had the problem of trying to satisfy public opinion in the UK and the US at the same time..."<sup>1384</sup>

The situation was similar on the wider scale of atomic matters too.

After the preliminary meeting, the actual meeting of the CPC had been difficult as well. The proposal Attlee had sent about the cooperation was not agreeable to the Americans. The US legal advisors stated that what Attlee was now proposing would have altered the purpose as well as the contents of the already existing agreement. Likewise, what Attlee had proposed would have enabled the inclusion of third parties. Whatever the wording of his choice might have been the point would have been the same - he would be changing an existing deal about wartime cooperation. In addition, it would alter the relations between the two states. Finally, Attlee's proposal was still against the UN Charter. At this point Canada sided, surprisingly, with the US.<sup>1385</sup>

It may well be, that the Canadians had seen the possibilities of future cooperation coming to an end. Perhaps the British had taken Canada slightly for granted in the vein of thinking Britain would automatically gain support from Canada, and by assuming that British interests would also be the best for Canada. After all, Canada was part of the Commonwealth and it might have been easy to overlook its role as an independent power. At the time also, a sentiment of independence was growing within the Commonwealth. Not only was there

<sup>1383</sup> Cf. the oral history interview of Arneson 21 June 1989.

<sup>1384</sup> Vickers 2004, p.179.

<sup>1385</sup> No.70 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 16 April, 5.15 a.m.) ANCAM 583 Telegraphic [U 4518/20/70], Washington, 16 April 1946, [U 4518/20/70], DBPO Ser.I, Vol.IV.

India contemplating her independence, but there was the case of the “evattism” (ambitious foreign policy) of the Australian Premier. Then again, the relationship between Canada and the US had improved dramatically. The two countries had for example signed a loan agreement, as well as an agreement about joint defence. These issues had not been considered to affect atomic relations in Britain. So it came as a great shock to the British when the Canadians did not support them in their protest against the US.

However, during the meeting of the CPC, the British attempted to gain at least some contact with the Americans, and asked if they had any counter-proposals. The answer was plain and simple - there were none, and nor did the Americans think there would be a means to solve the matter. This response was followed by an intensive and lengthy discussion about the nature of the Washington Declaration, as well as the secret additions.<sup>1386</sup> In those drafts or *modus vivendi* it had clearly stated that the cooperation was to be continued and, moreover, it was to be “full and effective”. In response to this, Byrnes bluntly stated that he had discussed the matter with President Truman, and Truman said that he did not actually remember what he had meant exactly! Naturally there is no way of being sure whether Truman had actually grasped what he had signed or not, or if he did not remember what his intention was when signing this. Research does exist, however, which challenges the capability of the Truman administration, especially in foreign affairs, as well as the personal skills, understanding and experience of the President and his Secretary of State.<sup>1387</sup> Either way it was still a clumsy excuse and one that must have been hard for the British to swallow.

Byrnes, however, did bring up two slightly more reasonable points. He said, that the agreements mentioned by the British had talked of continuing the cooperation that was already happening, but what the British wanted now, was something totally different - a wider and closer cooperation than had ever been conducted during wartime. In addition, Byrnes pointed out that the secret agreements contravened the Washington declaration. But then Byrnes added another less astute excuse. He was sure that when Truman had signed the agreement between the heads of state, he had not known that he had been promising the exchange of technical information.<sup>1388</sup> That the US President did not know what he was signing is bad enough, but perhaps more significant was the point about the Washington declaration. It might have been a coincidence, but if Attlee’s government had gone behind Parliament’s back and this was made public, it could have caused great problems for the Labour Government.

<sup>1386</sup> No.70 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 16 April, 5.15 a.m.) ANCAM 583 Telegraphic [U 4518/20/70], Washington, 16 April 1946, [U 4518/20/70], DBPO Ser.I,Vol.IV.

<sup>1387</sup> Brookshire, 2003. p.3-5; Harbutt 1986, p.99 and Herken 1988, p.41. See also Lewis-Gaddis, 2007, p.19; Leinonen, 2012, p.91 states that Truman was inexperienced in power politics; about the whole US State department being inexperienced p.104 (referring to Acheson 1987). Inexperienced Truman leaning on Byrnes p.107.

<sup>1388</sup> No.70 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 16 April, 5.15 a.m.) ANCAM 583 Telegraphic [U 4518/20/70], Washington, 16 April 1946, [U 4518/20/70], DBPO Ser.I,Vol.IV.

It could thus also have been a veiled threat to accept the facts that the cooperation was now over, for fear of risking a leak to public. However, this is mostly speculation, and probably something that can never be fully confirmed.

To get back to the facts that do exist, the Washington declaration and the agreement of the heads of state had been separated from each other on purpose. This was because of the American sense of urgency in wanting to publish something as a result from the talks (so as not to draw too much attention to the secret side of the talks). Moreover, the haste with which this was concluded was also accepted on the grounds that these original documents would be the basis and intention of future formal agreements to be concluded. After all, the CPC established a sub-committee to prepare these future documents! Naturally the wording of the documents mentioned above gave room for interpretations, but the understanding of the contents appeared to have been agreed on in the autumn of 1945. In this light, what the Americans were doing now was clearly avoiding fulfilling their obligations. As was described earlier, the British had also paid attention to these details and had attempted to adjust the vaguer points earlier in the winter meetings. But that had been the point when it all had started to go wrong for the British. Even if the Charter of the United Nations was a weighty argument, it did not seem to matter when it came to deals in which the Americans had something to gain. Besides the secret allocation of atomic raw materials, which was fine for the US, there was the agreement to get the bases from Portugal in the Azores.<sup>1389</sup> The UN charter had also been already in effect when the Anglo-American atomic collaboration agreements had been signed in Washington. Either this was overlooked by mistake or on purpose, but again, it is not often that so many high-level mistakes occur. Likewise, when similar kinds of backdoor deals were concluded at the same time as the UN Charter was used as an argument against another secret form of cooperation, it does raise questions.

It is no wonder then, that Attlee sent a telegram to Truman at the beginning of April to complain about the situation. The latter responded merely by asking about the original intention of the Washington negotiations in November 1945.<sup>1390</sup> One intention had been evident in the Washington declaration, and the other in the Groves-Anderson Memorandum. The latter had been all about continuing cooperation, and finding the ways for this.<sup>1391</sup> Thus Truman's questions appear peculiar, if not even intentional for the purposes of playing time. Besides these problems, a new proposal was also considered at the CPC meeting. It was about a joint statement to be made, that Canada, the United States and Britain would cooperate in atomic research under the auspices of the United Nations. Subsequently, possible results and benefits would be shared within the UN. However, the British gathered that this would not solve the original problem, as all three states had already agreed to work together. The British

<sup>1389</sup> For instance see No.47 Mr. Bevin to the Earl of Halifax (Washington) No. 2139 Telegraphic [Z 2218/250/36], Foreign Office, 6 March 1946, [Z 2218/250/36], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1390</sup> Herken, 1988, p.146.

<sup>1391</sup> Cf Groves-Anderson Memorandum; Washington Declaration in appendice.



representatives demanded that General Groves would be instructed by written guidance on the exchange of information to be conducted. A clarification on the practices agreed upon would also suffice. Byrnes claimed that this was beyond the mandate of the CPC. Such matters should be agreed upon between heads of state, and it should depend on them whether the exchange of information should be full and effective, or not. Examples that were mentioned covered production, as well as the exchange of information for the purposes of planning and establishing research plants. Byrnes nevertheless promised to suggest this idea to Truman, as requested by the British.<sup>1392</sup>

In practice it was the exchange of information as well as coordinating such actions that was agreed in the CPC. According to previous agreements, it was also the CPC that was in charge of clarifying the practicalities further. It was also meant to coordinate the cooperation. The American reluctance towards the independent project of the British had become apparent as the British plans progressed from intentions towards something more concrete. For instance the processing of the raw materials for actual use was extremely important for the British. Without the knowledge of the American processes of enriching the uranium ore, this would be difficult to plan and implement. The tests as well as pilot plants had all been established on North American soil, and a variety of methods had been trialled and employed. So indeed the British had quite a lot to gain from the intended exchange of information. As the raw materials, as well as other resources were scarce, choosing the best possible methods would be thus very important. Now that push had come to shove and the British actually requested concrete information to execute their own plans the Americans were perhaps intending to intercept these plans and reverse the whole agreement and its meaning, precisely to avoid giving the British any help to become a state with atomic capability.

Again, the British delegation protested heavily and demanded that the most high-ranking Americans be included in the negotiations. This was to be done immediately. The British delegates voiced their concern about the recent turns of events. They considered that handling the matter only under the auspices of the UN was possibly dangerous. There was no way of knowing whether it would ever work, when it would work, and there was no certainty of the time that making suitable arrangements would take. While waiting for the UN, the possibilities of the bilateral/trilateral cooperation would be harmed, and the projects of the all participating nations, not only British, would be slowed down. In addition the British mentioned that London (meaning Bevin and Attlee) regarded the situation as extremely worrisome.

“There appeared to be a great danger that while we were trying to work out full United Nations collaboration which might or might not succeed, and might in any

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<sup>1392</sup> No.70 No.70 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 16 April, 5.15 a.m.) ANCAM 583 Telegraphic [U 4518/20/70], Washington, 16 April 1946, [U 4518/20/70], DBPO Ser.I,Vol.IV.). DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

case take a long time, we were likely to impair the background of collaboration which had been drawn up between us around atomic energy.<sup>1393</sup>

Subsequently the British delegation in CPC conveyed that Attlee was well aware of Byrnes' general attitude and had been already since Byrnes was nominated as chair to the CPC in December 1945<sup>1394</sup>. Furthermore the British delegation gathered that the previous meeting of the CPC had been most illuminating. In this meeting Byrnes had been difficult and by suddenly leaving the meeting, he had prevented the delegation working and the meeting to be continued. Therefore the British delegation was not surprised at all about the unpleasant piece of news.<sup>1395</sup>

However, and as was mentioned already above, the sources at my disposal do not give any indication about being aware of the possibility of there being an extremely negative outcome. Instead, it appears the British were extremely reserved about the possibilities of there being any kind of Anglo-American problem. Later on in the spring these problems, needless to say, became impossible to ignore. At this stage however it could be best described as "watchful waiting". In practice it meant that other means of cooperation and joint activities were expected to solve the Anglo-American atomic stalemate. Then again, there was also only so little that could have been done. Britain appealing to the UN was impossible due to such a form of cooperation being against the Charter. So was making the Anglo-American problems public or even insinuating such possibility in order to pressure the Americans. This was because of the possible international as well as domestic outrage, and especially parliamentary scrutiny the publicity of secret cooperation would have caused. Parliament's Labour representatives would not have taken kindly to this either. Therefore the remarks about being well aware about Byrnes' attitudes were most likely rhetorical and a comment on his way of conducting policy in general. Naturally one has to consider the possibility that these views had been expressed by Attlee or another senior member of the Cabinet, for example, but they have not been written down.

Nevertheless, the British delegation recommended urgent action: the CPC should communicate promptly with both heads of state and convey Attlee's notion on full and effective cooperation. This message should be complemented with a note about what the British expected from the cooperation. In addition the aforementioned dangers, which might come reality were the cooperation not pursued as had been promised, should be emphasised.<sup>1396</sup> Byrnes had, after

<sup>1393</sup> No.70 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 16 April, 5.15 a.m.) ANCAM 583 Telegraphic [U 4518/20/70], Washington, 16 April 1946, [U 4518/20/70], DBPO Ser.I, Vol.IV. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1394</sup> However, Byrnes' taking lead in CPC was not commented in the sources used for this research, which could mean that the comment of the delegation was an expression of frustration.

<sup>1395</sup> No.70 Joint Staff Mission to Cabinet 16 April 1946 (ANCAM 583. Telegraphic). DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1396</sup> No.70 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 16 April, 5.15 a.m.) ANCAM 583 Telegraphic [U 4518/20/70], Washington, 16 April 1946, [U 4518/20/70], DBPO Ser.I, Vol.IV.

all, promised that Truman would contact the British. Apparently the British had thought to try to take the initiative again after a long pause, and make the most of the Americans slight disarray. The goal of the action, the continuity of "full and effective" cooperation (i.e., help with British atomic proliferation) could still be achieved, if Truman would still issue the required orders and would support the cooperation between the various instances. The urgency of action can be explained with not wanting to give Byrnes any time to communicate with Truman to try and affect his views. In addition, urgent action would also help in avoiding general Groves' possible interception of the British attempts. However, Margaret Gowing mentions that Byrnes did reach Truman before the British. Subsequently, the answer Truman gave was along the lines of Byrnes - vague and more or less cancelling all the promises of cooperation thought to have been achieved in Washington<sup>1397</sup>.

Except for this sniping from the sidelines, Britain did not really have any other means or leverage to support its stance. All in all, Britain was still dependent on the US regarding so many issues, that the problems of atomic collaboration, as important as they were, could not be solved by exerting any more pressure on the Americans. This could have led to the US withdrawing its support on one of the many other issues. That Britain was following the US too closely instead of pursuing an independent policy had been noticed in Parliament too,<sup>1398</sup> though it is not clear whether the reasons for this kind of policy were known by all the MPs.

Therefore the only useful way to pressure the Americans was to interfere with the raw material supply. This was what Britain intended to do. The dismantling or scrapping of both the CPC and CDT were considered as options by the British. In addition, they considered halting the raw material supply from the Congo to the US, and dividing other resources. At least the raw materials were to be reallocated. It was not acceptable that only American requirements were met. Britain needed to make her stance perfectly clear to the US.<sup>1399</sup> This reallocation of resources would have meant that the resource pool would have been *de facto* liquidated. The US would have had problems in securing raw material for its own research, development and production.

Attlee additionally sent personal telegrams to both Truman and Canadian PM Mackenzie King. Attlee once more encouraged them to resume the cooperation which had been agreed upon in Washington.<sup>1400</sup> He mentioned he had been informed about the latest meeting of the CPC by Lord Halifax, and that no doubt Byrnes had also informed Truman. He was extremely worried about the recent turn of events, especially related to both the Washington declaration and

<sup>1397</sup> Gowing, 1974, p.100-102.

<sup>1398</sup> David Gammans (Hornsey, Conservative) HC Deb 04 March 1946 vol 420 cc145; Thomas Horabin (Liberal Chief Whip, North Cornwall): HC Deb 05 June 1946 vol 423 cc2059.

<sup>1399</sup> Calendar notes ii, ANCAM 585 (Butler's memo) & ANCAM 597, DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1400</sup> Cf. Minute by President Truman, Mr. Attlee and Mr. Mackenzie King, 16 November 1945. "...there should be full and effective cooperation in the field of atomic energy..."; "We agree that Combined Policy Committee and Combined Development Trust should be continued in a suitable form". No.239 DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II.

the “Minute by President Truman, Mr. Attlee and Mr. Mackenzie King” signed on 16 November 1945. According to Attlee, paragraphs two and three were of the utmost importance. The second paragraph mentioned joint action concerning the responsible use and development of atomic technology. The third paragraph emphasised the threats for world peace that it would present unless its development and use was coordinated and controlled through joint action.<sup>1401</sup> The point of mentioning these paragraphs of the Washington declaration (as well as referring implicitly to the *modus vivendi* of the three heads of state) is rather self-evident, even if diplomatically put. It is clear that Attlee was both criticising and claiming US unilateral activity to be dangerous for the whole world. Unless a positive decision about cooperation could be achieved before the meeting of the UN Control Committee, Britain would be in a extremely difficult situation. Most likely this was implying that if the UN Committee was to start its work, making new secret deals about cooperation would be impossible (especially in the light of the article 102). After all the basis of the UN activity had been mentioned to be openness and honesty, which would have meant that all forms of atomic cooperation should be reported to the UN and the Control Committee in advance. Possible deals concluded “behind the scenes”, apparently at least after the committee would be active, could be detrimental to international trust and the UN.

In his telegram to Truman, Attlee also claimed that the wording of the clauses regarding the exchange of information (full and effective) meant the fair and equal sharing of both the raw materials and technical knowledge. In addition to the *modus vivendi*, and the mention in the Groves-Anderson memo, the exchange of information could also be found in the fourth paragraph of the Washington declaration. Moreover the sixth paragraph of the same document stated that sharing basic information about practical applications, e.g., industrial, was what the signatory states had wanted, though within the safety clauses. The reason why the Washington Declaration did not mention bilateral exchange was that it was thought to have been achieved already. Then again, the exchange was supposed to be kept out of the public eye. Attlee confirmed that wartime cooperation had led to the know-how of the new technology to be mostly in American hands, but he still recommended solving the CPC issue above all. In the memorandum sent to the Canadian PM, Attlee added that he was extremely worried, and hoped for Canadian support in the subsequent CPC negotiations. Earlier on the Canadians had been mostly ignored in the British plans, or at least taken for granted. Now that the shoe was on the other foot, Britain was paying close attention to Canada.<sup>1402</sup> Attlee’s point was good, even

<sup>1401</sup> No. 72 Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington) CANAM 572 Telegraphic [FO 800/584], Cabinet Office, 16 April 1946, [FO 800/584]), DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. This telegram conveys a copy of the telegram Attlee had sent to Truman to both Lord Halifax and Field Marshall Maitland Wilson. See Washington Declaration in Appendix 7. See also No. 239, DOBPO, ser.I, vol.II.

<sup>1402</sup> No. 72 Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington) CANAM 572 Telegraphic [FO 800/584], Cabinet Office, 16 April 1946, [FO 800/584]), DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

if his reputation as a negotiator in atomic matters has been questioned.<sup>1403</sup> There was not much more that could be done at this point.

“I would therefore urge most strongly that the Combined Policy Committee should make a further attempt to work out a satisfactory basis of cooperation”<sup>1404</sup>

Attlee did not spare any effort in trying to convince his American counterpart. The nature of the deals and memoranda conducted and signed in Washington should be made impossible for Truman to misinterpret. The continuity of cooperation had been promised, including sharing the know-how, and all this within the UN control measures. Attlee’s inclusion of know-how piling up in the US during the war, implied that, had it not been for practical reasons (like the bombing of Britain), the burden of the wartime project would have been more evenly distributed between Britain and North America. Attlee did not, however, have much more leverage besides his message, and neither did he have much momentum. The British position was weak and Byrnes had reached Truman first anyway.

The British experts had met among themselves and then with their American colleagues. They too, had attempted to devise means to diffuse the deadlock and to relieve the situation. James Chadwick had written to John Anderson after consulting Vannevar Bush after the meeting of the CPC, and told him about the attempts to find ways to ensure the continuity of cooperation. According to Chadwick, this frail hope now rested on Attlee’s shoulders. Only direct action and appealing to Truman could be of any assistance now. Chadwick also mentioned that for Bush too, the severity of problems had come as a surprise. It was Byrnes who was to be blamed for everything, reported Chadwick to Anderson. It had been Byrnes who had delayed negotiations in the early winter. It had been Byrnes who had hampered the activity and work of the CPC in every possible way. Though Byrnes’ role in this is no doubt important, some researchers have also considered that General Groves was the kibitzer.<sup>1405</sup> The leading American expert Bush, had been somewhat sympathetic to the British cause and project, according to Chadwick. Bush had also promised to talk with Patterson and Byrnes and persuade them of the British cause, but he could not go behind Byrnes’ back and appeal directly to Truman. Bush had already made it known that he thought the demands presented by General Groves had been unfair, but Bush could not support the British proposal to its full extent. He did not have any alternate proposals, but a compromise of sorts would have been his suggestion, so that Britain would not end up in an unfavourable posi-

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<sup>1403</sup> For instance Blackburn 1959, p.85 mentions this, and emphasises that the Quebec Agreement should have been made public as the war had ended, implicitly referring that the knowledge about the British role might have helped the British cause.

<sup>1404</sup> No. 72 Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington) CANAM 572 Telegraphic [FO 800/584], Cabinet Office, 16 April 1946, [FO 800/584]), DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1405</sup> Paul 2000, p. 55-56.

tion. Based on this, Chadwick thus considered Bush would be pro-British in this matter.<sup>1406</sup>

Unfortunately it was not the case though. When Chadwick next talked with Bush, it was clear he had been put in his place by Byrnes and was now towing the line. Chadwick expressed his anxiety about this in his message to John Anderson. According to Halifax, Bush would not have changed his view without pressure from the top. Chadwick actually considered that there was something more sinister going on. Chadwick also brought up the McMahon Bill, which might harm Anglo-American collaboration in the future even if these current problems could be solved. Furthermore, Chadwick considered that, were the Bill to be accepted and come into force as law, it might prevent all further forms of atomic cooperation, unless sanctioned by a special permission issued by the Congress or Senate. Likewise the exchange of information, and the getting back of raw materials from the US would be prohibited. Were the Quebec Agreement still somehow considered to be in effect (a claim that the British too had to eventually let go), there would nevertheless henceforth be serious problems in attempting to conduct atomic affairs with the Americans.<sup>1407</sup>

Anderson was extremely worried about the contents of Chadwick's message and informed all the related people and agencies immediately. He also expressed his curiosity that Lord Halifax had not reported anything like this previously about the CPC. The earlier commentary about the McMahon Bill had just briefly mentioned that it would be a long time before they would have to worry about it, if at all.<sup>1408</sup> Anderson's report, however, caused anxiety in Britain, and led to the feverish consultation of legal experts in the FO. They confirmed Chadwick's suspicions. If the McMahon Bill was passed, it would indeed destroy all hope of cooperation.<sup>1409</sup> In a minute to Sir Orme Sargent, which included Truman's letter to Attlee about the end of the cooperation<sup>1410</sup>, the FO reviewed what had been achieved in Washington, and how Byrnes had

"made difficulties about either signing a new secret agreement, in view of Article 102 of the Charter, or of signing any publishable agreement embodying a specially intimate cooperation between the British, the Canadians and themselves. We proposed as a way out of the difficulty that the C.P.C itself should revive itself and the Combined Development Trust by decisions recorded in its minutes. This would not constitute a new international agreement and would not need to be registered or published."

"A new telegram from Washington, ANCAM 583, attached below shows that the Americans and the Canadians have both rejected this solution, and that the Ameri-

<sup>1406</sup> No.75 Letter from Sir J. Chadwick (Washington) to Sir J. Anderson [CAB 126/277/78], Washington, 17 April 1946, [CAB 126/277/78], DBPO Ser.I,Vol.IV

<sup>1407</sup> No.75 Letter from Sir J. Chadwick (Washington) to Sir J. Anderson [CAB 126/277/78], Washington, 17 April 1946, [CAB 126/277/78], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1408</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 6 p.252. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1409</sup> Calendar notes to No.75, I, exchange of letters concerning McMahon Bill from 27 April to 15 May 1946. See also Gowing, 1974, p.108-109.

<sup>1410</sup> TNA FO 800/628 Telegram from Truman to Attlee 20 April 1946. Later presented as No.79 DBPO Ser.I Vol.IV.

cans have said bluntly that they can see no way out of the impasse. This threatens the collapse of Anglo-American-Canadian cooperation"<sup>1411</sup>

Halifax suggested sending a personal message from Attlee to Truman reminding him of the Washington negotiations. Roger Makins suggested the British think about the consequences of liquidating both the CPC and CDT. The British hoped it would make the Americans realise that it was

"exceedingly objectionable that one Government should initiate a step flagrantly inconsistent with a personal and confidential agreement by its Head of State and two other Prime Ministers, without being able to plead either any infringement of the agreement"<sup>1412</sup>

The technical consequences of liquidation were a matter for the Ministry of Supply, but the political consequences were quite different. It would mean that Britain would most certainly lose the

"political value of the previous specially *intimate* collaboration with the United States and Canada. The political value was diminished no doubt by the fact that the cooperation was largely secret"<sup>1413</sup>

The reference to the nature of the cooperation ("intimate") is important in highlighting how important the plan of cooperation had been. Earlier wordings had been much more neutral. The British considered that the Soviets most likely knew about this cooperation, and would also learn about its demise. This might lead the Soviets to feel that there was chance to complain about the "ganging up against Russia", and use such an argument to weaken Anglo-American cooperation. In addition to this, the minute considered too, that the Quebec Agreement was indeed a wartime effort with no provision about the future.<sup>1414</sup> Again, there was no mention of the Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire with the "full and effective" cooperation in the future. Other than that, the anxiety of the British was clear. There was a clear chance that everything was lost except for the CDT, as the paragraphs could be read in such a way that this would continue to exist with or without the CPC and even if this was against the spirit of the agreement. In this way, cooperation via the CDT could be used by the British to pressure the Americans. For instance, raw materials in the Congo could be used as a possible bargaining chip by the British to persuade the American to change their minds. All the same, Neville Butler was pessimistic about the chances of the CDT surviving.

"The Lilienthal Committee's report proposes that the Atomic Development Authority under U.N.O. shd. [sic] take over the control new materials. This would provide a natural euthanasia for the C.D.T."<sup>1415</sup>

<sup>1411</sup> TNA FO 800/528 Minute from North American Department, 17 April 1946

<sup>1412</sup> TNA FO 800/528 Minute from North American Department, 17 April 1946.

<sup>1413</sup> TNA FO 800/528 Minute from North American Department, 17 April 1946.

<sup>1414</sup> TNA FO 800/528 Minute from North American Department, 17 April 1946.

<sup>1415</sup> TNA FO 800/528 Minute from North American Department, 17 April 1946.

This would mean that, were the American Lilienthal Committee's plans to go ahead, the British would in any case also lose the advantage of CDT and their share of the raw materials.

The JSM reported back about further talks with Byrnes on 19 April 1946. Lord Halifax had met him after the additional negotiations held on 18 April. Both the JSM and Byrnes were worried about the tone of the recent talks. Byrnes had reported to President Truman about the latest events, and Truman had also received Attlee's telegram. The message Truman had sent via Byrnes was odd by all means. Truman claimed that he still had no recollections about the Washington negotiations. He had been totally unaware of the Anderson-Groves talks conducted at the War Ministry, and that the Secretary of War (Patterson) had also been present. Therefore Byrnes had requested Patterson to report to the President about these talks now. Byrnes also added that he too was totally unaware of any talks or papers signed! He had only been informed about them just before the recent meeting of the CPC.<sup>1416</sup> This is quite hard to believe. Requesting an additional report from Patterson also appears odd. It was much more likely that this was yet another diversion or delay.

How was it that the whole US administration could act in such an unprofessional manner about something as serious as atomic weapons? No doubt there had been some kind of a need-to-know basis, but it was highly unlikely that every leading politician involved in the agreement had suffered simultaneous memory loss. Patterson had been sympathetic to the British intentions after all, and if he was to present the case history to the President, who had just "forgotten" these things, then perhaps there might have been a way. But again, this is just speculation and apart from Gordon Arneson's interview (which is also bit vague)<sup>1417</sup> sources do not reveal any direct plans of Americans attempting to delay the British until the McMahon Bill was passed. The joint political amnesia did not go unnoticed though. Bevin's secretary Nevile Butler drew a large exclamation mark in the margins of the original document. It appears at the point where Truman is mentioned as not remembering.<sup>1418</sup> Roger Makins claimed however that notes of the British delegation existed, and these notes confirmed that whatever Truman had claimed, was "technically untrue". Vannevar Bush had also received written instructions for the negotiations about cooperation between the USA, Britain and Canada, and these instructions had been signed by Truman.<sup>1419</sup> During the negotiations in Washington, especially the meeting held at the War Department, Patterson had told the British that his

<sup>1416</sup> No.77 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 19 April, 5.50 p.m.) ANCAM 590 Telegraphic [FO 800/584], Washington, 19 April 1946, [FO 800/584], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1417</sup> Oral history interview of Arneson 21 June 1989.

<sup>1418</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 3, p.255. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1419</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 4, p.255. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. About the Washington talks cf. DBPO, ser.I, vol.II, No: 232; 238 and 240. About the signing of the instructions see No.220 & Bullen 1985, footnote 3, p.599. DBPO, ser.I, vol.II. The original document No.220 had been added a handwritten marking about Attlee achieving mutual understanding with Truman.



mandate for negotiating came from Truman via Bush, and that the mandate covered negotiating the continuity of atomic cooperation.

“Judge Patterson said that he had the authority from the President, conveyed to him through Dr. Vannevar Bush, to discuss with Sir John Anderson the continuation of cooperation between the two countries in regard to atomic energy.”<sup>1420</sup>

And the same information is confirmed in the American documents, though with a different wording.

“Mr. Harrison reported that – as indicated in a memorandum of November 14 (Tab C),<sup>15</sup> which Dr. Bush had written to President Truman recapitulating his understanding of the conclusions reached at the White House on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>, and a copy which was received by Secretary Patterson today – the principals desired that Secretary Patterson and Sir John Anderson and their advisers consider together what should be done with matters of collaboration covered by the Quebec Agreement.”<sup>1421</sup>

At the end of the negotiations, the British had been warned that the situation might change, were the Congress or the Senate to pass new regulations.<sup>1422</sup> However, the British had chosen to ignore this warning. During the additional meeting on 19 April 1946, Byrnes showed Halifax the report Patterson had written. According to Halifax, it did not contain anything that the British delegation had not mentioned already. Byrnes, however, kept on insisting that the fifth paragraph of the memorandum intended for the CPC to provide the basis for planning new cooperation on a temporary basis, according to members’ respective projects and situation.<sup>1423</sup> The memorandum itself nevertheless did clearly state that there would be full and effective cooperation between the signatory countries concerning the exchange of information related to basic research. Advanced forms of cooperation were desired, and would be conducted through specific measures coordinated by CPC.

“There shall be full and effective cooperation in the field of basic scientific research among the three countries. In the field of development, design, construction and operation of plants such cooperation, recognised as desirable in principle, shall be regulated by such ad hoc arrangements as may be approved from time to time by the Combined Policy Committee as mutually advantageous.”<sup>1424</sup>

According to Halifax, Byrnes had attempted to appease the situation by appealing to public opinion and by assuring the British that it was Congress who was reluctant, and that it had nothing to do with him. Building plants for the benefit

<sup>1420</sup> No.232 Record of meeting held at the War Department (Washington) on 15 November 1945 at g.30 a.m., 15 November 1945, CAB 126/133. DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1421</sup> F.R.U.S 1945 vol.II p.65-66.

<sup>1422</sup> No.232 Record of meeting held at the War Department (Washington) on 15 November 1945 at g.30 a.m., 15 November 1945, CAB 126/133. DBPO Ser.I.Vol.II

<sup>1423</sup> No.77 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 19 April, 5.50 p.m.) ANCAM 590 Telegraphic [FO 800/584], Washington, 19 April 1946, [FO 800/584] DBPO, Ser.I.Vol.IV

<sup>1424</sup> No.241 Memorandum to the Chairman of the Combined Policy Committee, 16 November 1945, CAB 134/7 (ie. Groves-Anderson memo about the cooperation): “We recommend that the following points be considered by the Combined Policy Committee in the preparation of a new document to replace the Quebec Agreement...”

of the British would not be accepted in the US, he claimed. Byrnes continued along these lines of disclaiming responsibility and delaying tactics<sup>1425</sup> until Halifax promptly ended the discussion by strongly recommending that Byrnes nonetheless contact Truman, and that Bevin would like to have a word with Byrnes when he next came to Europe. The American advisors had even suggested giving away a couple of atomic bombs to the British to calm them down, but both Byrnes and Halifax had rejected the idea. At the end of the conversation Halifax forcefully stated to Byrnes that Britain would seek her own functional atomic energy programme<sup>1426</sup>. In reporting the conversation he had with Byrnes, Halifax said it would likely be impossible to get the Americans to choose another policy.<sup>1427</sup> Bevin's reaction to this piece of news was to notify Attlee, and urge talks to be arranged with the Dominions about the possibility of building British atomic plants in either Africa or Australia. In addition Bevin emphasised, that despite these plans, negotiations with the Americans were to be continued.<sup>1428</sup>

Could it be that the Americans had led the British astray on purpose? Did they delay and keep their promises related to the cooperation vague on purpose so that domestic legislation could be prepared in time. Or were the plans altered to respond to the growing reluctance to cooperate in the American ranks? Either way it benefited the US a lot by keeping the essential British scientists, such as Penney at work on their project. Likewise the unresolved situation would have made it possible to keep raw materials still flowing to the US for the "joint" reserves. This seems plausible, even if direct evidence is missing; then again, leaving a paper trail about the intentional misleading of an "ally" would have been imprudent and thus unlikely. Most striking is the fact that the American government would have been so totally ignorant of such remarkable law reforms, especially as the complex relationship between the military and atomic technology had nevertheless been noticed. Likewise being so ignorant of international relations and bilateral treaties, even those signed by the President seems highly dubious. To add to these confused signals, Truman himself attempted to reassure the British, when bidding Halifax farewell, that once the McMahon Bill was passed, it would still be possible to continue with the cooperation.

"The President said that his main pre-occupation was to secure the passage through Congress of atomic energy control legislation and he could meanwhile do nothing to

<sup>1425</sup> Again, no mention of the more significant document, the Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire.

<sup>1426</sup> This is one of the few direct mentions in DBPO about the atomic weapon. Even though it is rather clear that the British were after this application of the new technology, a single atomic bomb on its own would not have sufficed as a deterrent. Capability to manufacture more was apparently the sign of a Great Power. Moreover, atomic research and manufacture project could have also brought more benefits too. On the other hand, it had become rather clear at this point, that if Byrnes had anything to do with it, the British would not get their Union Jack over even a single "consolation"-bomb.

<sup>1427</sup> No.77 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 19 April, 5.50 p.m.) ANCAM 590 Telegraphic [FO 800/584], Washington, 19 April 1946, [FO 800/584], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1428</sup> Bullen 1985, footnotes 10 & 12 p.257. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

jeopardize this. As soon as this had been 'handled', all would be well as between the U.S, Canada and ourselves. (He seemed to be unaware that the legislation as it now stands would prevent effective cooperation)."<sup>1429</sup>

It is uncertain whether the British thought the May-Johnson Bill (which would later become the McMahon Bill) would ever be passed. The archival sources at my disposal do not reveal that these aspects were emphasised. According to the sources there was not even much interest or knowledge in finding out how the McMahon Bill might affect the collaboration. Only when James Chadwick had started to worry about the implications were the lawyers contacted and the threat was taken seriously. In defence of the British however, the handling of the McMahon Bill was conducted via a secret committee hearing and the Bill emerged, at least according to the research literature, heavily altered so that it was only then that it became clear from the new wording that there would be no further possibility of atomic cooperation. Apparently, Senator Brian McMahon had said to Churchill that the hardening of the cooperative clauses in this hearing was due to committee members not knowing about the commitments that had already been made to Britain. Margaret Gowing in turn, thought that the American members of the CPC did not know what the Bill meant for the cooperation.<sup>1430</sup> Considering Roosevelt's executive orders and the need-to-know basis, it might have been true, but then again Henry De Wolf Smyth's book (with the British additions) had already been published, and was now considered as a semi-formal account of past cooperation that had been sanctioned by the US government. There were also numerous specialists and related persons who were interviewed at this time however, and it seems that nobody said anything about Anglo-American commitments.<sup>1431</sup>

There are a number of reasons to think the Americans were delaying atomic collaboration intentionally. It is firstly rather convenient that at the same time as the McMahon Bill was under consideration and being revised, that all kinds of delays sprang seemingly out of nowhere. Secondly, there was the prevailing idea in the US that an atomic monopoly was something it could maintain for years. Thirdly, the idea of maintaining an atomic monopoly had been strengthened by the spy scare which had involved British citizens, and which General Groves was keen to highlight. In his semi-biographical account Groves mentions that the spy scare and British security problems were one of the leading reasons he was trying his utmost to prevent cooperation.<sup>1432</sup> Truman eventually sent a telegram back to Attlee on 20 April 1946, but it only served to increase anxiety among the British. It was written in an elegant fashion and included condolences, but the core of the telegram was the same. The US was not prepared to simply give Britain atomic capability.

<sup>1429</sup> No 96. JSM (Washington) to Cabinet Office ANCAM 631 Telegraphic [FO 800/580] 10 May 1946.

<sup>1430</sup> Gott 1963, p.240-241. Gott also states that the Senate had not known about the Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire which affected to the restrictions that shut the British out. Gowing, 1974, p.105-108

<sup>1431</sup> Herken 1988, p. 115-116; 134.

<sup>1432</sup> Groves 1983, implicitly refers to this p.142-144.

"I must say that no one at any time informed me that the memorandum was proposed with the intention of having US obligate itself to furnish the engineering and operation assistance necessary for the construction of another atomic energy plant. Had that been done I would not have signed the memorandum..."<sup>1433</sup>

Cooperation under the auspices of the UN was now the American priority, apparently, and close cooperation before the UN plans were secured was to be avoided. Truman argued that the US domestic opinion was against such plans, and thus it was also impossible to build plants in the US that might indirectly help the British.<sup>1434</sup> The plants in Canada, however, were apparently quite fine. The Canadians were of no help to the British, however. They did not like what the Americans were doing either, but they pointed out that it should not have come as a surprise to the British, especially considering how previous cooperation had been handled.<sup>1435</sup>

The narrow interpretation the Americans had chosen to adopt was blatantly against what had been previously agreed upon. If it had been about the aforementioned exchange of "basic information", these negotiations would not have even been required, and the problem would have been solved a long time ago already. Likewise, if the American view was to be accepted as the proper interpretation, the work conducted under the auspices of CDT, Combined Development Trust, would have been against what had been agreed upon. All the raw material exchange and storages in the US would have been deemed "illegal". The Americans would have had to do without British help in acquiring raw materials, when most of it had been acquired by the British or from areas of the British Commonwealth for joint purposes. Anderson was of the opinion that Byrnes' interpretation should be resisted with the utmost vigour, as Britain had good cause to. In addition public opinion at home demanded independent production plants, and it would have been appalling if the Americans were to deny the British rights for their independent project after the British had more or less initiated the whole research project.

"Public opinion here will clearly demand the establishment of a plant in this country and it would be a monstrous intrusion for the USA. Government to seek to put a veto on such a development".<sup>1436</sup>

It is rather interesting that these particular old agreements were nevertheless included in the argument, although Britain had waived her claims to the other older deals. History formed the moral basis for the British cause. Were these

<sup>1433</sup> No.79 President Truman (Washington) to Mr. Attlee T. 160/46 Telegraphic [FO 800/584], Washington, 20 April 1946, [FO 800/584], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. *"I must say that no one at any time informed me that the memorandum was proposed with the intention of having United States obligate itself to furnish the engineering and operation assistance necessary for the construction of another atomic energy plant. Had that been done I would not have signed the memorandum..."*

<sup>1434</sup> No.79 President Truman (Washington) to Mr. Attlee T. 160/46 Telegraphic [FO 800/584], Washington, 20 April 1946, [FO 800/584], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1435</sup> Calendar notes ii, 21 April 1946 DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Comments of Canada to both Truman's and Attlee's telegrams. Cf. Gowing, 1974 p.134-135.

<sup>1436</sup> No.80 Notes by Sir J. Anderson on Washington Telegram T. 160/46 and ANCAM 590 [FO 800/577], Cabinet Office, 24 April 1946, [FO 800/577], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

arguments desperate measures for desperate times, or an honest plea from the British for fair play? Anderson's appeal to public opinion at any rate seems a bit odd at this stage, reminiscent as it was of what was done to force the Americans to agree to the Washington talks in 1945.

The parliamentary sources in fact do not totally back up Anderson's claim that there was parliamentary pressure for domestic plants. There was indeed one adjournment debate on 28 March 1946, initiated by Martin Lindsay (Solihull, Conservative) in which the Government was asked to reveal what was being done to develop atomic energy in Britain. And Raymond Blackburn (Birmingham King's Norton, Labour) and Peter Roberts (Sheffield Ecclesall, Conservative) took part in exerting pressure on the Minister of Supply. All the MPs wanted to know how long Britain must wait for atomic energy, and whether there was a conflict about whether to develop either energy or weapons. The Minister of Supply, John Wilmot (Deptford, Labour) tried to avoid answering, saying that it was not a matter of money, but physical limits that were the problem.<sup>1437</sup> This could be the "public pressure" to which Anderson was referring. Press reporting in *The Times* was active throughout the year, but reporting on the need for domestic development does not seem to be so prominent in the sources. However, preliminary canvassing of letters to the editor in *The Times* seems to be promising. There were quite few letters published there that referred to atomic matters. The Mass Observation sources might reveal more evidence of public pressure, but for the sake of space and time, they are beyond the scope of the current work at hand.

## 6.2 The McMahon Bill and the end of cooperation

Truman thus denied the British request for full information on constructing and operating atomic energy plants in Britain with US help on 23 April 1946.<sup>1438</sup> This led to the British reconsidering their policy options. The following day Bevin sent a message to Attlee about the breakdown of CPC talks, and about the subsequent plans for Britain to discuss cooperation with the Dominions. Britain was also to establish its first graphite piles to produce plutonium. Bevin stated that the British should nevertheless be wary of what they would tell the Dominions about their dependency on the US, "with whom the delicate negotiations are still proceeding".<sup>1439</sup> Apparently Bevin thought that even now there was still some hope to rescue the cooperation, even if he too was devising backup plans.

"First, seeing that President Truman as well as Mr. Byrnes is showing a strong reluctance to give us the [blurred] that we badly want; even if we do not absolutely require it..."<sup>1440</sup>

<sup>1437</sup> HC Deb 28 March 1946 vol 421 cc681-700.

<sup>1438</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Telegram from FO to Washington 23 April 1946.

<sup>1439</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Bevin's minute to Prime Minister 24 April 1946.

<sup>1440</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Bevin's minute to Prime Minister 24 April 1946.

Bevin recommended telling the Dominion PMs about the present state of the tripartite cooperation, if the Canadians and Lord Addison did not object. Before doing this it might be a good thing for Bevin and Anderson to plan the next steps carefully. Bevin was sure Attlee would keep the line open with Truman, and he was willing to talk with Byrnes either in Paris or London, as Lord Halifax had suggested. Bevin also thought the American argument of British plants being vulnerable for sabotage or attacks had been studied by the Chiefs of Staff, and he noted that they were "inclined to discount the risks".<sup>1441</sup> By 2 May 1946, the plan with regard to the Dominions had already changed because the British had found out that the Canadians now had joint plans with the US. Attlee would therefore bring up the difficulties with the Americans frankly when discussing atomic energy with the Dominion PMs.<sup>1442</sup> Somewhat surprisingly, Bevin's private papers do not have any record about following up his plans, besides having a copy of Attlee's attempt to convince Truman once more on 6 June 1946 with a long message.<sup>1443</sup> The next files in the folder were about other matters.<sup>1444</sup>

The aim of all this activity, despite all evidence to the contrary, was in fact to try and clear up the mess. The McMahon Bill was causing growing alarm, and by the end of April, the inter-British negotiations about the atomic project show just how much the Government were now worrying about the new Bill. According to the Government, it had been drafted (and altered) despite contradicting agreements, and apparently would stop not only cooperation, but also the exchange or acquisition of existing raw materials in the US that had been previously shared.<sup>1445</sup> Indeed the British drafted several possible answers to Truman and these drafts were circulated for comments among those who were in the know. An interim reply was also considered, and at the same time Lord Portal suggested that while the raw material question was possibly out of the way (this was about the Belgian Congo, and the possibility of suspending deliveries to US unless allocation would be done sufficiently),<sup>1446</sup> exchange of whatever information was available should be energetically pursued.<sup>1447</sup> This was met with with horrifying news about the McMahon Bill. It seemed that both information and material would be impossible to secure.<sup>1448</sup>

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<sup>1441</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Bevin's minute to Prime Minister 24 April 1946.

<sup>1442</sup> TNA CAB 104 Murrie to Addis 2 May 1946.

<sup>1443</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Prime Minister's Personal Telegram Serial No.T.326/46 (Bevin's copy) 6 June 1946.

<sup>1444</sup> TNA FO 800/438 Memo to PM (signed by Sargent) 29 May 1946; Bevin's minute to PM on Scientific Adviser to the UK Representative on the Atomic Energy Commission 10 July 1946.

<sup>1445</sup> Calendar note to No.80. Bullen 1985.

<sup>1446</sup> TNA FO 800/590 CANAM 575 Rickett to Makins 25 April 1946 (Cabinet to Washington).

<sup>1447</sup> TNA FO 800/580 Minute from Treasury (Gore-Booth) to Butler 25 April 1946, including three possible drafts for PM to answer to Truman's message. Including a message from Lindsell to Rickett 16 May 1946. See also: TNA FO 800/580 CANAM 578 Rickett to Makins 26 April 1946.

<sup>1448</sup> TNA FO 800/580 CANAM 577 26 April 1946 Rickett to Makins (Cabinet to Washington)

The CPC attempted to deal with the raw material question in a separate sub-group and the situation did seem to be bit better than was first considered. Hence it was decided to hold off mentioning the idea of liquidating the CDT in Attlee's reply to Truman. The problem was that it was Groves who would be negotiating about the raw materials. Bush and Acheson did not speak at all. This especially worried the Ministry of Supply, who were anxious about losing raw materials that were now intended for the British project.<sup>1449</sup> The Americans had everything to gain from this situation and the British saw there was no time to waste. Meanwhile the raw material situation needed to be solved urgently.<sup>1450</sup> On first of May 1946 Halifax and Makins met Acheson. The two presented Acheson with a plan that would be a compromise of a sort in regards to the transfer of the raw materials<sup>1451</sup>, which they thought that even General Groves might find interesting. Acheson was embarrassed to say that General Groves would resist even this. The British proposal would be giving too much raw material away in Groves' opinion, as this might stop American production, or at least slow it down. In addition, Groves was still claiming that anything built on British soil would be vulnerable to attack, and advised that Canada would be the best location for British production. Lord Halifax at this point intervened and pointed out to Acheson that this just would not happen. Eventually the Chadwick plan was presented to Groves, and to Halifax's surprise and outrage, Acheson still came out with the same arguments that Groves had given him earlier. Halifax suggested that either Britain tried to press for a compromise, or would send a gloomy message (apparently to say that all shipments would stop) to the Americans. Acheson had time to think until 7 May 1946. Halifax's firm response was supported by Field Marshal Wilson.<sup>1452</sup>

So it had come to this. It was time to prepare a draft for Attlee to use as a basis for further talks about cooperation no matter how futile it now seemed, but from the start it was understandably filled with a palpable sense of disappointment.

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<sup>1449</sup> TNA FO 800/580 ANCAM 595 Makins to Rickett 27 April 1946; ANCAM 597 (refers to CANAM 575) from Rickett to Makins 27 April 1946; About the anxiety of Ministry of Supply: D.E.H Peirson's note to Butler (Ministry of Supply) 1 May 1946.

<sup>1450</sup> TNA FO 800/580, CANAM 579 2 May 1946, From Rickett to Makins in reply to ANCAM 597.

<sup>1451</sup> No.86 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 3 May, 12.8 a.m.) ANCAM 603 Telegraphic [U 4849/20/70], Washington, 2 May 1946, [U 4849/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. This plan for compromise was rather similar to the one presented by the British. All the war-spoils would stay in American hands, as well as the material acquired from the Congo by 31 March 1946. Acquisitions after this date would be divided equally. In regards to the materials acquired for the Manhattan project, the British wanted 15 tons of metal-uranium, and 50 tons of oxide, produced by Mallinckrodt company. The deal would not be in power after 1946.

<sup>1452</sup> TNA FO 800/580 ANCAM 602 from Halifax to Anderson 2 May 1946; Ancam 603 Halifax to Anderson 2 May 1946; ANCAM 604 Halifax to Anderson 2 May 1946. ANCAM 605 Halifax to Anderson.

“My colleagues will be aware of the serious disappointments we have met in our attempts to establish a firm basis for cooperation with the United States since the end of the war in the field of atomic energy”<sup>1453</sup>

The draft reviewed yet again past cooperation and emphasised Britain’s efforts for a joint goal at the expense of her own interests, such as delivering raw materials for the US and giving the services of many leading scientists. All previous agreements had been made with similar intentions in mind. Truman had promised fair and equal handling of the matters in public and this was now expected of him. Now Britain requested only fair treatment and suggested various options for doing this, but the CPC meetings did not lead to any solution because of American resistance. Moreover Truman had denied all pleas and made it quite clear that public opinion in the US would be against British intentions. If the scientific exchange of information could not be revived, then the British would be prepared to go it alone. This kind of decision would, however, cost much more to the British than the Americans, and it would delay their plans by six months to a year. After all, without raw materials, Britain could not proceed at all. If this was a real danger any existing cooperation would be stopped, and the US would not get any more raw materials from the British. This action too, would be extremely dangerous for Anglo-American relations.<sup>1454</sup>

Therefore Britain still had two options: (1) to agree with the US along the lines of ANCAM 605, or (2) Attlee would send one more message to Truman, indicating that Britain would for the time being stop pursuing the technological exchange of information, if at least her raw material requirements were met. The second option was recommended if the first were to fail. Bevin and Halifax were also ready to discuss with their respective American counterparts if there were any usable proposals. In any case, it seemed that Britain should be ready herself for the collapse of cooperation, unless she was “ready to surrender [her] whole position”.<sup>1455</sup> This shows just how dependent Britain had become on the US. Attlee was now willing to give up a morally legitimate cause just to secure a raw material supply. Then again, this was one way for Attlee to avoid domestic repercussions with this approach. The British now seemed aware that the US was seeking an atomic monopoly so that it could control all the raw materi-

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<sup>1453</sup> TNA FO 800/580 Minute to Butler 6 May 1946 (Signed possibly by P.E Montagan?) “Atomic Energy Cooperation with the United States – a statement by the Prime Minister”.

<sup>1454</sup> TNA FO 800/580 Minute to Butler 6 May 1946 (Signed possibly by P.E Montagan?) “Atomic Energy Cooperation with the United States – a statement by the Prime Minister”.

<sup>1455</sup> TNA FO 800/580 Minute to Butler 6 May 1946 (Signed possibly by P.E Montagan?) “Atomic Energy Cooperation with the United States – a statement by the Prime Minister”.



als.<sup>1456</sup> One more revised draft for appealing to the Americans was thus produced.<sup>1457</sup>

On 11 May 1946, there was some relief when Anderson responded to Lord Halifax in Washington, that the raw material arrangements proposed in the CPC had been accepted. In a reply from Washington, Halifax reported that Dean Acheson was to thank for this result. He had struggled for the British against Groves and others. Details of the raw material allocation were to follow.<sup>1458</sup> However, this relief was short-lived when news came that the Soviet Union was intensifying its atomic research program just as Molotov had said earlier. Stalin was personally promoting the importance of atomic research in the forthcoming five-year plan. The Soviets were no longer blaming the West for an “atomic energy bloc” that would be directed against the Soviet Union, but instead enjoying the thought that there would now be ample resources from the new technology. The British reports from Moscow considered this to be a sign that the Soviets would catch up with the research in the US, Britain and Canada very soon.<sup>1459</sup> This Moscow report does not consider that the Soviets may have been attempting to aggrandise their own progress, or be creating a policy of smoke and mirrors. Instead this piece of news was taken as such and was added to the string of bad news that was coming in from all over the world. Moreover, Soviet pressure on the British had become exceptionally strong, with numerous clashes of interests throughout the year. There were contradictory views about being able to police the world with atomic weapons, Bevin was against the idea for one.<sup>1460</sup> Deterrence was nevertheless pursued by the Government. Lawrence Freedman, referring to Gowing, has confirmed this and has suggested that a monopoly in terror weapons was considered a great advantage. In Britain where geography and other factors made the country vulnerable from an attack from Europe, even the atomic problem was seen as a defensive one from the start. A deterrent was thus starting to be considered as the only means to ward off aggressors.<sup>1461</sup> But due to all the postponements and delays the British did not succeed in establishing their own project.

Subsequently some of the British officials started to voice their concern that the Americans were preparing to seek and secure atomic monopoly by using the idea of the international control as a tool for delaying others, while at-

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<sup>1456</sup> TNA FO 800/580 ANCAM 612 Halifax to Anderson 11 May 1946. This message also included two other memos in which the American strive for monopoly was brought up, as well as the problem that most people do not know the whole history of the cooperation and that might have affected the outcome. Included were also remarks about not sharing the atomic bomb with the Soviets.

<sup>1457</sup> TNA FO 800/580 ANCAM 615 Halifax to Anderson 11 May 1946. Montagan to Butler 26 April 1946, and ANCAM 596 Makins to Rickett 27 April 1946.

<sup>1458</sup> TNA FO 800/580 CANAM 589 Anderson to Halifax 11 May 1946. ANCAM 611 From Halifax to Anderson 11 May 1946.

<sup>1459</sup> No.73 Mr. Roberts (Moscow) to Mr. Bevin (Received 25 April) No. 283 [U 4434/20/70], Moscow, 16 April 1946, [U 4434/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1460</sup> HC Deb 22 October 1945 vol 414 cc1774. Bevin HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1340-42.

<sup>1461</sup> Freedman 2003, p.38-39.

tempting to hoard all available raw materials.<sup>1462</sup> US domestic legislation was being conveniently blamed for the break-up of the Anglo-American cooperation and the Americans would save face as well. Diplomatic relations would be kept in a way intact, as those in charge of foreign and military affairs could not be blamed for following decisions made in a “democratic” fashion. At the same time, the US could still keep on milking Britain by giving glimpses of the slight possibility of atomic cooperation, just as they had done with the loan negotiations. Moreover, without any help from the Americans, the British would not have enough resources to execute the intended foreign policy as a Great Power. In short, the Americans had the upper hand.

Dean Acheson got back to Lord Portal on 16th of May 1946, but it was not with details of the raw material allocation, but to say that, at that moment, the US could not continue cooperation. As Portal had demanded a straight answer on American views about British atomic plans in general, Acheson stated that the Americans considered a successful British plan would indeed be a positive thing.<sup>1463</sup> Gowing actually mentions that Halifax had more or less threatened Acheson with halting all raw-material deliveries, and furthermore, if the US would not meet Britain halfway, Britain would protect her interests by liquidating the CDT and its resources.<sup>1464</sup>

But the British attempt to pressure the Americans with the liquidation of the CDT had an immediate and severe set-back. The secret Anglo-American agreement about delivering uranium from the Belgian Congo to the CDT were about to be revealed in Belgium due to heavy pressure from the Belgian communists. The Belgian Foreign Secretary, Paul-Henri Spaak, had informed the British about this, at an opportune moment for the Americans. Both the US and Britain had wanted to keep the deal a secret, due to possible loss of their international reputation as well as the domestic implications. This was even more important for the British, due to the now heavy parliamentary pressure asking about the new foreign policy. Also the Government had been directly asked whether there were any further secret agreements to which Britain was committed, and the Government had said no.<sup>1465</sup> There was now the danger that Belgium might “have to” take over part of the delivered raw materials due to international and domestic pressure. American help would be required to convince the Belgian Premier that he should not publish anything about these raw material deals.<sup>1466</sup> Therefore, the British, as they had even more to lose should Belgium publish the agreement, were in even more of a delicate situation, as

<sup>1462</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 6, p.272 (Memo by Ward 29 April 1946, presented 7 June 1946), DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1463</sup> Calendar note i to No.85 DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV Conversation between Portal and Acheson 16 May 1946,

<sup>1464</sup> Gowing 1974, p.103-104; 111-112. Calendar note i to No.85 DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV Conversation between Portal and Acheson 16 May 1946.

<sup>1465</sup> HC Deb 6 February 1946 vol 418 ccw383

<sup>1466</sup> No.89 Cabinet to Joint Staff Mission 4 May 1946 (CANAM 581) DOBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. The actual telegram from Spaak had arrived earlier, and it had been told about on 22 April 1946 ANCAM 593, not printed in DBPO. On the agreements with Belgium, see Helmreich 1986.

there was even less room than before to pressure the Americans. The only possibility that the British may have had to pressure the US was now therefore up in smoke. Negotiations about the military bases were already tied in with the loan negotiations, even if this had not been fully explained, and so the British now had even more to lose, if this was used as leverage by the US. The need to keep the CDT, and secret cooperation out of the public eye thus limited the possible courses of action the British could take.

In case the secret deal with Belgium got leaked, the British executive started to draft a statement about previous arrangements with Belgium. Moreover, the JSM was asked to contact the Americans to get them to help keep the agreement a secret. The best option would be to issue a statement about Belgium promising to deliver some raw materials for the Anglo-American project, but the statement would also claim that Belgium had kept, and was to keep most of the raw materials.<sup>1467</sup> This might help Britain save face. Moreover, it could help the UN control commission for atomic energy seem more plausible. Moreover it would also save the credibility of the US, Britain and Canada, and thus keep the three on good terms. If the secret arrangements for atomic projects were to have become public, the commission, now more important for the British than ever, would not gain the trust it required to function. In fact, it would be the start of a slippery slope down: the secret arrangements concluded with Holland and Brazil would have to be revealed; and the Soviet Union could also have also caused problems, pressing demands from national communists around Europe (as might have actually even been the case in Belgium).<sup>1468</sup>

The Americans issued instructions for their ambassador in Belgium, in case there were any leaks to the public. Having heard this, the British continued making their own preparations. Spaak was rather worried, and requested updates on the matter as he was facing growing political pressure at home. Surprisingly, by the end of May, he suddenly informed the British that the situation was under control, and there was no need for public and official explanations.<sup>1469</sup> From the British point of view, the problem had resolved itself well. Then again, even though the Government had not lost face, it had still taken quite a lot of time and effort to prepare for the worst. And all the time, while Britain had been dealing with the Congo scare, and drafting statement after statement to persuade the Americans, the McMahon Bill was moving closer to being passed and crushing the last hopes of the cooperation once and for all.

Interestingly, most of the raw material delivered by from the Congo had in fact already been received by the US due to its huge trade surplus. The actual contacts with Belgium had been made through Britain. So in a way the Congo

<sup>1467</sup> Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington) CANAM 581 Telegraphic [U 4979/20/70], Cabinet Office, 4 May 1946, [U 4979/20/70], DBPO Ser.I, Vol.IV.

<sup>1468</sup> Cabinet Office to Joint Staff Mission (Washington) CANAM 581 Telegraphic [U 4979/20/70], Cabinet Office, 4 May 1946, [U 4979/20/70], DBPO Ser.I, Vol.IV.

<sup>1469</sup> Concerning the Americans being prepared for: DBPO, footnote 4, p.280 (ANCAM 601, 30.4.1946) DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. On Spaak's further enquiries on 18 April and 23 April 1946 calendar note i (CANAM 574) Ibid. On further consultation and about the situation's resolving see calendar note ii from 15 May to 23 May 1946, Ibid.

scare should have affected the Americans more, especially as they had been bringing up the UN charter on every possible occasion when it was in their interests. Lord Halifax wanted to clear up the Anglo-American situation before giving up his post as British Ambassador to Washington. He used his final audience with Truman to explain to him that the British were in quite a difficult situation now, due to the Americans' lack of willingness to proceed with atomic cooperation. According to Halifax, Truman appeared totally ignorant of the implications of the McMahon Bill, were it to pass. He, for instance, told Halifax that the Americans were preparing a new Bill to be passed, which would simply be about the domestic control of atomic energy. Once this was in effect, they could then proceed with possibly continuing cooperation. He did not want to jeopardise the legislative process at any cost now. Halifax felt that Truman was simply out of his depth when it came to atomic matters. Though there is no direct evidence that Halifax was trying to pull the wool over Truman's eyes, perhaps this is why he then tried to explain to Truman that Anglo-American cooperation would still be possible within the UN Charter.<sup>1470</sup> This was, of course, not true. Just some time ago, however, the British had considered the new idea that article 102 of the UN Charter was *de jure* preventing cooperation and harmed the legitimacy of *de facto* cooperation. This was why a great effort had been put into attempting to seal cooperation before the UN control commission came into effect. Another possibility, if somewhat remote, was that Truman was just washing his hands of the matter as it would not do his image any favours. Besides, now that the negotiations about the bases had progressed, and the loan negotiations were close to being a done deal,<sup>1471</sup> Truman had got most of what the US wanted out of Britain.

Halifax supported one more attempt to secure atomic cooperation after this, by putting Attlee and Truman in contact. There was nothing left to lose now anyhow. The recent visit of American scientists at the Canadian plants could be used as a leverage for gaining access for British scientists to make similar visits to US plants.<sup>1472</sup> On 11 May, Halifax commented on the political and economical situation in the US as he saw it, for the benefit of the FO and ministers who were planning to try to persuade the Americans to come round to their way of thinking. In his experience Halifax felt that US policy was about trying to achieve industrial profit. Dilettantism and public opinion were rife, and all too influential aspects of American policy too. Just a single piece of news could be used to exploit the whole system. Congress and public opinion were lacking governance, and this was particularly characteristic of foreign affairs. However, there was no getting round the fact that the US was a great nation

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<sup>1470</sup> No.96 Joint Staff Mission (Washington) to Cabinet Office (Received 10 May, 7.25 p.m.) ANCAM 614 Telegraphic [FO 800/580], Washington, 10 May 1946, [FO 800/580], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1471</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 1, p.296. DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1472</sup> Bullen 1985, footnote 5 p.296. Additional memorandum by Butler, 23 May 1946 DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

and powerful state, despite all the mistakes it had made.<sup>1473</sup> A faint glimmer of hope still existed that the US would take a greater role in world affairs in a way, and this would perhaps also serve the interests of the British. After all, besides independent atomic capability, the British still wanted to be able to take part in world affairs, even if it was only indirectly. US interests were always the first and foremost, as the attempts towards liberalisation of world trade or the global economy had already shown.

At the same time, the talks and preparations for the UN Control Commission's work had been initiated in New York. On 7 May 1946, Alexander Cadogan requested instructions from the FO about what to prepare for these. They were sent by the end of May and consisted mostly of British attempts at delaying both the actual talks as well as their start. They of course wanted cooperation secured first. The FO also recommended that the earlier Lilienthal report should be introduced as the basis of the negotiations, though the included American idea of denaturing the raw materials like uranium so that it could not be used for weapon development was seen as unfeasible. The first course of action for the commission would be the exchange of information, while the American idea was to focus on the raw materials. But the exchange of information had been mentioned in the Moscow agreement, as well as in the General Assembly of the United Nations, so these instances created a strong basis and argument for appeal.<sup>1474</sup>

The British avoiding the raw material issues is understandable in the light of the recent Anglo-American problems. In a way, the British could also utilise the Soviet interest in this argument, as the exchange of information was also a top priority for the Soviets. The Soviets were not so keen on revealing their own resources. Gaining formal recommendations for the exchange of information would have served British interests too, as the UN could not be used then as a reason against cooperation, and as this kind of solution would also bind the US to international cooperation, if not the bilateral one. Then again, an exchange of information before the raw material clauses were fixed would be considered a propaganda victory of sorts for the Soviets, so heavily resisted by the Americans. Then again, binding the Soviet Union to an international atomic control mechanism was also in American interests, so some sacrifices could be tolerable even for the monopoly-driven Americans. At the international level, most importantly for the British, the UN-based exchange of information would challenge the McMahon Bill and enable the British to appeal to the UN for a continuation of the Anglo-American exchange of information.

Lord Inverchapel (Alexander Clark-Kerr), the new British ambassador to Washington brought a little bit of hope for the British in his general review of current affairs in the US. The attitude of the US had become more sympathetic

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<sup>1473</sup> No.97 The Earl of Halifax (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 17 May) No. 1021E [AN 1547/16/45], Washington, 11 May 1946, [AN 1547/16/45], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1474</sup> No.101 Mr. Bevin to Sir A. Cadogan (New York) No. 443 Telegraphic [U 5544/20/70], Foreign Office, 23 May 1946, [U 5544/20/70], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

to the British, he argued.<sup>1475</sup> This had been helped by the problems the Americans were having with the Soviet Union in the Council of Foreign Secretaries in Paris, as well as in the negotiations about the peace agreements. The Soviet accusations about an Anglo-American bloc existing, and them acting against the USSR had angered most American politicians and made them realize that bridging the gap with the USSR was already impossible. The Americans, however, saw the "West" acting in parallel rather than in unison (much to the dismay of the British). The most prominent notion about US foreign policy that Clark-Kerr observed was that it saw the USA as being above and against all blocs and alliances.<sup>1476</sup>

Meanwhile the McMahon Bill had been altered in the secret committee hearings, and it now reappeared in an extremely strict form. The spy scare was largely the cause for the changes that now clearly prohibited Anglo-American cooperation. On 1 June 1946, the US Senate passed the Bill unanimously and it became law.<sup>1477</sup> The cooperation was not to be. Clause 10 in particular prohibited all forms of international cooperation. According to Gowing, the progress of the McMahon Bill, which was far stricter than May Johnson Bill had been, was practically kept a secret.<sup>1478</sup> When it was first brought forward in December 1945, it had actually emphasised international control, and it limited the exchange of information with others to only some extent. But when it went through Congress it changed drastically. The spy scare of February 1946 was the main reason for this, and Groves' testimony in front of the Senate Committee played an important part in its significance. According to American research, Groves aimed to keep atomic control in army hands by appealing to security issues.<sup>1479</sup> Most of the amendments were made, however, in the special committee of the Senate, and they are therefore difficult to trace. There was no mention about the revised Bill in the meetings of the CPC, for example. Gowing suggests that the US administration was unaware of what the Bill would precisely mean for Anglo-American cooperation, but she concedes that the new Bill did offer the Americans an excellent way to diplomatically opt out of cooperation if they so chose. Moreover, it is hard to see how a Bill of such importance could have been overlooked totally by the US administration if they were inclined to continue the cooperation. Gowing also mentions that Congress was supposed to be aware of the US commitments to the British. For instance, Leo Szilard had emphasised the important role of the British in the Manhattan project at the special hearing of the committee.<sup>1480</sup> According to Greg Herken, the

<sup>1475</sup> For instance Hans Morgenthau, as well as Mrs Roosevelt had expressed their worries about the line of foreign policy practiced in the US. According to them the policy of the USA should be warmer towards Britain.

<sup>1476</sup> No.104 Lord Inverchapel (Washington) to Mr. Bevin (Received 2 June, 2.30 a.m.) No. 3664 Telegraphic [AN 1721/1/45], Washington, 1 June 1946, [AN 1721/1/45] DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV. Also: No.106 Memorandum by Mr. Clarke [AN 1764/13/26], Foreign Office, 4 June 1946, [AN 1764/13/26]. Cf. Speech by Byrnes 16 March 1946, Documents on American Foreign Relations, vol. VIII, 1945-1946, p.464.

<sup>1477</sup> See for instance Hewlett & Anderson 1962 p.516.

<sup>1478</sup> Gowing 1974, p.104-109.

<sup>1479</sup> Herken, 1988, p.143-150.

<sup>1480</sup> Gowing 1974, p.105-108.

rapid handling, and especially the hardening of certain clauses were due to the earlier spy scare, and fear of further leaks of classified information.<sup>1481</sup>

On 4 June 1946, Denis Rickett sent a message to Roger Makins in Washington enclosed with some minutes from legal counsellor W. E. Beckett<sup>1482</sup> about the effect of the McMahon Bill on the cooperation. It also included a covering letter from Nevile Butler. Delay in sending the message was because comments from the Ministry of Supply were required as well. The fate of the raw materials was of the utmost urgency. Also, according to Beckett, if the Bill was to pass without amendments the chances for gaining further information were nil. The message recommended discussing the effect the Bill would have on the British with Dean Acheson as soon as possible. Butler wanted to be sure that Acheson would know the devastating results it would have. Acheson, being a lawyer himself might also help in clarifying the doubtful points with regard to the raw materials.<sup>1483</sup> But it seems Acheson already knew the repercussions it would have.

“[A]lthough we made the agreement, we simply could not carry it out; that things like that happen in the Government of the US due to the loose way things are handled [...]”<sup>1484</sup>

Not only was atomic cooperation not going to happen, but it was feared that it might get out to the public that the Government had sought a clandestine cooperation with the US that had failed, and that it would be raised in Parliament by the opposition, and particularly Churchill.

“The unexpected, almost snap, passage through the US Senate of the McMahon Bill, which would prohibit American technological information, to which we believe that we have a very strong moral and documentary claim, being imparted to any foreign Government, has caused great concern to Sir John Anderson, partly because he believes that Mr. Churchill will put the cat among the pigeons by attacking the Government for stupidity in pressing British rights.”<sup>1485</sup>

This challenges the claims of consensus in British post-war foreign policy and it shows that the opposition was also feared despite the Government’s overwhelming majority in Parliament.

<sup>1481</sup> Herken 1988 p.147-148. Cf. Calendar note 107 i, Makins to Rickett 2 June 1946, AN-CAM 623. Even at this point the British did consider that McMahon Bill was most likely to replace May-Johnson Bill. Other sources reveal that Truman had withdrawn his support from May-Johnson already around Christmas 1945. Either this is over-careful assessment of the situation or British channels of information had been rather limited.

<sup>1482</sup> This had been written already on 10 May 1946, but as is mentioned below the delay in sending this was due to need for comments on the practical effects on domestic project from the Ministry of Supply.

<sup>1483</sup> TNA FO 800/580 Rickett to Makins 4 June 1946, including a minute from Butler, and legal advisor’s comments.

<sup>1484</sup> Herken 1988, p.145-146, referring to Arneson’s comments in David Lilienthal’s book “The Atomic Years”.

<sup>1485</sup> TNA FO 800/580 Beckett to Bevin 5 June 1946. Further comments about McMahon Bill.

Anderson insisted that more pressure would be applied on Truman by the PM, even if little could be expected now. The breakdown in cooperation would not stop the British project, but it would make it more expensive and delay the construction of plants from six to eighteen months. Adequate amount of raw materials had after all been secured earlier already. Lord Halifax thought Truman should be approached, as did Lord Portal<sup>1486</sup>, who had been negotiating about the raw materials in the US, even if it would prove to be of no use, but he insisted that [his] good rapport with General Groves should not be endangered. Meanwhile, the Canadians thought that there was little chance of getting anything out of Truman before the American elections. But all this was decided before the Senate had approved the Bill. And as Truman had sponsored it, in Rickett's opinion, there was little chance of him sharing any information that the Bill would have prohibited from being shared.

"I do not believe the President is the kind of man to take that view". [still has the veto to the Bill]<sup>1487</sup>

The approach suggested by Anderson might have involved further dangers though, which the FO needed to consider. Indeed, it was of the utmost importance to "dissuade the Prime Minister from protecting himself against an attack by Mr. Churchill".<sup>1488</sup> The drafted message that had been got ready to send to Truman (from Attlee), was otherwise good to go, but now the wording had to be altered so that the Americans would not terminate everything at once. The cooperation was going on for the time being and it was useful. As Roger Makins was on leave and Halifax had gone too, James Chadwick, and Averell Harriman were asked about this, though Harriman was consulted apparently on the grounds of him feeling a "little out of things".<sup>1489</sup> Attlee was in favour of attempting to appeal to Truman as was suggested,<sup>1490</sup> and so the final draft was sent to the British Embassy for comments on 5 June 1946.<sup>1491</sup> James Chadwick's reply the following day confirmed that Roger Makins was away and that he could not be reached. Chadwick commented that the draft should be restrained and objective in its coverage of Anglo-American relations. He was nevertheless worried that the draft would imply that Britain was asking Truman to intervene in American domestic legislation or to insert a special clause for Britain and Canada's benefit. In his opinion this would surely not work as the pressure on passing the Bill was so immense. Adding any clauses on international aspects would surely not pass in Congress as the Bill was intended to be domestic one.

<sup>1486</sup> Portal's knowledge on atomic matters was described as that of an amateur in the memo.

<sup>1487</sup> TNA FO 800/580 Beckett to Bevin 5 June 1946. Further comments about McMahon Bill. The comment in the brackets is handwritten on top of the actual text.

<sup>1488</sup> TNA FO 800/580 Beckett to Bevin 5 June 1946. Further comments about McMahon Bill.

<sup>1489</sup> TNA FO 800/580 Beckett to Bevin 5 June 1946. Further comments about McMahon Bill.

<sup>1490</sup> TNA FO 800 CANAM 602 Rickett to Makins 5 June 1946.

<sup>1491</sup> TNA FO 800/580 CANAM 603 Rickett to Makins 5 June 1946 delivering the draft of PM's final appeal. Minor pencil adjustments were made to the draft.



Instead Chadwick recommended that the memo, signed in November, could be constituted as executive agreement, and would therefore be in force. This might still require communicating the terms of the memorandum to the Senate Committee [of atomic affairs], which might consider it as international agreement. This, in turn, might require ratification from the Congress, which could be done after the Bill would be passed. Therefore the agreement would be under the UN Charter's influence.<sup>1492</sup>

Roger Makins replied also on 6 June 1946, and confirmed that he had heard the main points over the telephone. In his opinion there was nothing more to be done, if this was going on the record he would abstain, as it could cause damage the chances of gaining further assistance sometime in the near future.<sup>1493</sup> After some consideration Professor Chadwick's recommendations were adopted and the draft to Truman did not have any mention about how he should solve the puzzle. So the British opted for mentioning the executive agreement. The idea behind this is a bit strange: the McMahon Bill was not to be overridden unless by a treaty that was either approved by the Senate, or sanctioned by agreement in Congress.<sup>1494</sup> Denis Rickett confirmed Makins' view of the grim situation in his minutes to Neville Butler, enclosed with a draft reply to James Chadwick.

"In some ways, I feel that we put ourselves in a weak position by undertaking to advise the Americans how to get us out of the difficulty. After all it is a problem of their own making. If we attempt to offer advice, we shall, in fact be likely to find that we have no suggestion which can be made to sound very convincing. We shall, therefore, be driven into the position of admitting that the Americans have no alternative but to refuse to give us the information."<sup>1495</sup>

Rickett suggested a face to face meeting with Butler to discuss if there would still be some sort of suggestion to be made to the Americans.<sup>1496</sup> In the draft reply to Chadwick, Rickett concurred that Truman should be given no advice. However, it would be important to consider what it was that the British wanted the Americans to do. Rickett also reminded Chadwick that the executive agreement Chadwick had proposed could not override the Bill unless it was approved by the Senate or Congress, or if it has been concluded after the passing of the Bill.<sup>1497</sup> The results of Washington, the tripartite memorandum for CPC, signed by the heads of state, that Chadwick had presented as the basis of executive agreement were, however, already signed in November 1945. They would not do.

In any case Rickett mentioned that the British still attempted to find a loop hole. If the said agreement would anyway be made public (for the intention of getting either Senate or Congress to approve it), it would most likely still de-

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<sup>1492</sup> TNA FO 800/580 ANCAM 625 Chadwick to Rickett 6 June 1946.

<sup>1493</sup> TNA FO 800/580 ANCAM 626 Makins to Rickett 6 June 1946.

<sup>1494</sup> TNA FP 800/580 CANAM 604.

<sup>1495</sup> TNA FO 800/590 Rickett's minute to Butler 6 June 1946, with draft telegram for Chadwick.

<sup>1496</sup> TNA FO 800/590 Rickett's minute to Butler 6 June 1946.

<sup>1497</sup> TNA FO 800/590 Rickett's minute to Butler 6 June 1946, draft telegram for Chadwick.

pend on the future of the UN control commission. Other alternative would be the special provision, possibly sanctioned by the US President. In the draft Rickett stated that the "Americans should be prepared to consider action on these lines."<sup>1498</sup>

Delaying the Bill long enough to secure what Britain wanted had also been considered, though this seemed like an unlikely feat to be able to achieve. This too was therefore marked to be removed. In the last paragraph of the draft, message to Truman was confirmed as the last resort.<sup>1499</sup> Based on these points the draft for the telegram to Truman was once more revised.<sup>1500</sup> Likewise, Chadwick was sent a slightly altered telegram as well. The talk between Rickett and Butler, of which there are no sources available, had led to adopting of Chadwick's suggestion in most parts, as in not giving Truman suggestions on what to do. However, Chadwick was instructed to visit the American plants as soon as possible, and if this would not be allowed, he should ask questions on the most important matters before it would be too late. The executive agreement was considered as a not likely to happen. Moreover the FO relied on hope that Truman would nevertheless authorise some sort of exchange of information until the Bill became a law. Also the PM's telegram to Truman was still in reserve too.<sup>1501</sup> Chadwick corrected Rickett still on 12 June 1946 and claimed he had not meant that the President should intervene, but authorizing visits before the Bill would be in effect could perhaps come in to question.<sup>1502</sup> After this, it was all about Attlee's telegram, and the FO started to focus on the allocation of the raw materials.

Earlier recommendations from the new Ambassador as well as the hopeless situation finally led to Attlee to send one last attempt to appeal to Truman on 6 June 1946. The purpose was again to convince the President of the benefits of Anglo-American atomic cooperation. Attlee argued on behalf of the cooperation, again, presenting the recent past history of Anglo-American agreements. In a lengthy manner chronicling the division of labour in research and development, such as the British focus on radar and jet-engine, which had hindered Britain's own research, Attlee did not want to estimate how much the British participation had helped the Manhattan Project, but he believed that it had not been a minor contribution. In addition to this, Britain had agreed to join the project, as they had believed sharing the benefits. Britain had shared her resources and raw-materials in a magnanimous way, always putting the joint project first. Britain had placed immense trust in these organs, and the spirit of earlier negotiations had also been reaffirmed in Washington during the autumn

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<sup>1498</sup> TNA FO 800/590 Rickett's minute to Butler 6 June 1946, draft telegram for Chadwick. The last sentence was struck out with pencil in the original draft.

<sup>1499</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1500</sup> Prime Minister's Personal Telegram Serial No.T.326/46 to President Truman 6 June 1946, (in reply to Truman's telegram 20 April 1946). Some technical amendments were sent few days later cf. TNA FO 800/580 ANCAM 639 Rickett to Chadwick 12 June 1946.

<sup>1501</sup> TNA FO 800/580 CANAM 604 Rickett to Chadwick 7 June 1946.

<sup>1502</sup> TNA FO ANCAM 630 Chadwick to Rickett 12 June 1946.

1945.<sup>1503</sup> If the British were being somewhat persistent, it was totally based on moral grounds, but the previous agreements were not watertight (as the legal counsellor from the FO had made clear).

This did not stop Attlee from trying, as Britain was now willing to share a greater burden of the research and development, since the war was over and Britain had more resources available. Nevertheless, the US unilaterally denied the cooperation they had promised and delayed for so long, even when Attlee pointed out that cooperation would not be against the Washington declaration. But evidently 'cooperation' (in this context) was referring only to those arrangements which benefited the US, such as raw material deliveries. At the end of his telegram, Attlee simply added that he had given Truman his honest opinion about the atomic question, and wanted to continue cooperation, in spite of the McMahon Bill.<sup>1504</sup> But while the British were drafting yet another appeal and Attlee was sending this telegram, the McMahon Bill had just become law.

Attlee's rhetorically eloquent appeal to Truman included just about all the possible arguments the British had ever used for justifying continuity of the cooperation. Though it is not completely relevant to this work as such, it seems the British had a valid case too. Moreover, they thought so themselves, and this is what comes most clearly across. All these arguments, especially those that were clearly realist and not in the slightest bit idealist or internationalist any more, show just how desperate the British had become. Using these arguments as a spearhead in persuasion attempts, also testifies to the change that had happened in Labour's Anglo-American foreign policy, not to mention the even more drastic change in American policy since Roosevelt's time. Britain had been clearly promised a chance to continue the cooperation. Admittedly the Americans had warned the British in Washington that a change in domestic legislation might change matters drastically. But when the agreements about formalising and updating the agreements from Quebec and Hyde Park had been signed, this had not really been considered by the British. In effect, it had been a veto-clause of a sort, that came back to haunt the British later on. The idea of fair play in international relations is often snubbed by realist theories, and this is a perfect example of this. Fair play would have meant the US informing Britain that something was being prepared that would most likely change atomic relations and affect Anglo-American cooperation. But of course, there was no *real* interest in continuing the cooperation in the US. Instead, atomic cooperation was used as leverage, as both a stick and a carrot, until most of the benefits that were of any use to the US had been harvested from the British. In other words, the British had been led astray ever since they lost their momentum in Washington, when they were lulled into a false sense of security.

Gregg Herken considers this from a typical American point of view: according to him the Quebec Agreement and Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire would

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<sup>1503</sup> No.107, Mr. Attlee to President Truman (Washington) T. 326/46 Telegraphic [FO 800/438], 6 June 1946, [FO 800/438], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

<sup>1504</sup> No.107 Mr. Attlee to President Truman (Washington) T. 326/46 Telegraphic [FO 800/438], 6 June 1946, [FO 800/438], DBPO, ser.I, vol.IV.

have not bound Truman to anything<sup>1505</sup>, and yet the Americans accepted the negotiations in Washington, with the agenda proposed by the British, including future cooperation and the issue of a joint statement. They led the British to believe that they had something to gain from all this. In this light, the actions of the Americans seem even more odd, and the 'harmonic Anglo-American relationship' interpretations of the earlier research seem even more incongruous and misplaced than ever. The American reluctance to continue cooperation manifested itself already quite openly in the early autumn of 1945 as the British tried to set up negotiations to discuss the matter. Initial American reluctance was brushed aside by a proactive British foreign policy that took the initiative. But the more it became evident that the US had the upper hand in relation to Britain, and the more the British helped encourage the Americans to take a more active stance in the world (in the hope this would serve British interests, which unfortunately they did not) the more the British lost the initiative. This brought momentum back to the Americans, and led to the resurgence of an anti-cooperative atomic policy. Though it seems that certain elements of cooperation which were beneficial to the Americans were continued, but perhaps without any real intention of actualising the promises. This is hard to prove, searching for American documents might be useful, but then again, if the playing against the British was intentional, if information was kept from decision makers, and politicking happened, it most likely was not done by leaving a paper trail of written proof. However, there are so many occasions when the atomic question or loan negotiations are mentioned in the vein of leverage, that it cannot be ignored.

The McMahon Bill passed in the Senate 1 June 1946 and finally on 20 June 1946.<sup>1506</sup> After the Bill was accepted in Congress, the British tried to appeal to Truman once more, but to no avail as we have seen.<sup>1507</sup> Truman then signed it into law on 1 August 1946 as the Atomic Energy Act (McMahon Act),<sup>1508</sup> and Anglo-American atomic cooperation was officially over. The only possible backdoor remaining was that, after the Senate and Congress approved the international safety guarantees for the control of atomic energy, some form of international agreements be devised.<sup>1509</sup>

<sup>1505</sup> Herken 1988, p.62. About Attlee's note and British opinions see Makins to Rickett 2 June 1946 ANCAM 623; John Anderson & Halifax demanded Attlee to appeal to Truman. British comments on Attlee's draft telegram: Cabinet to JSM (to Makin from Rickett) 5 June 1946 CANAM 602. Also: No.107 calendar note i: Rickett to Makins 5 June 1946 CANAM 603, which recommends postponing the sending of Attlee's telegram before experts could have commented it. In the draft reply Attlee had repeated the longer history of the atomic cooperation

<sup>1506</sup> Herken 1988, p.147-148.

<sup>1507</sup> For example No.107 calendar note i: Rickett to Makins 5 June 1946 CANAM 603, commentary concerning Truman's telegram on 20 April, and outgoing telegram on 6 June 1946. (No.107, DBPO)

<sup>1508</sup> Herken 1988, p.178.

<sup>1509</sup> Atomic Energy Act 1946 (McMahon Act), p.11-12 "*International arrangements*", part A: "*...international arrangement shall mean any treaty approved by the Senate or international agreement hereafter approved by the Congress...*" on international treaties part B: "*Any provision of this Act or any action of the Commission to extent that it conflicts with the provisions of any international arrangement made after the date of enactment of this Act shall be*

"It is the purpose of this Act to effectuate these policies by providing, among others, for the following major programs; (1) A program of assisting and fostering private research and development on a truly independent basis to encourage maximum scientific progress;

(2) A program for the *free dissemination of related technical information*;...

(6) *a program of administration which will be consistent with international agreements made by the United States, and which will enable the Congress to be currently informed so as to take further legislative action as may hereafter be appropriate.*"<sup>1510</sup>

Frustratingly, the new law would not have applied to deals that were already ratified by Senate or congress. So if for instance the Groves-Anderson Memorandum *had* been successfully ratified in Congress, the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 would not have been enough to stop cooperation. But as we have seen, the will to introduce these to the Senate was just not there. Public opinion in the US was mostly against sharing atomic secrets, and with the forthcoming US elections, it was probably prudent of the Government to leave such deals well alone. Likewise, in Britain, public opinion was against anything other than an internationalist foreign policy under the UN. This would have revealed the preparations made in secret, and not only during Churchill's time. Also there was the chance of repercussions abroad. There was of course the Soviet Union to think about, but also various other British commitments, like to France for instance. A comparison of the McMahan Bill and Act reveal that the new law was a complete revised version of the original Bill. The 9<sup>th</sup> clause was originally entitled 'dissemination of information, also abroad', as had been advised by the President, but in the Act the whole clause had been omitted. In the Bill, only the raw materials were to be controlled and supervised for security reasons (bomb utilization), while in the Act there was a whole clause (10) devoted to secrecy, security and classification. It was so strict that it even limited the constitutional freedom of speech!<sup>1511</sup>

Via the UN, the British still hoped to achieve something to improve stability in international relations in the face of the atomic threat. Over the summer and autumn however, the Baruch plan in the US made such negotiations difficult. Eventually things came to a head and negotiations about the UN control committee had come to a complete standstill by the autumn. That meant that the British now had to actualise their own atomic plans independently. But at the same time, the Government did not stop trying to turn American heads, and repeated attempts to establish a cooperation of some sort were made. This partly explains why the breakdown of co-operation with the US was never revealed to Parliament. But another reason was a growing impatience with the Govern-

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*deemed to be of no further force or effect". Cf. p.12-15. "Control of information". Especially 1B1: The paragraphs did encourage and favour exchange of information, if the information had not been considered as restricted, classified or so on. In practice all the information was classified: "The term "restricted data" as used in this section means all data concerning the manufacture or utilization of atomic weapons, the production of fissionable material, or the use of fissionable material in the production of power..."*

<sup>1510</sup> Atomic Energy Act 1946.

<sup>1511</sup> Atomic Energy Act 1946, paragraphs 1, 8 & 9.

ment's pro-US policy, which also contributed to the rise of the Keep Left movement.

### 6.3 Parliament's response to an independent domestic project and international control

The late spring shows a change in Parliament's take on the atomic question. In general, the activity in Parliament had slackened off a bit, even though March was still quite active. This had been mostly due to instances related to budget estimates and the Government White Paper on Defence. After these were handled, Parliament became less active in atomic matters. The brief Whitsun recess limited coverage to some extent and there are other reasons for the drop-off, which will be considered below. Higher activity resumed only in July and continued through the August until the autumn recess. These later instances could be described as the "aftermath", but they would deserve a detailed study of their own because they concerned the new plans the British had for the acquisition of raw materials.

Although reduced, Parliament nevertheless covered atomic matters in the spring. This was done especially in four contexts: (1) general mentions; (2) defence issues; (3) demands of independent foreign policy; and (4) atomic matters and foreign affairs in relation to the United Nations and its control commission plans. Details can be seen in appendix 1, the table about the parliamentary instances. These mentions could be divided in three main lines of enquiries which are presented in below. However, in order to get the full view of the parliamentary handling of the affair, a brief recap on the numbers of the instances is first considered, followed by considerations on the possible causes for this somewhat limited activity.

During the period ranging from April to June, atomic matters were brought up in 15 instances. Six instances occurred in April, four in May, and five in June. Nine of these 15 were parliamentary questions (7 oral and 2 written), and two instances were adjournment debates. This is in line with the overview of all the parliamentary instances from August 1945 to October 1946. Roughly half of all of the parliamentary findings related to the theme of "atomic question" were adjournment debates and parliamentary questions during the period of one year. In April 1946 there were six instances related to atomic matters, all of them in the House of Commons. Four were oral questions, and the other two were Supply Day debates regarding Army and Navy estimates. In May only four instances occurred, again in the House of Commons. Two of these were oral questions (on 20 and 27 May), one was in written answers on 29 May, and one was initiated by the opposition in relation to treaty negotiations in Egypt, in which few passing references to the possibility of atomic war in the Suez region were made.<sup>1512</sup> In June there were five instances in the House of

<sup>1512</sup> HC Deb 24 May 1946 vol 423 cc701-90.

Commons. Two of them were lengthy adjournment debates on foreign affairs, held on 4 and 5 June which were of the same origin, but are counted as separate entities (see chapter 1 above). Another two of the five instances were answers to questions presented on or about the intended Atomic Bomb Tests, one of them was a written answer on 4 June, and the other was an oral question on 24 June, related to animal tests and atomic trials. The remaining instance was again related to the estimates for the Army and counted as the 13<sup>th</sup> Allotted Supply Day on 27 June 1946.<sup>1513</sup> During the later spring and early summer the House of Lords did not cover atomic matters at all.<sup>1514</sup> The possible reasons for this are yet to be discovered. This would most likely require an intensive study on all of the matters covered in the House of Lords during this time, to see whether it was a matter of limited parliamentary time, or perhaps a question of limited interest. Only in July and August did the Lords become active again.

Interestingly, also the amount of “multi-discourse”<sup>1515</sup> instances remained at a relatively low level during the spring and summer, the same level to which it had dropped already since November 1945. This seems to relate to the idea that the atomic question had already become quite well established and defined. It was first and foremost assigned a meaning as a question of defence and of foreign policy. This explains the narrower focus of the atomic instances. At the beginning of August 1945 there was a greater plurality in the debate, although the parliamentary session ended in recess in September 1946, the new session, starting from October 1946 was again a rather active period in both chambers but it is out of the scope of this research. One plausible reason for the slowdown in activity on the subject since the beginning of April 1946 is that the Labour party conference, held in February had at least to some extent given enough possibilities for expressing scrutiny and criticism. Rhiannon Vickers mentions that there had been six resolutions about foreign policy and only the Government’s UN policy had been complimented upon, or received positive comments.<sup>1516</sup> For instance, the Government was conducting Labour’s foreign policy with no changes in FO personnel, and this was heavily criticised. This had been also complained about in Parliament.<sup>1517</sup> Also other forms of extra-parliamentary activity had increased. Some MPs were keen on campaigning in the press about the atomic question. Then again, also the somewhat heavy activity in March might have also led to lesser consideration on atomic matters, as there was not that much new to comment.

Another plausible reason for fading activity on atomic matters might have been the domestic reforms, such as nationalisation and the creation of national healthcare plan, requiring much more of the limited parliamentary time. Then

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<sup>1513</sup> HC Deb June 1946 vol 424 cc1540-1638. Cf. Appendix 1.

<sup>1514</sup> Cf. index volumes of Hansard.

<sup>1515</sup> Referring to debates or instances in which more than one of the major themes was covered. See Appendix 1.

<sup>1516</sup> Vickers 2004, p.169

<sup>1517</sup> Vickers 2004, p.169-170; See also HC Deb 19 June 1946 vol 424 ccw53-54 for Parliamentary question about the numbers of Labour attaches in FO 10 was mentioned to be in service, and later more.

there was the case of the independence of India, which also took up a lot of parliamentary time. For instance the nationalisation plans were covered during the spring, as was the question of Indian independence. Interestingly enough Churchill's famous "Iron Curtain speech", which can be considered as a part of Government's *ad hoc* attempts to revive Anglo-American relations in general, did not raise much interest in Parliament at least in the context of atomic foreign policy. The House of Lords brought this up once: numerous defence-connections between the US and Britain might already look suspicious to other nations.<sup>1518</sup>

The third explanation is the limited availability of information, which was also considered above. This correlates with the executive now having rallied and closed its ranks, having a policy (even if troublesome) to implement. Thus the government was more able to regulate also the parliamentary access. With no additional information available for parliamentarians, their chances of surprising or pressing the Government were few, despite the new procedures and even "mini-campaigning" in the press.<sup>1519</sup> There were no news, rumours or information circulating around that could have given reasons for parliamentarians to question the executive about the intended atomic policy. That is besides the Government White Paper on Defence, which was considered by frustrated parliamentarians, as a stop-gap.<sup>1520</sup> The publication of some information about the intended military budgets was nevertheless enough to kill off debating. Earlier it had not been clear whether Britain would soon have an atomic bomb at their disposal. As has been discussed above, that would have no doubt altered the considerations of the post-war armed forces. Even if the conventional forces would not or could have not been made obsolete altogether, in regards to expensive strategic armaments, the atomic bomb could have changed quite a lot, and same would have applied for instance to air-defence, anti-aircraft weaponry and systems, as well as to the "outdated"<sup>1521</sup> civil defence remodification requirements. This is why there was not much in Government's White Paper to actually debate about in Parliament. But this was nothing in comparison to the possibility of the secret negotiations leaking out. Had the problems of Anglo-American cooperation plans, now halted, or the whole secret negotiation process become public, the Government might have faced serious problems, and there is no doubt that this would have been heavily asked about in Parliament, and there would be very little the Government could do to deny giving an answer.

The fourth, and perhaps most important reason is related to the explanation already given above. It could be that Parliament, especially the House of Commons might have considered having achieved a status and role in atomic matters, and moreover, to have gained the promise that the atomic question was to be covered under the United Nations Mandate. After all, this had been

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<sup>1518</sup> HL Deb 07 March 1946 vol 139 cc1225-97.

<sup>1519</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.222-224.

<sup>1520</sup> Sir Arthur Salter (Oxford Uni, Ind.) HC Deb 5 March 1946 vol. 420 cc257-258.

<sup>1521</sup> HC Deb 5 November 1945 vol 415 cc936-937.



the one resolution in the party conference that had been treated as a positive result with regards to the Government's foreign policy.<sup>1522</sup> If one takes into account the public commitment to the UN in general, achieved through ratifying the charter already in the autumn, and the Washington declaration, enforced with the results of the Moscow conference, it indeed appeared as if the atomic question would be taken care of in the United Nations. This was along the lines of the ideas and internationalist idealism in the core of Labour's foreign policy, responding well to the internationalism and need for superstructures to be established to guide international politics towards stability, openness and cooperation.

This could be also considered as a lapse of a sort, relating to other parliamentary tasks. In legislative instances and such, the respective cases can be considered to some extent as "closed", when decisions had been made, and implementing of a law or other decision had started. Naturally parliamentary supervision was still "required", but the actual core of the matter was more stable and could be understood as having been dealt with, at least for some time. In a rather new parliamentary context of foreign relations, the policy as well as the negotiation about the role of Parliament need be kept constantly alive.

What then was covered in relation to atomic matters in the 15 instances found from parliamentary sources in the spring and early summer of 1946? Besides the odd instances related to the budget estimates of the forces other instances found in April the rest of the themes can be roughly summed up along four major discourses, of which two were more directly connected to foreign affairs: (1) supporting the idea of UN control; (2) concerns about Britain following the US too closely, and the need for an independent foreign policy; (3) questions about the forthcoming atomic trials to be held at the Bikini atoll; and (4) questions of raw materials, suitable for atomic research and production. These last two the Government wanted to keep as secret as possible, especially before the atomic trials mostly because the US would have wanted them. The reasons for the raw material issues were more complicated and are considered later, though they also mostly go beyond of the scope of this research.

Daniel Lipson (Cheltenham, National Independent) had asked a question on 3 April 1946<sup>1523</sup>. It was about the possibility of the United Nations Control Commission and the emphasised the urgency of international control of atomic energy.

"[Lipson] asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs why the Atomic Commission, which was given its mandate by the United Nations Assembly on 24th January, has not yet met; and, in view of the importance and urgency of the duty it has to perform, what steps he is taking to secure an early meeting."<sup>1524</sup>

<sup>1522</sup> Vickers 2004, p.169.

<sup>1523</sup> Altogether three instances occurred on 3 April 1946. Two were oral questions written down as "Atomic bomb trials in the Pacific" presented by Tom Driberg, and "Atomic Energy Commission" by Daniel Lipson, and one was supply-day instance related to Navy Estimates.

<sup>1524</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1222-3.

Foreign Secretary Bevin was representing the Government in the sitting because there were other oral questions related to foreign affairs. In general Bevin's answers to the other questions were rather blunt too, but efficient in curbing interest, which subscribes to the notions given by Saville<sup>1525</sup> that Bevin, "armed with a piece of paper was very potential and capable" That is at least if not answering without annoying parliamentarians too much is considered as a success. Raymond Blackburn mentioned in his biography that Bevin was a genius at belittling the questioner and avoiding answering.<sup>1526</sup>

Bevin attempted similar blunt approach with Lipson and stated that the Government was well aware of the importance of the question, and that the commission would start to work as soon "as it was practicable". Furthermore, Bevin mentioned that Government's representative was already in the US and ready to start work, but it was the representatives of other nations that were still expected to arrive, and in some cases even expected to be nominated.<sup>1527</sup> In a way this could be considered as a claim that Government had done what it could on the matter, and was now not to blame about the delay. Then again, Bevin's answer was bureaucratic, and similar to those answers drafted earlier in the FO to other atomic questions that had been considered awkward. In this case the awkwardness might have been apparent, as the secret cooperation had not been considered as a lost cause, and committing too strongly to the UN control plans could have limited options in the future, were the secret cooperation to be revived. Abstaining from comments about the progress of control plans was thus understandable in a way, for at the time the Government was still attempting to diffuse the deadlock of Anglo-American cooperation with desperate appeals sent directly to Truman. Likewise Britain's intended backup plan of an independent project, which was underway, might have become limited were the UN control plans to have progressed too rapidly. It may well be that Bevin was nevertheless unaware of the details too.

Lipson, however, did not accept Bevin's answer at first hand. In a rather typical fashion<sup>1528</sup> he utilized the supplementary question, and wanted to know how many nations were still considering their nominations. The answer was a total shutdown. Bevin wanted to "have notice of that question"<sup>1529</sup>. Besides calling Bevin's bluff, or his staff's limited preparedness, this is a good example of MPs finding ways to attempt to and to challenge the Government, especially by using parliamentary questions. Moreover, the weapon of choice for the MPs in atomic and foreign affairs was often the starred oral question, which demanded rapid answer, and enabled the questioner to try to surprise the minister with a supplementary question. This is a typical example of Parliament's newly-found procedural possibilities to challenge the Government. Moreover, the instance illustrates how the Government had closed their ranks and how debating atomic matters became increasingly difficult due to lack of knowledge on what to

<sup>1525</sup> Saville 1993, p.100-110.

<sup>1526</sup> Blackburn 1959, p.88-89.

<sup>1527</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1222-3.

<sup>1528</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.78-79; 84, 86; 109-111.

<sup>1529</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1222-3.

debate about. The ways and means were there, but content and information for the basis of the methods was lacking. Only by knowing more, and by asking an informed question (not to be mixed up with 'planted question') could Bevin's shutdown have been challenged efficiently. Then again, Bevin was also "protected" by procedural limitations, and as none of the other MPs opted to pursue his non-existent answer, the matter was dropped. For a while at least.

The Government considered possible supplementaries in general, to some extent. This was mainly done by the officials of the FO in order to prepare the Minister for answering in Parliament. They were more difficult to challenge and to surprise, and they were not wavering. Likewise, this instance also shows that without additional information an MP's chances of pursuing unsatisfactory answers were limited. This is a good example about the Government being capable to control the amount of information circulating among parliamentarians about atomic matters. For exerting more parliamentary pressure on Government, other ways had to be found. In the end, the importance of Lipson's question was that it showed the persistent parliamentary interest in constantly supervising what had been promised, referred to the Washington declaration and results from Moscow, and perhaps thought to have been achieved already by parliamentarians.

This is supported by the fact, that the matter was not dropped despite Bevin's attempts at curbing enthusiasm. Lipson returned with the same question five days later, emphasising further the worries about the commission not having met up yet. This time McNeil Greenock, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs answered that those countries who had named their representatives. When asked about it in supplementary question, he also named those who had not, namely Soviet Union, Mexico and China. As for the first meeting, Greenock put down Lipson's interest by reminding him that he had been already told that the summoning of the meeting was not in British hands, but in the hands of the Secretary General. Interestingly, now the commission had been named in the Hansard headline as "the bomb commission".<sup>1530</sup> Just before Lipson's repeated question on the 8 April, Raymond Blackburn, now already established as one of the most persistent, and well-informed questioners on atomic matters, got up to ask for more information on "the Report on International Control of Atomic Energy issued by the US State Department". Blackburn also wanted to know if there would be a "publication in Britain of this Report, or an analogous British report as a basis for public discussion."<sup>1531</sup>

In response, Attlee declined to comment on the matter.

"I understand that this document is not an expression of the views of the United States Government. His Majesty's Government prefer to make no statement on this subject in advance of the discussions which will take place in the United Nations Commission on Atomic Energy. I am arranging for the report in question to be placed on sale here by His Majesty's Stationery Office."<sup>1532</sup>

<sup>1530</sup> HC Deb 08 April 1946 vol 421 cc1643-4.

<sup>1531</sup> HC Deb 08 April 1946 vol 421 c1643.

<sup>1532</sup> HC Deb 08 April 1946 vol 421 c1643.

Blackburn went on to imply that Britain might have joint plans with the US with regards to the control commission. This was then followed with Lipson's questions which he had to repeat in the face of constant government rebuttal.<sup>1533</sup> As the answer Lipson gained was by no means conclusive or satisfactory, the matter was then taken further in August, as part of a wider Adjournment Debate initiated, again, by Raymond Blackburn (King's Norton, Labour).<sup>1534</sup> Earlier in May, Blackburn had demanded information as to the whereabouts and activities of German atomic scientists Hahn and Heisenberg. Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, John Hynd, had attempted to answer that the aforementioned persons were not engaged in atomic research. But he was unprepared, and neither Blackburn, nor William Shepherd (Bucklow, Conservative) were satisfied. The latter did not gain any answer to his supplementary on whether any German atomic scientists had gone to work for the Soviets.<sup>1535</sup> The case of the missing scientists is an interesting one and rather surprising too, but it has to be covered elsewhere. On a wider scale the questions about the scientists show at least a general interest in atomic matters, as well as an implicit fear of competent scientists conducting atomic research elsewhere.

UN control was also covered briefly in relation to even more awkward issues, namely raw materials and related plans. Blackburn wanted to know whether Britain would support the idea of putting certain raw materials as uranium and thorium under the UN's control.<sup>1536</sup> This was another telltale sign of parliamentarians supervising what had been promised. Little did they know, that the raw material questions had been considered extremely difficult due to Government's secret plans already in the autumn. First this was related to keeping the deals with the Americans as secret, and later in 1946 securing raw material deposits without the Americans knowing<sup>1537</sup>. The question was shrugged off by Morrison, now armed with a draft reply<sup>1538</sup> stepping in for Attlee, and he commented that the PM did not know of such plans having been stated in the UN, and that the Government would prefer not to make a statement.<sup>1539</sup> Blackburn did not subscribe to this, as he had other informants:

"Is my right hon. Friend aware that this proposal is contained in the American Report on the control of atomic energy, and that it has the support of almost all informed opinion in both Britain and America; and cannot he make some more welcoming statement about this proposal?"<sup>1540</sup>

While Morrison agreed that such plans might well have been considered, he nevertheless stated that no comment would be made before the commission

<sup>1533</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p.164-165; 204-205.

<sup>1534</sup> See HC Deb 02 August 1946 vol 426 cc1359-87.

<sup>1535</sup> HC Deb 20 May 1946 vol 423 cc23-4.

<sup>1536</sup> Cf. HC Deb 27 May 1946 vol 423 cc818-20.

<sup>1537</sup> TNA CAB 104, Prime Minister's personal minute, ser. no.106/45 to Lord Addison 12 October 1945. Signed C.R.A.

<sup>1538</sup> TNA CAB 104 23 May 1946 Drafts for Blackburn's question on 27 May 1946. On secret plans in Travancore see for instance TNA FO 800/528 ANCAM 643 JSM to Cabinet Office (Makins & Munro to Rickett) 7 July 1946.

<sup>1539</sup> HC Deb 27 May 1946 vol 423 cc818-20.

<sup>1540</sup> HC Deb 27 May 1946 vol 423 cc818-20.

had time to consider them. Blackburn then directed the point implicitly at foreign affairs. He followed a rising theme of requests for an independent active foreign policy which would take into account atomic matters.

“Does not the right hon. Gentleman think that we should take the initiative in placing this matter before the Commission, as otherwise it is in danger of being lost sight of, and somebody must take the initiative before it can be discussed?”<sup>1541</sup>

Morrison’s reply was that Britain was being active (if somewhat reluctantly).

“We did take that initiative. We were parties to bringing the matter before the United Nations. It would not be right for the Government to make an *ex parte* statement before the Commission has had the opportunity of considering it.”

To which Blackburn returned the serve by saying that in the US, the Secretary of State, James Byrnes, had already made such statements. Morrison was furious, which led to Blackburn demanding an adjournment debate on the matter to be held as soon as possible.

“I doubt whether that would be wise. We are parties to the discussion in the United Nations Commission, and I do not think it would be appropriate for us to make statements in advance. We shall, of course, be ready to make a statement when the United Nations Commission has come to its conclusion.”

“In view of the unsatisfactory nature of the reply, I beg to give notice that I shall raise the matter at the earliest opportunity.”<sup>1542</sup>

This kind of action seems to support the idea that the UN control commission had been considered as a suitable way to attempt to solve the atomic question, and now Parliament was keen on asking about the progress of the intended commission work. After all, the ratification of the UN Charter had been one of the first tasks related to foreign affairs the new Parliament had been asked to do. Atomic matters seemed to have been of personal interest to Lipson too, at least during the spring and summer of 1946. He had also joined the ranks of those MPs asking about the British taking part in the Atomic Trials to be held on Bikini Atoll in the Pacific. Instead of questioning about participants or nature of the tests, Lipson had expressed his worries about the possible use of animals in the atomic tests<sup>1543</sup>.

In any case Lipson<sup>1544</sup> was also building a name for himself in Parliament in relation to the atomic trials. This might have been intentional, as often is the

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<sup>1541</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1542</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1543</sup> HC Deb 24 June 1946 vol 424 cc674-675. “what reply His Majesty’s Government have received to their request to the US Government to agree that the animals used in the US trial of the atomic bomb shall be anaesthetized?” Interestingly Thomas Moore joined the conversation by asking why innocent animals were being used when plenty of “guilty men” were available.

<sup>1544</sup> Though one has to consider that Lipson was in general rather active and participated in numerous different debates on variety of themes. Cf. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-daniel-lipson/1945> indicates at least 187 instances in which Lipson spoke during just the autumn session of the new Parliament.

case with persistent questioners. According to Chester and Bowring this is due to the fact that frontbenchers often make it into the headlines of the news with “regular” business of the House, whereas the possibilities for backbenchers or others are often more limited. Questions tend to raise more interest in public and in press, thus being useful tools for gaining publicity, or for impressing the front bench. Especially an oral question, marked with an asterisk attracts interest.<sup>1545</sup> More vigorous attempts were made by Blackburn, who was much more informed, and thus also more dangerous for the Government than Lipson.

The reason why the Government denied reports and commentary about the UN control plans remains a bit vague. Finding solid, source-proven reasons is difficult, and even making educated guesses is challenging. However, this could be related to the idea of attempting to convert the Americans one way or another, and thus not giving any more public commitment to UN control. Knowing about the UN plans’ problems might have also been behind this, but at least the sources at my disposal do not mention anything like that. Later on during the summer some parliamentarians, like Lord Darnley considered that not even the United Nations could help with the problems created by men and the existence of the atomic bomb. Lord Addison had attempted to calm down the lively debate by arguing that the UN commission with its principles would come to the rescue.<sup>1546</sup> The comments related to the UN plans became reoriented when the reports of the Lilienthal Committee and the its sidelining became apparent. The possibility of UN control started to become suspect even, as the veto rights was seen to prevent any actual supervision.<sup>1547</sup> Also the Lilienthal Report’s failure raised some concern with regard to the UN plans ever coming to fruition.<sup>1548</sup> Research literature is not much help in considering the reasons further, but the UN topic was one of the few which kept parliamentary access open and parliamentary debate alive. Other themes related to this are considered below.

British participation in the American atomic trials on Bikini Islands in 1946 is an example of the parliamentary questions becoming more informed and more accurate instead of those general requests for information seen in the first months of the new Parliamentary session in 1945. The atomic tests, as well as the British participation in them were matters, which the Americans had wanted to be kept a secret.<sup>1549</sup> The forthcoming trials were mentioned in the press repeatedly, which might have sparked some interest, and which no doubt gave information for the basis of questions.<sup>1550</sup>

“It is officially announced by the Navy that atomic bombs will be tested on a number of American and enemy warships in the Pacific in the coming spring and summer.

<sup>1545</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.222-4.

<sup>1546</sup> HL Deb 10 July 1946 vol 142 cc297-316.

<sup>1547</sup> HL Deb 29 July 1946 vol 142 cc1027-113.

<sup>1548</sup> Cf. HC Deb 05 June vol 423 cc2011-122.

<sup>1549</sup> TNA CAB 104, Draft reply for PM for 28 January 1946 question by Hinchingsbrooke about forthcoming trials at Bikini.

<sup>1550</sup> *The Times* 25 January 1946 “US Atomic Bomb Tests”; March 23: “News in Brief – Atomic Bomb Tests Postponed”; March 25 “Postponing of Atomic Bomb Test”.

The first test will be made in May, near Bikini atoll, in the Marshalls area. A second test will take place in July, and probably a third in 1947.

Among the vessels to be used as " guinea- pigs " in these tests will be eight important units of the American Navy: the battleships New York, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Nevada; the carriers Saratoga and Independence; and the heavy cruisers Salt Lake City and Pensacola. Also on the list of ships are the German cruiser Prinz Eugen and the Japanese battleship Nagato and the cruiser Sakawa. In all 97 ships will be used in the tests. American Press representatives will be allowed to report on the experiments, but under present plans no representative of any foreign nation will be allowed to attend. This point, however, the Navy states, is still under discussion."<sup>1551</sup>

Questions about the Bikini Trials had been made since the press reporting early in 1946. For instance Viscount Hinchingsbrooke (Dorset South, Conservative) and other interested MPs kept on asking, often with written questions, whether Britain was to contribute to the atomic tests, and how.<sup>1552</sup> A tendency of repeating a question had arisen, especially since Attlee's attempts to avoid the matter<sup>1553</sup> had been noticed and criticised already in the first instance related to asking about the trials. Rupert de la Bère (Evesham, Conservative) taunted Attlee's abrupt replies to the supplementary questions following Hinchingsbrooke:

Viscount Hinchingsbrooke: "has His Majesty's Government made any representations to the US Gov. that British and Canadian participation in the forthcoming atomic tests in the Pacific is desirable and consistent with the principle of joint experimentation developed during the war."

Attlee: "Yes, sir, participation in these trials is at present being considered in consultation with the United States authorities."

Mr. Gammans: "Will the Prime Minister say whether this country has any rights in the atomic bomb at all now?"

Attlee: "That seems to be a different question altogether."

Mr. De la Bère: "I do not like such putting-off technique."<sup>1554</sup>

When considering Attlee's abrupt appeal on proper procedures in denying answer from Hinchingsbrooke one should also consider that the Americans had requested limiting the public exposure on the matter.<sup>1555</sup>

"For information only

The United States Chiefs of Staff have asked that we should refrain from making any announcement about British participation which goes further than saying that such participation is under consideration.<sup>1556</sup>"

<sup>1551</sup> *The Times* 25 January 1946: "US Atomic Bomb Tests";

<sup>1552</sup> HC Deb 28 January 1946 vol 418 cc541; HC Deb 13 February 1946 vol 419 c85W; HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1222-3; HC Deb 29 May 1946 vol 423 cc818-20; HC Deb 04 June 1946 vol 423 c204W.

<sup>1553</sup> For example referring to answer given to Hinchingsbrooke: HC Deb 13 February 1946 vol 419 c85W; TNA CAB 104 Hubback to Rickett 12 February 1946; Rickett to Hubback 12 February 1946.

<sup>1554</sup> HC Deb 28 January 1946 vol 418 cc541.

<sup>1555</sup> TNA CAB 104, Draft reply for PM for 28 January 1946 question by Hinchingsbrooke about forthcoming trials at Bikini. The memo has been signed by "N.B", Nevile Butler.

There had been nevertheless some more reporting on the matter<sup>1557</sup>, and thus the question of the atomic trials was also followed with interest in later spring. Thus the parliamentary questions about the trials had been, and still were a reason of dismay for the Government. The Government officials had attempted to cut off the number of questions<sup>1558</sup> but apparently a source or informant of some sort existed as other informed questions about the British participation in Bikini were asked by parliamentarians. This could constitute even as a sort of campaigning, as has been referred to by Chester & Bowring, though they consider this mostly happening on the party-level.<sup>1559</sup> Then again a topic which is considered important can of course stimulate further interest of other members on its own.<sup>1560</sup>

As the tests were covered in the UN negotiations, and were considered a possible cause for international friction, the tests were most likely considered important by parliamentarians, especially because of claims and stratagems<sup>1561</sup>

“Russian charge that the United States is ‘brandishing’ the atomic bomb for its own imperialistic purposes”<sup>1562</sup>

The official American spokesperson for the Bikini tests had immediately denied this claim.<sup>1563</sup> The question about the Bikini-trials did not peter out however. Which leads us to 3 April 1946. During the same question time, as Lipson’s had asked about the UN control commission had been presented, Thomas Driberg (Maldon, Labour) also made an enquiry as to “whether the forthcoming atomic bomb experiments in the Pacific are the sole responsibility of the US Government; and whether British and other allied scientists and observers are to take part in the experiments.”<sup>1564</sup>

PM Attlee answered to Driberg, as was customary in most of the cases relating to atomic matters.<sup>1565</sup>

“The forthcoming atomic bomb trials in the Pacific are the sole responsibility of the United States Government. As regards the second part of the Question, I have nothing to add to the Answer which I gave to the hon. and noble Member for South Dorset (Viscount Hinchinbrooke) on 28th January.”<sup>1566</sup>

Viscount Hinchinbrooke (Victor Montagu, South Dorset, Conservative), who had been scolded in the early winter, was present and jumped in immediately

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<sup>1556</sup> TNA CAB 104, Draft reply for PM for 28 January 1946

<sup>1557</sup> *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)*; 13 March 1946; "STRICTLY SECRET": American Decision on Atomic Tests.

<sup>1558</sup> TNA CAB 104 2 April 1946, Draft reply for Mr Driberg's question on 3 April 1946 about participating on atomic trials at Bikini,

<sup>1559</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p.219-221.

<sup>1560</sup> Chester & Bowring 1962, p.121; 219-221; 222-224.

<sup>1561</sup> The Russian comment was a mostly a reply to American critique about the Soviet troops being still present in Persia.

<sup>1562</sup> *The Times* 21 March 1946: "Russia asks UNO for a postponement."

<sup>1563</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1564</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1244-5.

<sup>1565</sup> Gowing 1974, p.19-21.

<sup>1566</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1244-5.



with a supplementary, again a typical way of using supplementaries, and harder for officials to prepare for, by asking whether arrangements were being made for the Royal Navy to be represented at these trials? Attlee avoided the awkward question, again in a typical fashion. He requested for the question to be put on paper.<sup>1567</sup> Question time then moved onwards with Attlee answering questions on few other questions, before the other matters were covered. Again, in questions related to atomic matters<sup>1568</sup>, PM or the inner circle of the Cabinet, answered.

The high interest in the forthcoming atomic tests could also be explained in terms of defence planning and costs, and the possibility of the atomic bomb changing strategies concerning the Navy.<sup>1569</sup> The supply debate concerning the Navy estimates touched atomic matters only briefly, but supports the idea of few main themes prevailing over the other atomic matters: The Bikini-trials, defence issues, and UN control and foreign policy. Three MPs brought up atomic matters: Hartley Shawcross (St.Helens, Labour), Ernest Taylor (Paddington South, Conservative) and Thomas Galbraith (Glasgow Pollok, Conservative). Shawcross repeated a point made by others earlier, that the future planning of forces would be extremely important, and as foreign policy and military matters are intertwined, intelligence is just as important. He mentioned that back in 1944 there was no knowledge about the atomic bomb existing, and now it had tremendous effect to these matters. Also Shawcross brought up the forthcoming atomic tests in the Pacific. For one reason or another, Shawcross criticised the American (alleged) enthusiasm of interpreting the tests already in advance and warned others that those results would most likely be misleading. He quoted Churchill's "Shall We All Commit Suicide?" about defence issues, stating that Churchill's old piece of essay was more reliable than future test results, and concluding that even atomic bomb would not alter the dependency on navy, merchant fleet and harbours. In conclusion Shawcross plead:

"I ask hon. Members opposite to help in this matter. I do not know how it can be done, perhaps in their speeches. Let us not have any element of controversy in these defence matters, but let us make sure that we get the best value for our money, whatever it may be. Let us try to think ahead and realise that these catastrophic changes as described by the right hon. Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) might mean that all this discussion about accommodation on board ship, what type of surface craft we may have, and whether faster or larger or smaller M. T. B. s should be built, is not merely a waste of time, but misleading ourselves, and getting ourselves into that very state from which we have suffered so frequently between wars, a false sense of security and a false idea that we are living in the past. I invite the House to adopt the "Nelson touch" and plan, and look ahead towards the future."<sup>1570</sup>

<sup>1567</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1244-5.

<sup>1568</sup> Gowing 1974, p.19-21.

<sup>1569</sup> See for example HL Deb 26 November 1946 vol. 138 cc7-10. Clifford Wilcock (Derby, Labour): HC Deb 31 July 1946 vol. 426 c208W. Roland Robinson (Blackpool South, Conservative): HC Deb 30 October 1946 vol. 428 cc583-584.

<sup>1570</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1320-24.

The comment is interesting not only due to its elegant summary of the current situation but also for its plea to reach consensus in foreign affairs as well as those in matters of defence in hard times. Likewise, the use of Churchill's old article as a rhetorical argument and means of persuasion, and as an "expert" account is interesting. This can be seen as reaching out across the floor, especially as Shawcross was not a regular backbencher. He had been the British chief prosecutor in the Nuremberg trials, and had been knighted in August 1945. Moreover, he was the attorney general, and Britain's principal United Nations delegate from 1945 until 1949.

The debate resumed in earnest and Vice Admiral Ernest Taylor agreed that if placing the atomic bomb into "cold storage by international agreement" would not work, then the navy would still be needed no matter how powerful the bomb might be.<sup>1571</sup> Commander Galbraith concurred: Britain could not afford to wait, not even for atomic bomb. A strong navy was needed and any false feelings of security were to be avoided.<sup>1572</sup> Idealistic foreign policies were evidently fading away in Parliament, although it did also linger on, as if something was to be done, it was to be done under the UN control commission. This supported the earlier question of Daniel Lipson made during the same sitting. Lipson went on to bring the question of the UN commission plans up again on 8 April, as covered above.

In addition to the interest from the point of view of Navy expenditure and defence preparations, the trials were perhaps also seen as indicators that Britain was closely collaborating with the US, a policy at least some of the MP's had also requested already earlier<sup>1573</sup>, though not totally without critical opinions.<sup>1574</sup> Therefore the pressure was kept on the Executive, as they would not or could not give satisfactory answers to MPs, despite it being told in the press that Britain and Russia were among the 11 countries invited to supervise the tests.<sup>1575</sup> Some remarks were made about the possibility and importance of some parliamentarians even attending the tests. Meanwhile Vernon Bartlett asked Bevin if he knew that "only three British journalists as against 187 US Press correspondents and photographers are being invited to witness the atomic bomb tests at Bikini in the Pacific".<sup>1576</sup>

Again, the Government was reluctant to shed any more information:

*(Mr. McNeil:)* "The atomic bomb tests are being conducted entirely by the United States Government and my right hon. Friend would not consider it proper for him to intervene in whatever arrangements they decide to make."<sup>1577</sup>

<sup>1571</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1333-34.

<sup>1572</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1343.

<sup>1573</sup> For example see HC Deb 7 November 1945 vol 415 cc1344-1345. Cyril Osborne (Louth, Conservative).

<sup>1574</sup> HC Deb 07 November 1945 vol 415 cc1312-1317. Martin Lindsay (Solihull, Labour).

<sup>1575</sup> *The Times* 8 May 1946 "News in Brief - Atom test observers" (based on Reuters' material).

<sup>1576</sup> HC Deb 29 May 1946 vol 423 c204W.

<sup>1577</sup> HC Deb 29 May 1946 vol 423 c204W.

But the matter was not dropped, and on 4 June, Frederick Montague (Islington West, Labour) asked Attlee “whether His Majesty's Government [had] accepted the invitation to send observers to witness the atomic bomb tests in the Pacific”.

Attlee answered this time with some clear information.

“Yes, Sir. The United States Government have invited the Governments represented on the Atomic Energy Commission to send two observers each to witness the atomic bomb tests. His Majesty's Government have accepted this invitation and have appointed as observers the hon. Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Beswick) and the hon. and gallant Member for Chelsea (Commander Noble).<sup>1578</sup>

So eventually two MPs were also asked to join in observing the tests. It is difficult to prove, but this might have been due to campaigning practiced by MPs. Considering the case of the Bikini Trials from the Government's point of view, giving away information against the wishes of the Americans might have jeopardized the attendance of the 18 British military and scientific advisors, secured earlier. No other powers had been asked to join the tests at this point.<sup>1579</sup> This is most likely behind the earlier curbing method of referring back to answer already given for Hinchingsbrooke in January as well as in the cases of vague answers to other questions in February. It is also behind the shooting down of Hinchingsbrooke's supplementary question on Tom Driberg's question. Only then the method was asking for the question to be put on the Order Paper.<sup>1580</sup>

Snappy answers like these or “I am not in the position to reply”, often used answering questions which demanded a statement, were only an interim solution, and often led to a follow-up, either in the form of supplementary or other questions.<sup>1581</sup> As a testament to this, questions about the Bikini trials, other than Lipson's animal-test related one<sup>1582</sup>, were asked even after the trials.<sup>1583</sup> This might have been related to the fact that in handling of the defence estimates and budget, the government White Paper on defence had been described at its best as stop-gap.<sup>1584</sup> Be that as it may, this definitely showed the resilience of Parliament wanting to perform the tasks assigned for it, and tending to matters perceived important, despite curbing attempts. It testifies to the dissidence caused by these attempts, and shows that questions were indeed not only used, but used successfully to expand Parliament's mandate into the previously fairly restricted fields of foreign and especially defence policy. This is an important notion when compared to Jack Brand's arguments of the atomic energy as an

<sup>1578</sup> HC Deb 04 June 1946 vol 423 c314W. So far there are no findings about this being a planted statement in the form of a question. Interestingly, the two MP's chosen to be public representatives were changed at the last moment. TNA FO 800/438, Sargent (Bevin) to Attlee 29 May 1946. Including PM's note to the First Sea Lord about the arrangements.

<sup>1579</sup> TNA CAB 104, Draft reply for Mr. Driberg's question on 3 April 1946.

<sup>1580</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1244-5.

<sup>1581</sup> Chester & Bowring, 1962, p.181-184.

<sup>1582</sup> HC Deb 24 June 1946 vol 424 cc674-5.

<sup>1583</sup> HC Deb 31 July 1946 vol 426 cc208W; HC Deb 30 October 1946 vol 428 cc583-584.

<sup>1584</sup> For example: Sir Arthur Salter (Oxford Uni, Ind.) HC Deb 5 March 1946 vol. 420 cc.257-258.

example of government guided politics, in which Parliament could not even have had impact.<sup>1585</sup>

As the Government was preparing for awkward questions concerning the Bikini Trials, they were in for a nasty surprise in the form of supplementaries asked in Parliament about the raw materials, possibly usable in atomic research and development. These were also covered in relation to the UN Control Commission plans by Raymond Blackburn.<sup>1586</sup> However, more detailed questions were made only later on during the summer, and after the Whitsun recess, when Blackburn gained the adjournment debates he had demanded.

On a wider scale, a more critical stance on Government's chosen line of foreign policy grew among some parliamentarians during the spring and summer. What has been called a "third power" approach, by Rhiannon Vickers<sup>1587</sup>, was suggested in the House of Commons with regards to foreign policy in general. Though this line is not that clearly formulated in parliamentary sources related to atomic foreign policy, it is recognisable.<sup>1588</sup> Another expression used for it, was an "independent" foreign policy, in the light of Big Three relations having already deteriorated so much. A characteristic of this approach is to view Britain as having moved too close to the US, and following its policy instead of showing moral leadership in the world. However, these instances became frequent only in June 1946. Unbeknownst to parliamentarians, the Government's approach might have been due to the already rather desperate attempts to break the Anglo-American deadlock by any means necessary. On top of that, the loan agreement had not been cleared yet either.<sup>1589</sup> This meant that the Government had to tread lightly.

The criticism of the Government foreign policy in general, such as the wide adjournment debate initiated by Government (de facto Bevin) on the fourth of June 1946<sup>1590</sup> and resumed by Churchill and the opposition about foreign affairs on 5<sup>th</sup> of June<sup>1591</sup> can be seen to have contributed, though in a differ-

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<sup>1585</sup> Brand, 1992 p.300-307, p.317-320.

<sup>1586</sup> HC Deb May 27 1946 vol 423 cc818-20.

<sup>1587</sup> For instance see Vickers 2004, p.169-170;194; 196-198;201-202.

<sup>1588</sup> Vickers 2004, p.169-170.

<sup>1589</sup> Though it agreement had been reached and signed in 1945 it took some time to actualize the loan. The American public opinion was strongly against the loan and it only passed in the House of the Representatives in July 1946. Gannon 2014, p.12-14. On the loan in general in the light of the "special relationship" see Gannon 2014.

<sup>1590</sup> HC Deb 04 June 1946 vol 423 cc1825-957.

<sup>1591</sup> HC Deb 05 June vol 423 cc2011-122. Churchill mentioned "painful decline" in British prestige (cc2011); Attlee did not want to comment atomic energy as it was considered still at the UN and that the Lilienthal report provided an good basis for further talks, even if it raised some difficult technical questions, which needed to be considered further (cc2040); Viscount Hinchinbrooke (Dorest South, Con) noted that the atomic bomb had seen nations to try to continue war by other means already. (cc2041) ; Seymour Cocks noted that the Soviet aggressions were due to atomic bomb and Britain aligning with the United States and that only cooperation and UN could save world from the perils of atomic bomb(cc2050;2054); Tom Horabin wanted independent policy from Britain, peace conferences and cooperation with France. (cc2058), William Warbey (Luton, Lab.) critiqued Churchill's speech in Fulton as irresponsible, it had been a verbal atomic bomb that did harm for international cooperation

ent way, to John Haire's (Wycombe, Labour) written question on 19 June 1946. Haire had asked the Government about the number of Labour attachés in the FO. He also wanted to know about the required qualifications and training of such personnel. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Philip Noel-Baker gave a written answer which stated that at the time, there were 10 Labour-affiliated attachés abroad, and that the Government was hoping to increase these numbers in future.<sup>1592</sup> This question, even if it was implicit, is related to growing criticism of the FO, noted also by John Saville. The criticism was about whether the officials with privileged Tory backgrounds actually had the slightest interest in conducting and implementing Labour's foreign policy.<sup>1593</sup> This kind of critique was often related to supporters of the third-line policy. It had also been shown in practice in the aforementioned adjournment debate on foreign policy.

Meanwhile, the opposition was advocating realism. Churchill claimed that the Big Three collaboration had already broken down, and that British influence and prestige were on the decline. He added that this was not a critique of Bevin. Churchill emphasised that despite all the commotion there had not been official contact between the Government and the opposition in foreign affairs. Attlee agreed to this, and added that in his opinion the Government alone, would be responsible about foreign affairs.<sup>1594</sup> This could have been a stance on the ideas of Churchill's semi-formal role and it may have been a response on inner criticism presented in the Labour Party's annual meeting<sup>1595</sup> about the Labour's foreign policy resembling too closely that of its predecessor.

In the same adjournment debate on 4 June (which was resumed the following day) 1946 Vernon Bartlett and Ernest Shackleton had asked about atomic matters, but again, government denied commenting, and claimed that the UN was considering the control issues, and only then would the foreign affairs aspects considered.<sup>1596</sup> Viscount Hinchinbrooke pursued the independent line and claimed that new weapons had changed safety-issues, and that militarist thoughts had entered foreign policy, for instance in Persia. He claimed that Britain was following the United States too closely, which was dangerous. Same applied in Tom Horabin's comments: he claimed that Britain was being made as a junior partner to an imperialistic United States.<sup>1597</sup> Horabin or other parliamentarians did not know that Britain, at least the FO wanted to gain U.S support for maintaining the empire or at least concrete help in some areas.<sup>1598</sup> Horabin insisted Britain needed to have a distinct line of foreign policy from both, Soviet Union and the United States. Seymour Cocks had urged that pro-

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(cc2064-2065), bilateral, regional and sectional policy should be forgotten and UNO should be the chosen forum for world policy and atomic matters (cc2071).

<sup>1592</sup> HC Deb 19 June vol 424 ccw 53-54.

<sup>1593</sup> Saville 1993, p14-15; 24-25;62-64;66;102.

<sup>1594</sup> HC Deb 05 June vol 423 cc2011-2033 (Churchill); cc2033-2040 (Attlee).

<sup>1595</sup> Vickers 2004 p.169.

<sup>1596</sup> HC Deb 04 June 1946 vol 423 cc1914; also Shackleton: cc1862-1864. HC Deb 05 June vol 423 cc2040.

<sup>1597</sup> HC Deb 05 June 1946 vol423 cc2040-2046 (Hinchinbrooke); HC Deb 05 June 1946 vol 423 cc2058-2060 (Horabin)

<sup>1598</sup> Weiler 1987 p.57-76.

soviet lines should be adopted, as that could bring a peace, which would render the atomic bomb not dangerous.<sup>1599</sup> Churchill's Fulton speech was mentioned only briefly William Warbey claimed it was a verbal atomic bomb.<sup>1600</sup>

As the Government was not able to produce a reasonable explanation for its sluggish foreign policy, mentions of this independent foreign policy, or "third way" were voiced. Same applied to the difficult questions concerning the atomic trials on Bikini, as well as the questions about the raw-materials. In the cases of raw material questions and the Bikini Atomic Trials, the archival sources reveal one additional explanation for limited parliamentary commentary besides the ones considered above. The secret deals negotiated between party leaders and with the speaker also testify to some extent about the successful increase of Government regulation on the matter. Being able to make such agreements, and justifying them, say, with national interest, also explain existing, defined policy which was easier to implement and regulate. Nevertheless the commentary on the Bikini trials continued. The American request for silence about the forthcoming tests could thus not be met fully.

During the early spring of 1946 matters relating to the United Nations and atomic energy (control) gained only little interest, though the eager optimism and hyperbole of the previous autumn had calmed down. However, Alexander Cadogan's new position as Britain's permanent representative in the United Nations caused some anxiety amongst Labour ranks in the House of Commons. Cadogan, a long standing civil servant, was not a member of the Labour party, and members were worried that the diplomatic service was being run by people who apparently had no understanding (or wish to understand) the Government's foreign policy.<sup>1601</sup> Recurring discourses focused on the role of the UN in atomic matters, its feasibility as a mediator for sharing information,<sup>1602</sup> controlling "atomic secrets", or on the few suggestions for the UN being the keeper of the atomic bomb. The United Nations had finally started to work in March, and the Members were curious about the expected progress of the intended control commission.<sup>1603</sup> In the Lords, similar waiting was noticeable, though the UN plans for control, as well as possible new information about the atomic bomb and other new weapons, were seen essential for the Government in order for it to make enlightened decisions concerning the future defence of Britain.<sup>1604</sup>

The United Nations' Control Commission was also still in focus of the executive, perhaps even more than previously. Parliament also reviewed the foreign policy of the previous year with sharp criticism, and emphasised that the atomic energy development must remain a top priority in any case, both in potential civilian and commercial use, and in terms of defence. The vulnerability of the British Isles was also debated again, thus indirectly emphasising the need for atomic weapon as a deterrent. The summer recess limited parliamentary

<sup>1599</sup> HC Deb 05 June 1946 vol423 cc2050;2054.

<sup>1600</sup> HC Deb 05 June 1946 vol423 cc2064-2065; 2070.

<sup>1601</sup> HC Deb 4 February 1946, vol 418 cc1348-1351.

<sup>1602</sup> HC Deb 24 October 1945 vol 414 c2012.

<sup>1603</sup> HL Deb 7 March 1946 vol 139 cc1227. HC Deb 03 April 1946 vol 421 cc1222-3.

<sup>1604</sup> HL Deb 27 March 1946 vol 140 cc367-368.

action in August and September, though the important role of the Ministry of Supply in atomic research did not go unnoticed as has been considered previously. Extremely difficult questions related to British atomic raw-material acquisition processes and plans were made by some Parliamentarians despite the government officials attempts to limit the possibilities of even asking about these matters.

As the delays ensued and hindered decision making, some Lords warned about the risks this posed to the whole United Nations Organisation, and emphasised the need for preparing accordingly for this unfortunate possibility.<sup>1605</sup> Parliamentary instances were also minimal in April and May, though Members seemed to get anxious about the fact that the UN Control Commission had not yet met.<sup>1606</sup> Raymond Blackburn asked the Government, whether Britain intended to support the more pragmatic proposal suggested for a UN control commission, “that all significant supplies of uranium and thorium throughout the world shall be owned or controlled by the United Nations.” Herbert Morrison faced severe difficulties in trying to evade Blackburn’s question and its supplementary. Blackburn first intercepted Morrison’s claim that there was no knowledge on such proposal, then after Morrison’s attempt to not comment before the commission had had time to consider the proposal, Blackburn demanded initiative from the Government and eventually threatened to raise the issue again in an adjournment debate.<sup>1607</sup>

The international situation grew worse and direct Great Power cooperation seemed impossible during the late spring of 1946, due the attitudes of both superpowers, and particularly due to US leaning more and more towards atomic monopoly. The tone of commentary in Parliament hardened as well and Members grew disillusioned. Numerous Members expressed their worries stating that “Big Three” cooperation had broken down, and that the issues with control, combined with American monopoly, had played a great part in this. Vernon Bartlett and Edward Shackleton (Preston, Labour) demanded a governmental statement about the atomic issues during a two-day adjournment debate on foreign policy, as it was far more important matter than “some light-houses on the Adriatic”.<sup>1608</sup> Earl of Darnley went as far as to claim that the American atomic trials on Bikini had ruined the American credibility in the eyes the international community, and hence harmed the possibility of the control commission<sup>1609</sup>. As the spring turned to summer and the plans for the intended control commission had not progressed, stricture of the Government from MPs grew. The signs for the United Nations control were not promising at all. At the same time the plans for the secret bilateral Anglo-American atomic collaboration, thought to be secured in Washington, were facing severe difficulties. Members of Parliament were to participate and to report about their expe-

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<sup>1605</sup> HL Deb 27 March 1946 vol 140 cc406.

<sup>1606</sup> HC Deb 03 April 1946, vol 421 cc1222-3. HC Deb 08 April 1946 vol 421 cc1643-4.

<sup>1607</sup> HC Deb 27 May 1946 vol 423 cc818-20.

<sup>1608</sup> For example HC Deb 04 June 1946 vol 423 cc1862; cc1914.

<sup>1609</sup> HL Deb 10 July 1946 vol 142 cc303.

riences.<sup>1610</sup> In the fragile situation it could be expected that criticism would be directed towards the idea of an American monopoly.

Even though Parliament was not informed about the Government's trials with the Americans, the third line gained more and more support. Britain was to consider her own actions as well, and Soviets were not innocent either, according to George Pargiter (Spelthorne, Labour) it was the US which was to blame:

"I do not think it will materially alter that feeling of disquiet, a feeling which started largely at the time when it was decided that the atom bomb should remain an American secret."<sup>1611</sup>

As these problems became evident, along with the further problems concerning the secret cooperation, the Government closed ranks, and followed the familiar practice of responding to criticism by arguing that commenting was not useful, as the American drafts for the control commission, the Lilienthal plan, were still under consideration.<sup>1612</sup> What little hope had been vested in this plan was lost when the option of veto entered the plans via the Security Council.<sup>1613</sup> These concerns were particularly strong in the House of Lords. Lord Chelwood went so far as to state that the world was in peril, and Lord Birker sympathized with him by stating that the report would have been the only hope, and as the veto had entered the paragraphs and plans, it had issued a death blow to the control plans.<sup>1614</sup> In the House of Commons the pressure for the Government was even more intense. Raymond Blackburn and Arthur Palmer (Wimbledon, Labour) stated that the atomic energy was the reason why the Great Power cooperation, so dearly missed, was not working. William Warbey (Luton, Labour) accused the government's timidity and secrecy contributing to the problem getting out of hand. To the credit of the House however, it was not just the ideas of the USSR or US that were reviewed or critique, but also practical ideas for solving the conflict were proposed: for example through controlling fissionable raw materials was brought up again. Britain taking lead or trying to act as mediator in trying to solve the conflict, which was apparently seen bilateral between the belligerent Soviets and monopoly-enthusiastic Americans, was also suggested by a number of members.<sup>1615</sup>

Though Philip Noel-Baker, as a representative of the Government, tried to calm the MPs and Lords, explaining that the plans for the commission were not deadlocked<sup>1616</sup>, Members' hopes could not be rallied.<sup>1617</sup> Prime Minister Attlee

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<sup>1610</sup> HC Deb 28 January 1946 vol 418 cc541; HC Deb 29 Jan 1946 Oral Answers vol 418 cc682-684; HC Deb 13 February 1946 vol 419 c85W.

<sup>1611</sup> HC Deb 22 October 1946 vol 427 cc1614.

<sup>1612</sup> HC Deb 05 June 1946 vol 423 cc2040.

<sup>1613</sup> HL Deb 29 July 1946 vol 142 cc1062-1064; cc1068-1075.

<sup>1614</sup> HL Deb 29 July 1946 vol 142 cc1063; cc1071.

<sup>1615</sup> HC Deb 02 August 1946 vol 426 Blackburn cc1359-1367; cc1371 (Palmer); cc1376-1378 (Warbey).

<sup>1616</sup> HC Deb 02 August 1946 vol 426 cc1379.

<sup>1617</sup> HC Deb 02 August 1946 vol 426 cc1371-74. See also comments from R.Blackburn and W.Warbey.



informed them about the UN actually being able to set up the Commission in October, and credited the Washington Conference for initiating this process, but to no avail. A side note, which revealed the shifting of the focus of the Executive, was made when Attlee emphasised that despite the achievements in the intended international control, it was the development of atomic energy in Britain, which was now the prime responsibility! James Ranger (Ilford South, Labour) commented that such plans were actually against the Washington declaration.<sup>1618</sup> The general picture painted of UN control was thus now grim, and in many ways Britain was back in the same situation as in the autumn of 1945.

“The full economic significance of atomic energy is not yet known. I think there has been in some quarters a good deal of over-optimism, both as to what could be accomplished and as to the time within which we could see vast changes in our daily life. I do not think anyone has any doubt that there is here a possibility of revolutionary changes. Therefore, I think hon. Members of all parties will agree that development in this country is a prime responsibility of the Government.”<sup>1619</sup>

Despite the best efforts and sacrifices in other fields of politics, the Anglo-American atomic energy collaboration had broken down. During the autumn the domestic research was in focus, as well as the domestic legislation for atomic matters. The actions of the Government focused on adjusting to the new situation and damage control, by securing resources and guiding policy to support the independent domestic project. At least the plans for managing the chaos were now sound, and the way to become an atomic power was through the means of independent project, though the door for perhaps one day returning to collaboration was left open.

For the purposes of domestic atomic research and development project the British Atomic Energy Bill for controlling domestic development had been prepared during the year. Raymond Blackburn had already asked about the plans for domestic legislation on atomic matters on 21 March 1946.<sup>1620</sup> In October 1946 the Bill had finally its second reading, and was thoroughly commented on by various MPs.<sup>1621</sup> The Government even made sure to secure the smooth passing of the Bill with Churchill, the leader of the opposition, in advance.<sup>1622</sup>

In the pursuit of atomic capability the British government had failed to some extent. Nevertheless Britain had managed to secure the raw materials required for the independent project, and it was on its way to becoming a state with atomic capability. The costs of the secret policy were somewhat heavy though. By attempting to close in on the US at all costs, the British policy had become reactive. The Government had not been able to confirm the cooperation despite being so close. Parliamentary pressure was for a different kind of policy and this caused contradictions with the differing views of the executive. How-

<sup>1618</sup> HC Deb 08 October 1946 vol 427 cc43-45; cc69 (Ranger).

<sup>1619</sup> HC Deb 08 October 1946 vol 427 cc43.

<sup>1620</sup> HC Deb 21 March 1946 vol 420 c2030.

<sup>1621</sup> HC Deb 08 October 1946 vol 427 cc43-98.

<sup>1622</sup> TNA PREM 8/366, Wilmot to Attlee, 8 July 1946; TNA FO 800/587, minute by Butler, 5 April 1946; PREM 8/366, Wilmot to Attlee, 4 Oct. 1946; PREM 8/366, Attlee to Churchill, 6 Oct. 1946; Churchill to Attlee, 7 Oct. 1946.

ever, parliamentary momentum had not lasted so long either. The change of government policy had not gone unnoticed, and it seems that as Britain had helped to secure the US commitment to Europe and gained headway in atomic matters, the seeds of parliamentary partisanship had been sown among the Labour ranks.

## 7 CONCLUSION: FIVE PHASES OF FAILURE?

The “failure” of Anglo-American atomic cooperation in 1946 and the reasons behind it was the initial focus of this dissertation. Already during the preliminary research it became evident that the events leading to this failure were much more complex than had been previously considered. I also believed that the role of the British Parliament should be reconsidered, as the idea of it not taking part at all in the discussions about atomic matters seemed implausible. Likewise a review of the “atomic diplomacy” between the Western powers (especially Anglo-American relations) appeared necessary. The results of this dissertation are mostly empirical, as they give new or additional information on the history of early British atomic proliferation, and point out how it cannot be seen simply as part of a grand narrative. This concluding chapter will discuss the five phases of change in British atomic policy (from August 1945 to October 1946), which constitute the main results of this dissertation. In brief, British atomic policy went from being internationalist, proactive and open, to becoming secretive, politically realist, and reactive within 14 months. But it wasn’t that simple in reality, and there were many fluctuations along the way which had other major repercussions. Thus, within this context, the domestic and international factors that contributed to the changes in policy are analysed too. This is followed by seven more detailed conclusions that arise from the main results.

1. The British Government followed a bidirectional atomic foreign policy which succeeded only in part. The role of officials in this was much greater than was previously considered.
2. Parliament capitalised on a degree of political momentum to become more active in atomic affairs. This finding calls for a more comparative and contextual approach to parliamentary studies.
3. Internationalism versus realism in the immediate post-war British political context led to problems in atomic foreign policy, and later to further problems within the Labour party.

4. The possibility that atomic diplomacy also occurred in Anglo-American relations needs to be considered.
5. The British domestic atomic project was launched already in 1945-1946, and the goal was the atomic bomb.
6. August 1945 to October 1946 profoundly affected the perception of atomic matters in Britain.
7. The seeds of the post-war atomic arms race and the failure of international cooperation can be found in this period.

In 1945-1946, British atomic foreign policy fluctuated back and forth but the major trajectory was from active to reactive, from idealistic to realistic, and from public to secret. The next section of this chapter considers the five main phases of policy change in this period and what caused them. These could be roughly divided into international and domestic reasons, even if the themes are sometimes overlapping. Among international factors, there was primarily the interaction between the Americans and the British, of course. The growing aggression of the Soviet Union towards Britain and others also affected Anglo-American relations and led to the deterioration of international relations in general. Meanwhile, the attempt to control atomic technology via the United Nations was another international factor. Among domestic factors, there was general parliamentary pressure, as well as public backing for an open and cooperative foreign policy, as promised in the elections.

In the first phase of this period, there was a general need for information about the atomic bomb and atomic energy. The British government established advisory bodies to help, and to give recommendations about what to do. Prime Minister Clement Attlee called for an idealistic and internationalist atomic and foreign policy, and gave consideration to either sharing atomic secrets, controlling it internationally, or even banning the bomb. The Labour election manifesto had, after all, promised that open and cooperative foreign policy. Not only did it have a strong backing in Parliament with a large number of new MPs behind the ideas, but also a strong mandate from the people. In Parliament, this first phase consisted mainly of requests for further information in an attempt to gain a better understanding of atomic matters in general. This generated a certain degree of parliamentary momentum. During this phase, Britain had to navigate between the two greater powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, and take into account the limited room for manoeuvre. There was the domestic policy of the US to consider, for instance, as the imminent US elections made the matter even more delicate, particularly as general public sentiment in the US considered the bomb to be purely American. Britain was not seen as an appealing partner in the new post-war world. Common American criticisms of Britain were that the governing Labour party were suspiciously hard-line socialists, and that this was a crumbling empire trying to hold on to past glory at US expense. The special relationship was really not there, at least on the level it had been earlier. The close relationship Roosevelt and Churchill had forged was gone due to one dying, and the other being voted out of office.

In addition, it was hard for the Attlee's government to start afresh on any policy, especially foreign and atomic, as much had already been invested in Anglo-American atomic cooperation. The trajectories of the past were thus still there, and pursuing secret and realist collaboration was suggested implicitly and explicitly by a number of British officials in the executive who had knowledge inherited from the Churchill era. There could not be a wholesale change of FO staff since they possessed essential knowledge on atomic matters. The wheels of administration had to be kept in motion in spite of many officials having quite different views than the new government. In the international context, there was thus a certain path dependency due to previous cooperation that was now also being recommended by officials in the know. Another point to bear in mind was that the mentality of a Great Power was still there, especially among the rather homogeneous group of officials. Even without any illusions of grandeur, it was also still a reality in 1945 that Britain was in charge of a number of regions in the world, and was definitely closer than any other nation to the United States and the Soviet Union in that respect. Britain therefore had some interest in maintaining international order, and in preserving its status. It soon became evident to Attlee, after he had been briefed sufficiently by officials, that the atomic bomb might provide the best means to achieve this. This meant, in practice, pursuing a British atomic bomb, either with cooperation or alone via an independent project. Though the initial ideas of internationalism were not totally forsaken, the Washington negotiations were prepared with secret cooperation in mind. Parliament was primed as a Government forum for making statements in order to press the Americans to negotiate about cooperation in the future. Meanwhile the original idea of internationalism and international control of atomic energy was kept alive due to domestic pressure stemming from vocal sentiments in Parliament.

A lot had been invested in the joint Anglo-American cooperation during the war, and the officials especially saw that Britain definitely had the right to the fruits of this cooperation in the future. No matter if the past deals were binding *de jure* or even *de facto*. What was important was that the officials saw that Britain had the right. Britain leading the world (or showing "moral leadership") was seen as beneficial for world affairs, especially in regulating the US and USSR with their rough and unrefined actions. Even if ultimate goals were not clearly stated, they were nevertheless obvious - to become a state with atomic capability via Anglo-American cooperation, and doing so cost-efficiently, despite very limited resources. But this had to be secret for a number of reasons. This led to the first changes in Attlee's new atomic policy, before it had even been clearly devised. The idealism demanded by Attlee, promised in public by the representatives of the Labour party, was thus left only as an alternative option. Already in November 1945, it seems that a new, yet at the same time old, British atomic policy had been devised. It was focused on pursuing further the secret Anglo-American atomic collaboration with the United States.

This was thus the start of the second phase in British atomic foreign policy. The Government embarked upon a bidirectional and active atomic foreign poli-

cy, aiming to achieve results on both the public internationalist level and the private realist level with the Americans at the forthcoming bilateral negotiations in Washington. The internationalist approach within this two-headed policy had been kept alive by a debate about the ratification of the UN charter in Britain, and Parliament showed its support for the international control and sharing of atomic know-how. This both suited Labour's ideological agenda and popular sentiment in Britain. Surprisingly the Americans also supported the latter option strongly and voiced their public commitment to international control and sharing of the new technology for peaceful uses. Most of the time and effort during the talks was thus given over to drafting the Washington Declaration about such international cooperation, and significantly less of the time was spent discussing specifically Anglo-American cooperation. Nevertheless, the British delegation thought that a full and effective secret Anglo-American collaboration had been secured and the exchange of atomic information confirmed. But it was short-lived as already it became evident that the Americans were keen to use atomic cooperation as leverage for gaining favourable outcomes on other issues. For instance, during the Washington talks, the Americans brought questions of civil aviation, Palestine, and loan agreements to the table, which made it very hard for the British to make any strenuous demands on the US. Nevertheless the British came away feeling they had almost gained formal confirmation for future atomic cooperation. They had also succeeded in keeping up American interest in post-war Europe, although this was also due to American domestic developments. The Washington declaration promised establishing an international control mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations. Moreover, as soon as effective security measures to prevent the aggressive use of the new invention would be devised, basic knowledge of the technology would be shared for the benefit of mankind.

The third phase started, much to the surprise of the British, when the American Secretary of State, James Byrnes, let the British know that he had asked for Soviet backing for the international control of atomic energy. This was something the Americans had been initially been totally against when Attlee had suggested it earlier. The negotiations were to be in Moscow just before Christmas 1945, so the Soviets would be flattered enough to support the 'official' UN control proposal outcome of the Washington negotiations, contained in the Washington declaration. Along with the atomic matters, negotiating about various international peace treaties (which had yet to be resolved) was mentioned as another reason for the conference to be called at such short notice. The inclusion of atomic matters on the agenda without consulting Britain first alarmed Attlee, Bevin and others. In public, the idea of international cooperation was supported, but now this sudden American initiative had forced Britain on to the back foot, and to be reactive. The Americans were now taking a greater role in handling world matters (Anglo-American, Anglo-American-Soviet, American-Soviet and international contexts). But the British were also partly to blame. The bidirectional ambiguity of the atomic foreign policy had hampered the execution and implementation of their own policy.

Soon Anglo-American cooperation was at a complete standstill, and the British could do very little about it, hobbled as they were by their double commitments, and the Americans interests lying elsewhere. This was the fourth phase, where Britain could do nothing but wait. As the sentiment for international control and cooperation grew more favourable in Britain and elsewhere, sentiments turned increasingly towards the idea of an American atomic monopoly in the US. For certain elements of the American regime this now appeared feasible, and furnishing any kind of British atomic project was seen as foolish, despite the documents signed by heads of states. Britain had encouraged the US to take a more substantial role in world affairs, as indeed it had. But at the same time, it was now clearer than ever that Britain was increasingly dependent on the United States - politically, militarily, and above all, economically. The abrupt cutting off of the lend-lease, and the slow loan negotiations conducted by Lord Keynes had already prove this to be the case. The Americans were in a better bargaining position and they knew it. For Britain to gain support against growing Soviet aggression in Persia and Turkey, the British had to stay on the good side of the Americans and be increasingly compliant.

Cooperation in other fields to gain favourable conditions for the continuity of the atomic cooperation was recommended by the FO, but this was not achieved. Even direct threats of liquidating the joint resource pool of atomic raw materials did little to help. At this stage, there was no forum to complain either, as the secret cooperation was, according to the Americans, against the charter of the United Nations. This charter Britain had unfortunately already ratified with the majority of Parliament behind it. After all, it was the kind of idealistic, bold, and open foreign policy that had been promised in Labour's election manifesto.

During the fifth phase all atomic cooperation formally came to an end. In the winter of 1945 the Americans had drafted a new bill for a domestic atomic law, that would guide their atomic project after the war. The initially open and negotiable law changed drastically in secret committee hearings during the winter and spring of 1946. So the McMahon Bill, which emerged at the other end as the Atomic Energy Law of 1946, ended up by forbidding all cooperation and sharing of atomic information. Such cooperation was also considered by the US to be of such a nature that it would have to be reported to the UN, and thus be made public. This threw all hope of a secret Anglo-American atomic deal out of the window. Making the secret deals public would have harmed not only the US administration, but also the British; and the damage it could have caused international relations was also worth considering.

To identify the changes within British atomic policy is an important result in itself, but the possible reasons behind these changes reveal even more interesting information about post-war international relations; the elements of continuity and change; early atomic proliferation; British foreign affairs; and the British Parliament. The following seven additional results illustrate the rich micro-history of Anglo-American atomic cooperation in 1945-1946.

1) The political approach of Attlee's government had idealistic or internationalist tendencies, responding to the realization of the devastating power of the new weapon threatening the post-war world. Thus it was initially different from that of Churchill's government. The advice the civil servants and diplomats gave was contradictory to what Attlee had stated initially as the goals for British atomic policy. The lack of information meant a lot of baggage and limitations for Attlee's regime. The Prime Minister's views on atomic matters were not discouraged as such, but the potential benefits of secret cooperation were presented to him in an appealing fashion. Besides this, it was suggested in these briefings that the process was already underway, and in spite of minor issues, should be able to continue without any hitches. This is highlighted by the organisation of the committees consulting the Government on atomic matters. Most of the persons who knew about them had already served under Churchill. These organisations and institutions, i.e., political structures, were nevertheless essential in the immediate post-war situation. They were needed to keep the wheels in motion as there was no time to stop to consider other options. The transfer from war to peace was a huge societal task, and it needed to be secured. The officials were needed to maintain functionality, and the information they had was essential even for such veteran politicians as many of Attlee's Cabinets were. A change that was too drastic could have led to unforeseen results, a revolution of a sort.

In brief, the Government succeeded in keeping Britain among the Great Powers and established a foreign and domestic atomic policy despite initially limited availability of information. The policy itself could be considered either as a failure or success due to its initial bidirectional approach. The secret and realist policy, that had been against Labour's ideals and had been advocated by those members of the Government's executive arm who knew about atomic matters, mostly failed. It could not be consolidated due to external and domestic pressure. The open and public, internationalist policy was still somewhat alive in the summer of 1946, even if the troubles in it were evident too. In comparison to other states, Britain had succeeded in gaining headway in atomic race as well. The Government did, however, fail in its attempts to consolidate the post-war atomic cooperation with the US. In attempting to do this by the means of other foreign policy issues it might have lost a chance for a different kind of policy, the "third way" or the "independent policy", alienating some of the Labour MPs and voters in the process. In the wild attempt to pursue atomic collaboration it also became perhaps even more dependent on the US and placed less effort in UN cooperation and development.

However, the explanations offered by the British bidirectional policy, growing American activity (perhaps even "atomic diplomacy"), and limited British resources, that led to losing momentum in Anglo-American affairs are perhaps not enough to explain the eventual failure of Anglo-American collaboration. Even the dichotomy of the PM and the inner circle of Cabinet against various well-informed officials supporting the realist policy, although plausible, does not fully explain all the wavering.



2) Another possible reason for the breakdown in Anglo-American cooperation might instead lie in the changes that British political culture was undergoing. This dissertation has come up with a new finding concerning the role of Parliament in British atomic matters in 1945-1946. Parliament was not mute at all, as has been claimed in the previous research. The 150 parliamentary instances, divided to six thematic categories for the purposes of this study, also reveal more. I suggest that the pressure from Parliament kept the idealistic policy alive along with the idea of the UN as a back-up plan. In a general atmosphere of change, the new Parliament, with a large number of newly-elected MPs, did not succumb to the continuity of political culture. Government's promise of a new type of policy, and the lack of enforcing features in the Labour Party's internal regulations contributed to this tendency as well. Parliament did not have so many chances to tackle atomic issues, but it used a few old ones, such as the State Opening, to maximum extent and with this foot in the door, found new ways, primarily through questions and adjournment debates, to access important matters. Likewise the various contextual, procedural and topical changes, led to a situation in which the prevailing political culture of Britain could be challenged and the parliamentarisation of foreign policy be furthered. Parliamentary momentum became evident in the early autumn of 1945, when it was sparked by parliamentary interest in the subject. This momentum was then used to further define atomic matters as one of those topics that Parliament would make it its business to help solve. Meanwhile, the Government also needed Parliament, in its atomic diplomacy against the US (and USSR). This then further enhanced the legitimacy of Parliament to take part in the matter, despite royal prerogative and other limiting constitutional practices.

There was just enough information available for parliamentarians to base their initial questions on. Press coverage then helped feed parliamentary momentum, in spite of the Government's attempts to limit the availability of information. Then when the Government sought ratification of the UN Charter, this further entitled to Parliament to supervise the Government, as did the Washington Declaration. Both documents were publicly stated as being important features in Britain's atomic and foreign policy. Parliament, however, failed in maintaining parliamentary pressure when Government policy became more established and information became more specific and thus scarce. With this, parliamentary momentum on atomic matters faded, but this was of course affected by other matters too, such as limited parliamentary time, the burden of domestic reforms, and the dismantling of the empire. Parliamentary action thus seems to have contributed to some of the phases in British atomic foreign policy. To some extent, Parliament succeeded in supervising government policy, and was watchful when the Government attempted a different kind of atomic policy than had been promised. However, it was mostly this parliamentary commitment to another kind of policy that made it difficult for the British to tackle American wishes to end the cooperation. And parliamentary pressure no doubt made the Government keep the failure of Anglo-American atomic collaboration secret. Not only would it have shown that policies had been attempted behind

Parliament's back, but by doing this, he would have also risked the fall of his own government. Both parliamentary and international pressure therefore prevented the British making any of the Anglo-American cooperation public.

By interacting with the Government and press, Parliament contributed to the general perception and understanding of the atomic question in post-war Britain. By discussing it at first as a horror and cause of fear, then in the context of defence, and then in the context of foreign affairs, Parliament participated in defining the forums and meanings that were considered to be important in atomic affairs, and which have resonance even today. Parliamentary action could also be interpreted as part of a longer trajectory of attempting to parliamentarise foreign affairs, and the partial success in this, constitutes, along with other contextual factors, a gradual change in British political culture. Parliament did succeed in creating a precedent for contributing towards defence, and foreign and atomic affairs. British political culture thus took steps towards parliamentarisation way before, for instance, formal committee practices were introduced in Parliament.

All this also shows that the atomic policy needs to be placed in its proper context, and the connection to the domestic side should not be forgotten. In terms of parliamentary history and studies, this dissertation partially challenges linguistic parliamentary research which focuses solely on speeches or keywords as the elements constructing reality by intention and carefully planned purpose. By focusing only on Parliament and parliamentarians, the constitution or plenary debating *pro et contra*, or legislation and other "ideal" topics, the interplay and interdependence in politics are lost. The importance of comparative research, contexts and charting out the every-day political struggle forms the basis of this work. Without comparing the parliamentary sources and executive sources to each other, for instance, all the planted questions of the Government would appear as rhetorical mastery from certain individual parliamentarians. Likewise, the intangible element of parliamentary pressure would have not been so easy to pick up on if I had focused solely on parliamentary activities. Finally, without knowing the procedural framework and how certain procedures worked, most of the important parliamentary instances would have been missed altogether.

3) The collision between the executive and Parliament led to contradicting ideas of government policy in atomic affairs, and foreign affairs. This contributed to the Government's indecisiveness, and to hesitation in pressing forward in times of trouble. The Government practised a constant balancing act between domestic and international relations. It was often torn between the recommendations of officials, parliamentarians, the Labour Party, and the general public. This led to a lukewarm policy that was prone to fluctuate. This was what also led the British to follow the American lead perhaps a bit too closely. Subsequently this kind of government policy led to dissatisfaction and when the expectations and demands of the MPs were not met and when the Government was not able to give Parliament any satisfactory reason for its policy, it is reasonable to suppose

that it went some way to helping create the “third-way”, originally pro-Europe, Keep Left movement within the Labour Party.

4) The concept of “atomic diplomacy” has been mainly attributed to James F. Byrnes’ failed attempt in the Council of Foreign Ministers in London (September-October 1945) to pressure the USSR with the US atomic bomb. However, based on the findings of this research it seems that the Americans intentionally played their atomic trump card much more effectively against the British than the Soviets. In fact, the US may have used its atomic advantage to such an extent against Britain, that it would be justified to talk about atomic diplomacy being already practised at this nascent stage of what was to become the western bloc. In their desperate attempts to find a detour in order to get atomic matters back on track, the British preferred to ignore the more likely possibility that the US was simply after an atomic monopoly. Dependency on the US for a number of other matters, such as loan negotiations, partly caused this wilful ignorance, and yet despite complying with American wishes or recommendations in matters like civil aviation, military bases and trade deals, Anglo-American atomic cooperation failed.

There are some instances which could be interpreted as signs of the Americans intentionally acting to prevent the British from achieving this. There is the slightly dubious case of missing documents with regard to the Quebec Agreement and Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire. The British sent the new copies immediately, but previous research has implicitly claimed that it was the missing documents that were the problem. The original American copies of the documents were only “found” years later. Another thing is that previous research, just like the Americans in 1945-1946, tend to base and link all the decisions that were made to the Quebec Agreement, whereas it was the Hyde Park Aide-Mémoire that described the cooperation to be full and effective and to be continued after the war. In addition, the fiasco in Moscow - ignoring British requests or playing against them, confirmed by the American officials’ apologies for Byrnes’ behaviour - would seem to indicate that the negotiations there were either a grave mistake or intentional policy. Other details that point to a possible intentional American policy to avoid atomic cooperation with Britain are the focus on securing raw materials before anything else, and the appeal to the UN Charter when the Americans knew very well the secret committee hearings for hardening the McMahon Bill were underway. This last point is difficult to prove as there are not too many direct mentions about it, but it does raise a reasonable doubt, and should be studied further in the future.

5) The failure of atomic cooperation eventually led to the British domestic atomic bomb project. At the time the only application of the new technology was the weapon, and thus the British aim was from the start the atomic bomb. In other words, the decision to make the bomb was made earlier than in 1947 as has previously been claimed. This was due to both strategic and prestige-related elements. As the last draft attempts for the CPC to make a “new Quebec

Agreement" show, the commercial side was also taken into account and it was already becoming more important for the British than before. Britain would try to become a state with atomic capability and power almost at any cost, and would try to utilise whatever headstart it had left.

6) The immediate post-war years had a deep effect on how atomic technology and matters were perceived in Britain, but also abroad. Discussions and debate on international and domestic levels as well as in the press about the possibilities and implications of atomic technology shaped perceptions of the "atomic" concept. For the purposes of illustration, these perceptions could be oversimplified as follows. The first reaction was shock and hyperbole; the second was related to defence, and the meanings assigned to the concept "atomic" then became even more threat-related. In Britain this was affected by the geographical factors, as well as the war time experiences of bombing raids. Some claimed that a deterrent could be the solution, but, in general, as there did not seem to be any technical defence, foreign policy was seen as the only option, and to change the world so that the threat of war would diminish. Moreover, if the bomb could not be controlled, the chance for civilian applications could be lost.

7) The interconnectedness of all the elements in atomic cooperation between Britain and the US (and its failure) contributed greatly to the shaping of the post-war world. Many of the problems are still relevant today, such as nuclear proliferation and its regulation. The British and Americans trying to secure atomic oligopoly or monopoly and rendering the United Nations control plans as a secondary policy option, had a great effect on the future atomic arms races and international competition in general. The momentum of embarking on an internationalist atomic policy, with UN control and cooperation was lost. International cooperation also failed in many ways due to the rise of realist policies. This, in turn played its part in the emergence of the Cold War by confirming the opposing positions of all three Great Powers.

## YHTEENVETO (SUMMARY)

Väitöskirjani tutkii vertailevalla, laadullisella ja kontekstoivalla otteella usein sivuutettua näkökulmaa ja ajankohtaa, Britannian atomiulkopolitiikan ja anglo-amerikkalaisen yhteistyön muutosten syitä vuosina 1945-1946. Väitöskirjan päälähteinä on Britannian hallituksen, virkamiesten ja erilaisten salaisten komiteoiden tuottamaa aineistoa, Britannian parlamentissa käytyjä keskusteluja sekä lehdistömateriaalia.

Atomipommien käyttö Hiroshimassa ja Nagasakissa elokuussa 1945 oli maailmaa mullistava tapahtuma. Se muutti erityisesti strategista ajattelua ja käsityksiä turvallisuudesta. Valtavien välittömien ja merkittävien pitkäkestoisten tuhojen lisäksi se aiheutti pelkoja ja huolta, erityisesti Britanniassa, jota pidettiin monia muita maita haavoittuvampana mahdolliselle atomiasein tehtävälle hyökkäykselle. Sodanjälkeinen maailma oli muutenkin radikaalisti muuttumassa ja entiseen ei ollut paluuta. Näiden seikkojen lisäksi, atomipommin käyttö oli myös pitkän, kansainvälisenkin, tieteellisen tutkimuksen ja kehityksen tulos. Angloamerikkalainen yhteistyö oli etenkin vuodesta 1943 solmitun, Britannian pääministeri Winston Churchillin ja Yhdysvaltojen presidentti Franklin D. Rooseveltin allekirjoittaman, Quebecin sopimuksen ja sitä täydentäneen 1944 allekirjoitetun Hyde Parkin lisäpöytäkirjan (Hyde Park Aide Memoire) jälkeen ollut merkittävässä roolissa uuden teknologian kehittämisessä toimintakelpoiseksi. Anglo-amerikkalaisen atomienergiayhteistyön oli myös sovittu jatkuvan sodan jälkeen tehokkaalla ja täysivaltaisella tavalla.

Tätä aikakautta, 1945-1946, joka vaikutti sodanjälkeisen maailman muotoutumiseen merkittävällä tavalla on syvällisemmin tutkittu sangen vähän. Yleensä ajallinen näkökulma on laajempi, ja siksi monet kiinnostavat ja myös merkittävät yksityiskohdat tulee usein sivuutettua. Angloamerikkalaisten suhteiden tutkimusta, ja etenkin myös atomiaiheista (nuclear proliferation) on pääosin tutkittu brittinäkökulmat ja intressit sivuuttaen. Poikkeuksena ovat brittinäkökulmaa korostaneet G.M. Dillonin, Andrew Pierren ja John Baylisiin tutkimukset. Nämä myös käytännössä summaavat keskeiset lähestymistavat aiheen tutkimuksessa: strategiaan painottuvan näkökulman, maineeseen ja arvovaltaan painottuvan näkökulman, sekä tuoreemman 1990-luvun jälkipuoliskolla esiin nousseen synteettisemmän lähestymistavan, jossa molempien osien yhteisvaikutusta on pyritty selvittämään brittikontekstissa. Sen sijaan Yhdysvaltojen puoli tarinasta, ja etenkin sen kylmän sodan aikana kirjoitettu osin tendenssihakuinen historiankirjoitus ovat määritelleet aihepiirin tutkimusta pitkään merkittävällä tavalla. Aihepiiristä myös julkaistaan lähes jatkuvasti eritasoista tietokirjallisuutta ja populaarimpaa materiaalia, mikä osaltaan korostaa Yhdysvallat-keskeisyyttä ja erityisesti vanhojen Kylmän sodan aikaisten tutkimustulosten jatkuvaa toisintamista. Vasta tuoreempi tutkimus, ja Kylmän sodan päättyminen itsessään ovat antaneet tilaa myös uudelleenlaiselle tutkimukselle. Se tosin painottuu myös suurilta osin ns. uuteen Kylmän sodan historiografiaan, ja taas nuclear proliferation tutkimus etsii maantieteellisesti ja alueellisesti uusia

aihepiirejä. Alkuvaiheita tunnutaan pidettävän jo selvitettyinä, vaikka aiempien tutkimusten perusteella syytä uudellenarviointiin on.

Britanniassa 1930-luvulla tehty teoreettisesti painottunut atomitutkimus oli vienyt koko tieteenalaa merkittävin harppauksin eteenpäin. Esimerkiksi brittitutkijoista Rutherfordin, Chadwickin, Cockcroftin ja Waltonin merkitys oli ollut suuri. 1939 saksalaissyntyiset, Britanniaan siirtyneet tiedemiehet Fritsch ja Peierls (sekä usein unohdettu Meitner) saivat selville että toisin kuin oli aiemmin luultu, atomipommin tekemiseen ei välttämättä tarvittaisikaan valtavia määriä rikastettua uraania. Tämä merkitsi käytännössä sitä, että atomipommin rakentaminen oli paitsi mahdollista, sen valmistuminen oli paljon lähempänä kuin oli luultu. Toinen maailmansota oli jo käynnissä ja Britannian poliittinen ja sotilaallinen johto pelkäsivät, että esimerkiksi Saksa voisi saada atomiaseen rakennettua sodassa käytettäväksi.

Vastauksena näihin pelkoihin Britanniassa alettiin koordinoida omaa tutkimusprojektia paljon tehokkaammin ja keskitetympin. Pian tuli kuitenkin selväksi, että pommitusten alla, miehitysuhan pelossa ja hyvin rajallisilla resursseilla operoiden tutkimus ja kehitystyö oli äärimmäisen hankalaa. Eräänä mahdollisena ratkaisuna näihin ongelmiin nähtiin yhteistyö Yhdysvaltojen kanssa. Siellä vastaava tutkimus oli sangen alkuvaiheissaan ja projektia ei ollut koordinoitu kovinkaan tehokkaasti. Edes Brittien M.A.U.D.-komitean, joka oli perustettu erinäisten vaiheiden jälkeen kattotason koordinoijaksi brittiläiselle tutkimukselle, systemaattisesti keräämät tutkimustulokset ja ennusteet eivät välittömästi herättäneet suurempaa kiinnostusta Yhdysvalloissa. Vasta Japanin hyökättyä Pearl Harboriin joulukuussa 1941 ja Yhdysvaltojen liittyttyä toiseen maailmansotaan sai tutkimus siivet selkäänsä.

Erityisesti Margaret Gowingin, ehkä merkittävimmän aihetta Britannian osalta tutkineen akateemisen tutkijan mukaan, yhteistyötä ei alkuun juurikaan syntynyt huolimatta brittien välittämästä tiedosta. Monien mutkien kautta, vasta Winston Churchillin otettua yhteyttä suoraan Yhdysvaltojen presidenttiin saatiin luotua Quebecin sopimus, ja vuotta myöhemmin sen lisäpöytäkirja, joilla käytännössä perustettiin Anglo-amerikkalainen atomienergian ja teknologian tutkimusprojekti. Kanadan rooli oli tässä myös tärkeä. Pääosa brittitutkimuksesta, ja noin 40 tiedemiestä siirrettiin Yhdysvaltoihin jatkamaan työtään. Lisäksi sovittiin, että yhteistyötä tulisi koordinoimaan kaksi alakomiteaa. Nämä olivat Combined Development Trust (CDT) ja Combined Policy Committee (CPC). Niistä ensimmäinen (CDT) koordinoi lähinnä raaka-ainepuolta, kokosi resursseja ja vastasi niiden allokoinnista. Tässä yhteydessä resurssit tarkoittivat jalostamiskelpoista uraania tai muuta fissiokelpoista materiaalia, uraanimalmia, mallincrodtia, jota voitaisiin käyttää uuden asean rakentamisessa. Nämä materiaalit hankittiin pääosin brittiläisiltä alueilta tai brittiläisin kontaktein (esim. Belgian Kongosta). Ne sijoitettiin turvaan Yhdysvaltoihin ja Kanadan maaperälle, niin että esimerkiksi saksalaisten pommitukset eivät yltäisi niihin. CPC puolestaan vastasi toiminnan poliittisesta koordinoinnista ja yhteistyön käytäntöjen sopimisesta. Merkittävää oli se, että edellä mainituissa sopimuksissa oli päätetty tutkimustyön jatkuvan myös sodan jälkeen täysimääräisenä ja tehokkaana.

Yhdysvalloille oli myönnetty monopoli mahdollisiin kaupallisiin sovelluksiin ja niihin liittyviin patenteihin. Tämä oli vastine projektin valtavista kuluista, jotka Yhdysvallat pääosin maksoi.

Sodan päätyttyä Yhdysvaltojen uusi presidentti ja hänen hallintonsa olivat brittien yllätykseksi yllättävän haluttomia jatkamaan yhteistyötä. Lisäksi amerikkalaiset ilmoittivat, ettei yhteistyöstä tai sen jatkosta löytynyt minkäänlaista dokumentaatiota. Britit toimittivat uudet kopiot nopeasti, mutta amerikkalaisten asennetta se ei muuttanut. Samaan aikaan Britannian uuden hallituksen piti ottaa atomikysymys haltuunsa ja määritellä oma politiikkansa siihen nähden. Vaikka pääministeri Clement Attlee ja ulkoministeri Ernest Bevin olivatkin olleet merkittävässä tehtävässä Churchillin sodan ajan koalitiollahituksessa, eivät he olleet kuuluneet Churchillin sisäpiiriin, niiden harvojen joukkoon, jotka tiesivät valmisteilla olevasta uudesta teknologiasta ja aseesta.

Sodan loppuvaiheissa käydyssä vaalitaistelussa Britannian työväenpuolue oli merkittävien rakenteellisten uudistusten ja sosiaalisten parannusten ohella luvannut, että salaista diplomatiata ei enää harjoitettaisi. Ulkopolitiikan perusteeksi nousisi kansainvälisen yhteistyön periaate, eivätkä itsekkäät kansalliset pyrkimykset. Erityisesti uudet työväenpuolueen kansanedustajat tuntuivat kannattavan tätä ajatusta täysin sydämin. Heitä eivät vielä rajoittaneet kovin tiukka puoluekuri tai komiteakäytännöt. He eivät myöskään pelänneet kritisoida omia puoluejohtajiaan ja ministereitään, vaikka jonkinlaista kontrollia esimerkiksi Bevinillä olikin ammattiliittojen kautta.

Hallintokoneiston pysyvät toimijat, jatkuvuuden takeena olevat virkamiehet, olivat kiristyvässä maailmantilanteessa täysin eri mieltä lähitulevaisuuden ulkopolitiikasta. Vaikka asiaa ei aina niin kovin vahvasti eksplikoitukaan, oli Britannian pitäminen suurvaltana heikentyneestä tilanteesta ja rajoitetuista resursseista huolimatta heille erityisen tärkeää. Eräs keskeisimmistä keinoista tähän näytti virkamiesten ja diplomaattien mukaan olevan angloamerikkalainen yhteistyö. Ja niiden harvojen mielestä, jotka aiheesta jotain tiesivät, erityisesti angloamerikkalainen atomienergiayhteistyö nähtiin erityisen potentiaalisena vaihtoehtona. Se olisi tarkoittanut sitä, että Britannialla olisi ollut pian käytössään ns. voittava, strateginen ase, pelote, joka toisi myös muuten arvovaltaa maailman silmissä. Vaikka ase olikin vielä ainut käyttökelpoinen sovellus, olivat muutkin tulevaisuuden käyttömahdollisuudet varmasti rajattomat. Virkamiesten raporttien mukaan kehitystyöhön oli jo panostettu paljon, ja työnjako amerikkalaisten kanssa oli ollut selvä. Atomitutkimusta tehtiin yhdessä Yhdysvalloissa kaikkien osapuolten panostaessa mahdollisuuksiensa mukaan. Britit olivat mielestään myös saaneet aikaan koko tutkimuksen kehityksen. Lisäksi tutkimuksen teko Pohjois-Amerikassa oli pakon sanelemaa Britannian pommistusten vuoksi.

Attleen perustamat atomiasioihin paneutuneet neuvoa-antavat komiteat (neuvoa-antava ACAE, Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy, ja ministerikomitea GEN75), joissa oli monia virkaiältään pitkään palvelleita Churchillinkin luottomiehiä, ja muun muassa Churchillin atomiasiodien erityisasiantuntija, opposition edustaja John Anderson, suosittelivatkin siis yhteistyön jatkamista ja

voimistamista, etenkin kun niistä oli jo sovittukin. Oli vain tärkeää toimia ja vaikuttaa amerikkalaisiin Britannian kannalta myönteisesti ennen kuin amerikkalaiset saisivat mielipiteensä lujitettua mahdollisesti brittien intressien vastaisesti. Erityisesti ulkoministeriön virkamiehet korostivat aloitteellisuuden merkitystä ja he myös ohjeistivat poliittisia päättäjiä selkeästi vaalilupausten vastaiseen politiikkaan, kohti poliittista realismia ja salaisia sopimuksia. Ilmeisesti menetettävää oli liian paljon ja Neuvostoliiton kasvava poliittinen aggressio vaikutti osaltaan vähäiseen intoon edistää kansainvälistä yhteistyötä ja internationalismia.

Vastoin vuodesta 1974 ilmestyneen Margaret Gowingin urauurttavan "Independence and Deterrence" teoksen väitteitä, brittiparlamentti ei suinkaan ollut mykkä atomiaiheeseen liittyen. Tätä mykkyyden väitettä on toistettu Gowingin töiden ilmestymisestä saakka vailla mitään kritiikkiä. Gowing on väittänyt että aiheesta ei ole käyty yhtään keskustelua, ja että asiaa korkeintaan sivuttu muutaman kerran. Myös brittilehdistön vaikutuksen hän pääosin sivuutti työssään epäkiinnostavana kritiikittä. Gowingin tutkimus nojasikin ensisijaisesti ns. viralliseen viranomaishistoriaan ja hallituksen puolen toimiin. Parlamentin suhteen hänen työnsä ongelmat selittyvät ehkä sillä, että vain parlamenttikeskustelujen otsikoita on luettu. Niissä atomiasioita ei juurikaan mainita. Sen sijaan ulkopoliitiikan tai muiden, jopa triviaalinkuuloisten, aiheiden alla sitä käytiin ja intensiivisestikin. Lisäselityksenä voidaan kenties pitää sitä, että perinteisemmässä parlamenttitutkimuksessa yleensä korostettua parlamentaarista toimintaa ei näkynyt. Brittiparlamentti ei esimerkiksi debatoinut vain puolesta tai vastaan, säätänyt lakeja, tai edes väitellyt äänestykseen johtavista asioista atomiteknologiaan ja asioihin liittyen. Päinvastoin, parlamentaariset kysymykset, erityisesti suulliset, ja adjournment debatit olivat sille tärkeä työkalu atomiasiaan tartuttaessa ja hallituksen pyrkiessä estämään atomiaiheista keskustelua ulkopoliittisten suunnitelmiansa vuoksi.

Myös amerikkalaisten ärtymys aiheen saamaa julkisuutta kohtaan oli merkittävä tekijä tässä, olihan parlamenttikeskustelu niin julkinen arena kuin vain mahdollista. Lehdistä esimerkiksi *The Times* raportoi keskusteluja päivittäin ja yksityiskohtaisesti. Näitä raportteja luettiin myös ulkomailla. Lisäksi parlamentaarikot itse kirjoittivat eri lehtiin ja laajensivat atomiaiheesta käytyä keskustelua, osin kenties myös legitimizeettiään aiheesta keskusteluun parlamentissa. Merkittävän pelinavauksen ulkopoliitiikan ja puolustuspolitiikan sinänsä pääosin parlamentin ulottumattomissa pidettyinä olevien ulottuvuuksien suhteen parlamentti sai atomiasioihin valtiopäivien avajaisiin liittyvissä perinteisissä laaja-alaisissa ajankohtaisten asioiden keskustelussa (debate on the address). Hallituksen kommentoimissa atomiasioita ensin julkisesti aihepiiri avautui myös muiden kommenteille. Aiheen radikaali luonne, poikkeuksellinen aika, uudet menettelytavat ja riittävä tiedonsaanti parlamentaarikkojen kiinnostusta tukemaan olivatkin merkittävä tekijä siinä, että vastoin monia todennäköisyyksiä brittiparlamentti sai aikaan mahdollisuuden tarttua turvallisuus- ja ulkopoliittiseen keskusteluun. Voitaisiinkin sanoa että se sai aikaan parlamentaarisen liikehännän, tai vauhdin, ja pystyi sitä myös hyödyntämään valvoessaan hallituksen toimia. Tietoisten pyrkimysten ja parlamentaarisen paineen ohella se



vaikutti myös epäsuorasti ja tietämättään hallituksen politiikkaan. Parlamentti muistutti hallitusta jatkuvasti työväenpuolueen suhtautumisesta maailman asioihin, ja vaalilupauksista, jotka hallitus oli linjannut politiikkansa perusteeksi.

Hallituksen empiminen politiikan muodostamisessa ja sen implementoinnissa suhteessa Yhdysvaltoihin syksyllä 1945 johtuikin osin hallituksen kokeesta parlamentaarista paineesta ulkopoliittikan linjan suhteen. Osin aikaa meni puhtaasti tiedon hankintaan, ja kahden, keskenään ristiriitaisen linjan yhteensovittamiseen. Hallituksen jahkaillessa lupailmansa politiikan ja toisaalta salaisten houkuttelevien mahdollisten etujen välillä hallituksella ei myöskään ollut politiikkaa kerrottavaksi vastaukseksi parlamentin tiedusteluihin siitä, mitä hallitus aikoo tehdä valtavalle haasteelle nimeltä atomipommi. Vielä enemmän tämän kysymyksen painoarvoa alleviivasi se, että iso osa Britanniasa käydystä atomiasioihin liittyvästä julkisesta keskustelusta käytiin joko parlamentissa ja/tai sanomalehdissä, usein parlamentin toimia kuvaten. Näin ollen ne myös määrittivät ensisijaisesti miten ihmiset mielsivät atomikysymyksen. Se koettiin lähinnä uhkana, joka oli erityisen vaarallinen Britannialle, mutta myös koko maailmalle. Se ainakin näyttäytyi asiana, jota nimenomaan parlamentti pyrki aktiivisesti ratkaisemaan, eikä vain kansallisesta näkökulmasta.

Parlamentaarikot yrittivätkin löytää mahdollisuuksia ratkoa tätä puolustuspolitiikan alueella. Koska hallituksella ei ollut varmaa tietoa, saisiko se käsiinsä atomipommin ja voisi siten kenties säästää monista perinteisten joukkojen varusteluistaan ja sitoumuksistaan, se ei taaskaan voinut ilmoittaa politiikkaansa atomipommin mahdollisista vaikutuksista Britannian puolustukseen. Ilman omaa pommia suunnitelmat olisivat olleet hyvin toisenlaiset kuin omalla pommilla ja pelotteena varustautuneena. Tämä politiikan puute ja toisaalta riippuvuus myös amerikkalaisten linjauksista hankaloitti ongelman ratkaisua. Parlamentissa nähtiin että mikään puolustusratkaisu ei auttaisi atomipommia vastaan. Ratkaisun avain voisi sen sijaan olla kansainvälisten suhteiden kitkan lieventämisessä, olihan atomipommi lisännyt parlamentinkin mukaan epäluuloa maailman kansojen välillä. Näin ollen atomikysymyksen ratkaisuksi tarjottiin asian käsittelyä ulkopoliitikassa. Tämä osuu laajemmin hieman pidempään jatkumoon ja brittiparlamentin yrityksiin pyrkiä parlamentarisoidaan ulkopoliitikkaa, teemaan johon tämäkin väitöskirja osin liittyy.

Ulkopolitiikkaan liittyvät tapaukset muodostivat itse asiassa jopa kaksi temaattista diskurssia koko parlamenttiaineistoni 150 tapauksesta, joista 113 oli alahuoneessa ja loput ylähuoneessa. Jo aiemmin olikin mainittu yleiset kommentit aiheeseen liittyen, sekä puolustusasiat. Ulkopoliittikan pääteemat olivat laadullisen analyysin jälkeen jaettavissa kahteen: kansainvälinen yhteistyö ja kontrolli, pian myös YK, sekä toisaalta suurvaltasuhteisiin perinteisemmällä tavalla suhtautuviin tapauksiin. Päällekkäisyyksiä oli tietysti lähes jokaisen keskustelun sisälläkin. Näiden lisäksi atomikysymystä kommentoitiin myös kansallisen tutkimuksen kontekstissa ja sekalaisissa asiayhteyksissä, esimerkiksi vain sanallisena tehokeinona tai outoina heittoina.

Parlamentin roolia ja erityisesti internationalismia kansallisten intressien pohjalta tehtävän politiikan vaihtoehtona korostavaa debatointia ja pohdintaa

vahvasti entisestään Britannian hallituksen esittelemä YK:n peruskirjan ratifiointialoite. Esitys teki läpi mennessään Britanniasta YK:n jäsenen ja toisaalta koko keskustelu ratifioinnista johti myös kiivaaseen pohdintaan järjestön roolista uudella atomiajalla. Oliko koko organisaatio syntynyt jo vanhentuneena, vai oliko sillä mahdollisuuksia vastata atomiajan haasteisiin? Samalla atomiasioiden ja YK:n esitetty suhde vahvistui julkisessa keskustelussa toisiinsa liittyviksi teemoiksi. Yhtä lailla aiheesta puhuminen oli myös entistä legitimiimpää, mikä vahvasti parlamentin epäsuoraa vaikutusvaltaa. Tämä yhdistyi siihen ajatukseen, että atomipommilta ei näytetty voivan puolustautua, eikä edes mahdollinen atomiasepelote ratkaisisi kaikkia ongelmia. Näin ollen parlamentti jatkoi kansainvälistymisen politiikan ajamista, vaikka toki taistelua perinteisemmän, realistisen politiikan puolestakin käytiin.

Hallitus oli alkuun ollut myös Attleen johdolla internationalismin kannalla, mutta virkamiesten ja diplomaattien suorittama indoktrinaatio sai Attleen toisiin ajatuksiin. Nyt merkittävämmäksi oli noussut salainen yhteistyö, ja sen lujittaminen. Toisaalta siihenkään ei voitu panostaa aivan täydellä teholla, koska julkisuudessa oli luvattu aivan päinvastaista. Toki internationalistinen politiikka oli itsessään myös varteenotettava vaihtoehto, ainakin jos realistinen politiikka ei onnistuisi. Tämä politiikan muotoutuminen kaksisuuntaiseksi luonnehtiinkin hyvin koko brittiläisen atomienergiapolitiikan olemusta. Noin vuoden ajanjaksolla tuo politiikka muuttui useita kertoja ja tutkimuksessani löysinkin yhteensä viisi päävaihetta, joiden kautta tuo politiikka voidaan jäsentää. Näiden muutosten syitä etsimällä saadaan myös selville syyt brittipolitiikan vaihtelulle, ja sen asteittaiselle epäonnistumiselle angloamerikkalaisen yhteistyön varmistamisessa. Samalla nousee kuitenkin esiin myös se, että parlamentti onnistui pääsemään kiinni ulko- ja turvallisuuspoliittiseen keskusteluun ennen näkemättömällä tavalla. Voitaisiin puhua jopa merkittävästä tapauksesta brittiläisen poliittisen kulttuurin muutoksessa, ulkopolitiikan asteittaisen parlamentarisaation merkittävästä vaiheesta.

Laajemmin nämä muutokset brittiläisessä atomienergiapolitiikassa ja siihen liittyvissä angloamerikkalaisissa suhteissa voidaan esittää seuraavasti: kaiken käynnisti ns. alkuvaihe, atomiajan koitto, ajanjakso pommien käytöstä marraskuuhun 1945, jolloin kaikki osallistujat yrittivät määrittää mistä onkaan kyse. Tätä ajanjaksoa luonnehtivat ensisijaisesti pelko ja kauhu atomiteknologian tulevista mahdollisuuksista. Tätä seurasi toinen vaihe, marraskuusta joulukuun 1945 loppuun, jota puolestaan luonnehti kamppailu internationalismin ja realismin välillä (ja osin myös parlamentin ja hallituksen, sekä sen takana olevien ”virkamiesten”) ja brittien oletama saavutettu lupaus yhteistyön jatkosta Washingtoniin vaivalla saatujen neuvottelujen tuloksena. Tässä vaiheessa oli myös jo selvää, että yhteistyöllä Britannia haki ensisijaisesti atomipommia kansalliseen arsenaaliinsa. Aiemmat tutkimukset aiheesta mainitsevat yleensä vuoden 1947 tämän päätöksen ajankohtana.

Samalla esiin nousi kuitenkin myös Washingtonin yhteistyöneuvotteluissa hieman yllättäen tehty julkinen lupaus Washingtonin julistuksen pohjalta tehtävästä kansainvälisestä yhteistyöstä uuden teknologian turvalliseksi jakami-

seksi ja mahdollisten väärinkäytösten kontrolloimiseksi. Kolmas vaihe oli joulun ja uuden vuoden paikkeilla. Sitä luonnehti kasvava amerikkalainen aloitteellisuus, ja vastavuoroisesti Britannian politiikasta tuli yhä enemmän reaktiivista. Tähän oli vaikuttanut paitsi arpominen kahden eri politiikan välillä, myös brittien riippuvuus Yhdysvaltojen tuesta muilla sektoreilla. Tätä amerikkalaiset näyttivät myös käyttävän kursailematta hyväkseen, jopa siinä määrin, että sen kytkeytyessä vahvasti myös keskusteluihin atomiasioista, voitaisiin jopa puhua lännen sisäisestä atomidiplomatiasta. Lähes aina kun atomiasiat olivat etenevässä briteille suotuisaan suuntaan, neuvottelupöydälle ilmestyi jotain aivan uutta asiaa, johon amerikkalaiset halusivat saada itselleen suotuisan ratkaisun vihjaillen samalla mm. Britannian lainansaantimahdollisuuksista ja atomiyhteistyöstä. Tähän vaikutti toki osaltaan Yhdysvalloissa julkinen mielipide, joka piti atomipommia ensisijaisesti amerikkalaisena keksintönä, joka piti myös pitää amerikkalaisissa käsissä. Erityisesti ulkoministeri James Byrnes, sekä Manhattan-projektin johtaja kenraali Leslie Groves näyttivät olevan kovasti yhteistyötä vastaan, vaikka siitäkin oli jo allekirjoitettu muistioita pääministeri Atleen ja presidentti Trumanin välillä.

Brittien menettäessä aloitteen angloamerikkalainen yhteistyö ja väitetty erityissuhde joutuivat kovalle koetukselle. Parlamentissa asiaa kommentoitiin vähän ja hallituksen pyrkimykset kontrolloida asian käsittelyä julkisuudessa onnistuivat entistä paremmin. Hallitus jopa käytti ystävällismielisten parlamentaarikkojen avustuksella parlamenttia foorumina brittiläiseen tutkimukseen ja atomipolitiikkaan liittyvissä lausunnoissaan kun niitä ei diplomaattisista syistä voitu suoraan amerikkalaisille osoittaa. Näissä parlamentaariksi kysymyksiksi naamioiduissa lausunnoissa yritettiin tehdä selväksi sitä, että Britannia jatkaisi tutkimusta ja kehitystyötä tarvittaessa myös yksin. Osaltaan näiden lausuntojen, osaksi "aidon" parlamentaarisen toiminnan ja siitä raportoinnin vuoksi amerikkalaiset monopolistit näyttivät kenties ärsyyntyneen lisää. Jo syksyllä kapteeni Raymond Blackburnin pyytämä adjournment debate oli herättänyt paljon huomiota Yhdysvalloissa, kun hän oli saanut tietoonsa aiemmat angloamerikkalaiset yhteistyösopimukset, ja oli vaatinut niiden julkaisua. Yhdysvaltojen presidentti oli joutunut näistä lausunnoista vaikeuksiin ja esimerkiksi Winston Churchill moittikin Blackburnia julkisesti salaisen luottamuksen pettämisestä. Toisaalta Quebecin ja Hyde Parkin sopimusten "julkitulo" oli osaltaan myös kertonut Britannian olleen atomitutkimuksen sisäpiirissä.

Neljäs vaihe, alkukevät 1946 aina maaliskuun loppuun saakka koostui lähinnä brittien pyrkimyksistä yrittää lujittaa ja toteuttaa jo luvattu angloamerikkalainen atomienergiayhteistyö. Toisaalta myös emmittiin ja pohdittiin luvattun kansainvälisen kontrollin järjestämisen mahdollisuutta. Olihan sille saatu alustava tuki myös Moskovassa Neuvostoliitolta. Parlamentaarikot keskittyivät lähinnä tiedustelemaan kansainvälisen kontrollin etenemisestä. Tosin osa myös ilmaisi kasvavissa määrin tyytymättömyyttään hallituksen politiikkaan, sillä sen nähtiin seuraavan Yhdysvaltoja liian läheltä, eikä olevan Britannialle soveliaista, kolmannen vaihtoehdon politiikkaa. Parlamentaarikot eivät tienneet että salainen yhteistyö oli jo kohdannut vakavia ongelmia ja että amerikkalaiset oli-

vat alkaneet viivyttämään lopullisten yhteistyösopimusten valmistelussa. Tähän vastauksena britit olivat yrittäneet entisestään lähestyä Yhdysvaltojen politiikkaa, tarkoituksenaan vahvistaa muuten maiden välisiä suhteita, niin että myös luvattu atomienergiayhteistyö etenisi. Yhä enemmän uusia, muita käsiteltäviä kysymyksiä nousi esiin, ja brittien mahdollisuus pyrkiä ottamaan aloite käsiinsä angloamerikkalaisissa suhteissa heikkeni entisestään. Sisäpoliittisesti hallitus kuitenkin onnistui rajoittamaan keskustelua atomiaiheista jossain määrin, ja salaisten kuvioiden pysyessä salaisena, parlamentaarikot vaikuttivat yhä yllättävän tyytyväisiltä. Heillä ei ollut tietoa, jonka perusteella he olisivat voineet haastaa hallitusta sen vaikeuksissa olevasta politiikasta. Näyttää myös siltä että ainakin osin ajatus kansainvälisen kontrollin perustamisesta nähtiin onnistumisena ja sille haluttiin antaa aikaa. Samalla joukko merkittäviä kansallisia sisä- ja talouspoliittisia uudistuksia, sekä esimerkiksi Intian itsenäistyminen veivät merkittävän osan parlamentarisesta ajasta. Yhdysvaltojen esittäessä erilaisia syitä yhteistyön viipymiselle ei hallituksella ollut myöskään mahdollisuuksia vedota mihinkään. Salaisen yhteistyön pyrkimysten tullessa julkiseksi, olisi edessä saattanut olla merkittävä luottamuspulla ja siten hallituskriisi, kansainvälisistä seurauksista puhumattakaan.

YK:n peruskirjan ratifioiminen ja Washingtonin julistus palasivat myös brittien eteen, Yhdysvaltojen vedotessa peruskirjan pykäliin salaista yhteistyötä estävänä tekijänä. Amerikkalaisten tekemän tulkinnan mukaan peruskirjan pykälät tarkoittivat että joko yhteistyö pitäisi julkaista, tai sitä ei voitaisi jatkaa. Samaan aikaan oman lisähaasteensa brittien pyrkimyksille toi myös Kanadassa paljastunut atomivakoojaskandaali, josta raportoitiin innokkaasti Yhdysvalloissa. Yhtä lailla kesken ollut tutkimus vuoti lehdistöön ja paineet tiukentuvalla sisäisellä valvonnalla ja monopolin lujittamisella kasvoivat jo ennestäänkin yhteistyöhön vastentahtoisesti suhtautuneiden amerikkalaisten parissa. Valmistella ollut sisäinen atomienergiaan liittyvä lakialoite, jota britit olivat pitäneet harmittomana, muuttuikin yllättäen senaatin ja kongressin salaisissa lisäkäsittelyissä kokonaan kansainvälisen yhteistyön estäväksi ja tiedot tästä uudesta lakialoitteesta tavoittivat myös järkyttyneet britit. Huhtikuusta elokuuhun 1946 he yrittivät vedota kaikin mahdollisin tavoin amerikkalaisiin mutta tuloksetta. Edes painostaminen raaka-ainepoolin likvidoisella ei auttanut pitkälle. McMahon-lakialoite tuli voimaan elokuussa 1946 ja yhteistyö ei ollut enää mahdollista. Samalla se myös asetti rajoituksia kansainväliselle kontrollille. Asiasta tietämätön parlamentti näki vain hallituksen jahkailun ja alkoi kasvavissa määrin kritisoida hallitusta sen politiikasta. Tämän voidaan nähdä vaikuttaneen osaltaan jopa vuoden 1947 "Keep Left"-liikkeen syntyyn. Samalla se todisti parlamentin merkittävästä roolista aiheen käsittelyssä, ja myös todensi sen pääosin epäsuoran vaikutuksen brittien atomipolitiikan muutoksiin.

Laajemmassa mittakaavassa väitöskirjani tuloksiksi voitaisiinkin nostaa edellä mainitut syyt angloamerikkalaisen atomiyhteistyön osittaiselle epäonnistumiselle. Tavoitellessaan tätä Britannia tosin onnistui osaltaan agitoimaan Yhdysvaltoja aktiivisempaan rooliin sodanjälkeisessä maailmanpolitiikassa. Myös perusteita myöhemmälle angloamerikkalaiselle erityissuhteelle saatiin kehitet-

tyä, atomiyhteistyön epäonnistumisesta huolimatta. Brittinäkökulmasta kertova uusi tieto on itsessään jo myös merkittävää, sillä aihepiiriä on dominoinut yleensä yhdysvaltalainen suuri narratiivi, samoin kuin jossain määrin myös angloamerikkalaisten suhteiden kuvaustakin tältä ajanjaksolta. Näiden lisäksi voitaisiin ylläesitetyn pohjalta johtaa seitsemän muuta tulosta:

1. Brittihallitus joutui harjoittamaan atomienergiainkopolitiikkaansa kaksisuuntaisesti. Virkamiesten merkitys tämän politiikan muotoutumisessa oli paljon oletettua suurempi kuin on aiemmin luultu. Poliitiikka ei ollut suoraviivaista, vaan se eli koko tutkimusajanjakson ajan.
2. Parlamentti onnistui pääsemään kiinni ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikkaan ja osallistumaan keskusteluun sen suunnasta. Keinoina tässä olivat ennen kaikkea parlamentaariset kysymykset, adjournment debaattit, sekä jossain määrin myös ulkoparlamentaarinen toiminta, kuten lehtikirjoittelu. Olen onnistunut haastamaan noin 40 vuotta valalla olleen käsityksen mykästä parlamentista atomiasioissa. Hallituksen empiminen kertoo myös parlamentaarisen paineen vaikutuksesta ja toisaalta ulkopoliitiikan asteittaisesta parlamentarisaatiosta. Tämä löytö korostaa kontekstoivamman ja vertailevemmän parlamenttist historian tutkimuksen tarvetta muiden lähestymistapojen rinnalle. Keskittyminen ns. ei-niin-ideaalisiin tapauksiin voi paljastaa paljonkin uutta tietoa. Yhtä lailla merkittävää on se, että käytettävissä olevan tiedon määrä näytti vaikuttaneen merkittäväällä tavalla parlamentin mahdollisuuksiin harjoittaa sangen aktiivista hallituksen valvontaa. Kun tiedon määrä atomiasioista väheni ja hallituksella oli implementoitava politiikka, oli sitä myös helpompi puolustaa aktiivisesti.
3. Parlamentin ja hallinnon välisen keskustelun pohjalta internationalismi vastaan realismi -asetelma sodanjälkeisessä brittiläisessä kontekstissa ja angloamerikkalaisiin atomiasioihin liittyen johti myös jatkossa kasvaviin ongelmiin Britannian työväenpuolueen sisällä.
4. Työssäni esitetyn perusteella on syytä pohtia "lännen sisäisen" atomidiplomatian mahdollisuutta tarkemmin jatkossa. Brittiaineiston valossa, Britannian näkökulmasta, näyttää siltä, että Yhdysvallat käytti uutta teknologiaa intentionaalisesti sekä keppinä että porkkanana angloamerikkalaisissa suhteissa.
5. Britannian oma atomitutkimusprojekti alkoi jo 1945-1946 ja sen pää tavoite oli atomipommi.
6. Ajanjakso elokuusta 1945 lokakuuhun 1946, ja eritoten Britannian parlamentin keskustelut atomiasioista, vaikuttivat merkittävästi asian ymmärtämiseen ja sen merkitysten hahmottamiseen.
7. Siemenet sodanjälkeisen kilpavarustelun ja kansainvälisen yhteistyön epäonnistumiselle kylvettiin jo tällöin ja osin atomiasioihin liittyen.

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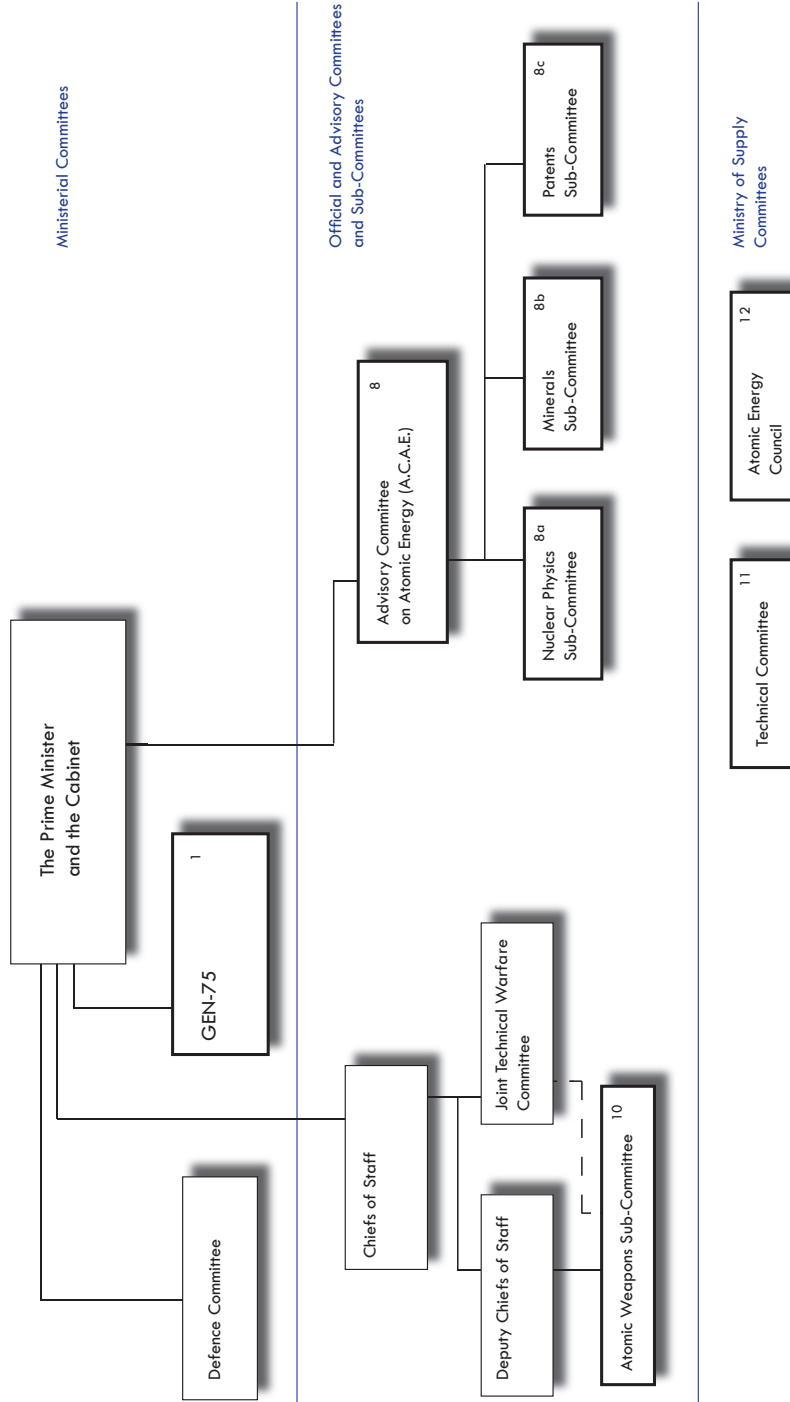
## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 PARLIAMENTARY INSTANCES AUGUST 1945 - OCTOBER 1946

Aug 45	3	3	2	5	2	1	9HC/3HL	12+2 multiclass =16 conv.
Sep 45	Parl. recess	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xx/xx	xxx
Oct 45	7	7	6	8	10	4	18/4	22/42 16 multi
Nov 45	10	10	10	7	9	12	17/10	27/58 17 multi
Dec 45	1	1	1	2	1	2	4/1	5/8 3 multi
Jan 46	1	1	2	0	6	0	10/0	8/10 1 multi
Feb 46	0	0	2	0	4	1	7/0	7/7 2 multi
March 46	7	7	10	6	6	3	11/4	15/39 10 multi
Apr 46	0	0	3	3	0	0	6/0	6/6 2 multi
May 46	1	1	2	1	2	0	4/0	4/7 3 multi
June 46	2	2	1	2	3	0	5/0	5/10 3 multi
July 46	4	4	4	3	3	5	7/5	12/23 6 multi
Aug 46	1	1	1	1	1	0	2/0	2/5 2 multi
Sep 46	Parl. recess	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xx/xx	xxx
Oct 46	9	9	9	7	14	5	17/6	23/53 14 multi
<b>Total:</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>33 (282)</b>	<b>117/33</b>	<b>150/284 81 multi</b>
		Class 2+3 total:97!	Class 2+3 total:97!					

APPENDIX 2 IMPORTANT ATOMIC COMMITTEES 1945-1946 BY GOWING

The most important committees covering atomic energy in Britain 1945-1946-

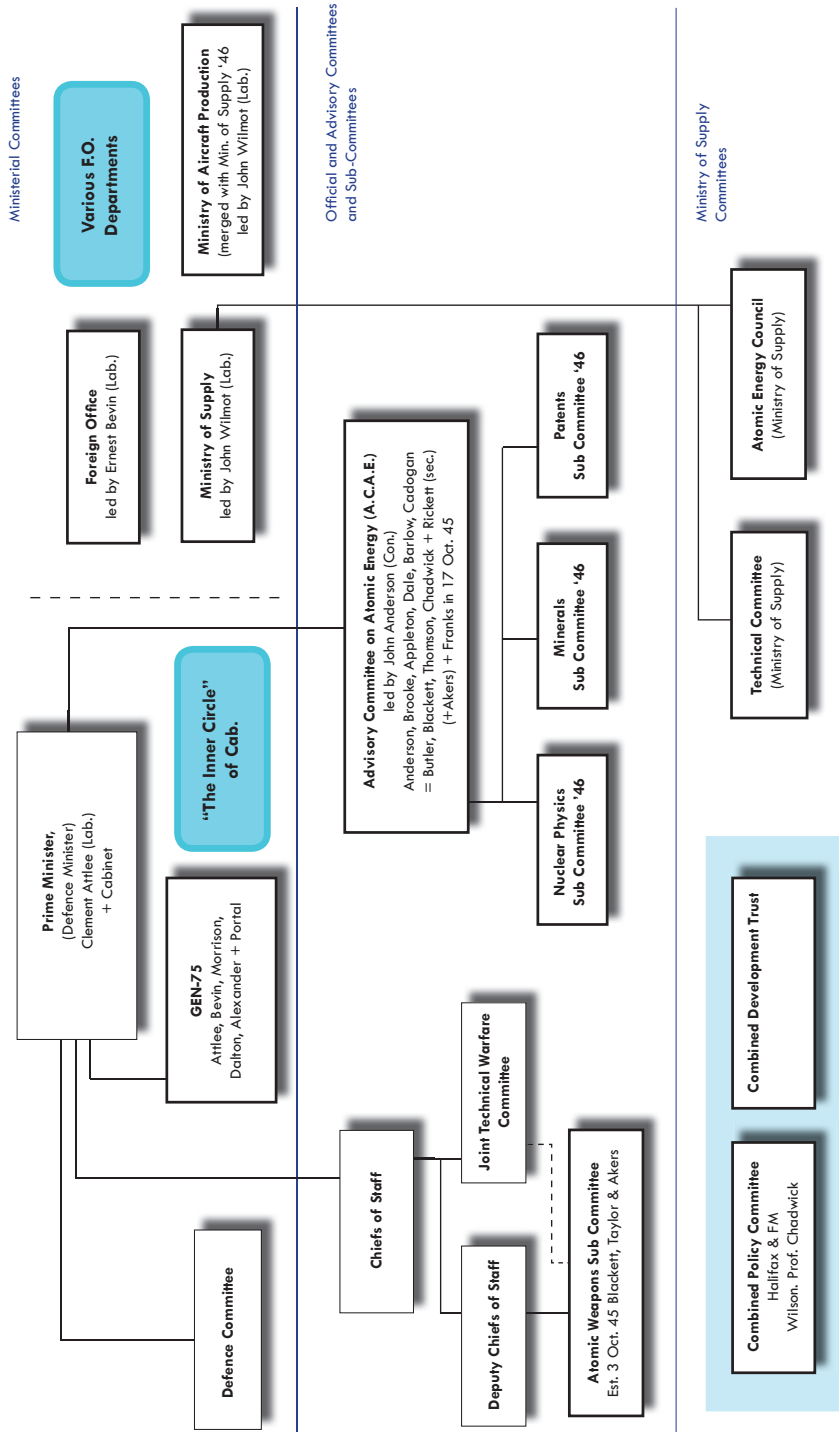


Ministerial Committees

Official and Advisory Committees and Sub-Committees

Ministry of Supply Committees

APPENDIX 3 GOVERNMENT'S ATOMIC ORGANIZATION 1945-1946





**APPENDIX 4 STATISTICS FROM THE TIMES RESULTS FROM THE  
TIMES ONLINE-ARCHIVE (CONDUCTED 6 OCTOBER  
2008)**

<u>Search words or combinations</u> 1 August 1945-30 August 1946	
atomic energy	~450 hits
atomic	871 hits
atomic bomb	457 hits
Bevin	999 hits
Attlee +atomic	128 hits
Bevin +atomic	121 hits

<b><u>"Atomic"</u></b> <b><u>Refined by month:</u></b>	
August 1945	148
September	58
October	77
November	97
December	65
January 1946	80
February	34
March	59
April	34
May	48
June	51
July	76
August	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>846</b>

Atomic 846	Atomic Bomb 457
News 611	News 247
Letters to the Editor 78	Letters to the Editor 57
Politics and Parliament 70	Politics and Parliament 42
Editorials/Leaders 55	Index 35
Classified ads 9	Editorials/Leaders 31
Official statements etc. 8	News in Brief 20
Arts and entertainment 7	Picture Gallery 8
exhibitions and adverts etc. 6 <sup>1623</sup>	Business and Finance 7
legals matters 5 <sup>1624</sup>	Official Appointments and Notices 3
	Display Advertising 2
	Stock Exchange Tables 2
	Reviews 2
	Arts and Entertainment 1

<sup>1623</sup> 1 was public info from the ministry of fuel and energy to promote saving energy. The rest were book/journal adverts.

<sup>1624</sup> Of these 1 related to United Nations, 4 were about Alan Nunn May & spy case.

**APPENDIX 5 QUEBEC AGREEMENT QUEBEC AGREEMENT AUGUST  
19, 1943**

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The Citadel, Quebec.

Articles of Agreement Governing Collaboration Between The Authorities of the U.S.A. and the U.K. in the Matter of Tube Alloys

Whereas it is vital to our common safety in the present War to bring the Tube Alloys project to fruition at the earliest moments; and

Whereas this maybe more speedily achieved if all available British and American brains and resources are pooled; and

Whereas owing to war conditions it would be an improvident use of war resources to duplicate plants on a large scale on both sides of the Atlantic and therefore a far greater expense has fallen upon the United States;

It is agreed between us

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First, that we will never use this agency against each other.

Secondly, that we will not use it against third parties without each other's consent.

Thirdly, that we will not either of us communicate any information about Tube Alloys to third parties except by mutual consent.

Fourthly, that in view of the heavy burden of production falling upon the United States as the result of a wise division of war effort, the British Government recognize that any post-war advantages of an industrial or commercial character shall be dealt with as between the United States and Great Britain on terms to be specified by the President of the United States to the Prime Minister of Great Britain. The Prime Minister expressly disclaims any interest in these industrial and commercial aspects beyond what may be considered by the President of the United States to be fair and just and in harmony with the economic welfare of the world.

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And Fifthly, that the following arrangements shall be made to ensure full and effective collaboration between the two countries in bringing the project to fruition:

(a) There shall be set up in Washington a Combined Policy Committee composed of:

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The	Secretary	of	War.	(United	States)
Dr.	Vannevar		Bush.	(United	States)
Dr.	James	B.	Conant.	(United	States)
Field-Marshal	Sir John	Dill,	G.C.B.,	C.M.G.,	D.S.O. (United Kingdom)

Colonel the Right Hon. J. J. Llewellyn, C.B.E., M.C., M.P. (United Kingdom)  
The Honourable C. D. Howe. (Canada)

The functions of this Committee, subject to the control of the respective Governments, will be:

- (1) To agree from time to time upon the programme of work to be carried out in the two countries.
- (2) To keep all sections of the project under constant review.
- (3) To allocate materials, apparatus and plant, in limited supply, in accordance with the requirements of the programme agreed by the Committee.
- (4) To settle any questions which may arise on the interpretation or application of this Agreement.

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(b) There shall be complete interchange of information and ideas on all sections of the project between members of the Policy Committee and their immediate technical advisers.

(c) In the field of scientific research and development there shall be full and effective interchange of information and ideas between those in the two countries engaged in the same sections of the field.

(d) In the field of design, construction and operation of large-scale plants, interchange of information and ideas shall be regulated by such ad hoc arrangements as may, in each section of the field, appear to be necessary or desirable if the project is to be brought to fruition at the earliest moment. Such ad hoc arrangements shall be subject to the approval of the Policy Committee.

Aug. 19th 1943

Approved

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Winston S. Churchill

**APPENDIX 6 HYDE PARK AIDE-MEMOIRÉ**

September 19, 1944

1. The suggestion that the world should be informed regarding tube alloys, with a view to an international agreement regarding its control and use, is not accepted. The matter should continue to be regarded as of the utmost secrecy; but when a "bomb" is finally available, it might perhaps, after mature consideration, be used against the Japanese, who should be warned that this bombardment will be repeated until they surrender.

2. Full collaboration between the United States and the British Government in developing tube alloys for military and commercial purposes should continue after the defeat of Japan unless and until terminated by joint agreement.

3. Enquiries should be made regarding the activities of Professor Bohr and steps taken to ensure that he is responsible for no leakage of information particularly to the Russians.

**APPENDIX 7 WASHINGTON DECLARATION WASHINGTON DECLARATION 15 NOVEMBER 1945**

Washington, November 15, 1945

The President of the United States, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and the Prime Minister of Canada, have issued the following statement:

(1) We recognize that the application of recent scientific discoveries to the methods and practice of war has placed at the disposal of mankind means of destruction hitherto unknown, against which there can be no adequate military defense, and in the employment of which no single nation can in fact have a monopoly.

(2) We desire to emphasize that the responsibility for devising means to insure that the new discoveries shall be used for the benefit of mankind, instead of as a means of destruction, rests not on our nations alone but upon the whole civilized world. Nevertheless, the progress that we have made in the development and use of atomic energy demands that we take an initiative in the matter, and we have accordingly met together to consider the possibility of international action:--

(a) To prevent the use of atomic energy for destructive purposes.

(b) To promote the use of recent and future advances in scientific knowledge, particularly in the utilization of atomic energy, for peaceful and humanitarian ends.

(3) We are aware that the only complete protection for the civilized world from the destructive use of scientific knowledge lies in the prevention of war. No system of safeguards that can be devised will of itself provide an effective guarantee against production of atomic weapons by a nation bent on aggression. Nor can we ignore the possibility of the development of other weapons, or of new methods of warfare, which may constitute as great a threat to civilization as the military use of atomic energy.

(4) Representing as we do, the three countries which possess the knowledge essential to the use of atomic energy, we declare at the outset our willingness, as a first contribution, to proceed with the exchange of fundamental scientific information and the interchange of scientists and scientific literature for peaceful ends with any nation that will fully reciprocate.

(5) We believe that the fruits of scientific research should be made available to all nations, and that freedom of investigation and free interchange of ideas are essential to the progress of knowledge. In pursuance of this policy, the basic scientific information essential to the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes has already been made available to the world. It is our intention that all further information of this character that may become available from time to time shall be similarly treated. We trust that other nations will adopt the same policy, thereby creating an atmosphere of reciprocal confidence in which political agreement and cooperation will flourish.

(6) We have considered the question of the disclosure of detailed information concerning the practical industrial application of atomic energy. The military exploitation of atomic energy depends, in large part, upon the same methods and processes as would be required for industrial uses.

We are not convinced that the spreading of the specialized information regarding the practical application of atomic energy, before it is possible to devise effective, reciprocal, and enforceable safeguards acceptable to all nations, would contribute to a constructive solution of the problem of the atomic bomb.

On the contrary we think it might have the opposite effect. We are, however, prepared to share, on a reciprocal basis with others of the United Nations, detailed information concerning the practical industrial application of atomic energy just as soon as effective enforceable safeguards against its use for destructive purposes can be devised.

(7) In order to attain the most effective means of entirely eliminating the use of atomic energy for destructive purposes and promoting its widest use for industrial and humanitarian purposes, we are of the

opinion that at the earliest practicable date a commission should be set up under the United Nations Organization to prepare recommendations for submission to the organization.

The commission should be instructed to proceed with the utmost dispatch and should be authorized to submit recommendations from time to time dealing with separate phases of its work.

In particular the commission should make specific proposals:

- (a) For extending between all nations the exchange of basic scientific information for peaceful ends,
- (b) For control of atomic energy to the extent necessary to insure its use only for peaceful purposes,
- (c) For the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction,
- (d) For effective safeguards by way of inspection and other means to protect complying states against the hazards of violations and evasions.

(8) The work of the commission should proceed by separate stages, the successful completion of each one of which will develop the necessary confidence of the world before the next stage is undertaken. Specifically, it is considered that the commission might well devote its attention first to the wide exchange of scientists and scientific information, and as a second stage to the development of full knowledge concerning natural resources of raw materials.

(9) Faced with the terrible realities of the application of science to destruction, every nation will realize more urgently than before the overwhelming need to maintain the rule of law among nations and to banish the scourge of war from the earth. This can only be brought about by giving wholehearted support to the United Nations Organization and by consolidating and extending its authority, thus creating conditions of mutual trust in which all peoples will be free to devote themselves to the arts of peace. It is our firm resolve to work without reservation to achieve these ends.

The City of Washington,  
The White House.  
November 15, 1945.

Signed:  
HARRY S. TRUMAN, President of the United States  
C. R. ATTLEE, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom  
W. L. MacKENZIE KING, Prime Minister of Canada

**APPENDIX 8 MINUTE BY PRESIDENT TRUMAN, MR. ATTLEE AND  
MR. MACKENZIE KING**

The White House, Washington, 16 November 1945.

1. We desire that there should be full and effective cooperation in the field of atomic energy between the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada.
2. We agree that the Combined Policy Committee and the Combined Development Trust should be continued in a suitable form.
3. We request the Combined Policy Committee to consider and recommend to us appropriate arrangements for this purpose.

Harry Truman,

Clement Attlee,

Mackenzie King.



## APPENDIX 9 GROVES-ANDERSON MEMORANDUM GROVES-ANDERSON MEMORANDUM

Washington, November 16, 1945

We recommend that the following points be considered by the Combined Policy Committee in the preparation of a new document to replace the Quebec Agreement, which should be superseded *in toto*. Together with all other understandings with the exception of the Combined Development Trust Agreement which should be revised in conformity with the new arrangements.

(1) The three Governments, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, will not use atomic weapons against other parties without prior consultation with each other;

(2) The three Governments agree not to disclose any information or enter into negotiations concerning atomic energy with other governments or authorities or persons in other countries except in accordance with agreed common policy or after due prior consultation with one another;

(3) The three Governments will take measures so far as practicable to secure control and possession, by purchase or otherwise, of all deposits of uranium or thorium situated in areas comprising the United States, its territories and possessions, the United Kingdom, and Canada. They will also use every endeavour with respect to the remaining territories of the British Commonwealth and other countries to acquire all available supplies of uranium and thorium. All supplies acquired under the provisions of this paragraph will be placed at the disposition of the Combined Development Trust;

(4) All the materials at the disposition of the Trust shall be allocated to the three Governments in such quantities as may be needed, in the common interest, for scientific research, military and humanitarian purposes. Such supplies as are not allocated for these purposes shall be held by the Combined Development Trust and their disposal shall be determined at a later date in the light of then existing conditions and on a fair and equitable basis;

(5) There shall be full and effective co-operation in the field of basic scientific research among the three countries. In the field of development, design, construction and operation of plants such co-operation, recognized as desirable in principle, shall be regulated by such ad-hoc arrangements as may be approved from time to time by the Combined Policy Committee as mutually advantageous;

(6) The Combined Policy Committee, already established and constituted so as to provide equal representation to the United States on the one hand and to the Governments of the United Kingdom and Canada on the other, shall carry out the policies provided for, subject to the control of their respective Governments. To this end the Committee shall:

- 1) Review from time to time the general programme of work being carried out in the three countries.
- 2) Allocate materials in accordance with the principles set forth in the fourth paragraph above.
- 3) Settle any questions which may arise concerning the interpretation and application of arrangements regulating co-operation between the three Governments.

The above is to be understood as being without prejudice to the consideration by the Combined Policy Committee of any matters covered in this memorandum.