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THE RUSSIA COMMITTEE OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE
ITS INFLUENCE ON FOREIGN POLICY FORMATION IN THE EARLY COLD WAR

TERESA ANNE STIRLING

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

SEPTEMBER 2018

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Teresa Anne Stirling

I should particularly wish to record my thanks to my supervisors, Ian Gazeley and Hester Barron, for their generous support and encouragement during the process of researching for, and writing, this thesis.

The Russia Committee of the British Foreign Office:

Its Influence on Foreign Policy Formation

in the Early Cold War

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SUMMARY

This thesis adds to the historiography on British foreign policy towards the Soviet Union in the early Cold War by closely examining the work of the Russia Committee, a secret organisation within the Foreign Office, in order to assess its influence on the formation of foreign policy in the early Cold War. The research undertaken was based on the scrutiny of the official Foreign Office Archives, of the meetings and papers of the Russia Committee from its inception in March 1946 to the early 1950s, as well as Cabinet papers, private papers of key individuals, diaries and memoirs and relevant secondary historical sources.

It concludes that the Russia Committee was a vital piece in the jigsaw of intelligence provision to the British government on Soviet Communist expansionism, and for a time was the only body collecting and analysing all aspects of Soviet activities. It helped to determine how to deal with the emerging circumstances and tensions. It recognises that policy formation was a joint enterprise on the part of the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin for most of the years covered, and his Foreign Office advisers and helped Ministers to determine how to deal with the emerging threats. It concludes that the Russia Committee inevitably influenced the decisions taken by Ministers. The inability to prove the extent of that influence does not, it concludes, negate the case for such influence to have occurred. It further concludes that the strong relationship of trust and respect between Bevin and his official advisers aided his strong leadership both as Foreign Secretary and a towering figure of the two Attlee administrations from 1945 onwards.

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List of Abbreviations

AC(O)	-	Official Committee on Communism Overseas
AC(H)	-	Official Committee on Communism Home
BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
CIA	-	Central Intelligence Agency
CID	-	Committee of Imperial Defence
CO	-	Colonial Office
CPG	-	Chinese People's Government
CRO	-	Commonwealth Relations Office
DIS	-	Defence Intelligence Service
ECITO	-	European Central Inland Transport Organisation
ERP	-	Economic Recovery Plan (ie the Marshall Plan)
FOI(A)	-	Freedom of Information Act
FORD	-	Foreign Office Research Department
GCHQ	-	Government Communications Head Quarters
ID	-	Information Department
IRD	-	Information Research Department
IDC	-	International Danube Commission
JIC	-	Joint Intelligence Committee
LON	-	League of Nations
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NHS	-	National Health Service
OEEC	-	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation
OPC	-	Overseas Planning Committee
PID	-	Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office
PS	-	Private Secretary
PPS	-	Principal Private Secretary
PRA's	-	Public Records Acts
PUS	-	Permanent Under Secretary
PUSC	-	Permanent Under Secretary's Committee
PUSD	-	Permanent Under Secretary's Department
PWE	-	Political Warfare Executive

MI5	-	Security Service
MI6	-	Secret Intelligence Service
MoI	-	Ministry of Information
NSA	-	National Security Archive
SIS	-	Secret Intelligence Service
SOE	-	Special Operations Executive
TGWU	-	Transport and General Workers Union
TNA	-	The National Archives
UNO	-	United Nations
UNSC	-	United Nations Security Council
UNWCC	-	United Nations War Crimes Commission
US	-	United States
VE Day	-	Victory in Europe Day
WCC	-	War Crimes Commission

The Russia Committee of the British Foreign Office: its Influence on Foreign Policy Formation in the Early Cold War

There is no period so remote as the recent past and one of the historian's jobs is to anticipate what our perspective on the recent past will be. Alan Bennett 'The History Boys'.¹

Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis, through the examination of the impact of the information gathering body within the British Foreign Office known as the Russia Committee, attempts to understand the way in which that organisation influenced the formation of the British government's foreign policy towards the Soviet Union in the early Cold War. It looks at the relationship between government ministers and officials as seen through the lens of the Russia Committee, examining the contribution of the 'big hitters' in influencing policy, both the key officials and the Ministers. It takes a fresh look at the whole issue as to when Ernest Bevin changed his initial stance towards the Soviets. It also aims to take a comprehensive look at the work of the Committee over its whole life span from early 1946 through to late 1957; to chart the ebbs and flows in its reach and influence over that life span; and attempts to draw conclusions about the contribution the work of the Committee made to our greater understanding of the Cold War.

With the exception of one academic article which largely concerned the first two years of the Russia Committee's work, there are relatively few references to this Committee's existence in secondary academic works. Because of the nature of the beast - that is a Whitehall Committee whose membership was drawn, at least initially, purely from high level Whitehall based diplomats - the assessment of the impact of the Committee's work presents certain challenges, not least because the membership of such committees comprises largely anonymous (outside of Whitehall) public servants and insight to the nature and influence of their work, mostly of a secret nature, has to be gained primarily from their papers and minutes of discussions. The papers of the

¹ Permission to use quotation sought from United Agents, 12-26 Lexington Street, London, W1F 0LE.

Committee were for many years not made available to the public at The National Archives (TNA)² so that until comparatively recently the organisation was shrouded in secrecy. These are now largely in the public domain but some have yet to be released. The most recent releases were in 2013,³ and doubtless more will eventually come to light. The official archives provide a sound basis for study of the work of the Committee but not generally an indication of what was being achieved through that work and the sparse secondary sources, such as do exist, tend not to extend to attempts to assess the value of the Committee's contribution to policy formation.

The most comprehensive outline and analysis of the work of the Russia Committee to date has been the article, published by Ray Merrick in 1985⁴ which looked at the years 1946 and 1947. Although the Committee was established in March 1946 and existed thereafter for just over 12 years, Merrick concentrated on 1946 and 1947, not because they were significant years in the life of the Russia Committee, though they undoubtedly were, but because at the time of his research the only papers available to researchers, were those which were first released into the public domain in the early 1980s under the 30 year rule⁵ and it was these early releases that were plumbed by Merrick for his article. He takes a broad view of the work of the Russia Committee from April 1946 to the end of 1947 and paints a clear picture of the Foreign Office officials being persuaded, from at least as early as 1945 onwards, that action needed to be taken to counteract Soviet policy, whereas Ernest Bevin, he argues, was not ready until the end of 1947 - and, in particular, not until after the November 1947 Moscow Council of Foreign Ministers - to actually accept and put to Cabinet, and then

² The National Archives (TNA) based in Kew, Richmond, holds all the released Public Records available to the public plus some which are held there but remain closed and held in secure accommodation.

³ TNA releases on 21 May 2013, including FO 1093/576-582 dealing with the setting up of the Permanent Under Secretary's Committee (PUSC) and including the minutes of PUSC meetings from 1949-50 and references to the Russia Committee.

⁴ Merrick, Ray. *The Russia Committee of the British Foreign Office and the Cold War, 1946-47*. Journal of Contemporary History Volume 20 (1985), 453-468.

⁵ The Public Records Acts (PRAs) of 1958 and 1967 initially imposed a 50 year rule on the release of government official documents and this was reduced in 1968, during Harold Wilson's Labour government of 1964 to 1970, to a 30 year rule. The PRAs established the criteria under which official records generated by government departments would be eligible for release to the public at TNA or for further retention if they were deemed by expert reviewers, after applying the criteria, to be too sensitive to release for a further period, in which case they would be retained for a further period and would be re-reviewed under sensitivity criteria normally after ten more years.

to the House of Commons, that the policies recommended by the Russia Committee should be adopted. As will be contended in later chapters of this thesis, while it was, indeed, clear in 1945 that some of the most senior and influential diplomats were becoming concerned about Soviet intentions, it is not necessarily true to say that Bevin did not 'accept' that there was cause for concern. The fact that he did not publicly voice his concerns was not necessarily an indication of Bevin's private views on the acceptability of the Russia Committee's recommendations or, indeed, of his persuasion that the foreign policy of the Soviets needed to be countered.

Another of the challenges in researching this thesis has been the anonymity of many of the key characters simply because most of them were civil servants or diplomats who were bound by the conventions of secrecy surrounding their work. From an outsider's point of view the world of the senior echelons of Whitehall are often shrouded in mystery and appreciation of the influence that individuals can have on policy formation may be difficult to comprehend.⁶ A clearer understanding of individual contributions is possible in relation to elected politicians, of course, from the media, from biographies, diaries, memoirs, parliamentary proceedings and archives. For most of the largely 'invisible' men behind the politicians, however, the data is restricted. But from an historiographical viewpoint it is important to try to put some flesh on the bones so as better to understand the inner workings of Whitehall and the extent of influence that key individuals can have. Fortunately, there are a few, albeit comparatively rare, examples of former senior public servants' diaries, memoirs, and personal papers having been donated to archive centres and this thesis draws on some of these. As was written about one such set of diaries: "...there remains something baffling about British statecraft ..the key to the mystery is to be found not only in official documents but in memoirs by men on the inner circle at the time. These bring out the personal attitudes, prejudices and subjective reasoning of the men in power".⁷

⁶ The author of this thesis was, until 2016, a senior civil servant in the Cabinet Office, Whitehall.

⁷ Review by Iverach McDonald of *The Times* on *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1941-1945*. Published Collins, 1978.

This thesis, therefore, attempts to shed light on the role and influence of the diplomats of the British Foreign Office during the early part of the Cold War, focussing in particular on the work of the Russia Committee which was set up to monitor Soviet expansionism and to: “..review the development of all aspects of Soviet policy and propaganda and Soviet activities throughout the world..... with reference to the Soviet campaign against this country.... to consider what action is required”⁸

The Foreign Office is the largest and is, arguably, second only to the loosely combined departments of No 10 Downing Street and the Cabinet Office⁹ as being the most powerful of the British ‘civil service’ departments. Certainly, it is, by its nature, the most influential advisory body to the British government on foreign policy.¹⁰ With its embassies and consulates throughout the world it is now, and it was in the 1940s and 1950s, well placed to gather information and feed it back to the policy makers in Whitehall. However, while the Foreign Office may have had a wealth of expertise, and the stream of information available to them from their outposts all over the world amounted to a formidable feedstock, at times it had to work hard to make its voice heard and to exert its influence. Indeed, it is claimed that in the early 1950s, the Foreign Office had a worrying “relative lack of influence within Whitehall.”¹¹

Towards the end of the Second World War the Foreign Office saw it as being vital to engender good and co-operative working relationships with the Soviet Union as well as seeing the need to “make use of American power for purposes which we regard as good”.¹² At this time their colleagues in the British military senior ranks were taking a different and a more hard-lined, even suspicious, attitude towards the Soviets and as early as the summer of 1944 the British military were expressing fears about future

⁸TNA: FO 371/N56885/N5170/38. Extract from the Russia Committee Terms of Reference – see Chapter 5, Page 103 for full Terms of Reference.

⁹ While technically there is no Prime Minister’s Department in the UK, the Cabinet Office and No 10 are so closely aligned and work together on so many issues that together they could be said to form a de-facto Prime Minister’s Department.

¹⁰ In recent times the Prime Minister has had his or her own Principal Foreign Policy Adviser in 10 Downing Street but such a position, while potentially highly influential, cannot compete with the coverage, influence, and sheer manpower of the Foreign Office.

¹¹ Beck, Peter J. *Using History, Making British Policy: The Treasury and the Foreign Office 1950-76*. Published Palgrave, 2006. Page 210.

¹² TNA: FO 371/38523. AN1538.

Soviet intentions. In his war diary entry for 27 July 1944, for example, Alan Brooke¹³ demonstrated impressive prescience when he said: “Germany is no longer the dominating power of Europe, Russia is. Unfortunately Russia is not entirely European. She has however vast resources and cannot fail to become the main threat in 15 years from now. Therefore foster Germany, gradually build her up, bring her into a federation of Western Europe. Unfortunately this must all be done under the cloak of a holy alliance between England, Russia and America”.¹⁴

Attitudes within the Foreign Office were, however, changing and by as early as April 1945, Sir Orme Sargent,¹⁵ then Deputy Under-Secretary, and therefore one of the most senior officials within the Foreign Office and who was to be a central character in the life of the Russia Committee, was identifying the need for the Foreign Office to re-think policy towards the Soviet Union: “I wonder whether the changes in the war situation has not come to change the technique of our diplomacy towards the Soviet Union.....(hitherto) it was only prudent that we should in our diplomatic dealings with the Soviet Government set ourselves to propitiate our Russian Ally.....the situation has radically changed.....”.¹⁶

The minute from which the above extract is taken is cited by Graham Ross as being a key Foreign Office document from the time. Orme Sargent, author of the minute which went both to his boss, Alexander Cadogan, and his Secretary of State, Anthony Eden, spelt out his views on the changes that were taking place in the relationships between the Soviet Union and the West and argued that while it had been prudent to try to maintain good relations with the Soviets while they were in such a strong position militarily within Europe, the time had come to challenge them. He described how the situation had changed markedly following the “opening of the heart of

¹³ Field Marshal Alan Francis Brooke (later Viscount Alanbrooke) was Chief of the Imperial General Staff and Chairman of the influential Chiefs of Staff Committee during the war and until 1946.

¹⁴ Field-Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, *War Diaries 1939 to 1945*. Edited by Danchev, Alex and Todman, Daniel. Published, 2001. Page 575.

¹⁵ Sir Orme Garton Sargent was Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office and Head of the Diplomatic Service from February 1946 to February 1949.

¹⁶ Ross, Graham – Editor. *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin: British Documents on Anglo-Soviet Relations 1941-45*. Published Cambridge University Press, 1984. Document 35, Pages 199 to 204. Orme Sargent’s minute of 2 April 1945 on the need to reconsider policy towards Russia.

Germany to invasion by British and American armies”¹⁷ and saw this as being at the root of the changing attitudes and growing truculence of the Soviets. Indeed, he argued that the first sign of the Soviets having understood the magnitude of the change in what might be called the balance of power was their sudden change in the diplomatic field where they had started rescinding agreements entered into willingly at Yalta. Sargent urged that the time had come to speak plainly to the Soviets and to stand up to them on, for example, the Polish settlement that had been reached at Yalta but on which the Soviets were strongly back-tracking. Eden and Cadogan largely shared Sargent’s “apprehensions and suspicions”¹⁸ and the maturity of his analysis and his evident understanding of the shifts in the East-West diplomatic field may have done something to place him in the pole position as the soon-to-be-successor to Cadogan, who himself was appointed by Attlee in February 1946 as the first British permanent representative to the United Nations. But whether it did or not, Orme Sargent was to be the driving force behind the setting up of the Russia Committee. He designed the Committee, from its inception, to be a secret body which would make use of covert means to keep track of the intentions of the Soviets and to consider how they might be counteracted.

Over its life-span the Russia Committee, as this thesis will show, was one of several inter-departmental bodies, both Official and Ministerial,¹⁹ which were set up to monitor Soviet propaganda and subversive activities and to put forward proposals to take defensive action. The other Committees and intelligence agencies which already existed included the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), the Joint Intelligence Committee – which was closely associated with the Military intelligence agency of the Chiefs of Staff (COS) – the Government Communications Head Quarters (GCHQ) and the Security Service (MI5). Each of them would have had interest in, and involvement with, the collection of intelligence on the Soviets in the early Cold War. Perhaps the most important of these as far as the Russia Committee was concerned was the JIC because

¹⁷ Ibid. Page 200.

¹⁸ Ibid. Page 204.

¹⁹ High level government Committees, and in particular Cabinet Committees are generally of two types that often mirror each other, namely Cabinet itself and other Ministerial Committees on the one hand, and on the other, Official Cabinet Committees, whose memberships generally comprise high level civil servants.

it was directly involved with the Committee from the outset²⁰ and was the link between it and the intelligence agencies. There are many academic works which have examined intelligence gathering from the perspective of these other committees and agencies²¹ but this thesis focuses interest on the Foreign Office and the relationship between political action and the professional advice on which it was based.

The output of the Russia Committee, and to a much lesser extent other committees, will be examined but to understand why the Foreign Office, along with colleagues in the military, the intelligence agencies and the Cabinet Office felt the need to set up such committees, there needs to be some appreciation of how the early Cold War was being perceived within the British government and public service²² at the time.

Cold War Origins

To consider the beginnings of the Cold War raises the question as to when the Cold War is deemed to have begun. This, of itself, remains a matter of historical debate and controversy. It has been argued that it had its origins in the early twentieth century with the Bolshevik revolution in Russia establishing a different kind of government from that of the West or, more particularly, the way of life epitomised by laissez faire, capitalist, American society.²³ That Bolshevism and Capitalism were diametrically opposite ways of organising society may be self-evident but whether the origins of the Cold War can justifiably be traced to these changes is disputable and indeed this may be to take the origins too far back. At the other end of the spectrum some would take the beginnings of the Cold War from the Potsdam conference in July 1945 which has been described as “the turning point” once the *raison d’etre* no longer persisted for

²⁰ A member of JIC attended Russia Committee meetings.

²¹ For the SIS, for example, see Jeffery, Keith’s *MI6 The History of the Secret Intelligence Service*; For the JIC see Goodman, Michael’s *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee*; for GCHQ see Aldrich, Richard’s *GCHQ The Uncensored Story of Britain’s Most Secret Intelligence Agency*; for MI5, see Andrew, Christopher’s *The Defence of the Realm Authorised History of MI5*. Each is referenced elsewhere in the thesis.

²² The term ‘Public service’ is here defined to include the Home Civil Service, the Diplomatic Service, the Military, including the Chiefs of Staff and the security and intelligence agencies, including MI5, SIS and GCHQ.

²³ McCauley, Martin. *The Origins of the Cold War*. Published, Longmans, 1983. See in particular Parts 1 and 3.

the 'grand Alliance' to continue.²⁴ Or from the date of Winston Churchill's 'iron curtain' speech,²⁵ made in America in March 1946 when he was no longer Prime Minister but was Leader of His Majesty's Opposition - though he first used the term 'Iron Curtain' in a telegram to Truman in May 1945. Such claims are arguably too precise. After all, the seeds for the growth of the Cold War were many faceted and unlikely to be attributable to one particular event given that the transformation from the relative peaceful co-existence of the wartime allies to one of open hostility did not take place overnight. Whenever it started, the Cold War was underway by the mid to late 1940s and gained strength in the decades that followed.

The origins and the causes of the Cold War are also open to historical debate. McCauley identifies three interpretations for explaining how the Cold War came about: the orthodox or traditional; the revisionist; and the post-revisionist. The orthodox view as exemplified by Arthur Schlesinger,²⁶ identifies the class struggle of Marxism/Leninism as a seed bed for revolution throughout the world, a revolution that would inevitably put Communist states in confrontation with the non-Communist powers, except at those times when it would be expedient for the opposites to work together for a common end, for example during World War II. Perhaps more reasonably, David Reynolds says that after the preoccupations of fighting the actual war there were broadly: "...two contrasting perceptions of the post-war Russian question: that the Soviet Union would be an expansionist threat driven by a mixture of ideology and imperialism, or that it would be an obstreperous but essentially co-operative partner, concerned for some years primarily with security and reconstruction." ²⁷

The revisionists ²⁸ would be more likely to see the roots of the Cold War as lying with the Americans who were determined to increase their share of the world markets to boost their internal economy and extend their influence while at the same time

²⁴ Ibid. Page 41.

²⁵ See Chapter 3, Pages 70 to 74.

²⁶ McCauley. Document 1, page 118.

²⁷ Reynolds, David. *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s*. Published, Oxford University Press, 2007. Chapter 13, page 236.

²⁸ McCauley. Document 2, pages 119 to 121.

instilling American values and the capitalist ethos. The post revisionist view in contrast would argue that the Russians who, having been brought to their knees economically through their massive human and material losses during the war, in which they could so easily have been defeated, were interested in forging closer links with “contiguous states which were not anti-Soviet” for safety and security.²⁹ Vladimir Pechatnov takes the view that the Cold War was down to a “messy mixture of ideology, realpolitik, geopolitics and culture”.³⁰ His Soviet perspective asserts that for the Soviet Union, the American led Western bloc was aimed at depriving the Soviet Union from gaining its: “well-deserved fruits of victory, and ultimately at its destruction”.³¹ While not denying the ideological struggles between the Soviets and the West, Pechatnov highlights that in recent years, as hitherto closed Soviet archives have been released they have provided evidence that the Soviet geopolitical aims after the end of the Second World War were about building a buffer zone of pro-Soviet states on their western borders and that he did not believe that Stalin had a clear plan to “Sovietize” all of the Eastern European countries.

Recognition of the complexity of the causality around the Cold War has been underscored by the increasing availability over the years of evidential historical source documents. Historians have written extensively on various aspects of the Cold War and the appetite for academic research into this already well plumbed field is underlined by the fact that in the year 2000 a major new journal – Cold War History – began to be published by the Routledge arm of the UK Publishing Group Taylor Francis. A year earlier an American academic journal was launched which was also devoted to the field of Cold War studies – the American Journal of Cold War Studies. Articles from these and other journals, have been explored for this thesis to shed light on the subject.

²⁹Ibid. Document 3, Pages 121 to 122.

³⁰ Pechatnov, Vladimir. *A Soviet Perspective on Cold War Origins*. Section 2, Origins and Preliminaries, Pages 19 to 23. From Fitzgerald, Michael and Packwood, Allen Editors. *Out of the Cold: The Cold War and Its Legacy*. Published Bloomsbury, 2013.

³¹ Ibid Pages 19 to 23.

Michael Hopkins identifies three distinct periods of Cold War scholarship:³² the emergence of the Cold War in the 1940s through to the 1970s when little serious historical work was undertaken in Britain”; the period from the 1970s through to the end of the Cold War between 1988 and 1991; and the post-Cold War period which has seen the burgeoning of archival material, publication of diaries and auto-biographies of key players, and many scholarly works. The historical perspectives on the Cold War have been shaped and re-shaped and altered continually as more information has become available. Moreover, the differing perspectives are likely to have been affected by the sources of the research material. The first material of an archival nature to come on stream was from American archives; the British archives were subsequently to be opened; and much later, some of the Soviet archives. If it could be argued that information from a particular source, for example exclusively from American archives, is likely to be coloured to some extent by having been generated by American practitioners, then it can similarly be argued that the same would hold true for information from other such sources. Indeed, Greenwood argues that by the end of the 1970s: “attention was being drawn to the narrow focus of early histories of the period, assembled almost entirely by American historians researching mainly American archives”³³

British official archives from the early cold war years, which began to be released into the public domain from the early 1980s, ensured that academic works began to provide more of a British perspective, although many of the British official documents remained closed beyond the normal 30 year period because of continuing sensitivity and are only now being opened to the public (See footnote 5 on page 2 above).

³² Hopkins, Michael F. *Teaching and Research on the Cold War in the United Kingdom*. Article in *Cold War History Journal*, Volume 8:2, Pages 241-258.

³³ Greenwood, Sean. *Britain and the Cold War 1945-91*. Published Macmillan Press, 2000. Pages 2-3.

Three different governments in eight years

Consideration of the output of the Russia Committee and its subsequent offshoots also throws light on the importance of the contributions of the key politicians, for the most part the British politicians, who played influential roles in foreign policy formation during this period. So, too, does the publication of well researched biographies on key British politicians such as the seminal work on Ernest Bevin by Alan Bulloch.³⁴

Autobiographies and diaries of key British politicians and other public figures of the early Cold War period have also added greatly to the useful data available to historians, while recognising that such works may be thought to share a similar question mark over their veracity as is sometimes attributed to oral history. Historian Michael Frisch, for example, writes extensively on oral history³⁵ which he has described as 'Anti-History'. But this is to deny the value and complexity of oral history. As Lummis³⁶ says: "Oral accounts from those who experienced the specific situation provide unsurpassed and irreplaceable evidence for actual behaviour".³⁷

Lummis recognises that the main concern about oral history: "is the degree to which accurate recall of the past is possible"³⁸ not least because: "The difficulty lies in the fact that memory does not constitute pure recall; the memory of any particular event is refracted through layer upon layer of subsequent experience and through the influence of the dominant and/or local and specific ideology."³⁹ However, Lummis' experience as an oral history interviewer has shown him that this is to undervalue the material gained through oral history. He makes a distinction between 'memory' and 'recall'. Memory, he says, is about: "the fund of information about the past that an informant will readily relate, often as polished stories or anecdotes, which suggest that they have been frequently retold or thought about. By recall I mean responses to detailed interviewing which prompts 'dormant' memories that are less likely to be

³⁴ Bulloch, Alan. *Ernest Bevin Foreign Secretary*. Published W W Norton and Company, New York, 1983.

³⁵ Frisch, Michael H. *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*. Published State University of New York Press, Albany, 1990.

³⁶ Trevor Lummis, formerly Senior Research Officer, Department of Sociology, University of Essex.

³⁷ Perks, Robert and Thompson, Alistair (Editors) *The Oral History Reader*. Published Routledge, 1998. Chapter 23, *Structure and Validity in Oral Evidence*, Pages 273 to 283.

³⁸ Ibid. Chapter 23, Page 273.

³⁹ Quoted by Lummis as "Editorial", *History Workshop*, 1979, no 8.

integrated into the individual's present value structure.....Clearly a great deal depends upon exactly what it is that the interview is trying to achieve".⁴⁰ Even if one accepts that caution has to be exercised in the use of biographies, diaries, interviews, and other forms of conveying events that the 'authors' of them have experienced, they have a value in enriching the understanding of those events. To quote Peter Hennessy, who sees value in the richness that personal recollections can add to the work of historians: "We historians. have to go back and immerse ourselves ...to reconstruct what people – leaders and led alike – knew... the memories and experiences that shaped their fears, expectations and mentalities".⁴¹

The issue of the value added by personal recollections and whether the veracity of such material can be relied upon goes to the heart of what is essentially an historical epistemological problem. Where the perceptions and judgements of individuals are brought to bear in reaching their conclusions, which inevitably they must be, then their conclusions are likely to differ in some regard from those of other individuals in similar circumstances. Nothing can be said to be 'true' or 'accurate'. Such considerations do not apply only to diaries, auto-biographies and interviews. They must also apply, for example, to archives which might otherwise be seen as a 'purer' source of information. Thus, even the Minutes of the Russia Committee, meetings which have been a basic resource underpinning this thesis, were written by individuals who will have brought their own perceptions to bear in recording the events they were minuting.⁴² Despite such philosophical conundrums, however, it can be argued convincingly that history benefits from the richer contextualising of events through personal recollections of those involved.

The years from 1945 through to October 1951 saw three different government administrations in the UK. These years saw the recognition of the need to gather information on Soviet intentions as the wartime coalition government neared its end. This was followed by the formal setting up of the Russia Committee just after Attlee

⁴⁰ Ibid. Page 274.

⁴¹ Hennessy, Peter. *Distilling The Frenzy: Writing the History of One's Own Times*. Published Biteback Publishing, 2012. Page 19.

⁴² Cabinet Minutes, by contrast, are written by one senior official and checked by another before being submitted for approval.

became Prime Minister and Bevin Foreign Secretary. And the work of the Committee continued after Churchill was returned to power in 1951. The fact that the Committee continued throughout this period to gather and analyse information on the Soviets points to a continuation regardless of political differences. That the Russia Committee was at its most potentially influential in the Bevin years may have had less to do with the political flavour of the government, or indeed the individual politicians involved, and more to do with timing. The Committee from its inception under Bevin, and for its first few years, was fresh and concerned with keeping abreast of a newly emerging situation.

So there were, from 1945 to 1951, three very different administrations of different political make-up but each served by the permanent and powerful cadre of home civil servants, members of the British Diplomatic Service, Chiefs of Staff of the military and members of the security and intelligence agencies who were involved in the various Committees co-ordinated by the Foreign Office and the Cabinet Office. The different backgrounds and expertise of the public servants who comprised the membership of the Russia Committee and other Whitehall Committees (eg Official Cabinet Committees, the JIC etc) can be seen as lending breadth to their work. The influential men who formed the membership – and they were all men as this was long before senior female diplomats and civil servants started to reach senior positions – would have been largely drawn from public school and Oxbridge backgrounds and very much products of their time. That is to say that, with a few notable exceptions, they had been born into, and educated within, a Great Britain that ruled a vast Empire and enjoyed a pivotal position in world politics.

The relationship between the key politicians and the civil servants and diplomats who potentially played significant roles in policy formation in respect of foreign relations with the Soviets, is worthy of closer investigation and this is a theme that will run throughout this thesis. As background to an examination of the contributions of key individuals it is important to take stock of the international position of Britain and the West as the Second World War drew to a close, Britain was very much a weakened and junior party to her former great war-time allies, the United States and the Soviet

Union. Britain was financially seriously dependent on the United States and the British Empire was sliding away. For all that, it would be wrong not to see Britain, despite all the deprivations and constraints with which she was faced, still as a significant power. One such reason for Britain's continued, albeit weakened, importance internationally was Winston Churchill, the great war leader, respected as such by Roosevelt and, probably, Stalin, and not easily removed from the equation when internationally far reaching decisions were to be taken about such things as reparations and the re-drawing of international boundaries.

Even as early as 1943 Churchill was concerned that Britain was crushed between two much more powerful allies. In November that year he said: "Our man-power is now fully mobilised for the war effort... it is already dwindling (so that) if the war against Germany continues after the end of 1944 we shall have to rely increasingly on United States resources to make up for the declining scale of our own effort".⁴³

As the War drew towards a close and Churchill remained for the moment as British Prime Minister, his views on the likely post-war international scene appear to have varied according to his latest experiences and dealings with Stalin and with Roosevelt and later with Truman. Indeed, Churchill's position on the emerging threat of Soviet expansionism is confused. On the one hand he appeared, at least some of the time, to be disinclined to recognise Stalin as a threat to the West because Churchill had a regard for Stalin, with whom he had enjoyed convivial meetings. On the other hand, Churchill was aware of the realities of what was going on in Europe. Reynolds talks of accusations circulating in London, especially in 1944-45, that there was: "a widespread feeling in the Foreign Office in December 1944 that Churchill was erroneously pursuing a 'policy of appeasement' towards Moscow and Washington".⁴⁴

Churchill told the House of Commons on return from the Yalta conference, which took place in February 1945, with Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin - the 'Big Three' - all in

⁴³ TNA: CAB 66/42, WP(43) 490 Memorandum, 1 November 1943.

⁴⁴ Reynolds. *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s*. Chapter 5 Page 100.

attendance, that he had the impression that Stalin wished: “to live in honorable friendship and equality with the Western democracies.... I know of no Government which stands to its obligations.... More solidly than the Russian Soviet Government”.⁴⁵

And yet Reynolds says:

In retrospect one can find many occasions during the war when Churchill bemoaned the dangers of Soviet expansion...There can be little doubt, I think, that in the very last months of the war, Churchill was more prescient than Roosevelt about future relations with the Soviets....Churchill had come round to the Foreign Office’s strategy of trying to pin Stalin down to a clear sphere of influence in Eastern Europe....Churchill’s Russian policy, then, was not of confrontation but negotiation from strength. Until at least August 1944, when the Allied offensive in the west developed a momentum of its own, Russian military help was essential.⁴⁶

It seems, therefore, that Churchill did, indeed, take a different view in regard to the future threat posed by Russia at different times but to do so was, arguably, neither surprising nor unreasonable. Stalin was not known for his consistency and indeed the situation was a fluid one for all parties. British and American hopes of building a sustainable working relationship with the Soviets reflected, according to Reynolds, three important assumptions: “...expectations of a limited American role in post-war Europe, confidence in Stalin himself as a man with whom one could do business, and hopes that ‘Stalinism’ betokened a shift from revolutionary ideology at home and abroad towards a more ‘normal’ state”.⁴⁷

One of Churchill’s biographers, Charmley, suggested that Churchill over-estimated both the altruism of the US and the fidelity of Russia and in so doing he sacrificed the remnants of British power and independence.⁴⁸ This could be seen to be an overly harsh and damning assessment. Perhaps Reynolds gives a more balanced appraisal when he sees Churchill as more of a realist and asserts that: “In the long run, Churchill knew, Britain would lose the numbers game in France. But he also hoped that British

⁴⁵ HC Deb, 27 February 1945, Vol 1 408: C1284.

⁴⁶ Reynolds. *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s*. Chapter 5 Pages 131-132.

⁴⁷ Ibid Chapter 13, page 248.

⁴⁸ Charmley, John. *Churchill: The End of Glory. A Political Biography*. Published, Faber, 1993. Chapter 2, see Pages 559 - 561.

brains could guide American brawn. This was basic British policy (or conceit) in the last part of the war: the aim, in the words of one Foreign Office memorandum,⁴⁹ was to make use of American power for purposes which we regard as good.⁵⁰

By the end of the Second World War, Churchill was tired and his health was poor and there was very little time after VE Day⁵¹ for him to enjoy the celebrations. Within less than a week, as his Principal Private Secretary, John (Jock) Colville, recorded: "The P.M. looks tired and has to fight for the energy to deal with the problems confronting him. These include the settlement of Europe, the last round of war in the East, an election on the way, and the dark cloud of Russian imponderabilityRussia shows no willingness to compromise and storm clouds threaten.....At 2.30 the P.M. went to bed, leaving almost untouched the voluminous weight of paper which awaits his decision. He told me he doubted if he had the strength to carry on".⁵²

Although Churchill's energy and determination to continue as Prime Minister ebbed and flowed after the end of the war in Europe, he was reluctant to end the coalition immediately. Indeed, on 18 May, just ten days after VE Day, he wrote to Clement Attlee - with whom, as his war time coalition Deputy Prime Minister, Churchill had enjoyed an excellent relationship based on mutual respect - asking him to agree to preserve the coalition until the end of the war in Japan. One of Churchill's motives was that he wanted to see through the Potsdam conference with the same team on the British side, notably his colleagues Clement Attlee and Anthony Eden. With the same team, and given his own perceived good relationship with Stalin, Churchill believed it was better for Britain to retain the best negotiating position through continuity. Attlee visited Churchill in Chartwell on the same day and indicated that both he and Bevin were predisposed to agree to Churchill's suggestion. However, after having consulted other colleagues attending a Labour party conference at the time, Attlee

⁴⁹ TNA: FO 371/38523, AN1538. Memorandum by the North American Department dated 21 March 1944.

⁵⁰ Reynolds, David. *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s*. Chapter 5 Page127.

⁵¹ Tuesday 8 May 1945.

⁵² Colville, John. *The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries 1939-1955*. Published Hodder and Stoughton, 1985, Page 599.

telephoned Churchill to say that he was unable to agree to postpone a General Election.⁵³

The Potsdam conference, with Churchill heading the British team, began in the outskirts of Berlin on July 15th 1945. The conference was adjourned ten days later to allow Churchill, Attlee and Eden to return home on 26 July for the British General Election. The results of the election were dramatic and surprising. Churchill's War time coalition government was replaced, following the land-slide victory by the Labour Party and Clement Attlee became Prime Minister. Colville notes that nobody was more surprised by the landslide victory than Attlee who told Colville, some three weeks later, that: "...in his most optimistic dreams he had reckoned that there might, with luck, be a Conservative majority of only some forty seats".⁵⁴

The new Labour government had a lot more to deal with than just the emerging threat of Soviet expansionism, important though this was. It was vital, given the major domestic issues to be confronted, that Attlee should have a strong Foreign Secretary who fully enjoyed his confidence. Attlee already saw the Soviets as a major threat and it was essential that sufficient priority be attached to being fully in the picture of developments on that front. Attlee's was a reforming and a socialist government; he was elected to make profound changes domestically (for example introducing Beveridge's Welfare State proposals) but the problems to be confronted were also profound. After bearing the costs of taking a central role in a lengthy world war, the economy was in a parlous state; a major fuel crisis loomed; there were food shortages and rationing at home and food shortages for our nearest European allies which could not be ignored; the social issues to be confronted were legion. Moreover, internationally he had other major concerns with which to grapple. The British Empire, which had long accorded Great Britain the influence and importance of a super state, was beginning to disintegrate which left the depleted British military forces having to: "respond to the problems of policing an empire which, when not already on the road to self-government and independence, was increasingly beset with

⁵³ Ibid Page 601, diary entry for Monday May 21 1945.

⁵⁴ Ibid Chapter 24 Page 611.

nationalist unrest in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, unrest which it was anticipated with some foreboding, the forces of international Communism would soon be in a position to exploit".⁵⁵

The establishment of the State of Israel also consumed much of the time and energy of the British establishment, as is evident from the number of times this was discussed in full Cabinet.⁵⁶ Moreover the relationships between Britain and the other two major Second World War 'super powers' was of great importance. As Francis Williams, in the post-war memoirs of Clement Attlee, observes: "Attlee and Bevin were compelled throughout the whole of the post-war period to play for time. They had to fight a holding operation. It was one which Britain's limited resources and pressing economic and defence problems made it virtually impossible for her to win without American help, only obtainable if the United States could be brought to realise that her own interests, no less than those of Britain and Europe, required her to oppose the expansion of Soviet power in Europe and the Middle East".⁵⁷

Matthew Jones has described the situation in which Britain found itself, eloquently, as follows: "far from enjoying any peace dividend with victory in the recent war, defence planners had to readjust to the menacing presence of Soviet military power in the heart of Europe, behind which lay a totalitarian system of government equipped with an ideology that predicted the demise of the capitalist states of the West, and which was busy consolidating, with the assistance of local Communist parties and using brutal methods, its firm hold over the peoples of Eastern Europe".⁵⁸

It has also to be remembered that it was not just the growing territorial expansionism of the Soviets, on the one hand, and the cooling of the 'special relationship' with the United States, on the other, that Britain was having to contend against at this time. It was also the period of the emergence of the nuclear race. Roosevelt had informed

⁵⁵ Jones, Matthew. *The Official History of the UK Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: Volume I: From the V-Bomber Era to the Arrival of Polaris, 1945-1964*. Published Routledge, May 2017. Chapter 1, Page 9

⁵⁶ TNA catalogue shows that Full Cabinet discussed the constitutional position of the setting up of the State of Israel 54 times between August 1945 and the end of 1948.

⁵⁷ Williams, Francis. *A Prime Minister Remembers*: Published Heinemann, 1961, Chapter 11, Page 160.

⁵⁸ Jones, Matthew Chapter 1 Page 9.

Churchill before the end of the Potsdam Conference in August 1945 - but had not informed Stalin - that the US was about to drop an atomic bomb on Nagasaki to bring the war in Japan to an end. The Americans were clearly, at that point, in the lead in terms of developing nuclear weapons but the Soviets were playing catch up rapidly and the view of the British government was that the British would be in danger of losing status unless they, too, entered the race.

On the foreign affairs front, Attlee generally left things to Ernest Bevin. As the new Prime Minister, Attlee initially intended – and was expected – to appoint Bevin to the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. But at the last minute⁵⁹ he appointed him Foreign Secretary instead. This, arguably fortuitous change of plan, and this tendency to leave foreign policy to Bevin, did not denote a lack of interest on Attlee's part, nor a reluctance to stand up to the strong personality of Bevin but, rather, was more due to their shared views on foreign policy. The two men, though very different from each other, were close allies who shared great mutual respect. Bevin had been one of the most influential, if not the most influential, of the Labour Cabinet Ministers in the Wartime Coalition Government. Although, in contrast to Attlee, his background was humble and his formal education limited, his abilities enabled him to work his way up to become the foremost trade union leader of his time, as General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU). He had gained experience of high political office when serving in Churchill's wartime coalition government, the latter recognizing Bevin's qualities as a shrewd man with the common touch who would provide an important bridge between Churchill's patrician Conservative colleagues and the working man and trade unionists. Churchill was astute enough to realize that he needed everyone on his side if he were to fully optimize the use of the country's resources. Bullock asserts that Bevin became the most popular politician in the coalition government after Churchill himself.⁶⁰

Bevin, while clearly in the lead on foreign policy, was never out of step with his friend Attlee. Moreover, as Elsby has noted there is a consensus amongst historians that it

⁵⁹ Thesis Chapter 2, Page 49.

⁶⁰ Bulloch. Page 854

was not just Attlee and Bevin who held similar views about foreign policy but rather there “was a commonality of view between Attlee, Bevin, the Cabinet and the Foreign Office”.⁶¹ Blackwell puts this down at least in part to the Labour government’s socialist ideology being confined to domestic policy issues, saying: “...on the domestic front, at least, they came to office determined to change the existing order of society”.⁶² His argument, basically, being that on matters of foreign policy the Labour government was freer to form policies unhampered by idealistic attitudes and could follow a more pragmatic path.⁶³

Bevin’s handling of Britain’s relationship with the Soviets in the turbulent years from 1946 through to the end of the two Labour governments was measured and pragmatic. He was kept well informed of the Communist expansionism of the Soviets, by the Russia Committee and others, but for a long time did not react confrontationally in the face of provocation. It was not until later that Bevin was prepared to go on record as being convinced that there was: “no longer cause for optimism that friendly relations could be maintained in the face of their anti-Western and expansionist campaigns”.⁶⁴

During the six years of Labour governments the Cold War intensified and first Bevin, as Foreign Secretary and in the light of advice from the Foreign Office’s Russia Committee, and then Attlee and his Cabinet, decided that a change in foreign policy was necessary. It seems reasonable to assume that their views were formed in part from personal experience of the difficulties they encountered with Soviet colleagues and partly from the advice they were receiving from their experts. But Francis paints a picture of Bevin as someone who was very much his own man, who formed his own views: “He sought and was ready to receive advice from his permanent officials but he made his own decisions and if they were decisions which often drew upon a range of

⁶¹ Elsby, Andrew William. *British Foreign Policy Towards the Soviet Union Over Germany in the Immediate Post-World War Two Period: A Causal Analysis*. Phd Thesis, University of Sussex, June 2004. Page 104.

⁶² Blackwell, Michael. *Clinging to Grandeur: British Attitudes and Foreign Policy in the Aftermath of the Second World War*. Published Greenwood Press, 1993. Chapter 3, Page 23.

⁶³Ibid. Chapter 3, Pages 22 to 25.

⁶⁴ Jeffery, Keith. *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949*. Published Bloomsbury, 2010.

experience uncommon to the Foreign Office they were soon recognized by his staff to gain a richness and sureness from that fact".⁶⁵

By 1951 the end of the reforming Labour Attlee government was in sight and the Cold War was intensifying. At the end of November, just a month after the General Election that returned Churchill to Downing Street, Colville, who himself had been posted back from the Foreign Office to No 10 as the Prime Minister's Principle Private Secretary, recorded a conversation with Churchill as follows: "The Prime Minister said that he did not believe total war was likely. If it came it would be on one of two accounts. Either the Americans....would say to the Russians you must by certain dates withdraw from certain points and meet us on certain requirements: otherwise we shall attack you. Or, the Russians realizing that safety did not come from being strong, but only from being the strongest, might for carefully calculated and not for emotional reasons, decide that they must attack before it was too late. If they did so their first target would be the British Isles".⁶⁶

Churchill's belief that there remained mileage in trying to broker a meeting of minds between the Americans and the Soviets was a theme that ran through the remainder of Churchill's checkered final period as Prime Minister, dogged as he was by intermittent periods of illness and, arguably, impaired judgement. He saw his role as the elder statesman who might just be able to bring about the rapprochement between the former three war time allies and thereby leave a fitting legacy at the end of his period of office. But his remaining days as Prime Minister were to be marred by health issues that undermined his ability to put his attempts at bridge-building to the test. On 23 June 1953 Churchill presided over a dinner in honour of the Italian Prime Minister, de Gasperi. At the end of dinner Churchill delivered a speech "in his best and most sparkling form"⁶⁷ after which, in the presence of many of the guests, Churchill had a stroke which affected his mobility and his speech: "He sat down and was almost

⁶⁵ Williams, Francis. *Ernest Bevin Portrait of a Great Englishman*. Published Hutchinson, 1952. Chapter 20, Page 244.

⁶⁶ Colville. Personal Papers held at Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge, under Class CLVL. Diary entry for 25 November 1951.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Diary entry for 23 May 1955.

unable to move. After the guests had left, he lent heavily on my arm but managed to walk to his bedroom".⁶⁸ He chaired Cabinet the following day, his speech slurred and his mouth drooping, but as Rab Butler subsequently told Colville, no one attending the June 24 Cabinet noticed anything strange except that the Prime Minister was more silent than usual.⁶⁹ The next day Winston and Clementine, together with Jock Colville, repaired to Chartwell to enable Winston to have a fortnight's complete rest. At first Colville feared that Churchill would not live beyond a few days not least because he had by then lost the use of his left arm and left leg: "But W's recuperative powers, both physical and mental, invariably outstrip all expectation and after a week he began rapidly to improve".⁷⁰

Arguably Churchill stayed on as Prime Minister, even after his stroke, at least in part because he hoped to bring about another conference between the three powers that would achieve some meeting of minds and help to reduce the potential hostilities born of the Soviet expansionism. That said, his reluctance to cede power and his lack of confidence in Eden, his long-expected successor, would doubtless also have played a part. Despite Eden's increasing frustration with Churchill's prevarication over when he would hand over the reins,⁷¹ it was clear that even at the last knockings of his premiership he harboured a continuing desire to try to bring the Soviets and the Americans together.⁷² On Friday July 24th 1954 Colville records: "Lunched alone with W at Chartwell. He is now amazingly restored, but complains that his memory has suffered and says he thinks he probably will give up in October or at any rate before the Queen leaves for Australia in November. Still very wrapped up with the possibility of bringing something off with the Russians and with the idea of meeting Malenkov⁷³ face to face." ⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Ibid. Diary entry for 25 November 1951.

⁶⁹ Colville. *The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries 1939-1955*. Chapter 38 Page 668.

⁷⁰ Ibid. Chapter 38 Page 668.

⁷¹ Eden believed he had extracted a promise from Churchill in the spring of 1954 that the latter would stand down at the end of the Parliamentary Session.

⁷² There is an interesting echo here of a much later close, but fraught, partnership – between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, with the latter believing that the former had reneged on a promise to step aside in his favour much sooner than he did.

⁷³ Stalin's successor who, in the event, had only a short tenure.

⁷⁴ Colville. Personal Papers held at Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge. Diary entry for 24 July 1953.

In the event Churchill's reluctance and prevarication about handing over to Eden continued for a further 20 months, until 4 April 1955, when he at last came to the view "that he did not really think there was much chance of a top-level conference, and that alone would be a valid reason for staying".⁷⁵

Contrasting stability in the Foreign Office

While the government administrations came and went – with three different administrations from 1945 to 1955 - the permanent cadre of officials in the Foreign Office, and, indeed, throughout Whitehall, were working away with colleagues from other departments and agencies, gathering information and forming policy ideas and trying to make their voices heard by the politicians in charge. The Foreign Office then, as now, attracted the highest calibre of people into its ranks. This begs the question as to why such talented and often well-connected people should be so attracted to a career that does not generally provide large monetary rewards. The answer is doubtless multi-layered but must include some of the following factors: those from privileged backgrounds who have benefitted from private education at a very high level may put a high premium on the intellectual stimulation, potential for influence, collegiate working environment and career paths available to them in the diplomatic service. Added to this would be the attraction for many of overseas work and even the prospect of receiving honours or of not having to take responsibility for the outcomes of policy decisions. Whatever the reasons it can be demonstrated that at the end of the War many senior diplomats, though not all, were indeed from the stereotype privileged background in terms of their educational background and their lineage. Their political masters, while many of them were similar in terms of their backgrounds and education were very different in one major respect. They were necessarily impermanent in their positions. By contrast, their officials spent their whole careers in the diplomatic service learning the ropes, gaining expertise in their specialist areas and climbing the career ladder so that they were well equipped to supply the kind of

⁷⁵ Colville. *The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries 1939-1955*. Chapter 41 Page 708.

stability that politicians would not be able to emulate, even assuming that they might wish so to do. While this is always likely to be true, it is arguably more important to have experience and continuity during a period of heightened international tensions where the collection and analysis of information in a fast-changing situation by experts in the field, must be beneficial to policy makers.

In 1945 those at the top of the Foreign Office tree included the most senior diplomats: Sir Alexander Cadogan, Sir Orme Sargent and the Ambassadors in the most senior posts throughout the world – HM Ambassadors in Washington⁷⁶ and in Moscow⁷⁷ among them. Others of considerable influence would have been those in the earlier stages of their careers who occupied influential positions, for example as Principal Private Secretary to Foreign Office Ministers, and these would include the likes of Pierson Dixon and Frank Roberts. Others would be the Heads of Departments within the Foreign Office who would be on the second or third rank down from the top and would include such people as Sir Oliver Harvey (the first Chairman of the Russia Committee and Head of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office). Biographical details about these and other key individuals and others will be picked up later⁷⁸ because the notion that individual diplomats played an important part in the formulation of foreign policy in the early Cold War is a theme of this thesis.

Conclusion

Having explored in this introductory chapter the broad political landscape of Great Britain at the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War, there remain three main themes to pick up: first, why the topic was chosen; secondly, to recap on the broad aims of the research; and thirdly, to outline how the rest of the thesis is organized.

There were five reasons that prompted the decision to research the Russia Committee. The first was the desire to understand what prompted the setting up of such a body. This led to the need to look at the wider context of what was going on at the time, as

⁷⁶ Viscount Halifax

⁷⁷ Sir Archibald Clark Kerr,

⁷⁸ Thesis Chapters 2, 3, and 4 and Appendix 2.

well as the views and concerns that were beginning to emerge on the part of officials and politicians towards the changes in the relationships between the former big three wartime allies: the US, Russia and Britain.

The second reason related to the increased availability of data on the subject. As the Russia Committee was an official body within the Foreign Office, and a secret one at the time, it could not be studied in depth before its papers were released into the public domain. The Papers of the Committee began to be released⁷⁹ comparatively recently under the 30 Year Rule, and even now some papers remain closed. This provided, therefore, the opportunity to reveal something extra about the way in which the Foreign Office officials were able to influence the formation of foreign policy. Over the twelve-year period of the Committee's existence it met over 150 times and generated a vast number of papers. The minutes of the Russia Committee meetings for the years from 1946 through to 1952 have been read and catalogued in researching for this thesis and are listed and summarised, together with some of their key papers, in Appendix 1.⁸⁰

The third reason was because relatively little has been written on the subject so that secondary sources are comparatively thin on the ground. Mention of the Committee is often confined to a passing reference, though a few recent PhD and MPhil theses have gone into greater detail and are cited in later chapters. The only detailed study specific to the Russia Committee remains the article by Ray Merrick in the *Journal of Contemporary History* in 1985.⁸¹ That article, the details of which are picked up later,⁸² dealt exclusively with 1946 and 1947. Although these were undoubtedly active and important years in the life of the Russia Committee, the papers on which would have been the only ones available to Merrick at the time of writing his article, it remains the case that it covered less than 20 percent of the time that the Committee existed. Being able to cover the whole period, therefore, offered the potential for breaking new ground.

⁷⁹ The Russia Committee papers began to be released at TNA from the late 1980s, mostly under Foreign Office class FO 371.

⁸⁰ Pages 230 to 313.

⁸¹ Merrick.

⁸² See Chapter 5, Page 108 and 140.

The fourth reason was because advice was received from respected contemporary historians⁸³ that this was a subject that was worth examining, both because it had not yet been done comprehensively, and in order to add to the knowledge of the understanding of British foreign policy formation in the early Cold War.

Finally, and of some importance personally, it provided the opportunity, from a former Whitehall insider's perspective, to cast light on the relationships between Ministers and their officials in the early Cold War, and in particular between Ernest Bevin, perhaps the most unlikely of great Foreign Secretary's, and his very different body of advisers. The workings of Whitehall and, in particular, the ways in which Ministers and their officials interact is likely to be somewhat opaque to those who have not experienced it. And while there are no shortages of secondary sources on the workings of Whitehall written by former insiders that deal with specific issues (an example being Percy Craddock's work on the JIC)⁸⁴ these tend to be specific to the subject under scrutiny rather than giving an insight into the way ministers and officials work together.

As to the broad aims of the thesis, to re-cap, there are basically three main inter-related aims: to look at the Russia Committee in its entirety as had never been done before; and, on the basis of that research, to assess the way in which the Russia Committee influenced the British government's foreign policy towards the Soviet Union; and to take a fresh look at the way in which key Foreign Office officials, associated with the Russia Committee, may or may not have influenced the views of Ministers - particularly Ernest Bevin's - and consequent foreign policy decisions on, how to deal with the Soviet Union's Communist expansionism.

The remaining eight Chapters of this thesis will explore these issues. Chapter Two looks at the concerns about Soviet foreign policy that were emerging as the war was coming to an end and in the immediate aftermath. It concentrates on what was happening in 1945 and looks at the Yalta conference; at the warnings issued by the US diplomat and Soviet expert, George Kennan; at the advice produced for Eden and then

⁸³ Most notably Professors David Reynolds and Matthew Jones.

⁸⁴ Craddock, Percy. *Know Your Enemy: How the Joint Intelligence Committee Saw the World*. Published John Murray, 2002.

passed to Bevin by the British diplomat who was to be the instigator of the Russia Committee, Sir Orme Garton Sargent; to look at Ernest Bevin's arrival in the Foreign Office as the new Foreign Secretary whose immediate task was to attend the Potsdam conference, which had been interrupted by the British General Election and change of government, and then his attendance at the first of the Foreign Secretaries Conferences; and to contrast the change in the political leadership with the continuity provided by the permanent cadre of diplomats.

Chapter three looks at how the early Cold War was developing in 1946. It examines Stalin's Election speech and Churchill's Iron Curtain speech and looks in depth at two policy papers by diplomats, in the form of Telegrams, that have since been regarded by historians as key to identifying and publicising in the West the concerns that US and British Soviet experts were experiencing. These policy papers, which have become known as the 'Long Telegrams', are examined in detail. The Chapter also looks at the Paris Council of Foreign Ministers, noting the difficult relationships developing between Bevin and his Soviet counterpart, Molotov.

Chapter four looks at the setting up of the Russia Committee within the Foreign Office in March 1946 and examines both why it was felt necessary at that time and within the Foreign Office purview to set up such a Committee. It also focuses on who set up the Committee and it does this for two reasons. The first being that there is some confusion as to who was responsible for setting up the Committee ie whether it was Alexander Cadogan, the Head of the Foreign Office until very early in 1946, or the Head of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, within which the 'Russian Desk' was situated, or the person who was to succeed Cadogan, namely Orme Sargent. The second reason is to focus on some of the diplomats who played key roles in the Russia Committee. There were many such individuals and information about some of them is in Appendix 2 but information on the main characters is included mainly in Chapter four.

Chapter 5 concentrates on the first three years of the Russia Committee, looking sequentially at 1946, 1947 and 1948 when the Committee was new to the task of gathering, analysing and promulgating information on Soviet expansionism, and was

working strongly to that end. 1946 saw a strong beginning and their work is examined in some detail; 1947 saw the Committee really getting into its stride; and 1948, which among other things was the year of the Berlin Blockade, and another busy year for the Russia Committee, saw the public recognition by Bevin of the need to take action to counter Soviet propaganda. It also saw the first of the re-organisations of the Russia Committee.

Chapter six concerns the work of the Russia Committee over the years 1949 to 1952, a period which the thesis describes as the second phase of the Committee's work. This period included a further overhaul of the Committee to make it more effective.

Although this could imply that the Committee was starting to be regarded as less than fully fit for purpose, which to an extent will be shown to be true, it also coincided with a period where the Committee's main and regular output was reaching the most powerful people in the country and when its engagement with Ministers was at its height.

Chapter 7 moves away from the sequential detail of the Russia Committee's work and takes a broader look at a few of the many statecraft issues in the early Cold War which dominated the agenda of the British government, and in particular, the Foreign Office, in the years from 1946 to 1952. This was a period during which the Russia Committee was most active and also coincided with the time when Ernest Bevin, as Foreign Secretary, and a towering figure of Attlee's government, was driving forward the government's foreign policy. The three issues selected for examination are: the development of the atomic warfare capability; Titoism, and the threat that it posed for Soviet expansionism; and the impact of Chinese communism and, in particular, the Korean 'War' on international relations. The Foreign Office had a close interest in these matters and the Russia Committee was gathering information, writing and promulgating papers on these and other issues.

Chapter 8 takes a fairly brief look at the final phase of the Russia Committee's existence and the parallel policy and/or intelligence advisory bodies within both the Foreign Office and the government more widely, whose existence obviated the need for the Russia Committee to continue to exist. It had fulfilled its aim as a means of

collecting and disseminating information to Ministers so that they could make decisions on foreign policy based on sound advice, but it had run its course.

Chapter 9 examines the Russia Committee in historical perspective and looks at secondary sources to identify what has been claimed of, or written about, the Committee. It attempts to answer the question as to what, new, can be said about the Committee's achievements as a result of the research for this thesis; what new can be said about how it influenced Bevin in reaching his views on the need to counter Soviet Communist expansionism, and consequently his foreign policy decisions. In short, whether the existence of the Committee made a difference.

Chapter 2 Cold War Origins – Emerging Concerns

Historians will doubtless long continue to debate the timing of the origins of the Cold War⁸⁵ but, from the perspective of this thesis, concerned as it is with the post-war machinations within the British Foreign Office, the focus turns to tracing the events that may have led the senior diplomats to reach the conclusion that it was necessary to set up apparatus within the Foreign Office for monitoring the behaviour of the Soviets as it impacted on her former war time allies.

1945 was clearly pivotal in terms of shifting attitudes and foreign policy towards the Soviet Union on the part of the United States and Britain. From as early as February/March 1945, as the end of the Second World War was in sight, some highly significant events, and changes in administration were taking place. These threw light on the beginnings of the cracks in the alliances between the big three powers and arguably can lay claim to providing, if not the start, then the seeds of the start of the Cold War. This chapter examines these events and issues which included: the Yalta Conference, which took place from the 6th to the 11th February 1945; the writings by the US diplomat, George Kennan; in Britain, the Stock Taking After VE Day Memorandum which was commissioned by Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden in July; the Potsdam Conference which spanned two different British Government Administrations; the British General Election result; and the first in a series of what were to become highly important Conferences, or Councils, of Foreign Ministers.

Yalta

In February 1945 the big three war leaders – the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill; the Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin; and the US President Franklin D Roosevelt – met in Russia, in the city of Yalta on the Crimean peninsula, to discuss and make major decisions about the post-war world. Of Yalta, Deutscher writes: “In their thoughts the ‘Big Three’ still tended to project their present unity into the peace and to see the future in terms of their condominium and of spheres of influence. But the nearer the

⁸⁵ Thesis Chapter1, pages 7 to 9.

war drew to an end the stronger grew their mental reservations, doubts and fears. Each side made concessions to the other, but sought guarantees for itself. To every act of agreement, each was anxious to add an escape clause.....As if by some frailty, the 'Big Three' were driven to adopt one military expedient after another; and every expedient contained seeds of future discord and rivalry".⁸⁶

The British agenda for the Yalta Conference discussions, as conceived and drawn up by the Foreign Office, was a "detailed and extensive list of priorities".⁸⁷ The major priorities were: the future of Germany; the Polish question; and possible French participation in later meetings of Foreign Ministers and Heads of Government. Sir Alexander Cadogan,⁸⁸ persuaded Foreign Secretary, Eden, to lobby colleagues and counterparts at Yalta to agree to the introduction of regular meetings of Foreign Secretaries.⁸⁹ Cadogan,⁹⁰ and Eden both remembered the "disorganisation of Tehran",⁹¹ and thought that meetings of Foreign Ministers every three or four months in London, in advance of meetings of the 'Big Three', could usefully prepare the ground for the latter's discussions of complicated and technical issues. These conferences were subsequently to become a feature, though at differing locations and at different intervals, but were noteworthy more for the differences, disagreements, even hostilities, between the parties that they sometimes revealed. As to the future of Germany, the Big Three were in agreement in principle about the need to partition Germany but had little in the way of concrete plans on how this should be done.

⁸⁶ Deutscher, Isaac. *Stalin: A Political Biography*. Published Penguin Books, 1949.

⁸⁷ Ross. *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin: British Documents on Anglo-Soviet Relations 1941-45*. Chapter 7 Page 53.

⁸⁸ Alexander George Montagu Cadogan had been Permanent Under Secretary and Head of the Foreign Office since 1938, which was a longer period than normal for anyone to hold this post which is pinnacle of the Diplomatic Service. This was possibly as a result of the War and the need to have some continuity in this position.

⁸⁹ Cadogan, Alexander. Diaries, examined at Churchill Archive Centre, Cambridge, in September 2015.

⁹⁰ Trevor Evans, *Bevin*, published George Allen & Unwin, 1946, Page 212, described Cadogan as "the punctilious and precise diplomat".

⁹¹ Ross. *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin: British Documents on Anglo-Soviet Relations 1941-45*. Chapter 7 Page 53.

Emerging concerns of US about Soviet policy – enter George Kennan

It was not until the Second World War was drawing to a close that George Kennan, a recognised US expert on Russia, returned to the US Embassy in Moscow. In his *Memoirs*⁹² he explains that on return to the country he had known so well in the past, he felt that he needed not to prejudge Soviet intentions as he recognised that they might well have changed following years of wartime co-operation with Western Allies. However, it was only a matter of a few weeks after his return that he concluded: “What I saw ... was enough to convince me that not only our policy toward Russia but our plans and commitments generally for the shaping of the post-war world, were based on a dangerous misreading of the personality, the intentions, and the political situation of the Soviet leadership”.⁹³

During February and March 1945, following the Yalta Conference,⁹⁴ Kennan witnessed endless, frustrating, discussions with Molotov over, for example, who was - and who was not - to be allowed to participate in discussions about the formation of a new Polish government. Kennan notes that, by April, President Roosevelt started to show a “strong and growing anxiety...over Soviet reactions and practices”.⁹⁵

Then, on 12 April 1945, President Roosevelt died and was succeeded by President Truman, a very different and in some ways less tolerant individual. Reynolds describes him as: “inexperienced and insecure but with a penchant for toughness, inclined towards the ‘firm but friendly’ line...”.⁹⁶

Three Weeks in Summer 1945 – ‘Stock Taking after VE Day’ – enter Sir Orme Garton Sargent

In, or around, the 10th July 1945, Eden, then Foreign Secretary to Churchill’s war time coalition government, asked Sir Orme Sargent to produce a paper on the ‘general

⁹² Kennan, George F. *Memoirs 1925-1950*. Published Little, Brown and Company, 1967.

⁹³ Ibid. Chapter 9, Page 224.

⁹⁴ The Yalta Conference took place from 6 to 11 February 1945.

⁹⁵ Kennan. Chapter 9, Page 236.

⁹⁶ Reynolds. *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s*. Chapter 15 Page 272.

political situation'. The background to this is explained in a manuscript note⁹⁷ from Sargent to Alexander Cadogan, his then boss, as follows: "Sir A Cadogan. The S/S when he was still down in the country, said he would like to have a 'Stock Taking' Memo on the general political situation at the end of the European War. The attached is a rather hurried attempt to get something down on paper before the S/S leaves. I have sent a copy to the Private Secretary. OG Sargent July 11." ⁹⁸

The paper produced by Sargent, dated 12 July 1945, entitled 'Stock taking after VE Day'⁹⁹ is one of the earliest British Foreign Office documents which offers evidence of alertness to the potential threats posed by the Soviet Union.

Orme Garton Sargent, who was to be the central character in the setting up of the Russia Committee, was known to his friends as 'Moley' and, to many others, just as OGS. He was exceptional as a senior diplomat for not serving abroad. Indeed, aside from spells in Paris early on in his career, from 1925 to his retirement in February 1949, he refused to attend overseas conferences or to go abroad for any purpose. It was thought that he suffered from claustrophobia in ships and aircraft. Some contemporaries believed that this was perhaps for the best as he had few of the interpersonal skills necessary for a great Ambassador. Although he was highly intelligent, informed, and passionate about defending British interests, he was nevertheless said to be reserved and somewhat aloof, with little time for the social life which was, and remains, an important element of an Ambassador's job. As Sir Robert Vansittart, a former Foreign Office Permanent Under-Secretary is said to have observed: "Orme Sargent was a philosopher who strayed into Whitehall. He knew all the answers; when politicians did not want them he went out to lunch".¹⁰⁰ This description implies a certain detachment or even perhaps a lack of commitment to his role though this could be regarded as being at odds with his colleague, Lord Brimelow's, description of

⁹⁷ TNA: FO 371/50912. Manuscript minute OG Sargent to Sir Alexander Cadogan dated July 11 1945.

⁹⁸ "Before the S/S leaves" refers to the planned departure of the Secretary of State on 14 July for the Potsdam Conference starting on 15 July.

⁹⁹ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Memorandum, signed O G SARGENT, and dated 11th July 1945.

¹⁰⁰ Vansittart, Robert. *Lessons of my life*. Published (Republished) by Forgotten Books, 2012; and in FCO History Note 15.

Orme Sargent as: “..an absolute model of a civil servant; quiet; orderly; calm; meticulous; thoughtful; fair minded and expeditious. He could get through extraordinary amounts of work, but never appeared ruffled”.¹⁰¹ Two other pen pictures of Orme Sargent add further flesh to the bones, the first given by Jock Colville in 1941, who as Winston Churchill’s Principal Private Secretary (PPS), knew Orme Sargent well, when he described him as a: “witty and cynical Under Secretary at the Foreign Office who was loved and respected by all his colleagues..... Churchill set great store by his judgement”.¹⁰² The second from, Sir John Wheeler-Bennet, a prominent member of the Foreign Office’s Political Intelligence Department (PID) during the Second World War, described Orme Sargent as: “a survival (sic) of a past age, almost an anachronism. In appearance, tradition, conventions, standards and values, he was essentially Edwardian with all the elegance and elan of that period”.¹⁰³

Clearly, then, Orme Sargent was a man of some force and influence and, given the largely anonymous nature of most senior public servants, the recorded views of his contemporaries provide the closest insight into this influential man and his strong views on what kind of foreign policy Britain needed to construct in the post war environment. Unfortunately, though perhaps not surprisingly, he did not leave his papers to any of the major archive centres. Indeed, his only papers relating to his official work are those held in the TNA under the Class FO 800/272-9 which are basically his Private Office papers. After his death, Orme Sargent’s personal papers were left to a friend but they are confined to papers about his family life and included no official papers.¹⁰⁴

At the time of Eden’s request for the ‘Stock Taking’ Memo, Orme Sargent was Deputy Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office which is, as it was then, the second highest rank within the Diplomatic Service. In February 1946 (i.e. two months before the first

¹⁰¹ Notes on two conversations with Lord Brimelow 20-21 April 1982. Churchill Archive Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge. Class GBR/0014/BIMO.

¹⁰² Colville. *The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries 1939-1955*. Page 352.

¹⁰³ Blackwell Chapter 5 Page 55.

¹⁰⁴ The Radcliffe Guidelines preventing senior officials from removing and/or writing about their official work had yet to be introduced at this time but, by convention, senior civil servants and diplomats who had been through the security vetting procedures, as Sargent would have been, were steeped in the need to keep their official business secret.

meeting of the Russia Committee) he was promoted to succeed Cadogan as Permanent Under-Secretary i.e. the most senior of all British diplomats, and, in civil service terms, out-ranked only by the Cabinet Secretary.

As one of his most senior officials at the time, Eden clearly knew Orme Sargent well. Their backgrounds, socially and educationally, were similar. Both were the products of a public-school education and from solid upper-class families and Eden would have been familiar with Orme Sargent's talents and, doubtless, his mind-set as regards Britain's position in the world and the challenges facing the country in the aftermath of the war. Eden was fully aware of, and in agreement with, Orme Sargent's views on the need to start standing up to the Soviets whose post-war settlement demands were starting to be regarded as becoming unacceptable and had seen, and commented on, his paper of 2 April 1945 which spelt out the need to reconsider British foreign policy towards the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the same was true for Orme Sargent in respect of Eden's views, the latter having written to Churchill: "the truth is that on any and every point, Russia tries to seize all that she can and... to grab as much as she can".¹⁰⁶

In commissioning the 'Stock Taking' Memo from Orme Sargent, therefore, Eden would have had some perception of the likely end result. The paper has been described as being "seminal to British post-war foreign policy"¹⁰⁷ and to have given rise to "an intense debate within Whitehall that apparently continued for some weeks".¹⁰⁸ It is interesting on a number of levels, including: the speed of its production and its authorship; the views of the Secretary of State, Eden, on the Memo; the timing of the commissioning in relation to the forthcoming General Election; and the use, if any, to which the paper was put.

The 'Stock Taking' Memo was produced at great speed and by Orme Sargent himself. While he may have been so deeply immersed in the subject matter that writing such

¹⁰⁵TNA: FO 371/47881 includes Orme Sargent's 2 April 1945 minute and Alexander Cadogan's and Eden's responses.

¹⁰⁶ Richardson, Adam, P. *The Attitudes and Advice on Foreign Policy given by Sir Orme Sargent*. University of Leeds, Phd Thesis, 2016. Chapter 6.

¹⁰⁷ Poole, Peter David. *British Foreign Policy, the United States and Europe 1945 to 50*. University of Birmingham, Dissertation, June 2011, Page 33.

¹⁰⁸Ibid. Page 33.

advice would not have required detailed research, nevertheless it would have been fairly unusual for an individual of his seniority, with many calls upon his time, to have immediately penned the paper himself. An individual as senior as Orme Sargent might reasonably be expected to commission a first draft of such a paper from one of his subordinates. While it is possible that he did so in this instance, the fact that the paper was produced at such speed, the fact that it has a flowing style rather than having the feel of being put together from disparate contributions and the fact that no evidence appears on the relevant Foreign Office files that his subordinates contributed to drafting the original version of the paper, all suggests that Orme Sargent penned the Memo himself. And while it is normal in Whitehall for civil servants to act quickly to meet requests for advice from their political masters, it is nevertheless impressive that a paper of such length, complexity and breadth of thinking was provided at such speed by such a busy individual.

The original 'Stock Taking' Memo, which was classified 'Secret', and dated 11 July 1945, is four single spaced typed pages long, excluding the Annexes, and has 16 paragraphs.¹⁰⁹ The first three paragraphs, extracts from which are reproduced here, elegantly set out the position in which Britain found itself as the war in Europe had drawn to a close and it is difficult, in hindsight, to take issue with Orme Sargent's scene setting:

STOCKTAKING AFTER VE DAY

The end of the war in Europe leaves us facing two main problems, neither of which has any resemblance to the problems with which we were faced at the end of the last war. They are (a) the military occupation by Soviet troops of a large part of Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Government's future policy generally; and (b) the economic rehabilitation of Europe so as to prevent a general economic collapse.

2. Our own position, too, in dealing with these problems is very different from what it was at the end of the last war. This time the control is in a large degree in the hands of the Soviet Union and the United States, and neither of them is likely to consider British interests ...unless we assert ourselves.....

¹⁰⁹ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Memorandum, signed O G SARGENT, dated 11th July 1945.

3.....the principle of co-operation between the three Great Powers should be specifically acceptedand would give us a position in the world which we might otherwise find it increasingly difficult to assert..... there is a feeling that Great Britain is now a Secondary Power...”.

Orme Sargent then goes on to say that the notion of Great Britain having become a Secondary Power is a misconception which it must be the policy of the British Government to combat and that in order to do that, given the fact that Britain was the weakest of the three both numerically and geographically: “.. it is essential that we should increase our strength in not only the diplomatic but also the economic and military spheres”.¹¹⁰ This might, at first sight, seem contradictory but what he may well have meant by this is that, although Britain may have ended the War as the weakest of the three big powers, and although there may have been “a feeling” that Great Britain was now a ‘Secondary Power’, this soubriquet was not necessarily justified and could, through appropriate actions/policies, be combated.¹¹¹

The meat of the lengthy Memo thereafter examined in detail the wide divergences between the outlooks, traditions and methods of the two other Great Powers and suggested what actions and policy Great Britain needed to adopt to maximise its influence over future developments dictated by either of the two other ‘Great Powers’.

In paragraphs 5 to 13 of the Memo, Orme Sargent concentrated on making some notable generalised comments on the Soviet Union and the United States, the flavour of which is illustrated by the following three extracts: “It is particularly dangerous to assume that the foreign policies of totalitarian governments are opportunist and fluctuating, like those of liberal governments (using the term “liberal” in its widest sense as representing all that is opposed to totalitarianism, whether to the Right or the Left). All totalitarian governments – and Russia is certainly no exception – are able to

¹¹⁰ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Memorandum, signed O G SARGENT, dated 11th July 1945. Paragraph 4.

¹¹¹ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. The final paragraph of the ‘Stock Taking’ Memo is reproduced in Appendix 1, Page 229-30.

conduct a consistent and persistent foreign policy over long periods because the government is not dependent on public opinion and changes of government..."¹¹²

This observation of the difference between, on the one hand, governments which have to have regard to the views of their electorates, and therefore need to tailor their policies and actions accordingly, and, on the other, the 'freedom' of totalitarian governments to make long term plans and stick to them, may seem a little simplistic but nonetheless has more than a kernel of truth. That said, Orme Sargent recognised that even such 'political freedom' as enjoyed by Stalin's Government would inevitably be constrained by the position it found itself in after a long and costly war, as he observed in his next paragraph: "At the present moment the Soviet Union has been so weakened by the war that Stalin is hardly in a position to force through ruthlessly his policy of ideological penetration against definite opposition.....".¹¹³

The Soviet Union had, of course, suffered enormous losses in manpower, in territory and in economic assets as a result of the Second World War and was pressing hard for reparations, in the post war negotiations at Yalta and Potsdam and other conferences. Orme Sargent then returned to the theme of constraints on Western governments: "Unfortunately, the foreign policy of the United States is, like that of the Soviet Union, difficult to forecast, but not because, as in Russia, it is secret, but because the "liberalism" of the United States constitution makes it fluctuating, uncertain, and emotional."¹¹⁴

The final paragraph of the Stock-taking Memo summarises Orme Sargent's suggestions for the future foreign policy towards the other two 'Great Powers'.¹¹⁵ It underlines Sargent's belief that Britain's foreign policy needed to be in keeping with traditional values and needed to work to establish a European voice even if that meant acting independently of the United States. Indeed, he was quite suspicious of the United States, fearing that they may "... adopt a policy of appeasement towards Russian

¹¹² TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Memorandum, signed O G SARGENT, dated 11th July 1945. Paragraph 5.

¹¹³ Ibid. Paragraph 7.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Paragraph 13.

¹¹⁵ See footnote 114.

domination”¹¹⁶ while recognising, however, that there remained a need to maintain Britain’s position with the latter. Having concluded his Memo, Orme Sargent signed it as “O. G. SARGENT”, dated it “11th July 1945” and, in accordance with normal procedure, submitted it to Anthony Eden via Alexander Cadogan who, before passing it on to Eden, added his own detailed comments covering two pages in manuscript and starting with his overall impression that: “This seems to me a most useful paper”.¹¹⁷ He then went on to comment on the conclusions, noting first, and before making comments on other aspects of the paper, that: “I entirely endorse conclusion (a) in para.16 – all of it”.¹¹⁸

Eden was also impressed with the Memo, enthusiastically endorsing it as an “excellent paper”.¹¹⁹ The Files show that Eden had clearly read the lengthy Memo immediately upon receipt, as the date of his manuscript note shows, and he commented: “I think this is an excellent paper and the Annexes are all valuable. I should like PM to see them & I am tempted to let Cabinet have a look also. I am most grateful for the guidance they give & agree whole heartedly. AE July 12”.¹²⁰

As to the Annexes to the Memo, as also endorsed by Eden, the main one of interest is the first, which comprises a note by Bruce Lockhart, dated 11 April 1945, which begins: “During my enforced immobilisation I have been turning my mind to the problem of Russia’s future intentions”.¹²¹ Sir Robert Hamilton Bruce Lockhart¹²² was a very colourful character with a long pedigree as an expert on Russia, having been posted to Moscow on joining the Diplomatic Service and was in the post of Acting British Consul-General in Moscow when the first Russian Revolution broke out in early 1917. Thereafter he had had continual contacts with the country in varying capacities, working for a time for the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and, during the Second World War he became Director-General of the Political Warfare Executive (PWE), co-

¹¹⁶ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Note dated 11 July 1945. Paragraph 16(d).

¹¹⁷ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Note dated 11 July 1945

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Dutton, David. *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation*. Published Arnold, 1997. Page 316.

¹²⁰ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Manuscript Note dated 12 July 1945.

¹²¹ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Annex 1 to Memorandum, signed O G SARGENT, dated 11th July 1945. Paragraph 13.

¹²² See also Appendix 2, Page 328-329.

ordinating all British propaganda against the Axis powers. He was also, for a time, the British liaison officer to the Czechoslovak government-in-exile and a close personal friend of Eden, as is evident from their spending leisure time together when Eden ceased to be in government.¹²³ For all these reasons Lockhart's views on the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War were not likely to be dismissed out of hand by Eden and others who knew of his expertise. His Annex I to the 'Stock Taking' Memo provides what might be described as Lockhart's take on a potted history of the Russian psyche. It makes for interesting, if not altogether convincing, reading. For example, he says: "We must remember that your true Bolshevik is a convinced Marxist and that Stalin regards himself, and is regarded by his supporters, as the infallible interpreter of Marxism..... [Marx's] whole belief in the social revolution was based on the theory that the smaller must be merged in the greater".¹²⁴

Lockhart concluded his Note by saying that there appeared to be only one way of checking the Soviet Union's 'political malfeasance' and that was by 'bolder, but still friendly diplomatic action' by Britain and the United States.

Having read the 'Stock Taking' Memo, including its Annexes, and given it his endorsement, Eden wrote, in manuscript, at the end of the Memo, a brief note to Pierson Dixon, his PPS, as follows: "PD Please speak to me tomorrow about circulation of these papers. AE".¹²⁵ The job title of PPS to a Minister (or, indeed, to a Permanent Secretary¹²⁶ or even to the Sovereign) in the British Civil and Diplomatic Services, is a slight misnomer which belies the importance of the post. It is a key position of influence as, arguably, the individual works more closely than any other with his or her Minister and is usually a position occupied by young and upcoming officials who are destined to reach the highest levels, as indeed was to be the case with Pierson Dixon.

¹²³ Dutton. Page 317.

¹²⁴ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Annex 1 to Memorandum, signed O G SARGENT, and dated 11th July 1945. Paragraph 1.

¹²⁵ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Manuscript Note dated 12 July 1945.

¹²⁶ The most senior civil servant in a home civil service Department is the Permanent Secretary. In the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence the most senior post is entitled Permanent Under Secretary so, in effect, these two slightly different job titles are interchangeable.

Pierson John Dixon,¹²⁷ whose forenames reflected a long-standing family tradition whereby he was the fifth generation, from father to eldest son, to be so named, and who was from birth always known by family, friends and colleagues as 'Bob', proved to be a highly influential individual. But whether or not he ever did discuss circulation of the 'Stock Taking' Memo with Eden the next day, or sometime later, cannot be verified as the trail goes cold at this point. There is no reference to such discussions in Pierson Dixon's diaries¹²⁸ and there are no further notes in the relevant archives to indicate whether such discussions took place. So, as Poole has rightly observed,¹²⁹ despite Eden's apparent intentions to give the Memo a wider circulation among his political peers, there does not seem to be any evidence that the paper was seen by Cabinet.¹³⁰ This is not altogether surprising. The timing of the commissioning of the Memo coincided with a very hectic period for Eden as the Secretary of State. The Potsdam Conference, to which Eden was to accompany Churchill, was set to begin just three days later on 15 July, and was expected to be a fairly lengthy affair.¹³¹ And the results of the British General Election were to be announced on 25 July so that some, at least, of Eden's energies, in common with the rest of his political colleagues, would have been invested in trying to ensure re-election of himself in his constituency but also election of the Conservative Party as the party of government (as opposed to being a partner in a coalition government). He was, moreover, heir apparent to succeed Churchill on the latter's anticipated future retirement. In the circumstances, then, even though Eden had warmly endorsed Orme Sargent's Memo, as had Cadogan, it is not surprising that nothing appears to have been done with the Memo immediately. However, that was by no means the end of it. Orme Sargent had clearly circulated the Memo to senior colleagues in the Foreign Office around the time of submitting it to Eden, and had asked for their comments. The responses arrived with him over the

¹²⁷ See also Appendix 2, Page 319-321.

¹²⁸ Dixon, Pierson *Double Diploma: The Life of Sir Pierson Dixon* Published Hutchinson 1968

¹²⁹ Poole. Page 33.

¹³⁰ TNA listings show that no such paper was circulated to Cabinet between 12 July 1945 and the end of the wartime coalition administration on 27 July 1945.

¹³¹ The Potsdam Conference began on 15 July 1945; was interrupted on 25 July to enable Churchill and Eden to return to the UK for the General Election; resumed on 28 July; and ended on 1 August ie 16 days duration.

course of the next week or two. The Foreign Office file at TNA¹³² show responses and comments being sent to him from: Gladwyn Jebb;¹³³ Sir John Troutbeck;¹³⁴ Sir Con O'Neill;¹³⁵ Douglas Howard;¹³⁶ Sir Christopher Warner;¹³⁷ Sir Philip Broadmead;¹³⁸ Sir Oliver Harvey;¹³⁹ Sir John Sterndale Bennett;¹⁴⁰ Ernest Passant;¹⁴¹ Sir Neville Butler;¹⁴² and Sir Ronald Campbell.¹⁴³ Several of these men – all men – went on to become active participants in the Russia Committee, several even Chairing the Committee on occasion. They were all either Heads of a particular Foreign Office Department or Deputy Heads. As such they were very senior and were drawn from a wide cross section of the Foreign Office which serves to illustrate that the Russia Committee was a broad-based entity – not confined to the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, for example, which housed the Russia Desk.

Of the responses received on the Memorandum the two which justify close attention, as opposed to the many others which Orme Sargent mostly just acknowledged and either agreed with, or dismissed summarily, came from Gladwyn Jebb and John Troutbeck.

Gladwyn Jebb, who at the time was PPS to Alexander Cadogan wrote a lengthy response to Orme Sargent and took issue with a fundamental point made by the latter in paragraph 14 of the 'Stock Taking' Memo, the relevant part of which reads: "....After the last war Germany was hamstrung until 1933 by having a liberal form of

¹³² TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. The minutes to Orme Sargent giving him comments, from those to whom he copied his 11 July 'Stock Taking' Memo are on this file at TNA.

¹³³ Gladwyn Jebb was at the time PPS to Alexander Cadogan. See also Appendix 2, Pages 325-326.

¹³⁴ Sir John (Jack) Troutbeck was Head of the German Department of the Foreign Office. See also Appendix 2, Pages 337-338.

¹³⁵ Sir Con O'Neill was Head of the Foreign Office News Department.

¹³⁶ Douglas Howard was Head of the Southern Department of the Foreign Office.

¹³⁷ Sir Christopher Warner was at the time the Head of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, that is the Department which held responsibility for dealing with Soviet Union issues. See also Appendix 2, Page 3338-9

¹³⁸ Sir Philip Broadmead was Head of the American Department of the Foreign Office.

¹³⁹ Sir Oliver Harvey was Deputy Under Secretary for the Foreign Office (Political). See also Appendix 2, Pages 323-325.

¹⁴⁰ Sir John Sterndale Bennett was British Minister (a diplomatic not a political appointment) in Sofia. See also Appendix 2, Page 314.

¹⁴¹ Ernest Passant was Director of Research and Librarian of the Foreign Office.

¹⁴² Sir Neville Butler was Head of the North American Department of the Foreign Office.

¹⁴³ Sir Ronald Campbell was Assistant Under Secretary for the Foreign Office (Far East Department).

government alien to her temperament. This will not happen this time, unless we make very great efforts to impose such a regime in Germany, for her natural tendency will be to strive to return to some form of authoritarianism.”¹⁴⁴

Gladwyn Jebb's response to this point was: “..On the other hand it is elsewhere [in the memo] suggested that Russia fears the revival of Germany as a “liberal” power and that we for our part should try to build up Germany as a bastion of liberalism, even if necessary “imposing” any such regime on a country whose tendency lies as previously stated in the opposite direction”.¹⁴⁵ Orme Sargent dismissed Gladwyn Jebb's point saying that his argument: “...lands us, I fear, with the conclusion that the only thing to do is to reach an agreement with Russia for dividing Europe into spheres of influence. This is a policy of despair which runs counter to the principles underlying the whole of my memorandum”.¹⁴⁶ A crushing dismissal. Needless to say, Gladwyn Jebb's comments were not taken on board in the revised version of the Memo. The comments submitted by Jack Troutbeck were perhaps not given quite so short shrift as those of Jebb. Troutbeck was a respected Foreign Office expert on Germany. Indeed, at this point he was the Head of the Foreign Office German Department, having earlier been involved in co-ordinating planning for the occupation of Germany and the peace settlement and, as such, had been much involved in the complex evolution of British thinking on the German question. His central point, in a well-argued minute dated 30 July 1945,¹⁴⁷ was also to take issue with the points made in paragraph 14 of the ‘Stock Taking’ Memo about the imposing of a liberal regime. He saw this policy as having three objectives: to prevent Germany from sliding into totalitarianism; to keep Germany weak so that it would be unable to play the Great Powers off against each other; and to prevent the Soviets from gaining political control. He wrote: “I must confess with all humility to certain doubts about all this....if the result, and the purpose, of establishing a liberal regime in Germany is to “hamstring” her, surely it is unlikely either to be a good advertisement for liberalism elsewhere or to last very long.

¹⁴⁴ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Memorandum, signed O G SARGENT, dated 11th July 1945. Paragraph 14.

¹⁴⁵ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Minute dated July 20 1945, from Gladwyn Jebb to Orme Sargent.

¹⁴⁶ TNA: FO 371/50912/5471. Minute by Orme Sargent, dated July 31st 1945

¹⁴⁷ TNA: FO 371 50912. Minute from J M Troutbeck to Orme Sargent dated 19 July 1945.

I have always thought it a short-sighted policy deliberately to create a feeble regime in Germany...I would say that to “impose” a liberal regime is a contradiction in terms.”¹⁴⁸

Orme Sargent’s concession to Jack Troutbeck’s comments was to agree to amend the wording of his paragraph 14 from “..impose a liberal regime in Germany” to “..support the cause of liberalism in Germany” and this form of words was contained in the revised version of the ‘Stock Taking’ Memo. This is a not insignificant concession which perhaps Orme Sargent made because he recognised that Troutbeck was such a respected expert on Germany.

On 31 July 1945, having received all the comments from his Foreign Office colleagues, Orme Sargent produced a minute summarising his responses to their comments and then produced a revised version of the Memo which, in truth, and despite the numerous comments he had received, was largely unchanged from the original that he had penned three weeks earlier. His 31 July minute included a manuscript note by him, in the margin, to the effect that the revised ‘Stock Taking’ Memo would: “still bear the date of the original Memo”.¹⁴⁹

This raises the puzzling question as to why Orme Sargent sought to produce a second version of the Memo and, even more puzzling, why he decided to retain the original date. On the first point, of why produce a second version, this would seem to be consistent with a normal Whitehall approach. If, as argued earlier, Orme Sargent penned the original – or what might be called the first draft – of the ‘Stock Taking’ Memo, he would have wanted it, for future usefulness and acceptance, to be considered by, and endorsed by, his senior diplomatic colleagues. To do so could only add weight to the importance accorded to the document if he could point to the fact that it had been seen as the product of the senior cadre of diplomats. Moreover, given that at this time he was Deputy Under Secretary - not yet the ‘boss’ - it would hardly be politic to seek the views of his colleagues, many of whom were his equals in terms of rank, only to dismiss them summarily without acknowledging that he had seen and considered them even if he chose then not to take them on board.

¹⁴⁸Ibid. Second and third paragraphs.

¹⁴⁹ TNA: FO 371 50912. Manuscript minute OG Sargent to Sir Alexander Cadogan, July 11 1945.

On the second, arguably more weighty point, as to why he specifically required the amended Memo to retain the original date, it seems that the reason, though this cannot be verified from evidence, is likely to have to do with the fact that between Eden's commissioning of it on, or around, 10 July and the revised version still dated 11 July but circulated within the Foreign Office on 31 July, there had been a change of Government and a change of Foreign Secretary. This begs the further question as to why this should have led him to insist on retaining the original date. Poole¹⁵⁰ raises two interesting points about the Memo in relation to the change of Government. First, he cites Robin Edmonds,¹⁵¹ a former diplomat, as pointing out that there is a Whitehall convention forbidding incoming governments from seeing papers prepared for a previous administration. While there is, indeed, such a convention¹⁵² and it is inconceivable that Orme Sargent would not have been aware of its existence, it would seem only to be relevant here if Sargent wished to accord it the status of a completed document that was not to be shown to an incoming Government. But clearly that was not his wish. If it had been, he would simply have had his clerks file the Memo using its pre change of government date destined for a 'previous administration' file and left it at that. But he must have felt strongly about the content of his Memo and felt that his new Foreign Secretary needed to see it when formulating his foreign policy decisions. Orme Sargent was doubtless aware of the respect which Eden held for Bevin (and vice versa)¹⁵³ and with Eden's belief that Bevin would continue with the Coalition's foreign policy. He could have avoided the danger of flouting the Whitehall convention by simply changing the date to after the arrival of Bevin. But to do so would break the link of its having been commissioned, and approved, by Bevin's predecessor, a link that would have been a useful selling point to Sargent given the shared views of the two Foreign Secretaries. Also, while technically retaining the original date was a breach of the convention, it could be argued that it would be appropriate to interpret the convention more liberally in the circumstances whereby a Labour Administration

¹⁵⁰ Poole. Page 34.

¹⁵¹ Edmonds, R. *The Big Three, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin In Peace and War*. Published Hamish Hamilton, 1991.

¹⁵² Whitehall archival policy is for files to be closed at the end of an Administration and a new set opened at the beginning of the new one. This facilitates the policy of not showing the previous administration's papers to the new one but is also practical in archival terms.

¹⁵³ Dutton. Chapter 11, Page 316. Dutton records Eden as having been "relieved that his successor as Foreign Secretary turned out to be Ernest Bevin rather than Hugh Dalton as many had anticipated".

followed on from a coalition government in which both Labour and Conservative Ministers had both served. Moreover, it would be in Orme Sargent's interests, assuming he did not want his 'Stock Taking' Memo to be swept under the carpet, to adopt an interpretation such that the advent of the new Labour Government would not be precluded from further discussion of his Memo; and that the new Foreign Secretary would have been at least aware of the discussion process. While it is verifiably true that the 'discussion', in writing at least, continued after the change of Government, as we know from the many written exchanges between 11 and 31 July that led to the production of the revised version of the Stock-taking Memo, those written exchanges were, during that period at least, from the evidence on the files, confined to exchanges between serving diplomats, although by the end of August Bevin had seen and read the Memo.¹⁵⁴

The 1945 General Election campaign was fought largely on domestic issues but, inevitably perhaps, given the recent end of the Second World War, both main political parties gave prominence in their Manifestos to foreign policy and, perhaps more surprisingly, they broadly followed similar lines. That said, it has to be remembered that the General Election was to be fought between, in essence, the two main political parties whose leaders had together held prominent positions as colleagues in a successful war-time coalition government. Both manifestos made strong references to the need for the United Nations Organisation which was then in its infancy.¹⁵⁵ The Labour Party Manifesto included the passage:

We must prevent another war, and that means we must have such an international organisation as will give all nations real security against future aggression.....

No domestic policy, however widely framed and courageously applied, can succeed in a world still threatened by war. 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.....

Now the victory has been won, at so great a cost of life and material destruction, we must make sure that Germany and Japan are deprived of all

¹⁵⁴ See under 'Continuity of foreign policy, Thesis Chapter 2, Page 56.

¹⁵⁵ The United Nations formally came into existence on 24 October 1945.

power to make war again.....We must consolidate in peace the great war-time association of the British Commonwealth with the USA and the USSR....¹⁵⁶

The Conservative Manifesto expressed similar views but emphasised the need for experienced men to take the policy forward:

Our alliance with Soviet Russia and our intimate friendship with the USA can be maintained only if we show that our candour is matched by our strength.

The main hope of the world is now founded upon the setting up of a World Organisation strong enough to prevent future wars of aggression whether by the weak or the strong. The United Nations have lately been assembled at San Francisco with the object of devising the necessary machinery".¹⁵⁷

The General Election that followed was expected to result in a return to power of the great wartime leader Winston Churchill. Anything else might seem like base ingratitude. The odds on a Conservative victory had shortened over the period of the campaign but it was still widely expected that Churchill would be returned as Prime Minister. On the morning when the results were due, but before the outcome was known, the Daily Mail warned that Labour would need to: "accept an adverse verdict like men and not like spoilt children".¹⁵⁸

The *Manchester Guardian*, perhaps more presciently, speculated that another coalition government might need to be formed if there were to be a stalemate.¹⁵⁹ In the event it proved to be a landslide victory for Labour as they won 47.8% of the votes which translated into 390 seats in the House of Commons and an overall majority of 146 seats.¹⁶⁰

So, the result of the 1945 UK General Election was largely unexpected, even on the part of the most optimistic of Labour supporters and Attlee, himself, was said to be

¹⁵⁶ The British Labour Party Election Manifesto, 1945: *Let us Face the Future: A Declaration of Labour Policy for The Consideration of the Nation*

¹⁵⁷ The 1945 Conservative Party Election Manifesto. *Winston Churchill's Declaration of Policy to the Electors*.

¹⁵⁸ *Daily Mail*, 26 July 1945.

¹⁵⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 23 July 1945.

¹⁶⁰ Bew, John. *Citizen Clem*. Published Riverrun, 2016. Part 5, Page 347. Labour had gained 225 seats, up from 165 to 390; Conservatives went from 361 seats to 195; Liberals were drastically reduced to having 12 seats.

shaken by the result. Sir Alan Lascelles¹⁶¹ recorded in his diary for 26 July 1945: “Attlee came 7.30, obviously in a state of some bewilderment – the poor little man had only heard a couple of hours before that he was to be called upon immediately to fill Winston’s place; it struck me that he may not be sure whether his followers are prepared to follow him, or may prefer another leader – he has had no chance of consulting them. Anyway, he kissed hands alright, so is now committed to forming a Government – or trying to.”¹⁶² That night “bonfires burned in the streets of east London, in a scene that was compared to the jubilations of VE Day”¹⁶³ and the *Daily Herald* reported that a dockworker had walked along Commercial Road in Mile End, with a placard around his neck which read: “THIS IS THE HOUR OF TRIUMPH OF THE COMMON MAN.”¹⁶⁴

After Attlee’s Audience of the King, he addressed a meeting in Westminster Central Hall of the newly elected Labour MPs where, with Bevin’s assistance, he warded off a leadership bid by Herbert Morrison¹⁶⁵ when Bevin moved a vote of confidence in Attlee as leader which was overwhelmingly passed. Attlee then turned his mind both to the need to return to Potsdam and to appoint a Foreign Secretary to accompany him. Other key posts would have to await his return.

Bevin as Foreign Secretary and Return to Potsdam

Bevin’s appointment as Foreign Secretary came as a surprise, not just to others, but also to himself as he had expected to be offered the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. It seems that Attlee had been inclined to make the latter appointment but changed his mind. Indeed, Lascelles reported that, in the Audience of the King on Thursday 26 July, which was held immediately after the results of the General Election were known, Attlee: “.. told the King he was thinking of making Dalton the Foreign

¹⁶¹ King George VI’s Principal Private Secretary.

¹⁶² Hart-Davies, Duff. Editor. *Kings Counsellor: Abdication and War: The Diaries of Sir Alan Lascelles*. Published Wiedenfeld & Nicholson, 2006. Page 344.

¹⁶³ Bew. Chapter 15, Page 348.

¹⁶⁴ *Daily Herald*, 27 July 1945.

¹⁶⁵ Morrison was lobbying fellow MPs to seek a leadership contest so that he could oppose Attlee for the leadership but his manoeuvring was scuppered by Bevin.

Secretary; HM begged him to substitute Bevin.”¹⁶⁶ Others, too, were keen to see Bevin at the Foreign Office, most notably the Cabinet Secretary of the day, Sir Edward Bridges, and also Bevin’s predecessor, Anthony Eden, whose diary entry for 26 July 1945 includes the passage: “Returned to W, and reported this.¹⁶⁷ Then Bob¹⁶⁸ came with me across to F.O. He tells me my successor may be Dalton. This would be very bad; it should be Bevin.”¹⁶⁹

Bevin, therefore, became Foreign Secretary, and was immediately thrown in at the deep end. Pierson Dixon recorded in his diary¹⁷⁰ that on the evening of Bevin’s appointment, when he was to fly with Attlee¹⁷¹ to Berlin the next day¹⁷² to resume the Potsdam Conference that had been interrupted by the General Election result, he and Oliver Harvey (in the absence of Orme Sargent who was at the theatre) spent an hour briefing Bevin on the Conference, bringing him fully up to speed on the topics under discussion and so on. Dixon said that Bevin: “absorbed it all and said very little, except, on parting, that he liked regular hours and found work better done and better decisions taken by work at day and not, like Winston, at night”.¹⁷³

Attlee and Bevin therefore arrived in Potsdam to resume the Conference on Saturday 28 July and Bevin had the first of a number of meetings with his two opposite numbers namely James Byrnes, the newly appointed US Secretary of State, and Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister. That evening also saw the first plenary session of the Conference attended by both Attlee and Bevin which lasted until the early hours of the following morning. Clearly there would have been interest, even perhaps concern, on the part of both the US and Soviet politicians and officials – as well, perhaps, as the British officials - over the change from Churchill’s Team to that of

¹⁶⁶ Hart-Davies. See footnote 162.

¹⁶⁷ This refers to the fact that Attlee had been to see Eden and asked him if he would be prepared to return to Potsdam with Attlee.

¹⁶⁸ Refers to Pierson Dixon – ‘Bob’ who was Eden’s and then Bevin’s Principal Private Secretary.

¹⁶⁹ Eden, Anthony. *Diaries*. Entry for 26 July 1945.

¹⁷⁰ Pierson Dixon diaries are incorporated in the book by his son. Piers Dixon, and his daughter, Corinna Hamilton, see footnote 172.

¹⁷¹ Attlee and Bevin were also accompanied by Sir Edward Bridges, Cabinet Secretary, and General (Pug) Ismay.

¹⁷² This was the first occasion in his life that Bevin had travelled by air.

¹⁷³ Dixon, Piers. *Double Diploma. The Life of Sir Pierson Dixon*. Published Hutchinson, 1968. Page 168.

Attlee's. The British interpreter at Potsdam, Hugh Lunghi,¹⁷⁴ commented that he: "was impressed by the 'sound, well-informed and realistic way in which Attlee, particularly, and also Bevin tackled the matter'. They got to the 'root of every question' and would not permit themselves to be distracted by 'red-herring digression – a trap into which Churchill could sometimes fall. At one point, Bevin leaned his large frame across Attlee to Lunghi and said, "Tell them, that in the Labour Party we call a spade a spade".¹⁷⁵

Potsdam – the turning point

Potsdam was not a resounding success for any of the central participants, though the Soviets did score a significant victory over the composition of the government of Poland and its frontier. Lawrence Freedman has summarised the essence of Potsdam as follows: "Tensions were evident...Germany was to be divided among the victorious powers and kept under an occupation regime, thereby delaying, though not for long, the struggle to shape its future political identity. Poland inevitably presented itself as a particularly difficult case. It had been the invasion of Poland by Hitler in September 1939, in cynical collusion with Stalin, that had drawn Britain into war. The Polish government-in-exile had moved to London and expected to return. With his forces now in full occupation, Stalin wanted his own regime put in place"¹⁷⁶

Bevin and Attlee stood their ground well during the discussions of these issues and made their respective marks. During the conference, and particularly during the days when plenary sessions were impossible due to the illness of Stalin on 29th and 30th of July (which according to Pierson Dixon had been due to Stalin having been shaken over his failure the day before to gain US and British agreement to his reparations requirements so that he "found it convenient to affect a diplomatic illness"),¹⁷⁷ Bevin had separate sessions with his fellow Foreign Ministers and had his first serious confrontations with Molotov.

Ernest Bevin clearly entered the scene as Foreign Secretary at a particularly sensitive time in relations between the 'Three Big Powers'. He took up the reigns with a strong

¹⁷⁴ Hugh Lunghi had been posted to the British Embassy in Moscow in 1943 because he was fluent in Russian. Lunghi was the first British soldier to enter Hitler's bunker at the end of the War.

¹⁷⁵ Bew. Chapter 15, Page 353.

¹⁷⁶ Freedman, Lawrence. *The Origins of the Cold War*. Published Cassell & Co, 2001. Chapter 1, Page 22.

¹⁷⁷ Dixon. Chapter 9, Page 170.

cadre of senior official advisers behind him, some at least of whom had strong views on the need for the West to take actions to restrain the expansionism of the Soviet Union. Moreover, they would have been well aware of Bevin's earlier 'on the record' criticisms of the Foreign Office and would have been forgiven for expecting that, he might, in contrast to senior diplomats and given his Labour Party pedigree, be pro-Soviet. In short, it could have been viewed as a fairly unpropitious beginning for the Foreign Office. But this was soon shown not to be the case and, indeed, Bevin was to go down in Foreign Office history as one of the most esteemed Foreign Secretaries in the history of the post.¹⁷⁸ Although his background, socially and educationally, was very different from that of the overwhelming majority of his staff in the Foreign Office, they quickly developed a mutual respect. Bevin himself, on his unexpected move to the Foreign Office, had had experience during the Second World War years of working with the top civil servants of the time and he appreciated their considerable abilities in being fully on top of their subjects and he valued their ability to help in the solving of problems. According to Bulloch, Bevin would affect sorrow towards those of his staff in the Foreign Office who: "had never had a chance because of their sheltered upbringing and education" but this was "more than half banter".¹⁷⁹ For their part, his staff recognised his impressive qualities which swiftly earned their respect. He was, it seems, very quick to take a point and absorb the information given to him but he resolutely refused to be hurried into reaching a considered conclusion, although once he had made up his mind he tended to stick to his guns.

Bevin came under a lot of criticism for not getting rid of the old FCO establishment, populated as it was almost exclusively by upper class, privately educated elite characters. Indeed, he faced, at the Labour Party conference in 1946, a formal resolution calling on him: "...to replace officials who were unsympathetic with socialist principles by others with more progressive views".¹⁸⁰ However, even if Bevin had been so minded it would not have been possible for him to summarily 'get rid' of officials. The fact that the recruitment and the subsequent management of members

¹⁷⁸ To this day there remains a bronze bust of Bevin in pride of place at the top of the staircase in the main FO building in Whitehall close to the Locarno Suite.

¹⁷⁹ Bulloch. Chapter 3, Page 84.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. Chapter 2, Page 74.

of the civil service and the diplomatic service were then, as now, independent of political interference is one of the cornerstones of the independence of the civil service in Britain. While Bevin might legitimately have had his say to the Cabinet Secretary about, for example: the choice of person to become his Principal Private Secretary (PPS); the staff in his Ministerial Office staff; or about the choice of the PUS, it would have been a matter for the Cabinet Secretary to decide. The concept of a Foreign Secretary being able to remove the 'FCO establishment' would simply run wholly counter to civil/diplomatic service independence.

On his arrival at the Foreign Office, Bulloch says that Bevin held "some residual radical suspicions of the Foreign Office"¹⁸¹ but his suspicions were short lived and although initially, while he sized up his key staff, he tended to rely on his (and formerly Eden's) Principal Private Secretary, Piers Dixon, as a go-between, he quickly came to respect his staff and they him. Indeed, in response to the calls at the Labour Party conference, Bevin was unrepentant saying that: "I am not one of those who decry Eton and Harrow. I was very glad of them in the Battle of Britain – by God! I was – those fellows paid the price in the RAF in those fatal days."¹⁸²

One of the question marks over the views and disposition of Bevin towards Russia relates to the fact that he was perceived to be well disposed to his Soviet allies as the Second World War drew to a close and might be assumed to continue to have been so well disposed as he assumed responsibility as Foreign Secretary. But such perceptions may not have been valid. He may not have been out of sympathy with the concerns expressed by Orme Sargent (or been opposed to the latter's setting up of the Russia Committee). Any shift in Bevin's pro-Soviet mindset, if indeed he had such a mindset, may have resulted both from his own first hand rather difficult experiences of dealing with the Soviets as well as his advice from his key officials. It is clear that his approach was one whereby he would listen carefully to the advice of experts and to take time to absorb what he was being told before finally coming to his own conclusions, as noted by Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick who said of Bevin that: "He never allowed himself to be

¹⁸¹Ibid. Part 1, Chapter 3, Page 96 and then on through to Part 4 of the Chapter sets out Bevin's early days and early encounters with his key staff.

¹⁸²Ibid. Chapter 2, Page 74, Footnote 1.

bounced into anything against his better judgement....He required time to read the files and subject his experts to a penetrating cross examination...Above all he required time to let a considered judgement precipitate from a mixture of reasoning, intuition and experience".¹⁸³

Bevin's so called pro-Soviet views may, therefore, have been exaggerated. Bill Jones, for example, tells of a misunderstanding on the part of the Labour Party of a pronouncement of Bevin's at the 1945 Blackpool Conference that: "... 'left understands left', was widely interpreted as applying to the Soviet Union whereas in reality he was talking about the French socialists..".¹⁸⁴

First Foreign Secretaries Conference – Bevin's tussles with Molotov

One of the outcomes of the Potsdam conference was the decision to have a protocol that: "established a Council composed of Foreign Ministers of the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China, France and the United States".¹⁸⁵

11 September 1945 saw the opening of the first meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers which was held in London¹⁸⁶ with Bevin for the first time acting as host to the other Foreign Ministers, Byrnes, Molotov, Bidault¹⁸⁷ and Wang.¹⁸⁸ The purpose of the Conference was for the Foreign Ministers to resolve the issues that lay unresolved from the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. But at the first meeting the "Russians became aggressive"¹⁸⁹ claiming that both France and China should not be involved; that it should just be the Big Three Powers as it had been at Yalta and Potsdam. This issue of the participation of France and China dominated the discussions in one form or another for the duration of the lengthy conference, which continued until 3rd October. Bevin stood firm against Molotov's claims and Byrnes supported him. The fact was that it had been agreed by all parties that the Council should comprise the

¹⁸³ Kirkpatrick, Sir Ivone. *The Inner Circle. Memoirs of Ivone Kirkpatrick* Published Macmillan, London 1959, page 203.

¹⁸⁴ Jones, Bill. *The Russia Complex: The British Labour Party and the Soviet Union*. Published Manchester University Press, 1977. Chapter 7, Page 103.

¹⁸⁵ FO 371/50922 sets out the Terms of the Protocol.

¹⁸⁶ The Protocol for the Council established that meetings should "normally meet in London".

¹⁸⁷ The French Foreign Minister.

¹⁸⁸ The Chinese Foreign Minister.

¹⁸⁹ Dixon. Chapter 10, Page 183.

Foreign Ministers of all five countries and it was in contravention of that protocol to then suggest that only the original 'Big Three' countries could discuss certain of the issues before the Conference. Initially, Molotov grudgingly accepted that France and China could be full participants but rejected any hint of compromise over the Balkans and engaged in a series of tussles aimed at securing the major part of Libya (Tripolitania) for the Soviets, something that had been firmly resisted at Potsdam. Then, having reluctantly agreed on 11 September that all five countries could participate in the Council's discussions, on 22 September the Soviet Delegation changed their stance, claiming that the Council's 11 September decision violated the Berlin agreement reached at Yalta.

Molotov's aggression continued and hostilities permeated the remainder of the lengthy Council and did not bode well for future such conferences. In his diaries, Cadogan, who had accompanied Bevin to the Conference, recorded: "Bevin's hopes of a new style of diplomacy, 'cards on the table, face upwards', waned.....At the meeting of Foreign Secretaries held in London, Molotov behaved in his most mulish and obstructive manner. By 23 September Bevin had had enough. He told Cadogan that he proposed to "ave it out' with Molotov".¹⁹⁰

Bevin was essentially a shrewd and pragmatic man and his immediate experiences of negotiation at the Potsdam Conference would have provided a sharp reality check and shone a light on the trickiness of the Russian contingent. And his experience of hosting the first Foreign Ministers Council could only have reinforced the view that the Soviets were becoming more and more unreasonable. Nor were his concerns that new. Both he and Attlee were, as Elsley puts it, anti-communism and had an "aversion for Soviet diplomatic tactics (which) were long-standing".¹⁹¹ He traces their 'long standing' views to Potsdam or earlier¹⁹² where Attlee formed the view that Stalin was a tyrant who had no principles and who would stop at nothing. Given the debate as to when Bevin

¹⁹⁰ Dilks, David, Editor. *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945*. Published Cassell, London, 1971. Page 785.

¹⁹¹ Elsby. Page 112.

¹⁹² Ibid. See footnote 376 to Page 112.

was 'persuaded' by his Foreign Office officials of the need to counter the Soviets aggression, this is an interesting observation.

From the minutes of the various meetings at the First Foreign Secretaries Conference it is evident that there was little meeting of minds either about the format of proceedings or, more importantly, of what was to be discussed. As a result, Bevin was clearly hard-pressed not to lose patience with the obstructive tactics of Molotov¹⁹³ and in the end the Conference/Council broke up in disarray, when the Russians declined to accept the French proposals that they should be involved in all discussions. As Pierson Dixon recorded: "There has been a singular bitterness in Molotov's attitude at this conference...no doubt partly due to frustration at failure to make any progress towards his hidden objectives and at the failure of the procedural manoeuvres. Another thing which may account for Molotov's attitude is that....the Russians may well have expected that a Socialist Government in this country would be more accommodating towards them than its predecessors. This has not proved to be so." ¹⁹⁴

Following the breakup of the conference, which had in effect achieved little of any substance, Pierson Dixon had to dissuade Bevin – when he was preparing to make a post-conference statement to the House of Commons - from baldly stating that the breakdown of the conference was due to his refusal to meet Soviet ambitions.¹⁹⁵ This, too, shines an interesting light on Bevin's so-called initial reluctance to see difficulties with the Soviets. According to Dixon's account he acted as a restraining hand on Bevin. Pierson Dixon's Diary entry for 3 October states: "Byrnes and Molotov had both given press conferences on the breakdown on the Council but E.B. decided to hold his hand. Still, tonight he dictated a fierce statement to the press to explain that when he did make a statement he would spill the beans. I prevailed on him not to issue anything but merely to let it be known that he would be making a full statement in the House next week".¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ TNA: FO 371/50922 contains extracts from the various Foreign Office minutes recording events at the meetings of the Council.

¹⁹⁴ TNA: FO 371/47856 and FO 371/47861. Pierson Dixon Memorandum 2 October 1945.

¹⁹⁵ Dixon. A full first person note of day to day procedures is contained in Chapter 10.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. Chapter 10, Page 194.

Byrnes's contemporary account of the conference¹⁹⁷ gives a measured description of the events which led to the break-up of the Conference. Although his language is more conciliatory than that of the blunt Bevin, Byrnes too decries the unwillingness of the Soviets to embrace what Byrnes saw as an opportunity to work for peaceful settlement of the issues under consideration. A sticking point for the Soviets, which on the face of it does not seem unreasonable, was the unwillingness of the USA and Great Britain to recognize the Bulgarian and Rumanian governments which the Soviets saw as "a manifestation of unfriendliness to the Soviet Union".¹⁹⁸ However, Byrnes explains why it was not appropriate in the context of the London Conference to give such recognition, saying: "We do not seek to dictate the internal affairs of any people. We only reserve for ourselves the right to refuse to recognize governments if after investigation we conclude they have not given to the people the rights pledged to them in the Yalta agreement".¹⁹⁹

The difficulties illustrated in relations between the Soviets and the Western allies at Potsdam and at the first of the Foreign Ministers conferences, were significant because they constituted the first points at which the Foreign Office and the new Foreign Secretary really saw at first-hand the way in which the Soviets were demonstrating their obstructiveness – rolling back on decisions made at Yalta on reparations etc. These issues were to fall to the Foreign Office to negotiate over – at Foreign Secretary Conferences - as time went on. While this preceded the setting up of the Russia Committee it clearly illustrated the need for such a body to be set up.

Continuity of foreign policy and personnel

The foreign policy of the new Labour government was largely a continuation of that of the war time coalition. Given that the senior Labour Government Ministers had served with their Conservative counterparts for the years of the Second World War, and given that they had a joint commitment in foreign policy terms, it is hardly surprising that the policy continued. It has already been stated that Eden was keen to see Bevin succeed

¹⁹⁷ First Meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers, London, September 11 to October 2, 1945. Report by Secretary Byrnes, October 5, 1945. Yale Law School, The Avalon Project, Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid..

him but even more telling is Bevin's continued liaison with Eden over the ensuing months, often with Pierson Dixon²⁰⁰ acting as the conduit.

Before entering the Diplomatic Service Pierson Dixon was a Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge. In his early days in the Foreign Office he became acquainted with Robin Butler²⁰¹ who wrote the Foreword to Pierson Dixon's published diaries²⁰² and chose to refer to Dixon's time as Foreign Secretary Bevin's PPS and his friendship with Eden as being the foundation for the bi-partisan foreign policy adopted by both of them. Lord Butler says of him: "One of Dixon's greatest services was as Private Secretary to Ernest Bevin. It was remarkable that a man like Bevin, who read papers and wrote with such difficulty, should have been able to handle the immense amounts of Foreign Office material, and be able to be absolutely at peace and ease with his official advisers. It was largely Dixon's work to bring out the greatness in the man. At the same time Dixon was able to conduct a bipartisan foreign policy through his friendship with Eden".²⁰³

Pierson Dixon's diaries give many examples of Bevin and Eden keeping in very close contact over foreign affairs. For example, after the break-up of the first Foreign Ministers conference, and when Bevin was preparing to make his statement in the House of Commons, scheduled for 9 October, there was a concern on Bevin and Dixon's part that if the Opposition were to press for a Debate following Bevin's statement, the real reason for the break-up of the conference and all the hostilities it involved could come to light. Dixon's diary entry for 7th and 8th October show both how closely Bevin and Eden were working together and how important Dixon was as the go-between friend and ally of both: "Long talk with A.E. about the Conference. I told him that EB, who wanted him to know everything he wished, held that these were national interests and above party. He hoped therefore that the Opposition would not press for a Debate when he made his statement on Tuesday. A.E. said that W.S.C., he

²⁰⁰ Pierson Dixon had been Principal Private Secretary to Eden and then stayed in that role supporting Bevin.

²⁰¹ Lord Butler of Brockwell, formerly Sir Robin Butler, who served as PPS to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and, subsequently as Cabinet Secretary to three Prime Ministers: Margaret Thatcher; John Major; and Tony Blair.

²⁰² Dixon. *Foreword Page xi to xiii*

²⁰³ Ibid. Foreword, page xiii.

thought, did intend to press for a Debate, but he then and there spoke to W.S.C. at Claridges and persuaded him that the country's interests required that there should be a cooling-off period of a fortnight of so.²⁰⁴

The continuity between the politicians of different political persuasion – in this case Eden, as a Conservative Foreign Secretary and Bevin, as a Labour Foreign Secretary - could at first sight seem surprising except for the peculiar circumstances that prevailed. The two had worked closely together in the wartime coalition government and were both highly senior members of that Cabinet who as this Chapter of the thesis shows both respected each other and shared views on foreign policy issues. The same was true of the most senior Diplomats who worked to these Foreign Secretaries. Cadogan and Sargent had both been in post for a long time and worked closely with both Eden and Bevin. In the ever-shifting circumstances of the emerging Cold War, and the need to watch carefully what the Soviets were doing, such continuity both with politicians and officials was likely to have been beneficial.

Conclusion

In his thesis on British Foreign Policy, the United States and Europe 1945 to 50, Poole²⁰⁵ argues that British diplomacy “had achieved unimaginable objectives since the summer of 1940 when the country and its Empire stood alone against Germany” and that as the War neared its conclusion optimism prevailed that there would be a new world order of mutual co-operation and concord between the three war-time allies. But as the cracks started to appear in this unrealistically optimistic viewpoint, the British Foreign office, along with many others in Britain and abroad, was quick to see the dangers.

This Chapter opened with George Kennan's paper 'Russia Seven Years Later' and was swiftly followed by the 'Stock Taking' Memo commissioned by Eden and written by Orme Sargent, which arguably could be seen as the first considered paper on the likely

²⁰⁴ Ibid. Chapter 10, Page 195-196.

²⁰⁵ For a full explanation of his argumentation, see Peter David Poole's dissertation of June 2011, “*British Foreign Policy, the United States and Europe 1945 to 50*”, University of Birmingham School of Historical Studies.

future of foreign relations with Britain's war-time allies and, in particular, the emerging concerns about the Soviet foreign policy. It was established that Eden thought the Memo worth circulating to the Cabinet but that there is no evidence that this happened, not least because of the change of Government which took place within weeks of the production of the Memo. What can be established, however, is that Bevin at some point in his first few weeks at the Foreign Office - between 31 July and 21 August 1945 – had been shown, and had read, the 'Stock Taking' Memo. On 21 August in a manuscript note from Pierson Dixon to his Secretary of State about a completely different paper, Pierson added: "...The paper, at the beginning, alludes to a memo by Sir O Sargent on "Stocktaking after V.E.Day", which you have read (flag B). Do you approve circulation of Sir Orme Sargent's paper to Cabinet? PD 21/8"²⁰⁶

And Bevin's response is shown by his having written, in his famously almost illegible hand writing and in clumsy grammar: "Do this. Connect by the discussions next Thursday. EB."²⁰⁷

Orme Sargent, given his background and his staunch views, might have been expected to be wary of, and not well disposed, towards his new Foreign Secretary, not least because he had been so close to Eden, though initially his relationship with Eden was said to have been cool and grew as the war brought them together.²⁰⁸ From Orme Sargent's viewpoint, and indeed from many of his fellow senior Foreign Office officials, there was bound to be some apprehension about Bevin's appointment given the latter's campaigning during the war for reform of the Foreign Office. In the political diaries of Hugh Dalton, he notes that Bruce Lockhart told him that "Cadogan and Sargent both thought that they were out upon Bevin's appointment".²⁰⁹ As noted earlier the removal of Cadogan or Orme Sargent or, indeed, any other senior Foreign Office official would not have been in the gift of Bevan as their Minister but Dalton may have been expressing the foreboding that these individuals felt at the imminent arrival of a new Foreign Secretary who was known to have misgivings about the

²⁰⁶ TNA: FO 371/50915. Manuscript note Pierson Dixon to Secretary of State, dated 21 August 1945.

²⁰⁷ An example of Bevin's odd use of language, as reported to me by Sir Stephen Wall and told to him by his father-in-law, Sir Norman Reddaway – himself a very senior diplomat at the time of Attlee's 1945-51 Government – when Bevin was briefed on a subject he would often say "This must be went into".

²⁰⁸ Richardson. *The Attitudes and Advice on Foreign Policy given by Sir Orme Sargent*. Chapter 6.

²⁰⁹ Dalton, Hugh. *Political Diaries 1945-60*. Edited Pimlott, Ben. Published Cape, 1986. Page 367.

Foreign Office. And, according to Pierson Dixon, on the morning of 26 July 1945 as the previous day's General Election results were coming in and it was becoming clear that it was a landslide in favour of Labour, the FCO officials were in the office, and Dixon recorded in his diary: “.. Lunched with OGS,²¹⁰ who was in the depths of gloom, prophesying a Communist avalanche over Europe, a weak foreign policy, a private revolution at home and reduction of England (sic) to a 2nd class power”.²¹¹

Despite confirmation that the General Election on 27 July had resulted in a resounding defeat for Churchill and the landslide election of Labour, Orme Sargent's gloom and despondency did not persist, or, if at all, certainly not for long. As he and his new Foreign Secretary quickly became known to each other, their respect for one another grew, as the following months and years were to show, such that Bulloch noted: “Sir Orme Sargent who served under every British foreign minister in the 20th century from Salisbury onwards and ended up as Bevin's Permanent Under-Secretary, went out of his way to tell the author that by comparison with any of his predecessors he considered Bevin a great foreign secretary”.²¹²

In the space, therefore, of just under three weeks during July 1945 great changes had befallen Orme Sargent in particular and the Foreign Office generally, not to say the rest of Whitehall and the country at large. But Orme Sargent, expert as he was on all matters pertaining to the foreign policy relating to the Soviet Union, had been invited by Foreign Secretary Eden to produce a policy paper that was to become regarded as “seminal to British post-war foreign policy”,²¹³ had been aware that it was thought important enough to be circulated to the Prime Minister and Cabinet colleagues, but had then seen it, as it were, set to one side as events of national and international importance intervened in the form of, first, the Potsdam Conference and then the British General Election. Clearly Orme Sargent would have wanted his Memo to be seen and, more importantly, action taken as a result of the proposals it contained, but he would have had to tread fairly carefully, at least initially, as he became familiar with Bevin. As the author of the paper and in his senior position as Deputy Under Secretary

²¹⁰ OGS was Sir Orme Sargent

²¹¹ Dixon. Page 166.

²¹² Bulloch. Chapter 2, Page 75, footnote 4.

²¹³ Poole. Page 33.

in the Foreign Office there would have been different avenues open to him to pursue the suggestions in his Memo and one of them would be to set up a high level official Foreign Office Committee to look further into the issues. It can hardly be a coincidence that he of all people was the one to set up the Russia Committee just a few months later. However, between July/August 1945 and March 1946 when the first meeting of the Russia Committee was to be convened, other significant policy papers and Telegrams were to be produced, important speeches were to be made, and foreign ministers conferences were to be attended, all of which would, to a lesser or greater extent, exacerbate growing concerns.

Chapter 3 1946 A Pivotal Year

1946 was a pivotal year at the start of the Cold War in terms of the United States' and Britain's shifts in attitudes and foreign policy towards the Soviet Union. This resulted in part as a reaction to the change in Soviet policy towards the West as evidenced by their rowing back from agreements reached earlier at, for example, Potsdam, and the hostility demonstrated towards their Western allies at the first of the Council of Foreign Ministers conferences. 1946 saw the emergence of several significant policy documents, speeches and think pieces, which had far-reaching consequences for foreign relations between the Soviets and the West. Domestically, too, within the Foreign Office, there were significant changes. On 1 February 1945 Orme Sargent succeeded Cadogan as Permanent Under-Secretary, an appointment about which Bevin, as the political Head of the Foreign Office, would need to have been consulted, not least because the two would be working closely together, even though he would not have had the final say. Sargent was undeniably a central figure in driving forward the close watch on Soviet actions and intentions, as is evident from his Stock Taking after VE Day Memorandum. For Sargent to have been given the highest post in succession to Cadogan, and in the full knowledge of his views of foreign policy vis a vis the Soviets, his appointment has to have been significant to some degree in the shift of emphasis in Soviet watching. In addition, the Summer of 1946 saw the Paris Peace Conference and the July Council of Foreign Ministers conferences and these were of great significance in terms of continuing to alert the Western powers to changes in the attitude of the Soviets. So, as 1946 began, the concerns felt within the United States and Britain about the behaviour and attitudes of the Soviets, their former wartime ally, grew. As John Lewis Gaddis puts it: "There were no surprise attacks, no declarations of war, no severing even of diplomatic ties. There was, however, a growing sense of insecurity at the highest levels in Washington, London and Moscow, generated by the efforts the wartime allies were making to ensure their own post-war security. With their enemies defeated, there was less of an incentive for these former allies, as they

were coming to think of themselves, to keep their anxieties under control. Each crisis that arose fed the next one, with the result that a divided Europe became a reality".²¹⁴ Concerns grew apace about the foreign policy of Russia and, in particular, about the threat of Russian expansionism. As Bulloch notes: "There was no doubt that since the beginning of the year tensions between Russia and the West had increased sharply".²¹⁵

A controversial election speech by Stalin at the beginning of February was smartly followed by George Kennan's Long Telegram later the same month, and, in March, by Churchill's Iron Curtain speech; and by Frank Robert's Long Telegram response to Kennan's Telegrams. Later in the year there was a retaliatory Long Telegram from the Soviets but as this, unlike the Kennan and Robert's Telegrams, was not widely publicised outside of Russia, its impact is hard to assess. Together these events combined to ramp up the distrust and hostility between the former wartime allies and thereby to threaten the chances of their peaceful co-existence.

Stalin's Election Speech

On 9 February 1946, Stalin delivered a controversial speech on the evening before elections to the Supreme Soviet. Such elections had been in abeyance for eight years partly, according to Stalin, because of the delivery of the third Soviet Five-Year Plan and then the intervention of the War. By then it was clear to Stalin that he was not going to get the help that his economy so badly needed. President Harry Truman, having been elevated to the Presidency following the death of Roosevelt, was more hard line than his predecessor. He had, on 5 January, read to Byrnes²¹⁶ - with whom he was annoyed because Byrnes had exceeded his brief - the text of a letter he had drafted which included the following extract: "At Potsdam we were faced with an accomplished fact and by circumstances were almost forced to agree to Russian occupation of eastern Poland, and that part of Germany east of the Oder River by Poland. It was a high-handed outrage. There isn't a doubt in my mind that Russia

²¹⁴ Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Cold War*. Published Penguin, 2005. Chapter 1, Page 27.

²¹⁵ Bulloch. Chapter 6, Page 235.

²¹⁶ Byrnes, as US Secretary of State, worked to secure a compromise with Stalin and Molotov over the political make-up of Romania and Bulgaria, which echoed Roosevelt's hopes. But this was not well received either by the more robust Truman or by his senior diplomats, hence Truman's summoning Byrnes to the Oval Office on 5 January 1946 to read to him the text of Truman's irate letter.

intends an invasion of Turkey and the seizure of the Black Sea Straits to the Mediterranean. Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language, another war is in the making. Only one language do they understand – ‘How many divisions have you?’ I do not think we should play compromise any longer...I’m tired of babying the Soviets”.²¹⁷

Stalin was well aware, from Truman’s decision to cut off Lend-Lease that there was no further “prospect of an American financial loan.....and that his other hopes of economic recovery were blocked by the British and American opposition to his requirements for reparations from Germany”.²¹⁸ Seen from Stalin’s perspective it would be entirely understandable if he were to have been bitter at his former allies’ reluctance to accommodate his wishes, especially in relation to reparations from Germany. Russia had suffered huge losses as a result of Germany’s aggression in two major wars in just thirty years and Stalin wanted both recompense on the one hand, and on the other, the security of knowing that Germany was so broken that it was unlikely to be in a position to pose a similar threat for the foreseeable future.

Stalin began his speech by roundly blaming the West for the War which he said had been no accident, or the fault of individual statesmen, but had arisen “in reality as the inevitable result of the development of the world economic and political forces on the basis of monopoly capitalism”.²¹⁹ He said: “the development of world capitalism does not follow a steady and even course forward, but proceeds through crises and catastrophes. The uneven development of the capitalist countries leads in time to sharp disturbances in their relations, and the group of countries which consider themselves inadequately provided with raw materials and export markets try usually to change this situation and to change the position in their favour by means of armed force. As a result of these factors, the capitalist world is sent into two hostile camps

²¹⁷ Truman, Harry S. *Memoirs Volume I: Year of Decisions*. Published Garden City, New York, Doubleday, 1955. Republished as *1945 Year of Decision*. By CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017.

²¹⁸ Walker, Martin. *The Cold War and the Making of the Modern World 1994*. Published Vintage, 1994, Chapter 2, Page 37.

²¹⁹ Judge, Edward and Langdon, John. *The Cold War: A History Through Documents*. Published Prentice Hall 1999, Page 13.

and war follows”.²²⁰ He went on to claim that these world crises, catastrophes and wars, were the direct result of the evils of capitalism and that these could have been: “avoided if the possibility of periodic redistribution of raw materials and markets between countries existed in accordance with their economic needs”.²²¹

This hard-hitting message was, understandably, not well received by his Western allies. But, in fact, the harsh criticisms of the West and capitalism were only a relatively small part of Stalin’s speech. It was predominantly aimed at encouraging his fellow Soviets to recognise their war time victory; to applaud the success of their system; and to look to the future. Nevertheless, although it is perhaps difficult to see why, the speech was said to be viewed by many in the West as a declaration of Cold War between the capitalist West and the communism of the Soviets.²²²

George Kennan’s Long Telegram

In February 1946 George Kennan, the eminent United States diplomat, by this time firmly ensconced in the US Embassy in Moscow as Deputy Head of Mission, responded to an invitation from the US State Department to receive from him an interpretive analysis of what could be expected in the way of future Soviet policy. The US Treasury Department was behind this request as they were puzzled by the disinclination of the Soviets to co-operate in international forums: “including economic systems of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund..[and the US Treasury Department] cabled the US Embassy in Moscow, asking it to shed some light on the background to Stalin’s speech and the real motives of Stalin’s foreign policy”.²²³

The upshot was the Kennan ‘Long Telegram’, which analysed Soviet policy and made recommendations for a strategy to contain Soviet expansionism, and is considered by some historians of the Cold War to be highly significant in turning the tide of attitudes, not just in Kennan’s native United States but also in Britain, against the Soviets.

²²⁰ Ibid. Page 13.

²²¹ Ibid. Page 13.

²²² Ibid. Page 13.

²²³ Walker. Chapter 2, Page 38.

On 22 February 1946 George Kennan, sent his 8,000 word, 17 page long, telegram²²⁴ to George Marshall, Secretary of State in the US State Department. Kennan was described by Lord Strang, as: “.... the best type of American, than which there is nothing better to be found anywhere in the world”.²²⁵ Kennan was both “highly regarded.....and a very influential man”²²⁶ who was later to be instrumental in producing the Marshall Plan. As an acknowledged expert on Soviet affairs, therefore, he penned the Telegram which turned out to be unapologetically lengthy because, as he said in his opening paragraph, the issues he was to address were: “so intricate, so delicate, so strange to our form of thought, and so important to analysis of our international environment that I cannot compress answers into single brief message without yielding to what I feel would be dangerous degree of over simplification”.²²⁷

The National Security Archive (NSA)²²⁸ television documentary *Cold War*, which was broadcast in 1998, included an interview with George Kennan about his Long Telegram. He explained that by 1946 he was frustrated by the way he had repeatedly watched his government – particularly the military – making concession after concession to the Soviet government and behaving in what he regarded as “an undignified ingratiating way toward Stalin and toward the whole Soviet bureaucracy”.²²⁹ He went on to say: “...we sent lend lease to them in great quantities, they were the only people who were not asked to justify their requests. And as the war approached its end, I once tried to question the general who was handling the lend lease and said: ‘Look, here, is this really necessary for their wartime needs?’ He was furious about it, and said, you had no right to question this: That is a matter for... the War Department, not for you in the State Department”.²³⁰

²²⁴ Reproduced in Jensen, Kenneth M. *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts ‘Long Telegrams’ of 1946*. Published United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993.

²²⁵ Strang, Lord. *Home and Abroad*. Published Andre Deutsch, Chapter VI, Page 207.

²²⁶ Judge and Langdon. Part 1, Document 9, Page 26.

²²⁷ US Department of State Incoming Telegram 8963, dated February 22, 1946. Received 3.52pm.

²²⁸ The NSA, based in George Washington University, Washington DC, was founded in 1985 with the aim of exploiting the US Freedom of Information Act through the efforts of investigative journalists and claims to have succeeded in obtaining the release of over 10 million pages of previously classified US government documents.

²²⁹ NSA interview ‘Comrades’ American Television Documentary Series *The Cold War*, 1998. Ref nsarchive.gwu.edu/coldwar/interviews/episode-1/kennan.

²³⁰ Ibid.

This, then, was Kennan's frame of mind when he received the request from the US Treasury Department for an interpretive analysis of what could be expected in the way of future Soviet policy. The Treasury Department expressed their astonishment and concern at the way the Soviets were dragging their feet about joining the International Bank despite all the financial help they had received from the United States. Kennan, for whom the behaviour of the Russians came as no surprise at all, set about the task of drafting the interpretive analysis straight away, despite being confined to bed with influenza at the time. He wrote his Long Telegram, dividing it into five lengthy sections. Part one²³¹ set out what Kennan believed to be the basic tenets of the Soviet post-war outlook. He began by quoting from a speech given by Stalin²³² in which the latter spelt out his belief that there could never be a peaceful long-term co-existence between Socialism and Capitalism and that the battle between the two for command of the world economy would decide the fate of Communism and Capitalism in the entire world. In Kennan's judgement, the Soviets believed that the capitalist world was beset with internal conflicts, and saw England and the United States as examples of capitalist states that were in conflict with each other, and that such internal conflicts would, they thought: "...hold out great possibilities for advancement of socialist cause, particularly if USSR remains militarily powerful, ideologically monolithic and faithful to its present brilliant leadership".²³³

Part two of Kennan's Telegram was an essay on his perception of the Soviet outlook on life and on Russian history and current-day policies of the Government. He went on to argue that the Soviets had no grounds for believing in the inevitability of war between Communist and Capitalist states and also between Capitalist states themselves. He believed that the Soviets held such views not as a result of any objective analysis on their part but rather because: "At bottom Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs is a traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity".²³⁴ Returning to his theme that this was more reflective of the country's leadership than of the Russian people he

²³¹ Part 1 of the US Department of State Incoming Telegram 8963, dated February 22, 1946

²³² Stalin's speech in 1927 was given to a delegation of American workers.

²³³ Part 1, Paragraph (e) Telegram 8963, dated February 22, 1946.

²³⁴ Part 2, Paragraph 6, Telegram 8963, dated February 22, 1946

said: “ ..this latter type of insecurity was one which afflicted Russian rulers rather than Russian people; for Russian rulers have invariably sensed that their rule was.... unable to stand comparison or contact with political systems of Western countries. For this reason they have always feared foreign penetration, feared direct contact between Western world and their own, feared what would happen if Russians learned the truth about world without or if foreigners learned truth about world within...” ²³⁵

In Part three, Kennan directed his thoughts to what actions he believed the Soviets were likely to take, both overtly and covertly. The avowed, or overt, actions, he argued, were likely to be devoted to increasing Soviet strength and prestige through the development of military industrialisation and the armed forces which would be manifested by great public displays of military strength to impress the outside world. Further ‘official plane’ actions would include the Soviets participating officially in international organisations but only where they saw opportunity for extending Soviet power or of inhibiting or diluting the power of others.

Given that these views are those of an American diplomat it is hardly surprising that he laments the anticipated lack of buy-in on the part of the Soviets to the ideals of the UNO. But even though he was shown to be right that the Soviets would pull out of the UNO when it was not felt to be of use to them, from the Soviet viewpoint this could be seen as being simply pragmatic self-interest and, as a sovereign State, they were, arguably, entitled to pursue that which would be of most benefit to their State.

Part 4 of the Long Telegram concerns what Kennan regarded as the kind of activities that the Soviet government were likely to pursue covertly by, as it were, pulling the strings of other organisations behind the scenes but being careful to take no responsibility for so doing. Under this heading he included: Communist parties in other countries; a wide variety of national associations which could be penetrated and dominated, for example youth leagues, women’s organisations, religious societies and other governments willing to bend to Soviet purposes, for example Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Northern Persia and China. Kennan said: “Everything possible will be done to

²³⁵Ibid. Paragraph 6

set major Western powers against each other. Anti-British talk will be plugged among Americans, anti-American talk among British. Continentals, including Germans, will be taught to abhor both Anglo-Saxon powers. Where suspicions exist, they will be fanned; where not, ignited".²³⁶

The final part of Kennan's Telegram sets out what he saw as being the practical deductions from the standpoint of US policy. He admitted that the picture he had drawn of the Soviets as a political force committed to the belief that they could have no permanent *modus vivendi* with the United States, was not a pleasant picture and that the question of how to cope with that force was undoubtedly the: "greatest task our diplomacy has ever faced and probably greatest it will ever have to face".²³⁷ He concluded with his overall concerns and vision: "World communism is like a malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue..... We must formulate ... a much more positive and constructive picture of (sic) sort of world we would like to see....have courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society".²³⁸

Kennan was surprised at the impact which The Long Telegram had in Washington and beyond. He said that the "success of the long telegram from Moscow changed my life"²³⁹ in terms of the status he was accorded and the posts he was subsequently offered. He was a little disturbed that his message, that the Soviet challenge could be dealt with through appropriate diplomatic rather than military means, seemed to be subsumed by the hawkish enthusiasm with which any criticism of the Soviets was greeted by his fellow countrymen. Nevertheless, his views on the Soviets remained steadfast as his further writings at the end of the winter of 1946 demonstrate: "The Russians have no conception of permanent friendly relations between states. For them all foreigners are potential enemies. The technique of Russian diplomacy...is concentrated on impressing an adversary with the terrifying strength of Russian

²³⁶Ibid Part 4, Paragraph 15 (e).

²³⁷Ibid. Part 5, Paragraph 1.

²³⁸Ibid. Part 5, extracts from the last three paragraphs.

²³⁹ Kennan. Chapter 12, Page 299.

power... its leaders are, by their own choice, the enemies of all that part of the world they do not control....".²⁴⁰

Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech

A month after Kennan dispatched his Long Telegram, Churchill delivered his Iron Curtain speech. After the devastating blow of being ousted by Attlee at the General Election in July 1945, Churchill, according to Colville was, as Leader of the Opposition, initially a spent force. He was 70 years old, his health was not good, and he was exhausted and dejected. But he was also famous for bouncing back and he did just that by 5 March 1946 when, in Fulton, Missouri, he delivered one of the most famous of all his speeches. Churchill had gone there, a place that David Reynolds, argues: "...he would not otherwise be caught dead in",²⁴¹ in the presence of President Truman - with whom he had shared the content of the speech beforehand - and whose presence was sure to guarantee maximum publicity. The speech provided, according to Harbutt:²⁴² "the first authoritative public utterance to many of the leading political and ideological themes of the coming Cold War."²⁴³

Churchill's speech was intended to underline the importance of the Anglo-American alliance and the 'special relationship' that was claimed to continue to exist between the English-speaking peoples and to give maximum publicity to the growing threat posed by Soviet intentions. Although peppered with references to understanding the position of the Soviets and the belief that it was possible to reach a meeting of minds with them, and after acknowledging his: "strong admiration and regard for the valiant Russian people and for my wartime comrade, Marshall Stalin".²⁴⁴ Churchill went on to give his iconic warning: "It is my duty.....to place before you certain facts about the present position of Europe. From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an

²⁴⁰ Ibid. Annex D, Page 560.

²⁴¹ Reynolds. *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s*. Chapter 14, Page 266.

²⁴² Harbutt, Fraser, J. *The Iron Curtain: Churchill, America, and the Origins of the Cold War*. Published Oxford University Press, New York, 1986. Chapter 7, Page 184 to 208.

²⁴³ Stalin's election speech, given a month earlier, on 9 February 1946, was another contender for this accolade – See Pages 68 to 70 and the full text of Stalin's speech in document 4 in Judge, Edward H and Langdon, John W. *The Cold War: A History through Documents*. Published Prentice Hall, 1999.

²⁴⁴ Judge and Langdon. Document 5, Extracts from the Iron Curtain Speech, pages 14 to 17.

iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Sofia, all these famous cities and populations around them lie in what I might call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject, in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow.....".²⁴⁵

In an interview published in Pravda on 11 March, Stalin assessed Churchill's speech: "as a dangerous act calculated to sew the seed of discord among the Allied governments" and he said that Churchill: "now stands in the position of a firebrand of war".²⁴⁶ Reynold's argues that Stalin's denunciation of the speech – with headlines and a lengthy article in Pravda, and another in Izvestia on the 13th March, was in part responsible for the fact that it was the 'iron curtain' sentiments that hit the headlines at the expense of the 'special relationship' or 'the sinews of peace' elements of the message.²⁴⁷ There is an echo here of what happened with Stalin's election speech and even of Kennan's Long Telegram where the more conciliatory and positive elements of the communications were lost in the headline-grabbing elements of the messages, which serves to highlight the power of the media to, inadvertently or otherwise, distort messages.

Despite the hostile reaction of the Soviets, Churchill retained some optimism that they could be prevailed upon to reach agreement with the US and Britain, an optimism he retained, in differing degrees of intensity, until the end of his Premiership. Indeed, as is clear from Jock Colville's diaries, barely a week before Churchill's resignation on 5 April 1955, the Soviet leader, Bulganin, finally expressed a wish to accede to the requests for Four-Power talks. As a result, Churchill was, even at that late stage, sorely tempted to go back on his decision, even asking HM the Queen if she would mind if he

²⁴⁵Ibid. Document 5, Pages 14 to 17.

²⁴⁶ Excerpts from Pravda interview with Stalin, 11 March 1946.

²⁴⁷ Reynolds, David. *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s*. Published, Oxford University Press, 2007. Chapter 14, Page 266.

changed his mind and stayed on, because he firmly believed that he, not Eden, was the right person to try to broker agreements in such talks.²⁴⁸

However, in the meantime, it was not Churchill, but Attlee, who held the reins in Britain and he and his Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, were trying to keep the Americans onside and not to frighten them, as Francis Williams puts it: “into a new isolationism by precipitate action”.²⁴⁹ At the same time they were both somewhat reluctant initially to give official recognition to rapprochement with the Soviets being a diminishing possibility, even though neither of them was deluded into thinking this would be straightforward. Bevin had recognized from his first dealings with Molotov both at Potsdam and at the first of the Foreign Ministers conferences, how tricky it was to negotiate with the Soviets. Indeed, as Cadogan observed: “Bevin’s hopes of a new style of diplomacy, cards on the table, face upwards’, waned during the autumn of 1945. At the meeting of Foreign Ministers held in London, Molotov behaved in his most mulish and obstructive manner. By 23 September Bevin had had enough”.²⁵⁰

Light is thrown on the reaction of Attlee’s Cabinet to Churchill’s Iron Curtain speech in the Cabinet Secretary Notebooks²⁵¹ entry for the meeting on 11 March 1946. The Cabinet discussed the speech in some depth. It had been suggested in the US, the Soviet Union and elsewhere that the British Government had seen and approved the content of Churchill’s speech before it was made. In present times it would be unlikely that the official Leader of the Opposition – as Churchill was at that time – would first clear his lines with the Cabinet before giving his personal views on the state of foreign policy. This, however, was at a time when the Second World War had recently come to an end and great international machinations were going on and the views of the former charismatic British Prime Minister were likely to be greatly publicised and taken notice of. What is clear is that the British Cabinet, and in particular neither the Prime

²⁴⁸ Colville, John. *The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries 1939-1955*. Chapter 40, Pages 708/709.

²⁴⁹ Williams, Francis. *A Prime Minister Remembers*. Chapter 11, Page 162.

²⁵⁰ Dilks. Page 785.

²⁵¹ Cabinet Secretary Notebooks are the Notes taken by the Cabinet Secretary during meetings of the Cabinet and, as such, since they record who said what, broke entirely new ground for researchers when they began to be transcribed and released by the Cabinet Office to TNA in January 2006 under new class CAB 195. As they were taken in note form, and in often difficult to read handwriting, the Cabinet Office had the originals typed up exactly as they appear - as in the extract reproduced here - to aid researchers – and the originals and the typescripts were then opened to researchers.

Minister nor the Foreign Secretary, had not been consulted in advance as the following extract from that Cabinet discussion confirms:

- "E.B.²⁵² Suggd in US Press tht we were consulted in advance. Hope all will make it clear that we didn't see it in advance. V. embarrassing tht it was circulated here by M of I²⁵³ some hours before speech was made.
- P.M.²⁵⁴ The US asked for M of I to handle it.
- E.B.Anyhow, it's v embarrassing to me... And policy on this for the future shd be made clear.
- P.M.I believe B Embassy started it, by agreeing to attach press offr to WSC
- E.B. I will enquire into B Emb part in this...
- R.S.C.²⁵⁵ Cd you add reply to PQ tht there was no consult with HMG. It has bn specifically alleged in US Press.
- P.M. "HMG had no knowledge of contents before delivered". I will add that....
- E.B. I want party to stand on my last speech. That is our policy."²⁵⁶

Bevin's remark in Cabinet appears to suggest that the British Government in general, and the Cabinet in particular, wished to distance themselves from Churchill's sentiments. However, given the fact that Bevin had said, in his first speech as Foreign Secretary, in the House of Commons on 23 August, that the government intended to maintain similar foreign policy lines to those of his predecessor, it is more likely that his annoyance with Churchill, if it can be so described, was because he was using his world statesman position to give a speech, the content of which was bound to be seen as the official British government viewpoint, but doing so without the courtesy of first clearing his lines with Attlee and/or Bevin. Indeed, it seems more likely that it was merely the embarrassment caused to Bevin by Churchill's discourtesy, rather than any disagreement with Churchill's sentiments, that led to Bevin's comments in Cabinet. Whatever view the British Cabinet took of the decision of Churchill to make his public pronouncements, it clearly angered Stalin, by painting, as Lord Brimelow put it, an:

²⁵² EB was Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary

²⁵³ M of I was the Ministry of Information.

²⁵⁴ PM was Clement Attlee

²⁵⁵ RSC was Stafford Cripps

²⁵⁶ TNA: CAB 195/4. Extract from CM 23(46) Meeting held on 11 March 1946. NB this quote is taken from the transcript of the actual words written by the Cabinet Secretary, Norman Brook, when taking notes at the Cabinet Meeting in March 1946, hence the abbreviations etc.

“enduring image of a brutal, totalitarian Soviet policy, whose “expansionist tendencies” could be checked only by Anglo-American strength and will”.²⁵⁷

Frank Roberts’ Long Telegram

A month after George Kennan’s Long Telegram had been widely distributed, and shortly after Churchill’s Iron Curtain speech, Kennan’s British counterpart, Frank Roberts, entered the debate with his own Long Telegram²⁵⁸. Roberts was British Minister in Moscow acting as Charge d’Affaire at the beginning of 1946. Lord Brimelow said of him: “I have never seen anyone with such a capacity for getting through work; always cheerful; bright as a button; clear-minded. A smiling, quizzical realist content to make the best of the world as he found it. A superlative operator”.²⁵⁹

Roberts’ background was fairly typical of diplomats at the time; public school (Rugby) followed by a scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he gained a first class honours in both parts of the History tripos. He was a skilled diplomat and negotiator, who liked the challenge of sorting out difficult situations. His three-year posting as chargé d'affaires in Moscow, from 1945–7, was perhaps the most important period of his career.

Roberts and Kennan had both been stationed in Moscow at the same time. As Roberts explained: “Our Ambassadors were away a great deal and he and I were in charge of our Embassies”.²⁶⁰ He said that few weeks passed without he and Kennan meeting two or three times, either formally or informally²⁶¹ and the two men worked closely together but were said to be: “..completely different characters – Kennan a deeply serious philosopher and moralist, always probing the validity of his past and present

²⁵⁷ Harbutt, Fraser, J. *The Iron Curtain: Churchill, America, and the Origins of the Cold War*. Published Oxford University Press, New York, 1986. Chapter 7, Page 183.

²⁵⁸ Reproduced in Jensen, Kenneth M. *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts ‘Long Telegrams’ of 1946*.

²⁵⁹ Notes on two conversations with Lord Brimelow 20-21 April 1982. Michael Burd. Lord Brimelow’s papers, Churchill Archive Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge. Held under Class GBR/0014/BIMO.

²⁶⁰ NSA interview Comrades, background to American Television Documentary Series The Cold War, 1998. Ref nsarchive.gwu.edu/coldwar/interviews/episode-1/Roberts.

²⁶¹ Greenwood, Sean. *Frank Roberts and the ‘Other’ Long Telegram: The view from the British Embassy in Moscow, March 1946*. *Journal of Contemporary History*, Volume 25, No 1 January 1990. Interview between Roberts and Sean Greenwood, noted on page 109.

assumptions; a 'loner'; Roberts a cheerful, pragmatic, brisk extrovert, who thoroughly enjoyed the task of trying to make the rickety machinery of international relations work".²⁶² There were other pragmatic differences. Kennan's political master, President Truman, had inherited, and initially wished to pursue, his predecessor's desire to foster amicable relations with the Soviets, although Kennan doubted that this would be easy or even, as time went on, possible. Roberts was in a different position. He had a political master, in the shape of Bevin, who was already showing his colours as a realist who listened to, and valued, expert advice and who had already experienced the difficulties of dealing with Molotov and others of his Soviet colleagues.

So, three weeks after his US counterpart in Moscow had sent his Long Telegram to the State Department, Frank Roberts sent an "equally long and penetrating analysis"²⁶³ in the form of three telegrams dated 21 March 1946: "analysing Soviet policy and recommending a strategy of containment to frustrate its aggressive expansionism".²⁶⁴ It is also relevant, that Roberts had been asked by Bevin on 12 March whether he thought that the West was in for a permanent gale or a short squall. Bevin had asked this question of Roberts having read a JIC report which had concluded that "although Soviet intentions may be defensive, tactics will be offensive"²⁶⁵ The Telegrams that Roberts penned were at least in part his attempt to answer Bevin's question.

The Kennan and Roberts Telegrams were similar in many ways but there were also some striking differences. As Greenwood notes: "Roberts focused more on the constructive aspects than Kennan".²⁶⁶ Greenwood saw the difference between Kennan's and Robert's Telegrams as being subtle but significant: "Both believed Stalin to be a paranoid with malevolent intentions towards the West but Roberts suggested

²⁶² Notes on two conversations with Lord Brimelow 20-21 April 1982. Michael Burd. Lord Brimelow's papers, Churchill Archive Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge. Held under Class GBR/0014/BIMO.

²⁶³ Gill Bennett from Gov UK: <http://history.blog.gov.uk/2016/03/21/whats-the-context-21-march-1946-frank-roberts-long-telegram>.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ TNA: CAB 81/132. JIC (46)1 Final Revise. 22 February 1946 TNA CAB 81/132. Paper entitled Russia's Strategic Interests and Intentions, dated 1 March 1946.

²⁶⁶ Greenwood. *Frank Roberts and the 'Other' Long Telegram: The view from the British Embassy in Moscow, March 1946. Journal of Contemporary History, Volume 25, No 1, January 1990, Pages 103-122*

that it might just be bluster that could be better manipulated economically and politically than militarily".²⁶⁷

Greenwood also suggests that as a result of his Telegrams Roberts was instrumental in the setting up of the Russia Committee as he recommended this to his Foreign Office colleagues in London. Although this has not proved verifiable from the archives or from contemporary accounts, it would be reasonable to assume, given the timing and the content of the Roberts 'Telegrams', that this may have been a contributory factor in Orme Sargent's decision to set up the Russia Committee. Moreover, Gill Bennett, the former Chief Historian of the Foreign Office has expressed a similar view.²⁶⁸ Greenwood also notes that both Kennan and Roberts: "received immediate and glowing commendations from Washington and London respectively...and both contributed signally to a hardening of American and British attitudes towards the Soviet Union".²⁶⁹

The Roberts' Telegrams were submitted in three dispatches to Bevin but, as for Kennan's Telegram, though in several parts they were meant to be read as a single document. The first part of Robert's 'Telegrams' was dated 14 March 1946 and set out the position in which Britain then found itself in terms of deteriorating relations with the Soviets. It comprises a review of the then current position and refers back several times to the difficulties experienced in the first abortive meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in September 1945 and in the second Council meeting in December. Section 1 concluded, rather gloomily: "the present state of Soviet relations with the outside world, and more particularly with Britain, is very different from what we had hoped for on the morrow of our joint victory.....Instead of the Soviet Union gradually settling down to a more normal and friendly relationship with its allies, we are faced with a Soviet policy designed to advance Soviet interests at every possible opportunity, regardless of those of its allies...and of treaty obligations...Soviet propaganda is actively

²⁶⁷ Ibid. Pages 103-122

²⁶⁸ Interview with Gill Bennett, formerly Chief Historian of the Foreign Office, on 2 May 2016.

²⁶⁹ Greenwood, Sean. *Journal of Contemporary History*, Volume 25, No 1, January 1990, pages 105.

instilling suspicions and distrust of the outside world, of which the Soviet public is being kept in complete ignorance".²⁷⁰

In the second part of Roberts' Telegram he sets out what he saw as being the long term aim of the Soviets, namely to make the Soviet Union the most powerful State in the world and, at a time when other countries were busy demobilizing and reducing their armed forces, to maintain a very large military establishment. He thought that they would pursue this aim in a number of ways which would include doing whatever could be done to weaken capitalist or social democratic countries in every way and, in particular, to keep the Americans and British apart; and to support and make use of Communist parties in other countries to further Soviet interests and, ultimately, to take over their governments. One issue to which Roberts attached great weight was the Soviets' aim to undermine Western Capitalism through the full weight of propaganda. He wrote: "...the full weight of Soviet propaganda...will be brought to bear in favour of the so-called oppressed colonial peoples and against imperialist domination.... and there is little doubt that the Soviet peoples, from Stalin downwards, are embarking upon such a campaign with the zeal of crusaders and with a sincere belief that they are thereby contributing to the progress of the world".²⁷¹ Perhaps this was one of the reasons why the Russia Committee, when it shortly thereafter came into existence - and given that Orme Sargent who set the Committee up was fully aware of the contents of Kennan's and Roberts' Telegrams - spent quite a lot of their time thinking about Soviet propaganda and what could be done to counteract it.

The final Telegram in Roberts series of cables in March 1946 dwelt on what British policy towards the Soviet Union should be if his assessments were to prove to be right in essentials. This can be seen as a refreshing acknowledgement that his assessments might not have been right. After the assertions made throughout Kennan's and Roberts Telegrams in language that appeared to brook no possibility that their opinions were other than accurate, this could be viewed as a welcome departure.

²⁷⁰ Frank Roberts Telegram of 14 March 1946, Paragraph 11.

²⁷¹ Frank Roberts Telegram of 17 March 1946, Section 2, Paragraph 18 (f).

Roberts' conclusions were not all pessimistic and in this he also differed from Kennan. As Bennett puts it, Kennan saw: "...Soviet policy as being fundamentally hostile to Western liberal, democratic capitalist and imperialist conceptions".²⁷²

However, Roberts thought it possible, albeit difficult, given the right mixture of understanding, patience, avoidance of unnecessary saber-rattling and of standing firm in the face of Soviet bullying - to reconcile the aims of the two powers. And his relatively optimistic assessment remained, for him, valid in hindsight. In 1990, asked whether he believed that his and Kennan's assessments about the transformation of the wartime alliance into the Cold War, and the likely long-term outcomes, had been realistic, Roberts said that he thought that the messages he and Kennan had put forward in early 1946 remained appropriate. His Telegrams, as the writer of his obituary in the *Independent* Newspaper put it after Roberts' death in 1998, were: "in substance a tour de force. Constituting a comprehensive and illuminating analysis, they revealed a sound grasp of the history of Russian foreign policy and a unique knowledge of the Soviet press".²⁷³

There was another Long Telegram that at least deserves a mention although it was different in scope and impact from the other two, and was not written until several months after those of Kennan and Roberts. This was the Novikov Telegram dated 27 September 1946, doubtless written in response to the Kennan and Roberts missives and it was commissioned by Molotov: "... in the wake of the rancorous foreign ministers' conference in Paris that dragged on fruitlessly through the summer of 1946".²⁷⁴

A copy of this Telegram is reproduced in full in pages 3 to 16 of Jensen's Long Telegrams book²⁷⁵ as released by the Soviet archives in 1990 and as background to a seminar on the Origins of the Cold War held in Washington and in Moscow during the

²⁷² Gill Bennett from Gov UK: <http://history.blog.gov.uk/2016/03/21/whats-the-context-21-march-1946-frank-roberts-long-telegram>.

²⁷³ Obituary from the *Independent*, 9 January 1998.

²⁷⁴ Miner, Steven Merritt. Commentary on Novikov Long Telegram, from Jensen, Kenneth M. *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts 'Long Telegrams' of 1946*. Published United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993. Page 89.

²⁷⁵ Jensen, Kenneth M. *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts 'Long Telegrams' of 1946*. Page 3 to 16.

summer of 1990. The document was translated into English for the conference with the translator²⁷⁶ scrupulously replicating not just the wording but all the many underlinings from the original document which were made by Molotov.

The major differences between the two Western Long Telegrams and that of Novikov are in terms of impact and consequence. The Western Telegrams have been assessed as contributing to the direction of the United States and British foreign policy towards the Soviets. But such assessments by historians in relation to the Soviet Telegram have been hampered by the lack of data due to the Soviet archives having been less open to the public and therefore the raw data on which to form conclusions has been sparse.

Paris Council of Foreign Ministers and Peace Conference

The third Council of Foreign Ministers opened on 25 April 1946 in Paris. It was a prolonged affair, going on until 13 July, with a break in mid-June and then followed up by a Peace Conference which began, also in Paris, on 14 October. In his autobiography Pierson Dixon records the frustrations during the lengthy discussions in Paris from April through to July: “The world was longing for peace. The war had been over for nearly a year. But still no peace treaties had been signed. An attempt was now made to implement the two stages agreed at Potsdam: first, there should be a Council of Foreign Ministers; and, secondly, there should be a Peace Conference attended by all 21 countries which had fought against Germany”.²⁷⁷

The Conference started well with constructive and orderly meetings on 25, 26 and 27 April and the Soviets took a conciliatory line with the French, accepting that they should, after all, be permitted to join in all future discussions – it had been the Soviet refusal to allow participation of the French (and the Chinese) that had led to the breakdown of the Second Foreign Ministers Conference in London the previous October – and all seemed to be going well until 29 April when: “suddenly the mood of conciliation evaporated and Molotov was back to his old tricks”.²⁷⁸ The sticking points were over Italy where the Soviets greatly increased their demands by insisting on the

²⁷⁶ Dr John Glad.

²⁷⁷ Dixon. Chapter 12, Page 207.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. Chapter 12, Page 209.

cession of Trieste to Yugoslavia and the cession of Tripoli to Russia as well as the payments of reparations crippling to Italy. Byrnes and Bevin refused to agree to any Italian Peace Treaty that contained such harsh increased demands. Reading the diary entries of Pierson Dixon during this period the conference appeared to have seen a series of difficult clashes mostly engendered by Molotov and by 6 May it was clear that the conference had reached deadlock. Things limped on until 10 May which saw what Dixon described as the “Grand crisis of the conference”²⁷⁹ with Byrnes having become so irritated with Molotov that he was prepared to engineer the collapse of the conference and eventually succeeded in securing an adjournment for a month, and Bevin being so thoroughly depressed by the deterioration in relations that he rushed back to London to consult Attlee and seek his views and advice. The Soviet press saw things quite differently when Pravda reported:

During the conference there were sharp clashes between the Soviet delegation, which defended the national independence of all peoples, and the delegations of the Western powers, especially the USA and Great Britain, which endeavoured to secure the right to interfere, at future peace negotiations, in the internal affairs of Germany’s former allies, particularly Bulgaria, Hungary, and Rumania, which had established people’s democratic systems. Owing to the firm position maintained by the Soviet delegation, the conference approved the overwhelming majority of provisions agreed upon earlier by the Council of Foreign Ministers. However, the Western powers imposed a procedure requiring the approval of recommendations by a simple majority, thus overriding the Council of Foreign Ministers’ decision calling for a two-thirds majority in such cases. Taking advantage of this procedure, the Western powers introduced several unacceptable recommendations.²⁸⁰

Seen from the Soviet perspective, and given their huge losses in the war, it is hard not to understand why they were making such harsh demands, for example over the cession of Trieste given its strategic importance and its geographical position ostensibly within the, then, Yugoslavian borders. But whatever the merits or otherwise of the Soviets post-Potsdam enhanced demands, their bellicosity could only serve to widen the rift with their former allies. The tail end of the Council of Foreign Ministers had an element of farce as the wrangles went on and on about when the

²⁷⁹ Ibid. Chapter 12, Page 212.

²⁸⁰ Extract from *Pravda*, 31 July 1946.

Peace Conference, which was to follow the Council, could begin and what had to be done and dusted before it took place. Byrnes wanted it to follow on speedily, and on 4 July there was acceptance by all the parties that it should start on 29th July, which it eventually did, but not until after there were several other challenges by Molotov to delay proceedings. Bevin was unable to attend the early days of the Peace Conference due to illness and Attlee had to go without him but Bevin resumed his attendance at a later stage. Although this, and other such, conferences had important things to discuss which impacted lots of countries and inevitably took a good deal of time to consider, it is also true that these meetings were very costly in terms of the time and energy of the principal participants and must have disrupted not only their lifestyles but also their home-based work issues. Fortunately for Bevin and Attlee they had a permanent cadre of professional and gifted officials to conduct business in their often prolonged absences.

Conclusion

It may be asked why, in the context of this thesis about the Russia Committee and its impact on British foreign policy in the emerging Cold War, were these conferences, speeches and telegrams of relevance and importance. The evidence is circumstantial. Clearly Stalin's speech had an impact on George Kennan sitting in Moscow as the acting US Ambassador. He had amassed a wealth of expertise on all things Soviet so that he was ready, when the request arrived from the US Treasury Department for his advice on why the Soviets were reluctant to play any part in the international financial organisation, to pour out his views and advice. Knowledge of the contents of the Long Telegram, together with knowledge of the response from Kennan's counterpart in the British Embassy in Moscow, Frank Roberts, was not confined to the internal diplomatic worlds of the US State Department and the British Foreign Office. Both Telegrams were widely publicised. Indeed, Kennan was personally at pains to ensure that the content of his Long Telegram was copied to the serious American Press so as to ensure it received good publicity. And from the sentiments of these influential Telegrams it is clear that, by the end of 1946, hostilities between the former Second World War allies were entrenched with the West being: "convinced that they had to contend with an

implacable and expansionist Communist state, well-armed, secretly policed, and utterly ruthless".²⁸¹

One interesting issue that, at this early stage of the Cold War, remained unclear, was whether the Foreign Office officials, many of whom were concerned that the UK needed to take action to combat the growing hostility of the Soviets, were already influencing their political masters' views or whether the latter were coming to a similar view themselves independently. And, if they were coming to similarly pessimistic views, whether other constraints upon them – the need to keep their Party colleagues on side; the need to have regard to the views of the electorate who were largely unaware at the time of the deterioration in East-West relations; and the need to try to keep international talks going – were holding them back from action. It is not easy to determine the views held by the officials on these issues. After all, as officials their job was to gather and analyse information rather than to express their own views. There are some notable exceptions, including: Sargent's Stock-taking Memorandum; Roberts Long Telegrams; and Warner's Memorandum. Also, once the Russia Committee had begun work there were meetings at which Ambassadors visiting London HQ and attended meetings of the Committee gave their first-hand views from the front line. Nor is it easy to determine how the views of the officials differed from those of the Foreign Secretary at this time. Bevin's initial reluctance to agree that the Soviets propaganda needed to be countered has already been alluded to, as has the point that this was perhaps more about his natural tendency not to rush into conclusions as well as his having many issues to deal with other than just countering Soviet propaganda.

So, in terms of whether these failed conferences, speeches by Churchill and Stalin and Long Telegrams had any impact on the perceptions on the part of British and US foreign policy makers, and, indeed, on their views as to what actions might be take to counter the threat of Soviet Communism, it seems inconceivable that they did not have an impact. This again raises questions relating to historical epistemology, as

²⁸¹ Walker. Chapter 2, Page 47.

discussed in Chapter 1.²⁸² Although such matters cannot be measured like tangible commodities they can be assessed in context and applying informed judgement which in this case suggests that the expert diplomats, who would have prepared their Ministers for the conferences and advised on the impact of Churchill and Stalin's speeches and who penned the policy advice in the Long Telegrams could hardly have failed to have had influence over the decision makers.

²⁸² See Chapter 1, Page 11.

CHAPTER 4 Setting up the Russia Committee

The Russia Committee, which was initially named the Soviet Policy Co-ordinating Committee, was set up in March 1946. This Chapter looks at why it was set up, when, by whom and for what purpose.

Why it was set up

The Russia Committee was set up because there was a need to establish a body which would keep a close watch, and gather all available information, on the developments that were taking place in Soviet foreign policy. There was at the time no other such body within the British government machine.

Richard Aldrich points to this absence of an appropriate organization. He argues that Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the Political Warfare Executive (PWE), SOE's sister propaganda service, "had been reduced to nothing in 1945"²⁸³ and that it was only in May 1946 that "senior British diplomats began to think about reviving shadow warfare."²⁸⁴ MI5 and MI6 remained functional and the latter – the organisation which dealt with overseas intelligence – was under the Ministerial control of the Foreign Secretary. But their remits were global - much wider than just the Soviets. What was needed was a high level organisation within government, with access to all available information, including intelligence, focused specifically on the Soviets. There would have been two possible homes for such a body at the time: the Cabinet Office/NO 10, in the form of an official Cabinet Committee or a cross-Foreign Office and cross-government body housed in the Foreign Office. It was, initially, the latter route that was adopted. From virtually the outset of the work of the Russia Committee it had links with MI6 and MI5 through the JIC member of the Committee, as well as links with other departments of state.

²⁸³ Aldrich, Richard J. *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and the Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Published John Murray, 2001. Chapter 5, Page 128.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. Chapter 5, Page 128.

In one of the few references to the Russia Committee in secondary historical sources, Aldrich, goes on to say: “Indeed, it was only in January that year that the JIC felt safe to return to the vexed issue of forecasting Soviet intentions. Its mammoth report²⁸⁵ now landed on the desks of several individuals including Frank Roberts, an influential British diplomat serving in Moscow. Roberts was a clear minded individual who punched above his weight and, like George Kennan in the US context, his dispatches from Moscow²⁸⁶ were important in forming British policy in the first year after the war”.²⁸⁷

In his Long Telegram Roberts had emphasised the coordinated and expansionist nature of Soviet post-war foreign policy and argued that this required an equally coordinated response. The result, Aldrich asserts: “was the creation of the Foreign Office Russia Committee, which then oversaw the gradual revival of a department of British covert political warfare”²⁸⁸ and he continued: “Creating the Russia Committee provided a key coordinating centre that was controlled by diplomats rather than the Cabinet Office or Chiefs of Staff. (It) also marked a new style of British foreign policy. Cadogan had nurtured an extreme aversion to planning, but the new Permanent Under Secretary, Orme Sargent, felt that in the current climate ‘it would be valuable to have a joint planning committee of this kind’It was imperative to get organised since the military were now the Foreign Office’s rivals for control of Britain’s Cold War”.²⁸⁹

In her thesis on the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, Ulricke Thieme claims that the setting up of the Russia Committee “...was essentially an admission that the Foreign Office had to become more proactive and better organised”²⁹⁰ because to anticipate Soviet actions would be invaluable for effective diplomacy. This would appear to be a mostly valid assessment. That greater knowledge of Soviet actions and intentions would aid effective diplomacy may well be self-evident. Moreover, it has to be true that the setting up of a co-ordinating body which would draw together

²⁸⁵ TNA: CAB 81/132. JIC (46)1 Final Revise. 22 February 1946

²⁸⁶ Here, Aldrich is referring to the Long Telegrams of Kennan and Roberts – see Thesis Chapter 3.

²⁸⁷ Aldrich. *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and the Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Chapter 5, Page 128.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. Chapter 5, Page 128.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. Chapter 5, Page 128.

²⁹⁰ Thieme, Ulricke. *“Armed Peace: The British Foreign Office and the Soviet Union 1945-1953*. Department of History, Glasgow University, November 2009. Pages 84 to 88

expertise from around the various Foreign Office Departments, and elsewhere, could not fail to result in better, and better organized, information gathering. Whether this amounted to an admission by the Foreign Office that there were shortcomings that needed to be addressed is a little different. They were dealing essentially with a fast-changing situation, the Soviets having until very recently, been wartime allies. It could, indeed, be argued that the Foreign Office was fast out of the blocks to recognise the growing dangers and to put into place machinery that could provide the British government with the information needed to enable them to make informed foreign policy decisions.

Who set up the Russia Committee

There is clear circumstantial evidence to suggest that it was set up at the behest of Sir Orme Sargent. Adam Richardson,²⁹¹ however, has asserted that it was set up by Sir Alexander Cadogan but this appears not to have been the case although it is an entirely understandable assertion given that Cadogan was Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign Office at the beginning of 1946. Despite Richardson's claim, the evidence suggests that it was not Cadogan but Orme Sargent who set up the Russia Committee. For one thing, Cadogan had retired from the Diplomatic Service in February 1946, that is before the Committee was set up, and was immediately succeeded by Orme Sargent. For another, the timing of the first meeting followed on immediately from a meeting called by the new Permanent Under Secretary which led directly to the setting up of the Russia Committee. That meeting, held on 18 March 1946, and presided over by Orme Sargent in his room in the Foreign Office's Main Building in Whitehall, brought together an illustrious group of fellow diplomats including Sir Maurice Peterson, who was at the time (and until 1949) His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow. Also present at the meeting were: Sir Christopher Warner, who was then Head of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office,²⁹² a post he held from 1941 through to 1946, before then becoming His Majesty's Ambassador in

²⁹¹ Adam Richardson *'The Berlin Embassy, The Foreign Office and German Aims 1935-37 – Chapter 6: 1945-1949.*

²⁹² The Northern Department of the Foreign Office is the Department that dealt with foreign policy in relation to Russia. For a lengthy analysis of the work of the Northern Department see Thieme, Ulrike. *Armed Peace: The Foreign Office and the Soviet Union 1945 to 1953.*

Brussels; Mr Kirkpatrick (later Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick) Head of the Information Department of the Foreign Office; Mr Edmund Leo Hall-Patch (to become Sir Edmond in 1947), Deputy Under Secretary and principal economic adviser to Ernest Bevin; and Mr Harold Anthony Caccia, lately returned from the Embassy in Athens. All of these individuals would become regular attendees at Russia Committee meetings and several of them would, on occasion, Chair the proceedings.

The purpose of Orme Sargent's 8 March 1946 meeting was to discuss Soviet foreign policy and British attitude towards it. It took a strategic overview of the UK's relations with the Soviet Union, focussing on three major issues. First, there was concern that the Chiefs of Staff were not as yet persuaded to take an interest in the Soviet attitude to the Middle East but, as Orme Sargent reported, the Foreign Secretary saw this as being of 'high importance' and needed to be looked into 'most carefully'. It was felt that the Soviets were not just interested in Middle East oil and that the probability was that their aim was not simply economic or defensive or ideological, but rather a combination of all three. Secondly, the meeting considered whether the Soviets were playing from strength or from weakness and, if the latter, whether they might be likely to resort to armed force. They also considered, in the light of the recent JIC paper²⁹³ whether, if the Soviets were acting from strength, this would be more dangerous but noted that the JIC paper had concluded that the Soviets would not be prepared to engage in a major war for the next five years. Either way, however, the meeting concluded that the Soviet Union was dangerous. Thirdly, and this is of particular significance in the context of setting up the Russia Committee, the meeting looked at what might be done to counter the spread of Communism and Communist propaganda. It was felt that it would be easy to counter propaganda 'if the Government decided to attack Communist doctrines, but not otherwise'.²⁹⁴ Orme Sargent suggested, and the meeting agreed that: ".....a general paper should be put up to the cabinet on policy towards the Soviet Union which it was clear had returned to pure Marx-Leninism, was becoming dynamic and aggressive and had opened an offensive against Great Britain as the leader of social democracy in the world.

²⁹³ TNA: CAB 81/132. JIC (46) 1 (O) (Limited Circulation) Final Revise, dated 8 March 1946.

²⁹⁴ TNA: FO 371/56885. Extract from Minutes of 2 April 1946.

Recommendations were to be made to cabinet for a co-ordinated defence against this long-term attack ... and it was apparent that we should coordinate our policy towards the Soviet Union in different parts of the world, since many of the elements of Soviet policy were much the same everywhere".²⁹⁵

The meeting was, in effect, agreeing in that last sentence, that a body was needed to gather the information required to enable the coordination of policy towards the Soviet Union and who better to do so than the Foreign Office which had bases all over the world which could provide advice and information. Given the timing and the seniority of the people involved attending the meeting, it seems evident that Orme Sargent, as the most senior official and the one who had engineered the 18 March meeting, was responsible for setting up the Russia Committee. What is less clear, as there is no actual evidence, is whether the decision to do so was agreed beforehand with Ernest Bevin, his political master, although it is clear from the note of the meeting, that Bevin had expressed his wish for the gathering of as much information as possible about Soviet attitudes

So, the ground work was completed for establishing the Russia Committee and it was suggested, too, that the Dominions Office and the Colonial Office should be involved in discussions about how to counter Communist propaganda in the British Empire. As it transpired, both departments were subsequently to be represented on the Russia Committee.

Some key Foreign Office individuals involved in the Russia Committee

There were many influential Foreign Office individuals who played a key part in the work of the Russia Committee during its existence, either directly or indirectly. Appendix 3 records at least skeletal biographical details on many of those individuals. But at least eight of them deserve more than a nodding reference since it is a central contention of this thesis that the senior diplomats in the Foreign Office in the early Cold War were an important and influential resource for Great Britain. The eight individuals were: Sir Orme Sargent; Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Sir Frank Roberts, Lord

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

Brimelow; Sir Oliver Harvey, Sir Christopher Warner, Sir Gladwyn Jebb and Sir Edmund Hall-Patch. While there were many others, these eight were probably the most important in the context of this thesis. Two of the eight have already featured, namely Orme Sargent and Frank Roberts. Orme Sargent's character and his views on British Foreign policy are explored in Chapter 2²⁹⁶ which describes his influential 'Stock Taking After VE Day' Memorandum provided to his then Secretary of State, Anthony Eden, at the latter's request' and subsequently to Eden's successor, Ernest Bevin. Orme Sargent was fully aware of the contents of the Kennan and the Roberts Long Telegrams described in Chapter 3. Frank Roberts, whose character and views are also outlined in that chapter, was in regular contact with Orme Sargent from the Embassy in Moscow where Roberts was stationed at the time and his views and his writings are likely to have influenced the views of his London-based colleagues, just as his US counterpart, George Kennan, had influenced his US based colleagues.

The third key Foreign Office mandarin at the time was Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, "a peppery Ulsterman"²⁹⁷ who in 1945 had been put in charge of the newly set up Information Department (ID) of the Foreign Office which had replaced the abolished Ministry of Information (MOI). As Head of ID, Sir Ivone was an Assistant Under-Secretary and therefore two ranks below Orme Sargent. The ID was set up in the Foreign Office for two reasons. First, because there was a perceived need to focus more on the gathering of information from foreign countries and to tailor this to meet Britain's post-war information requirements. And, secondly, and related to the first issue, it was only the Foreign Office which was tailor made to be able to gather information as they were the only British organisation that had officials situated throughout the world. Indeed, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick is on record as saying: "The Foreign Office was the first department of State to go in for information in a big way".²⁹⁸

In its early days Sir Ivone would occasionally Chair the Russia Committee when the normal Chairman, Oliver Harvey, was absent for reasons that are not made clear.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ See Thesis Chapter 2.

²⁹⁷ Aldrich. *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and the Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Chapter 5, Page 129.

²⁹⁸ Kirkpatrick. Chapter 10, Page 201.

Sir Ivone was an expert on information work, having been employed during the Second World War in propaganda and intelligence activities and thereafter in the MOI. He had had the task, in 1941, of verifying the identity of Rudolph Hess when he had flown secretly to the UK – having landed close to Glasgow – asking to see the Duke of Hamilton and wanting to instigate peace talks with the UK government. Sir Ivone had known Hess before the War and was an obvious candidate to be sent up to Scotland to establish whether it actually was the German Deputy Fuhrer or whether it was a hoax. Sir Ivone was also a rare example of someone who had not come up through the normal diplomatic route and did not conform to the usual kind of privileged background for a senior civil servant. A Roman Catholic, with a relative lack of formal education, he had an incisive mind and he established a reputation as a quick thinker and rapid worker. In appearance he was small, dapper, and decisive. He was said to have had an authoritative manner and to be combative with a perfunctory style of decision making which was not in the normal mode of a diplomat. He eventually rose to become the Permanent Under-Secretary from 1953 to 1957.

The fourth individual was Lord Thomas Brimelow who was always ‘Tommy’ to his friends. He was another character with an atypical background for a diplomat. He was a product of a grammar-school education, who went on to win a scholarship to Oriel College, Oxford, where he gained a first in Modern Languages. He then joined the Diplomatic Service, gaining entry through the Consular Section. In June 1942 he was posted to Moscow, as Vice-Consul, where he remained for the rest of the War. The experience he gained of the workings of the Soviet State led him to become an acknowledged authority on the interpretation of Soviet policy. That he was the best Russian speaker in the British Embassy in Moscow during the War placed him in an influential position. He was often despatched to cope face to face with Joseph Stalin, who, having imbibed his vodka, was in the habit of summoning someone from the British Embassy late at night or in the early hours of the morning to convey his views to

²⁹⁹ It is not clear why Orme Sargent would have made Oliver Harvey the ‘normal’ Chairman of the Russia Committee but he was highly respected and had served for two separate spells as Eden’s PPS and was highly admired by Bevin. By 1948 he had become HM Ambassador in Paris, one of the most prestigious of all Ambassadorships.

Churchill and the British Government.³⁰⁰ Many years later, from 1973 to 1975, Lord Brimelow rose to become Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office and, in 1977, he donated his personal papers, including those relating to Soviet foreign policy, to the University of Essex. Subsequently, in 1983, 'Notes of Conversations with Lord Brimelow', conducted by Michael Bird, and covering Foreign Office attitudes to the Soviet Bloc and Foreign Office personnel in the late 1940s, were deposited in the Churchill Archive Centre at Churchill College, Cambridge, where they were consulted for this thesis.³⁰¹

The fifth key player was Mr Oliver Charles Harvey – later to become Sir Oliver and, later still, to become Baron Harvey of Tasburgh. The son of a Baronet landowner in Norfolk, he was educated at Malvern College and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he obtained a first in the History tripos. He served in the Norfolk Regiment in France in the First World War and had a very distinguished military career,³⁰² and on return joined the Diplomatic Service in 1920, serving in Rome, Athens and Paris before returning to London to become Principal Private Secretary to Anthony Eden in 1936 and, later, to Lord Halifax whom he regarded as a disaster.³⁰³ In January 1941 Eden, who had taken over from Halifax as Foreign Secretary, was keen to have Harvey back as his Private Secretary. Harvey records: "I said that I would be only too pleased to come back if he thought I could be helpful. He asked whether I would be too senior to be P.S. again. I said of course not..."³⁰⁴

After the end of the Second World War, in 1946, Oliver Harvey held the rank of Deputy Under Secretary (political) and Head of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office and was to remain the Chairman of the Russia Committee for the first couple of years of its existence until, in June 1948, he was appointed His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris – one of the most prestigious of Ambassadorial posts - in succession to Duff Cooper. His time as Anthony Eden's Private Secretary, and his

³⁰⁰ Taken from the Obituary on Thomas Brimelow, written by Tam Dalyell in the *Independent* of 3 August 1995.

³⁰¹ Burd, Michael. *Notes on Conversations with Lord Brimelow*. Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge. April, 1982. Ref GBR/0014/BIMO

³⁰² Harvey, John (Editor). *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1941-1945*. Published Collins, 1978.

³⁰³ Harvey regarded Halifax as a disastrous appeaser.

³⁰⁴ Harvey. Page 10.

relationship with the latter, was a rich one for him. He served Eden with devotion saying, in his posthumously published diaries: "Eden gave me his confidence most fully and I endeavoured to return it in the same spirit, loyally and to the best of my ability".³⁰⁵ Then, as Deputy Under-secretary from 1946 to 1948 he also worked closely with Ernest Bevin, to whom he took immediately upon meeting him in July 1945, describing Bevin as "very genial and friendly".³⁰⁶ He grew in admiration for Bevin, who clearly reciprocated the respect and had great faith in Harvey.

The sixth major player was Sir Christopher Warner. He attended Orme Sargent's 18 March 1946 meeting in his capacity of Head of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office,³⁰⁷ a post he held from 1941 through to 1946, before then becoming His Majesty's Ambassador in Brussels. Although Oliver Harvey was the Chairman for most of the Russia Committee meetings in the first few years of the Committee's existence, Christopher Warner was a regular attendee. Indeed, he attended the first meeting of the Committee and later, on several occasions, he chaired the meetings. Lord Brimelow, described Warner, who was a Winchester man, as: "...a real intellectual; unmarried. He used to spend his spare time reading detective novels to spot faults in construction. He said it helped him spot errors in the drafting of minutes. He was a perfectionist; but he didn't get there the first time. When you went to speak to him he would speak at great length and his thoughts would evolve as he spoke. You had to do things for him three times. The amount of redrafting was exasperating. But he was the kindest of men".³⁰⁸

Christopher Warner, during the war, was very pro-Soviet. Aldrich tells how even as late as 1944 he was convinced that the Soviet Union were bent on co-operation in the future and that Warner was: "The leading light among the British co-operators.... He knew nothing of the Soviet Union and had certainly never been there.... could not have formed a greater contrast to the cynical old Russia hands...was genuinely moved by

³⁰⁵ Harvey, John (Editor). *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1941-1945*. Published Collins, 1978.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. Diary entry for July 1945, Page 384.

³⁰⁷ A post at Assistant Under Secretary level which put him two levels below Sir Orme Sargent.

³⁰⁸ *Notes on two conversations with Lord Brimelow 20-21 April 1982*. Michael Burd. Lord Brimelow's papers, Churchill Archive Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge. Class GBR/0014/BIMO.

the scale of the sacrifice by Russian forces".³⁰⁹ This is corroborated by Victor Rothwell who was a contemporary of Warner's and said: "during the war Christopher Warner felt 'real cordiality toward Stalin's State and thought that true Anglo-Soviet friendship was possible'.³¹⁰ Rothwell also described Warner as "something of an apologist for Soviet actions before reverting to outraged anti-Communism after the war".³¹¹

However, as time moved on, Christopher Warner had a complete change of heart so that as the war neared its end the hitherto "remorseless optimist"³¹² as far as the Soviets were concerned, had to concede that things had taken a sinister turn so that: "by 1946 there were no more arguments about 'co-operation' with the Soviets. The arguments were now about how far to go in responding to Soviet hostility and a more militant tendency was emerging in the Foreign Office. Ironically, these militants included Christopher Warnernow, like a lover scorned, he was full of bitterness and had come to hate the Soviets".³¹³ Greenwood, too, notes this complete change of heart saying that: "before long a hard-liner on Russia, Warner had initially gone in 'for rather cosy imagery being convinced that the Russians wanted to be reasonable".³¹⁴

Christopher Warner, then, was a man who had completely changed his view of the Soviets by the time the Russia Committee began work in March 1946 and was clearly a man of strong views who had the ear of his political, and his official, masters. He was to become closely associated with the early days of the Russia Committee as is evidenced by his having been the one to draft the Committee's terms of reference and, even more importantly, he wrote what was to become one of the most referenced of the early outputs of documents of the Committee, namely the Warner Memorandum.^{315 316}

³⁰⁹ Aldrich. *The Hidden Hand : Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Chapter 2, Page 46.

³¹⁰ Rothwell, Victor. *Britain and the Cold War 1941-1947*. Published Jonathan Cape, 1982. Introduction, Page 16.

³¹¹ Ibid. Chapter 2, Page 80.

³¹² Aldrich. *The Hidden Hand : Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Chapter 2, Page 47.

³¹³ Ibid. Chapter 5, Page 129.

³¹⁴ Greenwood. *Britain and the Cold War 1945-91*. Chapter 1, Page 11.

³¹⁵ TNA: FO 371/56885/5169/38. Memorandum by Christopher Warner. The Soviet Campaign Against this country and Our Response To It. Dated 2 April 1946.

³¹⁶ See Thesis Chapter 5, Page 107, Sub Heading 'The Warner Memorandum'

On 2 April 1946, he attended the first meeting of the Russia Committee, which looked at the Soviet 'offensive against Great Britain as leader of social democracy in the world'. Clearly by this time he had completed his volte face and offered, what Aldrich describes as an: "unabashed comparison with Hitler's Germany, arguing, 'We should be very Unwise not to take the Russians at their word just as we should have taken Mein Kampf at its face value'. A week later Bevin wrote to Attlee employing exactly those words".³¹⁷

The seventh key player was Sir Gladwyn Jebb. Later, to become Lord Gladwyn, he was Head of Economic and Reconstruction Department of the Foreign Office, from 1942 to 1945, and was then given, in his own words, "my new job of getting the UN going".³¹⁸ In that capacity he first came into contact with Bevin at Potsdam at the start of the latter's Foreign Secretary-ship, although the two did not get to speak on that occasion. But shortly after that, Jebb received a message saying that Bevin wanted to see him, to find out how things were going on the UN front. The following quotation is revealing about both characters: "The initial reception was a little formidable. In fact he said nothing for a few moments.... Finally, he observed, 'Must be kinda queer for a chap like you to see a chap like me sitting in a chair like this?... 'Ain't never 'appened before in 'istory' he remarked, scowling ferociously. ... 'Secretary of State', I said .. 'I am sorry that the first time I open my mouth in your presence is to contradict you. But you're wrong. It has. 'What do you mean young man?' 'Well', I said, 'it was a long time ago – rather over four hundred years I think. But there was then a butcher's boy in Ipswich whose origins, I suspect, were just as humble as your own, and he became the Foreign Secretary of one of our greatest kings. And for that matter, a Cardinal too. His name was Tom Wolsey....What is certain is that, from that moment onward, I could do little wrong so far as Bevin was concerned....As for myself I thought he was splendid."³¹⁹

Roderick Barclay, one of Jebb's contemporaries describes him as being: "a

³¹⁷ Aldrich. *The Hidden Hand : Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Chapter 5, Page 129.

³¹⁸ Gladwyn, Lord. *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*. Published Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1972. Chapter 11, Page 168

³¹⁹ Gladwyn Chapter 11, Page 176

strong character with decided views”³²⁰ which he was always encouraged by Bevin to put forward. Bevin, it seems, had a high regard for Jebb and he in turn was a warm admirer of Bevin who Jebb always used to refer to as “Uncle Ernie”³²¹ although at least one historian has described this as “patronising language often used in the writings of other Foreign Office officials”.³²² Jebb was later to become Chairmen of the Russia Committee³²³ and oversaw the first of the two main reorganisations of the Committee having become critical of its workings and its outputs. In 1954 he was to become His Majesty’s Ambassador in Paris, a post which he held until 1960.

The eighth key player was Sir Edmund Leo Hall-Patch who was a slightly odd character. He gained much experience in financial diplomacy following his posting from the Treasury to the Foreign Office from 1936 onwards, when he was first appointed to the British Embassy in China, then Japan and, subsequently, as the government’s Financial Commissioner throughout the Far East. From 1948 he became principal economic adviser to Bevin, in which capacity he played a central role in the British response to the US Marshall Plan. A single man, a devout Roman catholic and a great Francophile, he was said to have had a brilliant, but rather tortuous and pessimistic, mind. He was slightly eccentric in his dress and had a tendency, as he was completely bi-lingual, to suddenly break into French. He was also said to have been a cheerful and charming companion, always kind and ready to help. He was said to be a “great favourite”³²⁴ of Bevin’s who valued him highly and was amused by his Cassandra role. ‘Morning ‘all-Patch’, he would say as he saw Hall-Patch lowering ominously in the corridor ‘and what’s the snags to-day?’ When he had heard, he felt forearmed against the worst. Bulloch tells the story that when Bevin heard that a member of his staff was optimistic about finding a solution for a particular problem he snorted: “Optimistic, is he? Send for ‘all-Patch. E’ll chill ‘is bones.”³²⁵

³²⁰ Barclay, Sir Roderick. *Ernest Bevin and the Foreign Office 1932-69*. Printed by Butler & Tanner Limited, Frome and London, 1975. Page 83.

³²¹ Ibid. Page 84.

³²² Blackwell. Chapter 4, Page 32.

³²³ Pierson Dixon took over from Gladwyn Glebb as Russia Committee Chairman in 1954.

³²⁴ Gladwyn. Chapter 12, Page 189.

³²⁵ Bulloch. Chapter 3, Page 98, Footnote 2.

This, then, was the background when in March 1946 Orme Sargent set up the Russia Committee with membership drawn from the Heads of various Foreign Office Departments – all of whom were subordinate to Orme Sargent. As to why Orme Sargent saw the need for such a Committee, it is clear from the Minutes of his 16 March 1946 meeting and from his recommendations in paragraph 16 of his Stock Taking Memorandum³²⁶ that actions would need to be based upon sound information being gathered from sources drawn as widely as possible – including the intelligence agencies - on the views and the policies of Britain's allies. Moreover, since writing his Memorandum he had seen both Kennan's and Roberts' Long Telegrams. Gill Bennett, in her capacity as Chief Historian of the Foreign Office was familiar with the workings of the Russia Committee to whose papers she had full access - both those in the public domain and those retained by the Foreign Office. She has said that although she had never seen any papers that specifically recorded Orme Sargent's decision to set up the Committee, she nevertheless takes the view (and it is a view shared by Greenwood) that the debate enshrined on the Long Telegrams could be seen as being at the very least in part the catalyst for his decision to do so.³²⁷ It would have been a small step from the setting up of the Information Department to the establishment, within the Foreign Office Headquarters in Whitehall, of the vehicle that would organize the collection of information about the actions, tactics, attitudes and plans of the Soviets, namely the Committee that subsequently became known as the Russia Committee,³²⁸ the first meeting of which took place on 2 April 1946³²⁹ just a fortnight after the 16 March meeting had been convened by Orme Sargent.

³²⁶ See Appendix 1, Pages 229-230.

³²⁷ Interview with Gill Bennett, formerly Chief Historian of the Foreign Office, on 2 May 2016.

³²⁸ At the initial meeting it was called the 'Soviet Policy Co-ordinating' Committee.

³²⁹ TNA: FO 371/N56885/N5169/38. Minutes of 1st meeting on Soviet Policy Co-ordination Committee, 2 April 1946.

Chapter 5 Phase I of Russia Committee work 1946 to 1948

1946 A Strong Beginning

During 1946 there was, what Rothwell describes as “much serious pondering of Soviet policy motives in the Foreign Office and in the British Embassy in Moscow”.³³⁰ In so pondering, the British, Rothwell argued, had the advantage over the US in terms of understanding the Soviets because “British-Russian relations had been of great importance to both countries for at least a hundred and fifty years, whereas Soviet-American relations had been of secondary, even trivial, importance before 1941”.³³¹ Whether this view has validity is at least questionable but what is indisputable is his assertion that the subject of British-Soviet relations was under close scrutiny at this time and one tangible result of this ‘pondering’ was the setting up of the Russia Committee. April 1946³³² saw the establishment of what was to be the first of the government committees to examine the emerging threat posed by the Soviets. It was set up to: “collate information about communism from all sources, including the most secret, in order to bring home to Ministers and selected Government Departments the true nature of the [Soviet] menace”.³³³

The membership of the Committee mostly comprised Heads of Foreign Office Departments all of whom were diplomats of senior rank, many of whom later went on to reach the highest levels of their profession. By drawing the membership from across the Foreign Office the Committee gained a wide coverage of Foreign Office expertise. The first Chairman of the Russia Committee was Oliver Charles Harvey,³³⁴ Deputy Under-secretary (Political).³³⁵ He was one of the few members of the Committee who was not a Head of Department but he was someone who was highly regarded by Orme Sargent and by both Eden and Bevin. It was in some ways surprising

³³⁰ Rothwell. Page 247.

³³¹ Ibid. Page 247.

³³² TNA: FO 371/56885. This document, released in May 2013, records that the Russia Committee was set up in 1947 but the minutes of the Russia Committee show that its first meeting was on 2 April 1946.

³³³ TNA: FO 371/ 0/1/57

³³⁴ See Chapter 4, Page 91-2 and Appendix 2, Pages 323-325.

³³⁵ Deputy Under Secretary was one rank down from the most senior Diplomatic rank of Permanent Under Secretary.

that the Chairmanship was not vested in the Head of the Northern Department³³⁶ which encompassed the 'Russia Desk'. Sir Christopher Warner was Head of the Northern Department until early 1946 and did attend Russia Committee meetings until his move to become HM Ambassador in Brussels but it was perhaps because of his imminent move from the Northern Department that he was not appointed Chairman. It may also have been deemed more appropriate to appoint a Chairman whose brief extended beyond specific areas and disciplines. After all, the Russia Committee was not an exclusively Northern Department organisation. The reach and coverage was wider. And although several members of the Committee, including the Secretary, were from the Northern Department, others came from the Foreign Office Research Department (FORD), the Information Department (ID) and other Foreign Office Departments as well as visiting Ambassadors. Nevertheless the fact that the Secretary came from the Northern Department put it in poll position. The post of Secretary in civil/diplomatic service terms has an importance probably undermined by the nomenclature. The Secretary of high level Committees is often a very senior person who is an expert in the particular field, perhaps the most obvious example being the Secretary to the Cabinet who is the highest ranking civil servant in Britain, a post which it has been claimed, is one of the four highest Offices of State, alongside the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.³³⁷

The first Secretary to the Russia Committee was Robin M A Hankey who was the son of the highly esteemed Secretary to the Cabinet, Sir Maurice Hankey, who had retired in 1938.³³⁸ Robin Hankey had served in Cairo and then Teheran in his early Diplomatic career and was posted back to the Foreign Office in London in 1943 to become the Deputy Head of the Eastern Department and then, from 1946, became Head of Northern Department but was not to remain Secretary for long as he was soon appointed Counsellor in Warsaw.

³³⁶ Thieme. *Armed Peace: The British Foreign Office and the Soviet Union 1945-1953*.

³³⁷ This claim was made in the second of the five BBC's *Inside No 10* programmes in which the journalist Sue Cameron interviews the five surviving former Cabinet Secretaries: Lord Armstrong, Lord Butler, Lord Wilson, Lord Turnbull and Lord O'Donnell, which were broadcast in February 2018.

³³⁸ Beesley, Ian. *The Official History of The Cabinet Secretaries*. Published Routledge 2017, Chapter 2, Page 171, refers to the fact that Maurice Hankey kept diaries on which his Memoirs were based and later published and which proved troublesome to his successor, Norman Brook.

The first meeting of the Russia Committee took place at 11am on 2 April 1946 in Whitehall where eight³³⁹ senior ranking members of the Diplomatic Service met with the far from low-key objective to “co-ordinate policy towards Russia”.³⁴⁰ The meeting was notable for a number of reasons, beyond its being the first to be held. The sheer reach of the Foreign Office interests and the surety of the assessments is profound. The judgments are stated as facts. There is an unnerving self-confidence about the statements and, not surprisingly as it was the British Foreign Office, a clear and unapologetic concentration on the British interests and, significantly, in its inaugural format and membership, this committee was made up purely of Foreign Office officials. The Chairman, Oliver Harvey, set out the background to Orme Sargent’s decision to set up the Committee, explaining that the outcome of the latter’s recent meeting was the decision that a paper should be put to Cabinet as it was clear that the Soviets: “..had returned to pure Marx-Leninism, was becoming dynamic and aggressive and had opened an offensive against Great Britain as the leader of social democracy in the world...Recommendations were to be made to the cabinet for a coordinated defence against this long term attack and possibly for the adoption of a defensive-offensive in reply...”.³⁴¹

The Chairman explained that the aim was to hold a series of weekly meetings to coordinate policy towards the Soviet Union and in a tour de table he led his colleagues in an overview of Soviet policy towards the Far East, the Middle East and Central and South Eastern Europe. It is worth dwelling on the overall assessments of each of these areas at this point because the Committee would return at their subsequent meetings to take stock of developments thereon. The report on the Far East³⁴² concerned the states along the Soviet border with China which were described as being quiet noting that the Outer Mongolian People’s Republic was “virtually a satellite”³⁴³ of the Soviet

³³⁹ The attendees at the first meeting comprised: Oliver Harvey (Chairman), Mr Howe, Nigel Ronald, Edwin Hall-Patch, Ivone Kirkpatrick, Christopher Warner, John Sterndale Bennett and Mr Robin Hankey.

³⁴⁰ TNA: FO 371/56885 folio N5109.

³⁴¹ TNA: FO 371/N56885/N5169/38. Minutes of 1st meeting on Soviet Policy Co-ordination Committee – later called the Russia Committee, held on 2 April 1946.

³⁴² Given by Mr Sterndale Bennett, later Sir John Sterndale Bennett, who had previously had a very distinguished military career. See Appendix 2, Page 316.

³⁴³ TNA: FO 371/N56885/N5169/38. Minutes of 1st meeting on Soviet Policy Co-ordination Committee, 2 April 1946. Page 2.

Union. In Manchuria the Soviets were said to be trying to get a majority control of economic enterprises and had put great effort into the removal of factories and machinery which it was observed would be likely to have had a crippling effect on the economy of a country that had up to then been “relatively highly developed”.³⁴⁴ Nevertheless, as an observation on the relationship between the two big Communist blocks, the Chinese were thought to be capable of looking after their own interests very effectively, as the minutes of the meeting record: “..the Chinese Communists would probably take all they could get from the Russians in order to increase their own power. Present indications, however, were that they had a strong nationalist tendency and it was quite possible that they would end by biting the hand that fed them”.³⁴⁵

The discussion on the Middle East dwelt largely on Persia’s³⁴⁶ oil reserves, which were important not just to the British and the Soviets but also to the United States. The formation of the Tuleh Party, which had been encouraged by the Soviets, was seen by the Foreign Office as a lever to be used to encourage the formation of a stooge government over which the Soviets could exert undue influence. This sort of tactic was regarded by the Foreign Office as being a typical move on the part of the Soviets to foster Communist expansionism. With similar concerns in mind the meeting noted that Britain had advised the Iraqi Government: “not to be in a hurry to receive a Soviet diplomatic representative and were contemplating advising His Majesty’s Minister at Jedda in the same sense...”.³⁴⁷

The discussion on Central and South East Europe³⁴⁸ drew attention to a report which, given subsequent events may well have been true, that the Soviets had started to establish a base at Varna, Bulgaria’s largest seaport, where they had fermented disagreement between the existing Bulgarian government and the opposition. The Communist state of Bulgaria was subsequently established, lasting for 35 years, over

³⁴⁴ Ibid. 2 April 1946. Page 2.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. Minutes of 1st meeting on Soviet Policy Co-ordination Committee.

³⁴⁶ The old nomenclature of Persia, rather than using today’s Iran, is used repeatedly in the Russia Committee reports, papers and minutes despite it having been decided by that country, from March 1935 onwards, that Iran should be used rather than Persia.

³⁴⁷ TNA: FO 371/N56885/N5169/38. 2 April 1946. Page 4.

³⁴⁸ This was Christopher Warner – see Chapter 4, Page 92-94 and Appendix 2, Page 338.

which period it was for a time under strong Stalinist/Soviet control but later held more to the Yugoslavian/Titoist type of Communism.

The remaining countries, for which an overview was given at this initial meeting, were Scandinavia, Austria and Germany. It was thought that the Soviets had reasonably little influence at the time in either Sweden or Norway but rather more in Denmark and that they were seeking to penetrate the Swedish trades unions. A commonsense, though nonetheless interesting, observation was that the Scandinavians by their close proximity to Russia were impressed by power and the nearness of that country which could lead to the lessening of their tentative ties with Britain. On Austria it was reported that Britain had now agreed to support the Austrian Social Democrats and was noted that the Soviets "...were being as difficult as possible in Austria"³⁴⁹ in relation to the allocation of farm land and the supply of food.

As to Germany, the views expressed in the initial report are worth quoting more fully given what later transpired in the partitioning of Berlin: "the Eastern zone was being rapidly communised. The battle over the future of the Social Democrat Party was now joined and it was apparent that the Russians aimed at turning Berlin into a Communist stronghold. There were preliminary indications that the Russians were now actively building up industry in the Soviet zone and were even using industrial plants delivered as reparations from Western Germany and Austria for the purpose".³⁵⁰

This initial scene-setting meeting concluded with a summary of the situation in respect of the numerous international organisations which were then operable: The United Nations Organisation (UN or UNO);³⁵¹ the European Central Inland Transport Organisation (ECITO);³⁵² the International Danube Commission (IDC);³⁵³ League of

³⁴⁹ TNA: FO 371/N56885/N5169/38. Minutes of 1st meeting on Soviet Policy Co-ordination Committee, 2 April 1946. Page 5.

³⁵⁰ Ibid. Page 5.

³⁵¹ Founded in 1945, the UN was in its infancy at this time.

³⁵² The ECITO was created under the auspices of the UN in 1946 and existed until 1954.

³⁵³ The Danube River Commission which was set up in the wake of the Treaty of Paris in 1856 was in effect disbanded in the light of the rise of German power so that the control of the river was in the hands of the Germans until the defeat of Germany in 1945. A new Commission was subsequently introduced in 1948 which gave the governance of the river to the tripartian powers only ie those powers through whose lands the river ran and thus ended a century of Western powers' control and influence over this important European waterway.

Nations (LoN);³⁵⁴ and the War Crimes Commission (WCC).³⁵⁵ On the UN, although Gromyko³⁵⁶ had reportedly walked out of the UN Security Council over the Persian dispute about oil rights, the general consensus was that the Soviets would not walk out of the UN altogether if they could avoid it; Molotov, in his election speech, having said that the Soviet Government would support the UNO: "...in order to prevent capitalist aggression".³⁵⁷

It is clear from this record of the initial meeting that there existed considerable concern within the Foreign Office as to the direction in which the Soviets were moving and the need to get the Cabinet to address these issues and to act upon recommendations that the Russia Committee would draw up. The fact that the Committee planned to meet weekly was, of itself, an indication of the importance that was attached to the Committee's work by the most senior people in the Foreign Office as it required a considerable resource commitment.

There were several distinct elements to the Foreign Office's concern over Soviet Foreign policy. The first concerned Russia's stance towards Great Britain, as evidenced by the earlier reference to "dynamic and aggressive offensive against Great Britain".³⁵⁸ The Russia Committee rapidly came to the view that Britain needed to respond by adopting a 'defensive-offensive' stance, in other words to defend Britain's position by going on the offensive. The second element, which the Foreign Office was uniquely able to fulfill, was to examine and keep under regular review the Soviet policy in different parts of the world. The third concern, which would become clear at later meetings, was the need to walk in step with colleagues in the United States.

The Chairman concluded the first meeting of the Russia Committee with the warning: "By means of their economic, financial, banking and commercial policies, the Russians

³⁵⁴ The League of Nations was, in effect, the forerunner of the UN and as such was disbanded in April 1946.

³⁵⁵ Established in London in October 1943 the United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC) Ref TNA Records Group 238: 238.1

³⁵⁶ Gromyko was the Soviet Ambassador to the United States from 1943 to 1946 and thereafter became Soviet Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

³⁵⁷ TNA: FO 371/N56885/N5169/38. Minutes of 1st meeting on Soviet Policy Co-ordination Committee, 2 April 1946. Page 5.

³⁵⁸ Ibid. Page 6.

were linking up the largest possible area in Eastern Europe with the Five Year Plan and were gearing it into the Soviet economic system. The effect of their economic stranglehold was to tighten their political grip on Eastern Europe and the social changes which their economic measures produced (eg by closing the banks or manipulating the currency in Eastern Europe) had a similar result. Western influences and economic interests were by the same means being progressively eliminated".³⁵⁹

The second meeting, a week later and with largely - but not entirely - the same cast list, was perhaps a little sharper and more business-like in its approach, agreeing immediately that terms of reference for the Committee would be drafted by Christopher Warner³⁶⁰ and these were subsequently circulated on 18 April as follows:

To review weekly the development of all aspects of Soviet policy and propaganda and Soviet activities throughout the world, more particularly with reference to the Soviet campaign against this country; to ensure a unified interpretation thereof throughout the political and economic departments of the Foreign Office; to consider what action is required as a result of the Committee's review with particular reference to the probable degrees of support to be looked for from the United States of America and to a lesser degree from France, and others; and to ensure that the necessary recommendations as to policy are made either by the departments of the office concerned or by the Committee to Sir Orme Sargent, as may be appropriate. The Committee will maintain close contact with the JIC with a view to coordinating intelligence and policy at every stage.

A brief report of each meeting is to be submitted to Sir Orme Sargent.³⁶¹

These terms of reference are significant in several respects. First, they are broadly based and high level. The requirement to review "all aspects of Soviet policy and propaganda throughout the world"³⁶² appears an ambitious and formidable task. Only the Foreign Office was in the position within the UK to mount such a review. Secondly, they embrace the close intelligence relationship that existed between the United States and Britain during the Second World War and sought to ensure that this continued. Thirdly, the reference to "maintaining close contact with the JIC", which has been described as the most important British intelligence body at the centre of UK

³⁵⁹Ibid. Page 6.

³⁶⁰ See footnote 348.

³⁶¹TNA: FO 371/56885/ N5170/38. 12 April 1946. Russia Committee Terms of Reference.

³⁶² Ibid.

politics,³⁶³ is highly significant not only in terms of establishing the security and intelligence credentials of the Russian Committee but of its importance in terms of status – the JIC being on all fours with an official Cabinet Committee. The status of the Russia Committee was further underscored by the involvement of the PUS, Orme Sargent, who was to be kept in close contact with all that they did.

The discussions at the next meeting of the Committee, held on 16 April 1946,³⁶⁴ covered a broad spectrum of issues and serves to underline the size of the task before them. In addition to looking at the state of play in the Middle East and the Far East and looking ahead to the proposed next Council of Ministers meeting to be held in Paris, there was a lengthy discussion on the strategic position of the British Commonwealth and a paper on 'Relations with the United States'. On the Commonwealth, the discussion centered on what to do about the manpower needed to honour the country's defence commitments when manpower resources were at a low ebb. One proposal for dealing in part with this problem related to the large number of Polish Armed Forces who had fought with Britain in the War and had remained in the UK and to whom de-mobilisation had been promised. The proposal was to offer the Poles the opportunity to remain in the UK and to join a new voluntary defence organisation. This resulted in the proposal to set up another Whitehall inter-departmental committee to consider the plans of the Ministry of Defence's Chiefs of Staff to tackle the manpower shortage problems, with representatives from the Chiefs of Staff, HM Treasury, the Ministry of Labour and the Foreign Office. This is an example of a subject that crossed the responsibilities of several Departments including the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence and which left the MOD in this instance in the pole position. The Foreign Office representative was to be Mr Hall-Patch who, as he was also a member of the Russia Committee, could keep the latter informed of what was going on. This Committee was charged, once they had researched the options, with advising Ministers who would then take it to the Defence Committee. On the face of it, therefore, this Whitehall Committee on Manpower had a much more

³⁶³ Goodman, Michael S. *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee, Volume I, From the Approach of the Second World War to the Suez Crisis*. Published Routledge, 2014. Chapter 4, Page 94

³⁶⁴TNA: FO 371/56885/ N5406.

focused and narrow remit than the Russia Committee but on the other hand it also had cross-Whitehall representation and an expectation to advise their political masters, whereas the Russia Committee at this early stage had high level official participation but no obvious Ministerial backing; had a dauntingly wide remit; and had a membership drawn exclusively from the Foreign Office, though attendees from elsewhere were permitted.

The other paper of interest, which was circulated in advance to the Russia Committee members was significant in one important respect, namely that it picked up on the need to continue to work closely with, and to share information with, the Americans. The sharing of intelligence between the UK and the United States was well established but was to be undermined by the US decision to stop sharing intelligence after the War with all other countries, including the UK and, later – by 1952 – through the compromising of British intelligence output through Soviet spies working within the SIS and the Foreign Office. The un-redacted³⁶⁵ section of the Addendum reads as follows: “Relations with the United States. Mr Caccia informed the meeting that the Chiefs of staff had now agreed that we should exchange J.I.C. appreciations through the Joint Chiefs of Staff Organisation in Washington”.

The April 23rd meeting of the Committee, in addition to what had already become the standard updating under the normal headings, was interesting in that it records several instances of Committee members wishing to engage Ministers and/or senior diplomats with their concerns. They were not, after all, deliberating on the Soviet threat in a vacuum merely for their own consumption. Their *raison d’être* was to bring their concerns to those senior people in government and by so doing encourage the adoption of policies to counter the threat. So, for example, under the ‘Europe’ heading, concern was expressed about the willingness of France to accede to Soviet pressures. The minutes record the view that the: “....growth of Communist influence in France was having a marked effect on the Netherlands and Belgian Governments

³⁶⁵TNA: FO 371/ 56885/N5406. Minutes of Russia Committee meeting on 16 April 1946. The fifth page, has text removed, or redacted, under Section 3(4) of the Public Records Act.

which were becoming nervous of having close connections with France".³⁶⁶ There were also thought to be a number of instances which indicated that Czechoslovakia was falling more and more into the Soviet sphere of influence - this was a somewhat prescient comment given the fact that the Communists seized power two years later. Similarly, under the heading of International Federations, concern was expressed about the tactics employed by the Communists of infiltrating their nominees into influential positions in organisations.

The Committee continued to meet weekly. At their 30 April meeting,³⁶⁷ in addition to the by now normal topics being discussed, there was a curious reference to the "decidedly anti British" American government representative in Berlin, General Clay, who was described as a "queer character" who felt that he needed to keep on the right side of the Soviets. The Foreign Office was mindful of the need to keep abreast of possible changes in relations with United States with whom close relations remained very important partly because of the wish to try to retain a central place on the world stage and partly because of the practical need for tangible economic assistance.

Concern was expressed about the Soviets making propaganda use of Great Britain not having supplied wheat to France when asked to do so, the French being susceptible to such propaganda with their elections in the offing. It was claimed that: "...the Russians had speeded up their campaign of vilification against us by saying for instance that Russians had only given wheat because the Anglo-Saxons had failed to help France".³⁶⁸ Britain, of course, had major issues with feeding its own population. As had been noted during the Russia Committee meeting a week earlier in that the British Secretary of State had decided that there was nothing that could be done to aid the French with cereals, as all available stocks were spoken for. Britain also had to have regard to the needs of the wider Commonwealth, for example India, which was experiencing dangerous food shortages. And on Persian oil – a recurring theme, and set to remain so – the view was that Britain needed to press her interests in South Eastern Persian oil

³⁶⁶ TNA: FO 371/56885/N5407. Page 6, under 'Europe' heading.

³⁶⁷ TNA: FO 371/56885/N5490/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee held on 30 April 1946.

³⁶⁸ TNA : FO 371/56885/N5940. Page 2, paragraph 8.

unilaterally rather than as being in a consortium with the Americans who would doubtless have no qualms about pursuing their own independent interests in this area.

Members of the Committee, at this stage all from different parts of the Foreign Office, agreed that other government departments had a clear interest in the issues being kept under review by the Russia Committee, and they therefore decided to hold a meeting dedicated to considering whether the net of membership should be cast more widely. The appetite for so doing seemed likely to be welcomed given the Chairman's report that Sir Orme Sargent wished the committee: "to pay special attention to economic policy as well as political and to the co-ordination of the two".³⁶⁹

The Committee was therefore beginning to widen out its sphere of interest to involve other government departments, for example HM Treasury. So it was that even in these very early days of the Russia Committee's existence, their remit was recognised as being so vast, and so potentially important, that its membership could not be confined to the Foreign Office. The membership was, therefore, expanded from May 1946 to include representatives from the Ministry of Defence Chiefs of Staff and the JIC.

The Warner Memorandum

May 1946 saw the Russia Committee really getting into its stride with a lot of things happening in short order. The first really significant output of the Russia Committee was circulated in early draft form after Christopher Warner had been commissioned by Orme Sargent to produce a Top Secret Circular, which was to become known as 'The Warner Memorandum', designed to be sent to all Heads of Political and Functional Departments of the Foreign Office and all Under Secretaries in posts abroad – therefore, in effect, to every senior diplomat in the Foreign Office - to be entitled 'The Soviet Campaign Against this Country and Our Response To It'. On 3 May Warner sent his first draft to Edmund Hall-Patch, inviting him to make any changes he thought fit and then to pass the draft on to Orme Sargent. On 4 May Hall-Patch did as requested, noting: "This circular covers the Russian aspect of the Committee's work very well. It makes no mention of any more general activities. You may wish to add

³⁶⁹ TNA : FO 371/56885/N5940.

something to cover this, or it may be better to leave things as they are and see how the work of the Committee develops.” On 6 May Mr Troutbeck produced a note for discussion at the next meeting of the Russia Committee – which was to take place the following day - having been asked by Lord Brimelow for his views on Warner’s paper.

The meeting on 7 May was a key event in the early life of the Russia Committee. In addition to the normal updates, it was notable for including an in-depth discussion about the draft Warner Memorandum. The Memorandum, which is made up of seven pages and 28 paragraphs, comprises arguably the blueprint for all the future work of the Russia Committee. It begins by referring to the various sources that had influenced Warner in his thinking - for example election speeches by Stalin, Molotov and other Polit-bureau members – which Warner believed illustrated the Soviets’ return to the pure doctrine of Marx-Lenin-Stalin. It notes the Soviets intense building up of military and industrial strength and what Warner described as their “revival of the bogey of external danger to the Soviet Union”.³⁷⁰ The Memorandum then unpacks Warner’s reasons for so contending and his belief that Britain needed to defend herself against these Soviet policy changes which were unlikely to be short-lived and posed a serious threat to Britain’s interests all over the world.³⁷¹ He further argued that Britain needed not only to be fully aware of the Soviets’ aggressive policy in all its aspects but also to foresee future developments in her campaign against Britain and how they could be countered, or, in using Warner’s words whether Britain should adopt a “defensive-offensive policy”. This phrase was picked up by Merrick ³⁷² who singled out the 7 May meeting as being important, noting that the Committee: “recognised a need for a defensive-offensive policy, and drafted lines for a counter-offensive of propaganda”.

Warner saw a clear necessity to carry out a constant study of the Soviets’ activities to stir up trouble for Britain and weaker her influence. And to work out a coherent policy to keep counter measures under constant review. He cites the Soviets as accusing Britain of being anti-democratic, reactionary, lax in routing out fascism, aggressive and

³⁷⁰ TNA FO 371/56832/N6344/605/38. Memorandum by C.F.A Warner dated 2 April 1946. Paragraph 1.

³⁷¹ Ibid. Paragraphs 2-5.

³⁷² Merrick.

war-mongering. He points to the Soviets infiltration of international bodies such as the World Youth Organisation and the World Federation of Trade Unions etc and the need to be alert to these moves. The specific threats he identified as needing to be guarded against were: “(a) the establishment of communist governments in countries where a hostile influence threatens our vital interests, (b) the weakening of the influence of elements friendly to us in such countries, (c) the creation of troubled conditions where we are responsible for peaceand prosperity, (d) Soviet blocking of schemes for restoring settled conditions..., (e) Soviet attempts to divide us from those who share our basic political conceptions, (f) Soviet attempts to discredit us as weak and reactionary.”³⁷³ As to how Britain should go about conducting a “defensive-offensive” policy, the Memorandum argues that Britain should develop her own propaganda but recognised that this would need endorsement by Bevin and Attlee and a lead would need to be given by politicians through their Ministerial speeches.

Following the Russia Committee discussion of the draft Warner Memorandum, Orme Sargent signed a circular, dated 13 May,³⁷⁴ and entitled “Committee on Policy towards Russia”, which was, in effect, a covering note to the Memorandum. It included the following:

The Russians are engaged in a general and long-term political offensive against us...The pattern of Russian tactics in the political economic and propaganda fields is pretty clear: we must constantly try to anticipate their application to new cases and consider how to counter them. But we must try not to think purely defensively. A defensive-offensive policy has been sanctioned. We should therefore ourselves constantly consider how we can score points in the contest against the spread of international communism and against the extension of Russian influence. We must, however, expose totalitarianism and communism in all their forms and wherever they may be found.....³⁷⁵

The Circular was preceded by a note from Christopher Warner, dated 10 May 1946, to Orme Sargent in which he says: “It was recommended at last week’s meeting of the Russia Committee that the attention of heads of department should be drawn to the

³⁷³ TNA FO 371/56832/N6344/605/38. Memorandum by C.F.A Warner dated 2 April 1946. Paragraph 16.

³⁷⁴ TNA: FO 371/56885/N6092. Circular to all Foreign Office Heads of Departments from Orme Sargent, dated 13 May 1946.

³⁷⁵ Ibid

importance of trying to foresee and prepare to meet in advance if possible Russian developments of their campaign against us.....".³⁷⁶

The Circular³⁷⁷ set out for the Heads of all Foreign Office Political and International Departments, the reasons behind the setting up of the Russia Committee; noted the fact that a shorter version of the circular had been approved by the Prime Minister and had been sent to all Ministers – thereby giving the Committee status and the highest stamp of approval for its work; and informed the Heads of Department what role they were to play in the Committee's work. It re-iterated that the basic justification for the existence of the Committee was that, as the Soviet policy in the military, political, economic and propaganda fields was carefully planned and orchestrated, then the British should attempt equally to co-ordinate their responses in these fields. The scope of the Soviet threat was seen as: "...so wide and so insidious that the policy of withstanding communism and fighting for "liberalism" of western democracy will to a large extent affect and focus this Office".³⁷⁸

The setting up of the Russia Committee was regarded as being essential not just to react/respond to Soviet aggression and propaganda against Britain but to be in a position to anticipate what they were likely to do in the future and thereby be better placed to counter it; the Committee was to become the central machinery for this work. This task could best be achieved by ensuring that membership was not only drawn from senior experienced diplomats from across the relevant Foreign Office departments but also by linking in to the Chiefs of Staff at the Ministry of Defence and to the JIC through the addition of Harold Caccia³⁷⁹ to their regular membership, and Caccia himself would provide a link with the Security Service (MI5).³⁸⁰ Each of the Committee members was charged with responsibility for bringing to the notice of the

³⁷⁶ TNA: FO 371/N56885. Note by Christopher Warner to Orme Sargent dated, 10 May 1946.

³⁷⁷ TNA: FO 371/56885. Circular to Heads of Political and Functional Departments entitled 'The Soviet Campaign against this Country and our Response to it', dated 13 May 1946.

³⁷⁸ TNA: FO 371/56885. Circular dated 13 May 1946, by Orme Sargent. First paragraph.

³⁷⁹ Harold Caccia, a Foreign Office man, was Chairman of the JIC from 1945 to August 1946. See also Appendix 2, Pages 315-316.

³⁸⁰ TNA: FO 371/56885/. Minutes of the Russia Committee Meeting on 28 May 1946. NB no further reference on the actual minutes. Paragraph 6, 4th line, notes that any contact between the Committee and MI5 should be conducted through Harold Caccia.

Committee any matters bearing on Soviet policy of concern to their own departments and of seeing that any actions agreed by the Committee and affecting their areas of responsibility were implemented. Cross-departmental issues would be the responsibility of the Committee to address as would the need to decide whether to engage or bring in people from other government departments as the Committee's work proceeded.

By mid-May 1946, therefore, the Russia Committee had been established and Ministers were aware of its existence. The Chairmanship and membership had been agreed, individual responsibilities had been assigned; the frequency of meetings (weekly) had been decided; and the wider Foreign Office Departments and Overseas posts were informed of its existence and purpose. Indeed, the minutes of the 14 May 1946 meeting confirmed that the circular to Heads of Department regarding the work of the Committee "has now been sent out".³⁸¹ The Russia Committee was now well placed to get on with its task. Moreover, the meeting of the Committee on 14 May 1946 saw an end to the period in which the Russia Committee only existed, as it were, as an internal and purely officially sanctioned entity and became a body of which Ministers were aware and of which they were supportive. Two other points worthy of note are recorded in the Minutes, namely that a working party had been set up to look into the preparing of a "counter-offensive" to Soviet propaganda; and that Mr Caccia was able to inform his fellow members of the Russia Committee that the JIC intended to keep the output of the Russia Committee under review to ensure that they were kept up to date on the strategy being adopted to counter the Soviets propaganda activities. This underlined that a close link had been formed between the JIC and the Russia Committee which, in turn, provided the Committee with a link with the security and intelligence agencies. Subsequently, and out of committee, the Secretary circulated a memorandum in mid-May summarizing the subject of various studies that had been, or would be, produced at the behest of the Committee.³⁸² The list of topics it was intended to cover illustrates the proposed breadth of the work of the Russia Committee, which included: the spread of communism throughout the world and the

³⁸¹ TNA: FO 371/56885/N6523. Paragraph B (4).

³⁸² TNA: FO 371 /56885/ N6092.

extent of its being directed from Moscow; the Soviet use of Diplomatic Privileges and Missions for subversive purposes; Soviet strategic interests and intentions in the Middle East; fortnightly reports on Soviet troop movements in South East Europe and the Persian frontier; Soviet activities in Western Europe, Austria, Hungary and in the Chinese Northern provinces .

May 1946 was, therefore, a busy time in the early days of the Russia Committee. They were clearly feeling their way forward and deciding on the areas on which they needed to concentrate their energies. The above list is formidable of itself but to this was added another requirement, as set out in another circular drafted for Orme Sargent to send out at the end of May to go to all Heads of Foreign Office Political and Functional Department Heads. The circular was entitled 'Communist Activities in International Federations and Congresses' and in what might appear a slightly paranoid opening to the paper, Orme Sargent described why he believed it necessary, when proposals were in hand to set up new international organisations – and particularly where British participation was mooted - to keep them under close scrutiny: "The Soviet Government's clever trick of penetrating or securing the creation of International Federations of various kinds and arranging that the executive functions should be controlled by Communists.... By suitable manipulation of the procedure and drafting of resolutions the whole proceedings of such bodies or congresses are made to serve the ends of Soviet propaganda and in particular for unscrupulous attacks on this country....."³⁸³ The examples of organisations being penetrated by the Soviets were similar to those listed by George Kennan in his Long Telegram and lend weight to the assertion that the Telegram prompted Orme Sargent to set up the Russia Committee.

There was a delay in sending out this circular, as became apparent from the note of a subsequent meeting of the Russia Committee which recorded "the Secretary of State's refusal to approve the paper on propaganda".³⁸⁴ This reference is highly significant for two reasons. Firstly, the language could be said to be uncharacteristically forthright

³⁸³ TNA:FO 371/N6274. Extract from Circular signed by Orme Sargent dated 25 May 1946.

³⁸⁴ TNA:FO 371/56885/N7515. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 4 June 1946, Paragraphs 1 and 2.

for a set of formal minutes of a meeting of senior diplomats. The use of the word “refusal” appears pejorative. As has been alluded to elsewhere, the attitude of Ernest Bevin towards the Russia Committee’s proposed anti-Communist propaganda is open to question. It has been argued that neither he, nor Attlee, were at this stage inclined to take a pessimistic view of where the Soviets were going and this could seem to be borne out by the following extract from the meeting minutes: “(The memorandum on propaganda) had been submitted to the Secretary of State but it had not been approved. The Secretary of State had requested that in the meantime, instead of publicizing misdeeds of the Communists, we should concentrate on extolling our own achievements”.³⁸⁵

This sounds like a reining in of the Committee by their political master but, if so, it failed to achieve that end. Indeed, the Committee was having none of it. Their conclusion was that in circulating the paper the covering letter should make it clear that the recommendations therein should ‘not yet be acted on’. It would be easy, perhaps, to see too much significance in Bevin’s apparent reigning in of the Committee. While it is conceivable that he may have had a somewhat different view of the Soviets’ intentions from those of his officials, it is also likely that too much can be made of this and that in fact his attitude was multi-layered as he had to have an eye to the need for retaining as good an official line with the Soviets as possible even though he had already had first-hand experience of how difficult, duplicitous and intransigent they had shown themselves to be over, for example, rescinding Yalta agreements. One historian of the period takes the view that he was simply feeling his way³⁸⁶ and in the absence of concrete evidence of hostile action and given his relations as Foreign Secretary with the leaders of Britain’s former allies it would have been incumbent upon him to deal with his counterparts on issues as they arose and in an open minded way.

In mid-May 1946 there was evidence that the MOD and JIC valued the work of the Russia Committee. A paper³⁸⁷ by the Chief of Staff, circulated to Russia Committee

³⁸⁵ Ibid. Paragraphs 1 and 2.

³⁸⁶ Interview with Gill Bennett, former Chief Historian of the Foreign Office, on 11 December 2014.

³⁸⁷ TNA: COS (46)69(0). Paper dated 8 March 1946

members, outlined three studies being prepared on Russian activities. The first was a report on Russia's strategic interests and intentions, prepared by the JIC³⁸⁸ which was to be updated six-monthly to see if the conclusions needed amending. The second would comprise fortnightly reports on Russian troop movements in South East Europe and on the Persian frontier. The third was a paper that was in preparation on Russia's strategic interests and intentions in the Middle East, which was also to be reviewed and updated monthly. The Memorandum recorded that the Russia Committee, in addition to ensuring that they had sight of the above three regular report updates, would also, "as sufficient material becomes available" prepare studies on: Soviet activities in Western Europe; Soviet activities in Austria and Hungary; Soviet activities in Chinese Northern Provinces and in the use of Chinese Communism to further Soviet aims; and the spread of Communism throughout the world and the extent of its direction from Moscow including Soviet use of Diplomatic Privileges and Missions for subversive purposes. A formidable expanse of work for any organisation.

In mid-May another key document³⁸⁹ was produced, by Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, for the Russia Committee, entitled 'Anti-Communist Propaganda'. It set out the factors that needed to be kept in mind when setting up a scheme for anti-Communist propaganda. Although there was clearly a perceived need to take action it was nevertheless noted that, unlike the Soviets, Britain could not control domestic organs of publicity but was dependent on the goodwill of her publicists. Therefore, it was argued, the success of propaganda would be dependent upon engaging Ministers and would need to be backed up with policy decisions and deeds which, in turn, needed Ministerial sanction. This was not necessarily going to be easy to deliver bearing in mind that Bevin had already shown that he was not yet ready to take action. This was to be an education campaign and therefore long-term. It required action at home and abroad. Action that would be needed at home would comprise: informing and obtaining co-operation of Ministers and other Home departments and particularly enlisting the cooperation of the Ministry of Defence's Admiralty, War Office and Air Ministry; engaging the BBC

³⁸⁸ TNA: JIC (46)1(0)

³⁸⁹ TNA: FO 371/56885/N 6092/5169/38. Paper by Ivone Kirkpatrick dated 15 May 1946.

Home Service via the BBC governors; engaging Chatham House³⁹⁰ to include suitable material in all of their publications. Action that would be needed abroad would require keeping Heads of Missions fully updated on the purpose and scope of the propaganda campaign and providing Missions with information on malpractices of the Soviet Government.

With initiatives coming thick and fast the next few meetings of the Russia Committee were notable for reporting on the status of the two most substantive circulars yet produced by the Committee, namely the Warner Memorandum and the Kirkpatrick 'paper on propaganda'. Rothwell describes the Warner Memorandum as being "very influential"³⁹¹ and as evidence for this he cites Attlee as having referred to the ideas enshrined in the Memorandum in positive terms when in correspondence with the British Liaison Mission, Tokyo, in July 1946.³⁹² But, before that, in June, the Committee were awaiting Bevin's approval to circulate it widely and so Orme Sargent authorised a partial circulation ie he agreed to the despatch of the draft of under a suitable covering letter to "a restricted number of posts". It was also agreed that in view of the Secretary of State's awaited approval to circulate the paper, the covering letter should make it clear that, while the analysis contained therein had been accepted, its recommendations were still under consideration and could not yet be acted upon. Finally, on 18 June the stand-in Chairman³⁹³ was able to report to the Russia Committee³⁹⁴ that Orme Sargent had approved the dispatch of the Warner Memorandum to those posts suggested by the Committee provided adequate security could be ensured. Also, in reference to the Kirkpatrick Memorandum, the Committee discussed what economic, diplomatic and publicity action might be taken once Ministers had approved their recommendations. There was also discussion as to the application of policy outside the Foreign Office's purview and the need to draw in other Departments where the policy impacted their responsibilities.

³⁹⁰ The independent think-tank.

³⁹¹ Rothwell. Chapter 5, Page 259.

³⁹² TNA FO 5698/10435. Letter from Attlee dated 19 July 1946.

³⁹³ Edmund Hall-Patch chaired the meeting in the absence of the normal Chairman but there is no indication on file as to why he did so. For more on Hall-Patch see Chapter 4, page 95 and Appendix 2, pages 321 to 323.

³⁹⁴ TNA: FO 371/5169/N8183/38. Minutes of Russia Committee held on 18 June 1946.

The second half of 1946 saw no significant slowing down of the Russia Committee activities. However, it did see a ratcheting up of concerns about Soviet policy expressed to the Foreign Secretary and the latter's further examples of being on the receiving end of Soviet hostilities. For example, in early July Ernest Bevin received from His Majesty's Ambassador in Washington³⁹⁵ a telegram setting out in detail the deterioration in relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers and the growing conviction that it was: "becoming impossible to bridge the ideological gap between them."³⁹⁶ The Ambassador went on to report on two recently published articles by John Foster Dulles, the central thought of which was that the Soviet rulers did not believe the security of their country could be guaranteed until the eradication of non-Soviet type of society which dangerously divided the one world into incompatible halves. Although there is no record of Bevin's reaction to this missive, it is reasonable to assume that he would not have discounted the views of either His Majesty's Ambassador or, indeed, of his American counterpart, Dulles. Moreover, at Cabinet on 15 July, Bevin gave his colleagues an account of the Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting that had recently concluded in Paris.³⁹⁷ He outlined the very intransigent line taken by Molotov on reparations and the fact that he had made many charges that Britain was not playing its part. Bevin had called his bluff by suggesting that there should be an enquiry to determine the veracity of Molotov's claims. Molotov declined the proposal. Bevin concluded, and this must surely be seen as a signal that he was alluding to the kind of actions being proposed by the Russia Committee, that it would be well to bring publicity to bear on Russian activities in this matter. The following day there was a meeting of the Russia Committee at which Hall-Patch gave an account³⁹⁸ of the same Foreign Ministers Conference, to which he had accompanied the Foreign Secretary, saying that the UK had been forced to give way to the Russians which he ascribed to the weakness of Britain's bargaining position which

³⁹⁵ TNA: FO 800/N8550/971/38. Telegram dated 3 July 1946 to Secretary of State, Ernest Bevin, from Washington Embassy (Lord Inverchapel, Minister in Washington. on behalf of His Majesty's Ambassador Balfour.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ TNA: CAB 128 68 CM(46). Minutes of Cabinet Meeting held on 15 July 1946. Item 1, 'Council of Foreign Ministers'.

³⁹⁸ TNA: FO 371/56885/N9543/5169/38: Minutes of Russia Committee meeting held on 16 July 1946

he thought resulted from two causes. First, the United States had been so anxious to get the Peace Conference off the ground that they had acceded to many of the demands of the Russians to include items. Therefore, in the interests of keeping the Soviets on side the United States had been willing to bow to their pressure. And secondly, Hall Patch believed that the weakness of Britain's bargaining position was attributable, somewhat prosaically, to the fact that she had taken to the conference only a small delegation of generalists whereas the Russians had arrived mob-handed with specialists in all of the fields under discussion. Another interesting insight into the way statecraft issues were handled by the different parties, that such a relatively small issue should have such an impact.

Hall-Patch also reported that the Council had been unable to reach agreement on Germany where the United States and Great Britain wished for German unity but it was concluded that such unity might be dearly bought at the expense of a nation-wide domination of Germany by the Soviet Union through the Communist party. Bevin's view was that the projected talks would fail, and German unity would be unachievable, unless the Western powers and the Soviets were able to agree on an exact interpretation of the Potsdam Agreement. Such an outcome seemed unlikely, however, because the Soviets were construing certain ambiguous passages in the documents flowing from Potsdam in a way that differed from the interpretation of the United States and Great Britain

This somewhat pessimistic report to Cabinet was smartly followed by a Secret Minute to Bevin from Sir Maurice Peterson, His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow, dated 16 July 1946 which is important for its forthrightness to his political master about the trickiness of the Soviets. The seven-page minute records the Ambassador's views on Soviet foreign policy and the Soviet mindset. He expresses surprise that the Soviets unexpectedly, at the Second Conference of Foreign Ministers in Paris, had shown themselves willing to try to unlock the deadlock that had transpired at the end of the previous Conference. He wrote: "There are no half-tones in Russia and the foreign commentator must steer a middle course between the scylla of flattery and the

charybdis of insult....³⁹⁹ and to see whether some agreement could be reached on the Russian obsession over increasing “bases”.⁴⁰⁰

While Bevin was experiencing his own difficulties with the Soviets, Attlee, too, had his concerns as was apparent from a report given to the meeting of the Russia Committee on 30 July⁴⁰¹ to the effect that the Prime Minister had drawn attention in a minute to a suggestion made by General Gairdner⁴⁰² that as Russian tactics in Europe and Asia followed the same pattern, it would be useful if our representatives in the East could be given early notice of tactics followed in the West and vice versa, so that they would be forewarned. In effect the Prime Minister was commissioning information from the Russia Committee and they set about discussing the best means of carrying out the Prime Minister’s wishes and agreed that: “it would be best to compile a monthly summary on Russian tactics as revealed in the “tour d’horizon” made each week by the Committee and to pass this summary by telegram to His Majesty’s Representatives in Tokyo and Nankin and to Lord Kilearn”⁴⁰³

The first summary, which was to be compiled monthly, would be embodied in a note for submission through Orme Sargent to the Prime Minister”.⁴⁰⁴ This was a major step forward for the Russia Committee. Not only did it prove incontrovertibly that the Prime Minister, as well as the Foreign Secretary, were well aware of the work of the Committee, it also marked the beginning of the latter’s regular high-level reports to Ministers.

It was becoming clear, then, by mid-1946 that Bevin and Attlee were well versed in the trickiness of their Soviet allies, as were their US counterparts and their advisers. An example of concern on the part of the US was shown in a Confidential memorandum sent by Ernest Bevin to his Cabinet colleagues reporting a conversation he had had

³⁹⁹ A Greek idiom, meaning to have to choose between two evils.

⁴⁰⁰ TNA: FO 371/56887/N9460/605/38. Minute to Secretary of State Ernest Bevin from Sir Maurice Peterson, His Majesty’s Ambassador in Moscow, dated 16 July 1946.

⁴⁰¹ TNA: FO 371/56885/N10141/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee held on 30 July 1946

⁴⁰² General Sir Charles Gairdner.

⁴⁰³ TNA: FO 371/56885/N10141/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee held on 30 July 1946

⁴⁰⁴ TNA: FO 371/56885/N10141/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee held on 30 July 1946.

with US Secretary of State Byrnes about UK policy towards Russia. Byrnes had called attention to the conduct of the Russians at the Paris Peace Conference and in the Security Council where they had attacked the US and the UK without notice and without reason despite the US having tried hard to bring about peace and amity with them.⁴⁰⁵ So while Bevin and Attlee may not have broadcast their concerns as yet outside the relatively narrow and confidential confines of Cabinet, that does not mean that they were not alert to, and complicit with, the need to take counter action.

The Summer months of 1946 saw the Russia Committee focussing on a new initiative, namely on the need for the problems being experienced with the Soviets to be better publicised within the British media. This was an initiative born out of questions being raised by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of State about the advantages of giving wider circulation to reports in the Soviet Press which were hostile to Britain, by making them available to the Libraries of the House of Commons.⁴⁰⁶ It was concluded that the best information source for this purpose were the weekly reviews compiled by the British Embassy in Moscow of Soviet daily press on international issues and monthly reviews of the main omissions and the peculiarities in the presentation of world news by the Soviet Press. The Committee was minded to recommend that the Prime Minister should encourage the British Press to make use of the material but although this issue of publicity dominated the Committee's deliberations throughout August and September, it posed a number of difficulties. First, it was felt that "Ministers approving an all-out anti-Communist campaign"⁴⁰⁷ would be necessary in order to see that the publicity machine was working at full efficiency but unless there were to be a clear steer from the Prime Minister to this effect, it was feared that the British Press were likely to be reluctant to report anything critical of Russia in case the British Government were thought to be against such reports.⁴⁰⁸ Secondly, on a prosaic level, there was a shortage of newsprint in London which could hamper the efficiency of the publicity machine.

⁴⁰⁵ TNA: FO 371/56886/N12449/5169/38. Memorandum from Ernest Bevin to his Cabinet colleagues, dated 25 September 1946.

⁴⁰⁶ TNA: FO 371/N9930/5169/38. Minutes of a Meeting of the Russia Committee Sub-Committee on Publicity, held on 29 July 1946.

⁴⁰⁷ TNA: FO 371/56886/N10437/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee, held on 6 August 1946.

⁴⁰⁸ TNA: FO 371/56886/N10901/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee, held on 20 August 1946.

By the end of August, having dwelt on this subject for a couple of months, the Russia Committee concluded that there was: "increasing evidence to show that the Press...was still abstaining from the publication of items reflection (sic) unfavourably on Soviet policy."⁴⁰⁹ Evidently the Committee proposed to draft a minute for the Foreign Secretary to send to the Prime Minister to deal with this but decided that the draft should await discussions at the forthcoming Paris conference on the Balkan Treaties which might generate publicity. The Committee agreed, therefore, to put this on hold for discussion a fortnight hence when the Chairman, then noted that: "our publicity in general was not keeping the public fully informed on two important aspects of the present situation, viz the extent and virulence of the Russian propaganda campaign against us over the last six months, and the reign of terror and oppression which was mounting in countries behind the iron curtain".⁴¹⁰

One further development of interest occurred around this time when, at the suggestion of Orme Sargent, the Russia Committee agreed that General Jacob of the Ministry of Defence's Chiefs of Staff, should in future be invited to attend meetings as he had a clear interest in all the subjects with which they were engaged. This met with a slight reluctance on the part of Christopher Warner who noted that the Committee had decided "some time ago" to confine membership to the Foreign Office. He accepted, however, given that it was Orme Sargent's suggestion, and who could gainsay 'the boss'. So General Jacob was invited to attend "in his personal capacity" even though it meant that the Russia Committee had to re-time their weekly meeting to accommodate him, but Warner felt that General Jacob should not receive Russia Committee papers routinely because of security - although this compromise, they accepted, would need to be cleared with Orme Sargent.⁴¹¹ This little restriction is amusing in the sense that General Jacob would have had security clearance at least as high as that of his Foreign Office colleagues so that the compromising of security could

⁴⁰⁹ TNA: FO 371/56886/N11284/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee held on 28 August 1946.

⁴¹⁰ TNA: FO 371/56886/N12335/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee held on 17 September, Paragraph 9.

⁴¹¹ TNA: FO 371/56886/N12615/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee held on 24 September 1946.

hardly have been a real concern. Anyhow, it was subsequently agreed that General Jacob could attend the Russia Committee meetings regularly from mid-October onwards, which, indeed, he did.⁴¹²

As has been demonstrated, the work of the Committee in its first year was impressively productive. They had met at weekly intervals since April – a total of 30 meetings. They had produced several detailed Memoranda which conveyed to a wide audience, including Ministers, advice on the need to be alert to, and report on, examples of Soviet propaganda against Britain that needed to be countered. They had established their worth to the extent that the Prime Minister, as well as the Foreign Secretary and other Foreign Office Ministers, had commissioned work from them. They had produced and circulated monthly updates on developments in Soviet foreign policy affecting various areas of the world. They were examining what could be done to tackle the reluctance of the British media to report on the country's tensions with the Soviets. They had broadened the membership of the Russia Committee to include liaison with the intelligence community and with the Ministry of Defence, and they had included representatives from the Colonial Office and the Dominions Office as members. And they had encouraged attendance at their meetings of Ambassadors who were visiting London and could contribute valuable inside information to their discussions. It was therefore a busy and successful inaugural year.

1947 The Russia Committee Getting into its Stride

The year started on a positive note in terms of a perceived improvement in relations with the Soviets. On 2 January Ernest Bevin reported to his colleagues at their Cabinet Meeting on the position vis a vis PeaceTreaties discussions with the Soviets and the US⁴¹³ where the Soviets were being more positive and co-operative. On the official front, this was followed up the next day with the Russia Committee's monthly report to overseas representatives, which, amongst other things, noted that Soviet policy had

⁴¹² TNA: FO 371/56886/N13583/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 17 October 1946.

⁴¹³ TNA: CAB 195/5: CM 1(47). Dated 2 January 1947.

been more restrained in December 1946 than for some time past. This was thought to be due in part to the Soviets being satisfied with the outcome of the General Assembly.⁴¹⁴ This optimism was, however, short lived. Frank Roberts (of Long Telegram fame) attended the mid-January meeting of the Russia Committee and was asked to give his opinion on the state of the Soviet's foreign policy and their current domestic situation. He described Soviet problems as both internal and external.⁴¹⁵ Their internal problems, he thought, were largely economic, as their 5-year plan was not going to schedule and the bad grain harvest in 1946 had led to food rationing bordering on starvation in the Ukraine. The Russian people were becoming disillusioned. Externally, the Soviets feared the closeness of the US and UK and, of course, the US atomic bomb. A distinction was drawn between Molotov and his aggressiveness – which was perceived by many to be the 'real' stance of the Soviets - and the sometimes more conciliatory comments by Stalin. The Committee felt that the appearance of a more accommodating Soviet mood might be designed to provide ammunition for the critics in the Labour Party who were pressing Ernest Bevin to make more conciliatory responses to the Soviets than he had previously been prepared to do. But Bevin had become, at least in communications with Cabinet colleagues, brutally honest about the difficulties posed by the Soviets. In a minute entitled 'Main Short-term Problems Confronting us in Moscow' he outlined what was likely to be the most crucial part of the discussions in the forthcoming March Moscow meeting, namely the short-term economic and political problems of Germany. Bevin, who was speaking to Cabinet colleagues rather than to his wider Labour Party critics, made harsh assessments throughout the paper on the Soviet stance and their having reneged on Potsdam agreements. He said that: "It is most important ...that the responsibility for failure at Potsdam should be placed fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the Russians who are entirely responsible for the present state of affairs".⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁴ TNA: FO 371/56887/ N16363/5169/38. Dated 4 January 1947

⁴¹⁵ TNA: FO 371/56887/ Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 16 January 1947.

⁴¹⁶ TNA: CAB 129 (47) 68. Memorandum to Cabinet by Secretary of State, for Foreign Affairs, dated 20 February 1947. Paragraph 11.

As the year wore on, Bevin's views on the difficulties with the Soviets seemed to converge ever closer with those of his senior Foreign Office officials on the Russia Committee. As Warner reported to colleagues at the end of February, the Soviet propaganda machine had now been turned against the internal policy of the UK Government and was attacking the leadership of the Labour Party. Bevin had therefore decided that he would mention this in his next Foreign affairs speech and had duly included a passage so doing. Warner had also suggested to Bevin that he should confront Stalin and ask him whether such a policy of hostility could be reconciled with the Treaty of Alliance and Collaboration to which he had signed up.⁴¹⁷ And Jebb, who attended the meeting as he was in London, that he should prepare a dossier of Soviet attacks on the UK in the United Nations, which Bevin might also wish to point out to Stalin.

At the end of April, Kirkpatrick told the Russia Committee about a meeting that had taken place on 21 April between HM Ambassador in Moscow and Mr Vyshinsky⁴¹⁸ on a revised version of the British/Soviet draft Peace Treaty which had been sent to the Soviet Government on 3 April.⁴¹⁹ No progress had been made at the meeting and no date fixed for a further meeting. It was felt that the Soviets would put blame on the UK for failure to achieve progress. This proved to be true. Although Vyshinski did agree a month or so later to some further discussions on the draft Anglo-Soviet Peace Treaty with the British Ambassador, and this resulted in a measure of success in reaching some agreement on the terms of the revision, there followed an editorial in *Izvestia* amounting to 'a slashing attack'⁴²⁰ on Bevin's recent speech in the House of Commons, claiming that his version of the negotiations for a revised Peace Treaty did not correspond with the facts and that the UK version would worsen, not improve, the present Peace Treaty.

⁴¹⁷ TNA:FO 371/66365/N3125/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 28 February 1947.

⁴¹⁸ Aya Vyshinski was at the time Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia.

⁴¹⁹ TNA: FO 371/66368/N4991/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 24 April 1947.

⁴²⁰ TNA: FO 371/66369/N6315/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 22 May 1947.

Elements of the UK Press had been hardly less critical, with the *Daily Worker*, in an article on 23 April, attacking the British Government and Bevin in particular. Against that background the Committee, re-opening their push for counter propaganda through the British Press, concluded that two papers should be prepared for submission to the Secretary of State setting out the lines that should be taken in response to a Soviet Propaganda campaign. The first would comprise guidance to the British Press; the second would cover the more technical points arising out of the Peace Treaty.

In early May, again, Bevin was giving negative messages to his Cabinet colleagues when he reported on the Moscow Council of Foreign Ministers meeting from which he had just returned, it having dragged on for six weeks. His report was detailed and itemised all the areas of disagreement between the UK (and the US) and the Soviets.⁴²¹ An even more candid report on the same conference was given at the next Russia Committee meeting by the Secretary, who reported that the UK delegation had arrived in Moscow 'full of apprehension' and that the Secretary of State had refused to commit to partial solutions to the outstanding problems at the initial stages of the Conference. He had subsequently tabled a paper entitled 'Revised Potsdam' which, surprisingly, the Russians had seemed to accept in large measure. German reparations were, as always, the main stumbling block with the Soviets seeking more than the US and UK were prepared to accept. It was noted that the next Council of Foreign Ministers, which was to be held in November, would need to make decisions on reparations.

The deliberations of the Russia Committee during the second half of 1947 were dominated by three subjects: the Marshall Plan; the setting up by the Soviets of Cominform; and preparations for the November Conference of Foreign Ministers.

⁴²¹ TNA: CAB 195/4: Taken from CM 43(47). Cabinet Secretary Notebooks extract, Cabinet Meeting on 2 May 1947.

The US Economic Recovery Program (ERP), colloquially known as the Marshall Plan, had its genesis in June 1947 when the US Secretary of State, George C Marshall,⁴²² gave an address at Harvard University, espousing the urgent need to provide European countries - including the UK, Germany, France, Italy etc - with economic aid to enable the rebuilding of the economies left devastated by the War. Bevin, who had heard the speech on the radio, immediately perceived its importance and was keen to grasp the initiative and start discussing with the French and others how to respond. So, although the Marshall Plan itself was not implemented until mid-1948, the planning began with a meeting in June 1947, set up by Bevin, of the European countries affected, to discuss how they would develop a reconstruction plan to take advantage of the US aid proposals. The US had included the Soviets - and Soviet satellites including Poland and Czechoslovakia - in their offer of aid, but the Soviets declined, and put pressure on their Satellites to do likewise. In part this was, doubtless, because they did not wish to be beholden to the US and have to comply with what they regarded as the political interference that went along with such an offer. Partly, too, and perhaps understandably, because Stalin was fundamentally opposed to restoring Germany to a position of economic strength, when it had been responsible for heaping such misery and devastating loss on the Soviets.

The Russia Committee discussed the 'Marshall Offer' in July. Initial discussions centred on the, by now familiar, subject of the disruptive behaviour of the Soviets at the recent Paris Conference where they had walked out at once and subsequently caused their Satellites to follow suit in leaving the conference, and their reasons for so behaving.⁴²³ Despite this behaviour the Secretary of State was said to be of the view that European unity should not be despaired of until after the November conference of Foreign Ministers. Later in July the Russia Committee, with Kirkpatrick in the Chair, considered a minute he had produced setting out arguments for and against a more actively critical line in UK publicity about Russia in the light of the failure of the Trade talks and their attitude to the Marshall offer.⁴²⁴ They agreed that it would not be politic, given Bevin's view, to recommend any drastic changes to the policy until after the

⁴²² Formerly the US Army Chief of Staff during World War II.

⁴²³ TNA: FO 371/66371/N8811/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 17 July 1947.

⁴²⁴ TNA: FO 371/66371/N9345/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 31 July 1947.

November Conference and that a campaign of propaganda against Russia by the BBC at that time could serve to undermine the latter's reputation for objectivity. It would also be at odds with the situation with Satellite countries which was impacted by the directive earlier in 1947 by Bevin to HM's representatives abroad to maintain relations with the Satellites. Moreover, obstructive Soviet tactics were already showing signs of damaging Communist influence in the UK and clumsy Soviet propaganda was serving the UK cause well in the US. For all these reasons the Committee decided to hold back, for the time being, on making any recommendations to Ministers on pursuing a publicity propaganda campaign to counter that of the Soviets.

The second of the three main pre-occupations of the Russia Committee in late 1947 was to consider the implications of the setting up by the Soviets of Cominform.⁴²⁵ Cominform was founded in late 1947 as the information bureau of the Communist parties in Russia and eight other countries⁴²⁶ to exchange information between them by means of, for example, the Cominform newspaper, which was produced in several languages. At their early October meeting⁴²⁷ they had a wide-ranging discussion on the significance of the Soviets having set up Cominform which had been the subject of a telegram from Frank Roberts.⁴²⁸

With the November Council of Foreign Ministers around the corner the Russia Committee felt that it was important to provide Bevin with a full report on the implications of the setting up of Cominform and decided that when Frank Roberts' fuller analysis had reached London it should be correlated with the Committee's discussions and a note prepared for circulation, after which it would be submitted to Bevin together with a draft Intelligence note to posts abroad for his approval. At their second October meeting⁴²⁹ the Russia Committee continued their earlier discussion on 'Cominform' and were informed that Bevin had taken note of Mr Roberts' preliminary analysis but had ruled that no 'Intelligence' on the subject should be sent out, because he wished to wait for further evidence of the effect on which the setting

⁴²⁵ Judge and Langdon Pages 37 to 39.

⁴²⁶ Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, Italy and France.

⁴²⁷ TNA: FO 371/66372/N12137/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 9 October 1947.

⁴²⁸ TNA: FO Telegram No 2212.

⁴²⁹ TNA:FO 371/66374/N13701/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 23 October 1947.

up of the 'Cominform' was going to have on Communist plans in Europe and - by now a familiar theme - would probably await the outcome of the November Conference. A Memo was duly circulated to Foreign Office Heads of Department in early November⁴³⁰ entitled 'Russia Committee – The Cominform' – asking for comments on the text in order to have ready a final version of the submission to Bevin after the November conference. The Memorandum began by noting that judgment on the real significance of the Cominform was being suspended until it could be seen whether it resulted in changes to Soviet policy and tactics. By 21 November comments had been received back from Embassies in Austria; Hungary; Bulgaria; Czechoslovakia; Yugoslavia; Romania; France and Italy and a further version was produced incorporating their comments and providing what the Russia Committee regarded as the concrete evidence that Bevin had wished to see, to the effect that the setting up of Cominform marked a new phase in Communist and Soviet policy which was aimed at tightening the ties, and the controls, over the Communist satellite countries. This draft advice was discussed and agreed at their 4 December meeting⁴³¹ and was ready to go forward not just to Bevin but also to his Minister of State and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary but not be circulated to posts abroad or given further distribution in London. It was for their political masters to see and any further distribution would need to be agreed first with them.

⁴³⁰TNA: FO 371/66373/N12755/271/38. Memorandum by Mr A E Lambert headed 'Russia Committee - The Cominform' and dated 7 November 1947.

⁴³¹ TNA: FO 371/66375/N14304/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 4 December 1947.

The third issue to dominate discussions of the Russia Committee in the second half of 1948, indeed from as early as August that year, was what was likely to happen at the November Council of Foreign Ministers. This was hardly surprising given that relations between the UK and the Soviets had been deteriorating. At their 14 August meeting Sir Maurice Peterson (HM's Ambassador in Moscow) described how the atmosphere in Moscow had changed for the worse recently and the breach between East and West now appeared to the Soviets to be an accomplished fact, and one that the US also acknowledged. Bevin, with an eye on the continuing need not to exacerbate the risk of a split in the Labour Party, continued to maintain publicly that the UK government should not sanction any policy of despair at being able to reach some agreement with the Soviets until after the November Conference. However, as the hope of a change of heart on the part of the Soviets was deemed to be so slight, the Russia Committee saw the need to make alternative plans.⁴³²

As the much-heralded November 1947 Council of Foreign Ministers approached⁴³³ the Russia Committee were well aware that it was to be a kind of watershed in terms of cementing the Foreign Secretary's foreign policy proposals in respect of his, and the government's, formal views on, and proposals for countering, Soviet aggression. Meeting in mid-September, the Russia Committee focussed their discussions on Germany and Austria.⁴³⁴ On Germany, the focus was on what the Soviet attitude was likely to be at the Council. It was feared that they would press for unreasonable concessions and, if and when unsuccessful, would blame the Western powers for non-achievement of German unity. On Austria, it was noted that there had been no progress on the Austrian Peace Treaty because the Soviets would only sign if they could acquire a large portion of German assets in Austria. At their 8 November meeting the Russia Committee considered a memorandum from Sir Maurice Peterson, to Bevin (received 13 November)⁴³⁵ providing, in advance of the Council meeting, a lengthy and pessimistic analysis, from the man on the spot in Moscow, of the

⁴³² TNA: FO 371/66371/N9549/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 14 August 1947.

⁴³³ The Conference was scheduled to start in London on 25 November 1947.

⁴³⁴ TNA:FO 371/66372/N10896/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 11 September 1947.

⁴³⁵ TNA: FO 371/66373/N12959/271/38. Memorandum dated 8 November 1947.

deterioration in Anglo-Soviet relations since the previous Council meeting held in Moscow in April 1947.

More importantly, however, as an indication of Bevin's thinking, was his report to his Cabinet colleagues on the morning when the Council meeting was due to begin later in the day. The minutes record his speaking of a lack of optimism about the fifth Council of Foreign Ministers Conference: "There were no indications that the Soviet Government would be more accommodating than they had been at the last meeting in Moscow. Indeed, their action in establishing the Cominform, in strengthening their political control in the satellite countries of Eastern Europe and in fomenting industrial troubles in many parts of Western Europe seemed to suggest that they had no present desire to reach agreement with the Western powers for the peaceful settlement of Europe. There was, therefore, little ground for hoping that the Council of Foreign Ministers would be able to make much progress towards agreement on the main issue still outstanding in connection with the Peace Treaties for Germany and Austria".⁴³⁶ This underlines that although Bevin was being cautious with the suggestions coming from his Foreign Office team, and was careful in the House of Commons not to antagonize his pro-Russia Labour colleagues, he clearly had reached a pessimistic view of Soviet tactics.

On 4 December, while the Council of Foreign Ministers was still underway, the Russia Committee met and agreed that it was important to foresee what the UK publicity should be in the event of a breakdown of the Conference (which did subsequently occur). General Jacob drew attention to the fact that Ministerial speeches were an essential preliminary to any propaganda operation and that the Secretary of State should be advised to make a statement either at the Conference or immediately following it, to give maximum effect to the publicity. It was agreed that this suggestion should be taken up with Orme Sargent.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁶ TNA: CAB 128/10, CM(47) 90(2). Cabinet Minutes of meeting held on 25 November 1947 Item 2

⁴³⁷ TNA: FO 371/66375/N14304/271/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 4 December 1947.

As 1947 drew to a close it had been another busy and productive year for the Russia Committee which was by now well established as a source of expert information on Soviet policy. The Committee had met on a total of 18 occasions in 1947 - fewer than in 1946 when they had met 30 times - but this largely reflected the fact that their meetings were now fortnightly rather than weekly as hitherto.

1948 Highlights

The year started, momentarily from the Russia Committee's viewpoint, with a confirmation from the Foreign Secretary that he was persuaded of the need to do something to counter Soviet attitudes. He duly sent three Memoranda to Cabinet colleagues on three consecutive days. The first, dated 4 January 1948 but circulated to Cabinet on the 5 January, for discussion at their meeting on 8 January, was entitled 'The First Aim of British Foreign Policy'.⁴³⁸ The Cabinet endorsed the policy outlined in his paper⁴³⁹ but felt that too much emphasis should not be laid on its anti-Soviet aspect. In reply Bevin was reported as saying: 'it would be impossible for him to give an effective lead without being critical of Soviet policy, but it was his intention to concentrate mainly on the positive and constructive side of his proposals'.

The second Memorandum to his Cabinet colleagues entitled 'Policy in Germany' (dated 5 January but circulated to Cabinet on 6 January)⁴⁴⁰ set out the situation resulting from the breakdown of the Conference of Foreign Ministers. Bevin explained that the breakdown had not been unexpected and that although he had, before the Conference, not abandoned hope that the issues around trying to reach agreement on German policy would be resolved, he now felt that the UK and Western powers had to consider urgently, but soberly, what their future policy in Germany should be in response to Russia's intransigence.

⁴³⁸ TNA: CAB 129/23 CP (48)6. Memorandum to Cabinet by Ernest Bevin dated 4 January 1948.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ TNA: CAB 129/23 CP (48)5. Memorandum to Cabinet by Bevin dated 5 January 1948.

The third memorandum, dated 5 January but also circulated on 6 January was entitled 'Review of Soviet Policy'.⁴⁴¹ This paper was partly based upon Sir Maurice Peterson's 8 November Memorandum to Bevin. The minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 8 January 1948 are very important from the viewpoint of the Russia Committee. Under Item 5, Bevin referred to the above Memoranda that Cabinet had before them. They 'took note' and the Minutes record his saying:

...although the recent Soviet attempts to stir up trouble in France and Italy had largely failed, some closer form of union should be created in Western Europe in order to resist the increasing penetration of Soviet influence. It would have been premature to take action in this direction before the recent meeting of the Council of Foreign Minister, but the breakdown of that conference ...had opened the way for an attempt to secure a greater measure of co-operation among the countries of Western Europe.⁴⁴²

Significantly, in Russia Committee terms, Bevin was also reported as saying:

The most effective method of countering Soviet propaganda was to provide specific information refuting the misrepresentations made by the Soviet Government. The Prime Minister's recent broadcast illustrated how this could be combined with encouragement of Socialist principles'. 'It might be desirable to establish some form of inter-departmental organisation, including the Board of Trade, the Colonial Office, and the Commonwealth Relations Office, to work out the basic principles of co-operations and advise on the line which propaganda should follow'.⁴⁴³

So January 1948 saw a flurry of activity that was of direct relevance to the work of the Russia Committee and saw Bevin presenting to Cabinet the papers produced by the Committee and in so doing giving them his personal endorsement. This provides clear evidence of the influence of the Russia committee over Bevin himself and over the Cabinet as a whole. While they may have merely at that time 'taken note' of what was recommended it was an early indication of future changes in foreign policy towards the Soviets.

⁴⁴¹ TNA: CAB 129/23 CP (48)7. Memorandum to Cabinet by Bevin dated 5 January 1948.

⁴⁴² TNA: CAB 128/12 CM (48)2. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting held on 8 January 1948.

⁴⁴³ As for ref 442

Shortly after this it was announced that Orme Sargent had asked Gladwyn Jebb to take over as Chairman of the Russia Committee in succession to Oliver Harvey. No reason was given for this change but it was possible that Jebb, a high-profile and charismatic character, was thought more likely to drive forward Committee's work following the approvals given by Cabinet on 8th January. Jebb began his tenure with a minute to Orme Sargent, in which Jebb said that 'to his astonishment' he had discovered, when chairing the Russia Committee for the first time that, with the exception of Kirkpatrick, none of the other Committee members, despite their seniority, had seen the papers which had been circulated to the Cabinet and therefore: "it was really not possible for [the Russia Committee] to function very intelligently".⁴⁴⁴ He therefore proposed some special circulation rules to circumvent the problem of the stringent rules governing the circulation of Cabinet papers⁴⁴⁵ from preventing the efficient working of the Russia Committee.

Later in January there was a debate in the House of Commons in which Bevin reported on the breakdown of the November Council of Foreign Ministers.⁴⁴⁶ The debate marked the public recognition (as opposed to official recognition to his Cabinet colleagues) on Bevin's part that relations between Western Powers and the Soviet Union had seriously broken down and that actions, to counteract Soviet aggression were needed as had long been suggested by his Russia Committee Foreign Office officials. His speech was a lengthy one where he painstakingly described the changes in relations since Potsdam onwards – after which, he said, 'things had begun to go wrong' - and gave examples of what he described as the 'war of nerves and pressure upon weaker neighbours' exercised by the Soviets since the war. He said that Mr Marshall's proposals for a European Recovery Programme (ERP), which he saw as an opportunity for really trying to get Europe on its feet, had been the catalyst for further deterioration in relations between the West and the Soviets who could not accept the concept of the unity of Europe. He re-iterated that Molotov had threatened both the

⁴⁴⁴ TNA: FO 371/71687/N765/765/38. Minute from Gladwyn Jebb to Orme Sargent dated 16 January 1948.

⁴⁴⁵ The rules governing the circulation of Cabinet Papers require that the papers only go to the numbered, approved, recipient who is the member of the Committee, in this case the Cabinet, but they would equally apply to Cabinet Committee papers going to members of those Committees.

⁴⁴⁶ Hansard. HC Debate Vol 446 cc383-517. 22 January 1948.

UK and France if they went on with the ERP and that it had been soon after that the Soviets had established the Cominform, the objective of which was to prevent the ERP from succeeding. Bevin continued:

The flood of abuse against ourselves and the world by M Vyshinski in New York was calculated to raise tempers...we still went on trying to get the conference on a proper basis as I reported to the House before the Recess. Every day when there was a proposal discussed and an effort made to reach a practical conclusion we had to waste a whole day listening to abuse of the Western Powers.....I ask each one here to try to imagine what it is like to sit there hour after hour and to have thrown at one almost every invective of which one can think and not answer back.....Now we have to face a new situation.....the free nations of Western Europe must now draw closely together.⁴⁴⁷

On Germany, Bevin stated:

We stand for a united Germany, not a dismembered or divided Germany. We have been in favour of a centralised German Government but not an over-centralised German Government which in our view could be a danger to peace.... On the other hand, the Soviet Government are pressing for an over-centralised Government which we know could be used in the same way to develop a one-party dictatorship as has been done in the Eastern European countries, and we cannot agree to it.⁴⁴⁸

On how to meet the change in Soviet policy, Bevin said:

Despite all the artificial barriers set up, and the propaganda blared out, which no doubt will increase after this Debate, we shall pursue a course which will seek to unite Europe. If the present division of Europe continues, it will be by the act and the will of the Soviet Government.... However, we shall not be diverted, by threats, propaganda or fifth column methods....⁴⁴⁹

The debate therefore finally put paid to any suggestion that Bevin remained unconvinced that action of some kind was needed to counter the Soviet offensive. But more than that it was carefully planned as the best opportunity to set out for the Labour Party as a whole and, indeed, the British public, the full story of what had been happening in the deterioration of foreign relations with the Soviets since the end of the Second World War, despite every attempt on the part of the British, the US and France, to try to maintain good relations. Repeatedly he had delayed taking decisions of a change in policy until 'after the November Council' which he clearly saw as the last

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid. 22 January 1948.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid. 22 January 1948.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. 22 January 1948.

chance to effect reconciliation with the Soviets. By waiting until after the Conference to report to the House of Commons and then by going into detail and using such unequivocal language, and importantly, by citing the fact that the United States and France had reached similar conclusions, Bevin was setting out the case for the change in foreign policy. He may long have held the views expressed in the debate, and if so, it would have been a pragmatic policy decision on his part to hold back his public statements until he could demonstrate just how much he had tried to hold things together with the Soviets.

In March, as an example of Bevin's close interest in keeping abreast of Soviet activities, he asked Orme Sargent to get in touch with the Permanent Secretary of the Colonial Office⁴⁵⁰ to say that the Foreign Secretary was anxious to have periodical (fortnightly) surveys of Communist activities in countries outside the Soviet Union.⁴⁵¹ The Colonial Office was asked to supply information about Communist activities in British overseas territories. Later in March Bevin was being provided with a lengthy (17 page) paper by the Head of the Russian Secretariat at the British Embassy in Moscow,⁴⁵² entitled "The Practice of Stalinism"⁴⁵³ in which he says:

2. What emerges from the study with incontrovertible clarity is that Soviet policy is... directed towards the ultimate goal of bringing about world revolution.....During this desperate struggle for survival...the Soviet leaders were compelled to jettison, at least temporarily, many of the fundamental principles of Leninism both at home and in their relations with that part of the capitalistic world with which they were compelled to make common cause.....
3. The years 1946 and 1947 saw, in pursuance of this policy, the development of a ponderous propaganda campaign for the reconditioning of the Soviet peoples, who during the stress of war had been allowed to stray so far from the narrow path of Marxism-Leninism.
5. ...the Truman Doctrine...and the birth of the idea of Marshall Aid had given them a sense of urgency. For, as the Kremlin was quick to appreciate, this latter idea if realised in practice, raised the possibility not only that the impending crisis of the capitalist world might be deferred, but that common action by the governments of the capitalist states might even lead to the long-term

⁴⁵⁰ Sir T Lloyd was then Permanent Under Secretary of the Colonial Office.

⁴⁵¹ TNA: FO 371/71677/N3820. Memo from Orme Sargent to Lloyd, Colonial Office, dated 30 March 1948.

⁴⁵² Maurice Peterson.

⁴⁵³ TNA: FO 371/71677/N3820. Cover Note by Peterson to Bevin dated 24 March 1948 covering a paper by Barker, Head of the Russian Secretariat at the British Embassy in Moscow.

stabilisation of the capitalist system. This no doubt accounts for the violence of the Soviet reaction to the European Recovery Programme.⁴⁵⁴

With Bevin by now fully signed up to the work of the Russia Committee it ploughed on with renewed vigour throughout the next few months which were dominated by the discussions on the format and production of various versions of a paper, entitled 'Summary of Indications Regarding Soviet Foreign Policy', which had been commissioned by Bevin and designed to be regularly updated and circulated to all senior government Ministers including the Prime Minister.⁴⁵⁵ Somewhat bizarrely, this paper, over the period from April to September, went through no less than fifteen drafts because the Russia Committee was at pains to adopt a format of the summaries which would best suit the Foreign Secretary and they also needed to get the content right. They debated, for example, whether the regular summaries should reflect a more detailed analysis of the Soviet press and radio. All this took a lot of time but by version fourteen – dated 17 September – the Minister of State had at last pronounced himself fairly happy according to Jebb who reported that the Minister of State had said: "This is a reasonable paper and represents substantially my own thinking....We are now collecting stuff, but we must index it and have it available at every conference ready to pull out...Above all we must overcome our reluctance not to use a point more than once. If it is good we must learn to plug the theme".⁴⁵⁶

The summer of 1948 saw the start of the Berlin Blockade⁴⁵⁷ which the Russia Committee discussed at length in their meetings on 24 June⁴⁵⁸ 8 July⁴⁵⁹ and 21 July.⁴⁶⁰ They were told by Kirkpatrick on 24 June that currently there were sufficient food stocks in Berlin for 27 days and coal stocks for 40 days. The situation could only

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ TNA: FO 371/71687/N8168/765/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 15 April 1948.

⁴⁵⁶ TNA: FO 371/ 71630/N10454/1/38. Minute from Gladwyn Jebb to Minister of State and from Mr F A Warner to Mr Mason and Mr Rundall, dated 16/17 September 1948.

⁴⁵⁷ On 24 June 1948 the Soviets blockaded Berlin by roads and trains. Western Allies responded, from 26 to 29 June, by organising the Berlin Airlift to carry in supplies for the West Berliners. This was increasingly successful, with vast amounts of supplies being flown in by the US, UK, Canadian, ANZAC and South African Air Forces. The Soviets eventually agreed, on 4 May 1949, to end the Blockade with effect from 12 May 1949.

⁴⁵⁸ TNA: FO 371/71687/N8171/765/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 24 June 1948.

⁴⁵⁹ TNA: FO 371/71687/N8172/765/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 8 July 1948.

⁴⁶⁰ TNA: FO 371/71687/N8559/765/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 21 July 1948.

be solved either by the Soviets relaxing their present restrictions or by bringing in food by air to Berlin. Kirkpatrick outlined three possible courses: to fly in sufficient foodstuffs for our troops and leave the people of Berlin to starve; to leave Berlin placing the onus on the Russians; or to tell the Russians they must be responsible for the feeding of Berlin. They concluded that the difficulties of keeping it going would increase over the winter months, particularly the transport of coal. On 8 July the Cabinet discussed the progress of the Berlin Airlift with the Foreign Secretary reporting that the Governments of the United Kingdom, United States and France had now presented to the Soviet Government notes of protest against the Russian blockade of the western sectors of Berlin. No reply had yet been received to these notes. Meanwhile, very satisfactory progress had been made with the arrangements for supplying Berlin by air.⁴⁶¹

From an organisational viewpoint the interesting period of the Russia Committee in 1948 occurred at the tail end of the year when the membership and modus operandi of the Committee were subject to review at the highest level. This was to be the first of two major reviews of the Committee during its twelve-year existence. This first review began with a personal minute from Warner to Jebb dated 22 November⁴⁶² in which Warner, at one point, lays claim to having set up the Russia Committee though later in the same paragraph he notes that Moley (ie Orme Sargent) had expressed the view that the Committee was needed. In view of the importance of this minute it is reproduced more or less in full as follows:

I have for some time wondered whether it is not a mistake for the Russia Committee to spend the bulk of its time looking through a long draft intelligence summary in great detail. When the Committee was originally set up at my instance, the idea was that the political and economic Under-Secretaries should pool recent information regarding Russian doings affecting their various areas in order to get a collated picture and consider what action, political, economic or in the publicity sphere, should be taken as a result. I remember Moley saying that although he did not believe in a Joint Planning Committee for the whole work of the Office, he thought it would be valuable to have a Joint Planning Committee ...for matters concerning the Russians...it made sense to try to assess their plans and make counter plans.

⁴⁶¹ TNA: CAB 128/12 CM (48)48. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting dated 8 July 1948. Item 3: Germany.

⁴⁶² TNA: FO 371/71687/N12649. Personal minute from Christopher Warner to Gladwyn Jebb dated 22 November 1948.

This started quite well, but afterwards failed because Oliver Harvey, who was Chairman and also ought to have spoken at each meeting on Germany and Western Europe, practically never turned up, and gradually other Under-Secretaries dropped out too.

I gather that during my absence a plan was instigated for reviving something of this kind by having a small sub-committee to consider specific problems thrown up by the Russians ...but this will not work if the main Committee takes an hour or so considering the draft intelligence summary, as happened last time.....it would be much more valuable to revert to something like the original idea, making a great effort to get all the Under-Secretaries that matter to come or to send adequate substitutes if they cannot.....⁴⁶³

In very smart order thereafter the proposed Sub-Committee of the Russia Committee was set up and the Terms of Reference were mapped out along with a set of objectives: including to loosen the Soviet hold on the orbit countries and ultimately enable them to regain their independence; and to seize every opportunity of discrediting the Soviet regime or weaken its position.⁴⁶⁴

The first meeting of the Sub-Committee took place on 14 December and began by recasting the terms of reference which had been set out by the main Committee on 25 November. They were as follows:

Making the Soviet orbit so disaffected that in the event of war it would become a dangerous area requiring large armies of occupation, and not a source of useful manpower for Russia.

Loosening the Soviet hold on the orbit countries, and ultimately enabling them to regain their independence.

Seizing every opportunity of discrediting the Soviet regime or weakening its position within the frontiers of the Soviet Union.

Frustrating the Soviet effort to build up the economic war potential of the Soviet Union and the satellites.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ TNA: FO 371/71687/N13016/765/38. Terms of Reference for "Cold War" Sub-Committee of the Russia Committee. Dated 24 November 1948.

⁴⁶⁵ TNA: FO 371/71632A/N13467/9. Report of the first meeting Sub-Committee, held on 14 December 1948, set up to examine the problem of planning in relation to policy towards the Soviet Union and the Soviet orbit.

These highly ambitious objectives, the sub-committee agreed, should attempt to be attained by “all means available short of war”. They also decided that the mooted special planning organisation should remain an off-shoot of the Russia Committee from whom it should take its directives and to whom it should report; that the Chairmanship should be a Foreign Office person of the rank of Under Secretary but with representatives from the MOD Chiefs of Staff, The Treasury, The BBC and the SIS. They should concentrate initially on Yugoslavia, Albania, the Soviet Zone of Germany and, possibly, China.

However, all was not plain sailing with the Sub-Committee. Clearly Jebb was having second thoughts about it and duly called an additional early meeting of the main Russia Committee⁴⁶⁶ to have a preliminary discussion on the report of the first Sub-Committee which raised two problems. First, whether the objectives as formulated should be recommended to the Foreign Secretary and, secondly, whether the planning organisation outlined by the Sub-Committee was the best means of attaining those objectives. There was clearly, and understandably, concern over the objectives agreed at the 14 December meeting which were, one might even say absurdly, over ambitious. Since Ministerial sanctioning would have been necessary for the work to go ahead, it would have been essential, if they were to be approved by Bevin, that each objective should be well articulated and the action to deliver it should be properly founded. As to the second issue, there was general agreement to the proposal to create a small permanent Planning Section under the Foreign Office but with representatives from other government departments. But there was unease as to whether it be appropriate for such an inter-departmental committee, even if under Foreign Office chairmanship, to be under the ambit/control of the Russia Committee and, if so, it seemed likely that the latter’s Terms of Reference would need recasting. After a lengthy discussion of the issues the Committee concluded that the Sub-Committee should prepare: a memorandum analysing the advantages of a policy of counter offensive against Soviet attacks; and a separate paper setting forth the views

⁴⁶⁶ TNA: FO 371/71687/N13677/765/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 16 December 1948.

of the Committee on the Planning Organisation which would be required if the counter-offensive policy were approved.

The concerns felt by the Russia Committee about the Sub-Committee were well founded as was illustrated the following day when Orme Sargent called a meeting directly as a result of the meetings held on 24 November, 14 December and 16 December concerning the proposals around the setting up of the Sub-Committee, its objectives and proposed planning machinery.⁴⁶⁷ He had summoned several of his most senior colleagues as well as the normal senior Russia Committee members⁴⁶⁸ and clearly wanted to take control of what was happening and to look at several questions. First, the need to consider the re-organisation of the Russia Committee itself, which perhaps he feared was in danger of over-reaching itself. Secondly, the desirability of setting up another organisation for planning counter offensive policy. Thirdly, and somewhat oddly, to consider the question of what action should be taken to educate the Service departments in the methods and function of the Foreign Office.

The meeting discussed whether the new Committee (which was meant to be a reconstructed Russia Committee) should be a purely Foreign Office body or should have, for example, a MOD Chiefs of Staff representative. The thought was that, if it were decided to pursue a more offensive policy towards the Soviets, the Committee would need to draw on a wider pool. Orme Sargent said that if Bevin were to agree to a more offensive policy, it might be necessary to set up an inter-departmental planning organisation, possibly an official Cabinet Committee, in co-operation with the Chiefs of Staff and others concerned. He thought, however, that Bevin would not agree to an essentially foreign policy initiative being undertaken by, for example, the Defence Committee. Summarising the discussion, Orme Sargent said that a Policy Committee would be useful and commissioned Jebb to prepare a paper containing Terms of Reference, taking account of renewed Terms of Reference of the Russia Committee. The sub-committee proposal was designed to deal with the criticisms levelled by

⁴⁶⁷ TNA: FO 371/77623/N1052. Note of a meeting held in Sir Orme Sargent's room on 17 December 1948.

⁴⁶⁸ Attendees: William Strang; Nigel Charles; Ivone Kirkpatrick; Gladwyn Jebb; Mr Bateman; Christopher Warner; Mr Dening; Harold Caccia; Mr Wright; Mr Hayter; Frank Roberts; and Robin Hankey.

Warner and initially seemed like a good idea to Jebb but he, and Orme Sargent, soon realised that the sub-committee's proposed remit was too ambitious and impractical and the outcome was that the Russia Committee remained the central Soviet watching body for the time being and its membership was expanded to take in representatives from a wider pool from Whitehall and beyond.

1948 had proved another eventful year for the Russia Committee with 27 meetings of the Main Committee but as the year drew to a close the Committee was under close scrutiny by the Permanent Under Secretary and with the prospect of imminent changes and with a question-mark over whether the work that was being done by the Committee might be more appropriately undertaken, by another body. It was a time of uncertainty.

Conclusion

The end of 1948 saw the conclusion of the first phase of the Russia Committee's work. Three years of solid commitment, at first weekly meetings, then fortnightly. At first, no evidence to show that Ministers in general, or the Foreign Secretary in particular, were either aware of and/or committed to the existence of this body. Then a period where Ministers were clearly aware of the Committee's work but Ernest Bevin was careful not to publicly commit himself to agreement with the basic premise of the work of the Russia Committee, namely that action was needed to counter the hostile Soviet foreign policy. By the end of 1947 there existed evidence of official acceptance of the situation. So, the first phase of the Russia Committee's work was one of shifting perceptions. Merrick concludes that: "During 1946 and 1947, as the east-west struggle surfaced, the Russia Committee had been at the very heart of the British appraisal of the Soviet threat"⁴⁶⁹ Merrick also recognised the Russia Committee as having made a significant contribution towards convincing Bevin and Attlee, of the need carefully to monitor and do all it could to counter the propaganda of the Soviets. This assessment clearly has merit. It is hard to conceive of a better placed group of

⁴⁶⁹ Merrick.

senior public servants with expertise in Soviet machinations, nor a better placed organisation to gather together the data needed to reach conclusions and on which to base their advice to Ministers. Merrick's work provided a valuable starting point for assessing the contributions of the Russia Committee but as it was restricted primarily to the years 1946 and to an extent 1947, whereas the work of the Committee had a long way to go beyond this period, it would have been impossible for him to make a comprehensive assessment of the affect of the Russia Committee's work. It continued in existence, still producing important policy papers, until the early 1950s. However, as will be shown, its remit changed significantly as other Committees came into existence in later years.

Chapter 6 Phase II of Russia Committee work 1949 to 1952

From 1949 through to mid-1952, here described as the middle phase of the Russia Committee's existence, it continued to meet regularly and to produce policy advice to Ministers. But it has to be recognized that this period saw the diminishing of the position of the Committee in that it was no longer fulfilling a unique advisory role because this period saw the arrival on the scene of other official bodies covering some of the same ground.⁴⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it would not be accurate to write off this whole period as being an unimportant phase, for two main reasons. First, it was during this period that the 'Crystal Gazers' - which are explained hereafter - came into their own and were the main regular output of the Committee; and, secondly, it was a period which saw commissions from Bevin and Attlee for advice from the Committee on specific topics, requests they assuredly would not have made if they saw no value in the Committee's advice.

This almost four-year span saw many significant developments in the Cold War that occupied the statesmen in all the countries which it impacted. The development of atomic bomb by the United States was followed by that of the Soviet Union and, later – towards the end of 1952 – by Great Britain and ushered in one of the great challenges of Cold War statecraft, that of seeking to avoid another war, which would have catastrophic global consequences. A key element of the strategy to avoid war was the need to make judgements on what your opponents were likely to do in a given set of circumstances. To do that effectively what was needed was the gathering of up to date information which would be analysed and turned into advice to decision makers by those with expertise in the subjects in hand. In a nutshell this is what the Foreign Office's Russia Committee was all about. It was not just relations with the Soviets that were difficult at this time. Relations between the United States and Great Britain were also under strain in the context of the development of nuclear weapons. The British nuclear physicist Klaus Fuchs was found guilty in March 1950 for passing nuclear secrets to the Soviets, which contributed to the United States decision not to

⁴⁷⁰ See Thesis Chapter 8.

collaborate further with Britain on nuclear matters. The Communist Peoples' Government of China, established in October 1949, also joined the nuclear race by the end of the 1950s. 1950 also saw the invasion of South Korea by North Korea which brought the United States and Great Britain, and the recently formed United Nations, into the conflict with China and, by association, as they were thought to have colluded with China, into further conflict with the Soviets. These and many other international concerns, arising through the tensions between East and West, tested the political leaders of the states concerned. For the leaders of the two Attlee administrations, and for Bevin in particular, these issues occupied a good deal of the time of this highly pressured person, neatly summed up in a House of Commons debate⁴⁷¹ by him, as quoted by Bulloch: "All the world is in trouble and I have to deal with all the troubles at once".⁴⁷²

Against the background of such troubled times, the Foreign Office in general, and the Russia Committee in particular, continued to gather information on the perceived threats posed by the Soviets and to provide the advice to Ministers which was reflected in the papers and other outputs from the Committee during this period. The next Chapter will look at three of the themes on which the Russia Committee focused its attentions in these years - namely the development of atomic weapons; the growing concerns about Chinese Communism; and Titoism. This chapter, however, continues to focus more on the actual development, and preoccupations, of the Russia Committee itself. These included the changes to its structure and the regular engagement with Bevin and Attlee. There are also glimpses from the Committee's papers of the shifts in relations between the UK and the US over certain issues, for example over China. These issues are examined as a means of shedding light on how the Russia Committee influenced foreign policy decisions during this period.

Changes to the Russia Committee

At the beginning, and again at the end, of the second phase of the Russia Committee's existence it was subject to two reviews. The first of these took place during December

⁴⁷¹ HC 20 August 1945

⁴⁷² Bulloch. Chapter 5, Page 184.

1948/January 1949. It resulted in the expansion in the membership of the Committee to include other Departments of State, a change which had by its nature to enhance the reach of the work of the Committee. On 13 January 1949, Orme Sargent wrote to the Head of the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO)⁴⁷³ and the Head of the Colonial Office (CO)⁴⁷⁴, with Bevin's agreement, inviting them to send representatives to Russia Committee meetings. In his minute, Orme Sargent says:

You may be aware that there exists in the Foreign Office a Russia Committee with Terms of Reference as shown in the enclosed Annex to this letter. This Committee meets once a fortnight under the Chairmanship of one of the Deputy Under-Secretaries, and is at present attended by senior officials of the Foreign Office and by representatives of the Chiefs of Staff and of the Overseas Service of the BBC. It has occurred to us that you might find it useful to send a representative of your Department to the meetings of this Committee, and the Foreign Secretary has agreed to my inviting you to do so⁴⁷⁵

Whilst Orme Sargent did not mention them specifically, the Russia Committee had also, long since, been keeping in close contact with the JIC by virtue of there being a JIC representative attending Russia Committee meetings and by the exchange of papers produced by both Committees. This was a natural alliance in that the JIC was the central British official committee that liaised with all the intelligence agencies and with the Foreign Office whose Secretary of State was responsible for three of those key Agencies⁴⁷⁶ while its remit was to look at all intelligence issues relating to any area of the world, it naturally had an interest in intelligence relating to Communist expansionism. The CRO and the CO accepted the invitation to join the Committee. So, by the beginning of this second phase of its existence, the Russia Committee, while remaining a Foreign Office run and dominated body, included members from the Cabinet Office (JIC), the MOD (Chiefs of Staff), the CRO, and the CO. Its main task remained: "To review at fortnightly intervals the development of all aspects of Soviet policy and propaganda and Soviet activities throughout the world, more particularly with reference to the Soviet campaign against this country..... to consider any

⁴⁷³ Sir Peter Leishington.

⁴⁷⁴ Sir Thomas Lloyd.

⁴⁷⁵ TNA: FO 371/N1793/1052/38G.

⁴⁷⁶ The Foreign Secretary has ministerial responsibility for the intelligence agencies: SIS, and GCHQ; the Home Secretary for MI5; the Secretary of State for Defence for the Defence Intelligence Service.

immediate action that might be required as a result of the Committee's review, and to make recommendations accordingly".⁴⁷⁷

Under the Chairmanship of Gladwyn Jebb not only was the status of the Russia Committee enhanced in terms of its extended membership but also its workings became more crisply and more formally organised. Meetings now began by considering and agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting – a normal, and formal, way of running any such committee, though not one reflected in the Minutes of earlier Russia Committee meetings. Moreover, the meetings did not always follow the hitherto standard pattern whereby they considered papers on various topics within their sphere of interest. Sometimes they were given over entirely to discussing one specific issue. But the question remains whether the Committee, for all its changes and enhanced status, could be said to have influenced the decisions made by British Ministers on foreign policy towards the Soviets and, if so, how much influence they had. Elsby makes a pertinent observation on this issue when he argues that: "The FO's influence on foreign policy derives from its function of interpretation of incoming information germane to foreign policy and of giving advice to the Foreign Secretary".⁴⁷⁸ If that observation holds true then it is difficult not to see the Russia Committee, for so long the unique body dedicated to gathering and interpreting information about Soviet activities, as having such influence and value. Clearly the Committee itself believed it had a value, as the minutes of a special meeting in December 1949 record: "Even if such a committee⁴⁷⁹ were not useful in itself, it could deprive the Chiefs of Staff of their argument that there was no body in the Foreign Office for considering and coordinating long-term policy".⁴⁸⁰

At the end of the end of the second phase of the Russia Committee's existence, Jebb was succeeded as Chairman by the equally senior Pierson Dixon and just had Jebb had done before him, Dixon began his tenure by taking another close and critical look at

⁴⁷⁷ TNA: FO 371/56885/N5170/38.

⁴⁷⁸ Elsby, A W. *British Foreign Policy Towards the Soviet Union Over Germany In the Immediate Post-War Two Period: A Causal Analysis*. D Phil Thesis, Sussex University, 2004. Page 123.

⁴⁷⁹ This refers to the proposal then being considered, but not taken up, of having a Russia Committee sub-committee.

⁴⁸⁰ TNA: FO 371/77623/N171/1052/38G. Report, dated 17 December 1949, of a Special Meeting on the Functions and Re-organisation of the Russia Committee. Page 2, Paragraph 5.

the organisation he had inherited and so began the second major overhaul of the Russia Committee. As a result, at the end of February 1952, the Secretariat of the Committee produced a draft paper making proposals for re-organisation⁴⁸¹ and these were put to Pierson Dixon, under a manuscript covering note: "If you agree that the Russia Ctee needs rejuvenating, I think that the attached paper by Mr. Bushell provides a very useful basis for discussion ...".⁴⁸² Pierson Dixon responded saying: "I have been feeling for some time that the Russia Committee needs a "new look", & I asked Mr. Bushell to consider the matter. His proposals are much to the point & I agree that they shd be circulated & considered at a small meeting as proposed by Mr. Harrison. PD".⁴⁸³

The proposed meeting took place a fortnight later. The suggestions were considered and agreed by the Committee members and the Permanent Under Secretary. However, nothing further happened on this front for a further six months when the Chairmanship changed again, this time from Pierson Dixon to Frank Roberts who wrote to William Strang, by then the PUS, on 9 December 1952, in the following terms:

About six months ago Sir P Dixon obtained your approval to certain measures of re-organisation of the Russia Committee. They have now been tested and the Committee agreed at its last meeting that the time had come to put them on formal record.

2. I accordingly submit a draft office circular on the work of the CommitteeThe main changes are in respect of meetings and membership, both of which have been cut down, and in the scope of the Committee's work which now includes China. You will notice that the definition of the scope of our monthly survey has been amended to cover this last point: and, similarly, as a consequence, the terms of reference.

3. We thought it right in present circumstances to omit the sentence on liaison with the Chiefs of Staff and JIC, from the new terms of reference, since this is now the work of the PUS Department⁴⁸⁴ in the first instancen....

4. Although the title is no longer accurate, there was general agreement that it should not be changed.

I should be grateful for your approval for the issue of the new circular.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸¹ TNA: FO 371/125005/ZP12/1. Note by Bushell to Harrison dated 29 February 1952.

⁴⁸² Ibid. Manuscript minute dated 1 March 1952, from Mr Harrison to Sir Pierson Dixon covering the draft paper by Mr Bushell.

⁴⁸³ Ibid. Manuscript note by Sir Pierson Dixon to Mr Harrison, dated 29 February 1952.

⁴⁸⁴ The Permanent Under Secretary's Committee (PUSC) was set up in early 1949. See Chapter 8, Page 176.

⁴⁸⁵ TNA: FO 371/125005/ZP12/5. Minute from Roberts to the PUS, Strang, dated 9 December 1952, entitled "Russia Committee".

The text of the Office Circular⁴⁸⁶ sets out the revised terms of reference of the Russia Committee and changes of the frequency of meetings to monthly whereas they had originally been weekly and then fortnightly. The circular makes clear that the main output of the Committee was to be its monthly reports to Ministers.⁴⁸⁷ It also states that the Russia Committee was to report to the PUS on any issues of importance and to work closely with the PUSC with whom they would share secretariats.

The Russia Committee therefore began, and ended, the second phase of its existence, from 1949 to 1952, by undergoing re-organisations. But they were different in scale and importance. The earlier overhaul was driven by the need to improve administrative arrangements. The second, more far reaching changes, were driven by two main factors. The first was the changing international situation and, in particular, the emergence of China as a force to be reckoned with. The second was undoubtedly the fact that by 1952 other more senior vehicles existed to continue the work previously done by the Russia Committee, most notably the Permanent Under Secretary's Department (PUSD) and this signaled the start of the diminishing of the Russia Committee's importance.

The Russia Committee 'Crystal Gazers'

In March 1948 Ernest Bevin had told Orme Sargent that he was anxious to receive, from the Russia Committee, reports giving fortnightly surveys of Communist activities in countries outside the Soviet Union including Communist activities in British overseas territories.⁴⁸⁸ These were entitled 'Summaries of Indications Regarding Soviet Foreign Policy' but subsequently became known colloquially as 'Crystal Gazers'. For several months thereafter, as noted in Chapter 5, the format and content of the 'Crystal Gazers' went through numerous iterations before finally being agreed.

'Crystal Gazers' became, in effect, the mainstay of the work of the Russia Committee throughout the whole of the second phase of the Committee's existence. Until

⁴⁸⁶ TNA: FO 371/125005/ZP12/5 Office Circular No 18, dated 22 December 1952.

⁴⁸⁷ See section on Crystal Gazers Page 148- 150.

⁴⁸⁸ TNA: FO 371/71677/N3820. Memorandum from Orme Sargent to Sir T Lloyd, Colonial Office, dated 30 March 1948.

November 1948 they were only distributed within the UK and were always classified both “Top Secret” and “Personal”. They were sent every fortnight to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, other senior Ministers and, no less, to His Majesty the King. Eventually they were to stale in their impact as can often happen when something is produced regularly in a standard format. Indeed, Jebb, when he became Chairman criticized the length of the ‘general’ section of the summaries and suggesting that they should only include points of major interest and detail and should be included under the country concerned and that they should be: “... less of an intelligence summary and more of ‘an inspired guess’”.⁴⁸⁹

These constructive criticisms were aimed at improving the Crystal Gazers, there being no suggestion on Jebb’s part that they should cease all together or had outlived their usefulness. Indeed, as they had originally been commissioned by Bevin it would not have been for Jebb to decide to abandon them. Nearly a year later, and under a different Chairman, further criticism was leveled at the Crystal Gazers when Pierson Dixon described them as being: “too long. It should be compressed more in the form of an intelligence summary, to bring out points of importance which were otherwise obscured by the somewhat conversational style”.⁴⁹⁰

But the most fundamental formal change in the fortnightly ‘Crystal Gazers’ was to occur from January 1951 onwards, following the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950, which resulted in the expansion of the coverage of the Russia Committee to include gathering information relating to Chinese Communism. In January 1951, Pierson Dixon, wrote to His Majesty’s Ambassador to Singapore,⁴⁹¹ explaining that he had recently taken over the Russia Committee chairmanship and that, at their fortnightly meetings, they approved the regular ‘Summary of Indications’ papers (colloquially known as the “Crystal Gazer”).⁴⁹² He explained that these papers were sent out under very tight security arrangements to the King, the Prime Minister and

⁴⁸⁹ TNA: FO 371/77624/N10086/1052/38G. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 22 November 1949.

⁴⁹⁰ TNA: FO 371/86761/NS1053. Minutes of Russia Committee held on 15 August 1950, Page 4, paragraph IV, 1).

⁴⁹¹ John Sterndale Bennett.

⁴⁹² TNA: FO 371/94819: NS 1021/10. Note from Pierson Dixon, to Sterndale Bennett, dated 2 January 1951.

the Foreign Secretary and a very few other senior people. He explained that until recently they had been concerned only with Soviet Policy but that, given recent events in the Far East, their papers had begun to focus also on China. It had therefore been decided that in future the papers would be in two sections with a short summary covering both parts. Pierson Dixon therefore proposed to include the Ambassador in the recipients list and to ask him to contribute/comment as necessary in relation to issues concerning the Far East, and to treat the papers with special care given their sensitivity and to make sure that his copies would be destroyed after three months. He agreed and consequently the first example of the new format of the 'Summary of Indications/Crystal Gazer' fortnightly papers was circulated on 23 January 1951.⁴⁹³

Further Engagement of Ministers with the Russia Committee

While the 'Crystal Gazers' were the Russia Committee's main regular output for Ministers, there were plenty of other examples of commissions from Bevin or Attlee over this period. One example was Ernest Bevin's request that the Russia Committee be asked for: "a considered appreciation of the probable results of the creation by the Soviet Government of a Council for Economic Mutual Assistance with reference to the following: whether the formation of the new body...likely to lead to the gradual disappearance of the Cominform..... whether the new step was likely to mean a genuine lessening of international tension or not?"⁴⁹⁴

The Russia Committee summarised and sent their advice to Bevin, their main conclusions being that there was no evidence that Cominform was about to disappear; that the main difference between the two bodies was that the new Council represented governments whereas the Cominform was an organisation of Communist Party representatives; and the creation of the new Council might lead the satellites to adopt a tougher attitude in their trade negotiations with the West.

⁴⁹³ TNA: FO 371/94820/ NS1021/11. Summary of Indications, dated 23 January 1951.

⁴⁹⁴ TNA: FO 371/N1388/1052. Minutes of Russia Committee meeting held on 3 February 1949.

In April 1949⁴⁹⁵ Attlee and Bevin commissioned the Russia Committee to produce a paper on Soviet industrial potential. The paper in its draft form mostly concerned the Soviet economy and the estimated Soviet expenditure on armaments over which there was some dispute about the accuracy. It was largely agreed that the strength of the Soviet Union lay in its numerous front-line soldiers in Germany and was not dependent on basic economic factors. The figures in the paper showed that the Soviet standard of living was supporting an increasing productivity and also provided a higher food standard than West Germany. The paper went in mid-May to both Attlee and Bevin who suggested that it should be circulated to Cabinet once any comments from the MOD had been sought and taken on board. This must be seen as further evidence that Attlee and Bevin valued the advice of the Russia Committee. The MOD, perhaps because they saw the aspect of the paper which dealt with armament expenditure as trespassing on their military policy interests, said that they wished to circulate a parallel paper giving the latest estimates of Russian armament production. But this was deemed unnecessary since the original version had already been amended in accordance with comments from the JIC – conceivably because the JIC representative on the Russia Committee had already passed on MOD comments to the Committee secretariat. The Committee agreed that the revised paper should be sent to Bevin under a covering minute making this clear. Another example, perhaps, of the tensions sometimes underlying the relationship between the MOD and the Foreign Office.

In February 1950 Attlee's government was returned to power following a General Election but the Labour Party's overall majority was reduced to five. From the Russia Committee point of view nothing much changed at this juncture and their regular meetings and their production of papers for Ministers continued as before. In May 1950 the Committee discussed a paper entitled "Western Measures to Contain Soviet Communism" by the Foreign Office's Northern Department and which had been commissioned by Bevin. Jebb thought that the paper was: "well written and contained useful material"⁴⁹⁶ but despite this praise he thought it "too long for busy Ministers to

⁴⁹⁵ TNA: FO 371/N3583/1052/38G. Minutes of Russia Committee meeting held on 12 April 1949.

⁴⁹⁶ TNA: FO 371/86761/NS1053/18. Minutes of Russia Committee meeting held on 23 May 1950.

have to read”.⁴⁹⁷ As he would have been well aware, there is always pressure on officials to keep papers for Ministers as brief as the information to be conveyed allows. There are always many calls upon the time of Ministers and Bevin, in particular, had a huge portfolio to manage. In the event, a further, shorter, version was produced and discussed in July and was then sent to the Cabinet.⁴⁹⁸

There were other commissions to the Russia Committee directly from Bevin but these few serve as examples of the fact that the Committee was taken seriously at the top most levels of the UK government as a resource for information and considered advice that would help Ministers to form their policy decisions on the areas under scrutiny. Once again it raises the question of the influence of the Committee on policy decisions and, as Bulloch points out: “Bevin had to rely on the information and the appreciation of that information supplied by the Foreign Office”.⁴⁹⁹

The second phase of the Russia Committee’s existence was clearly one which was set against a good deal of change in the relations between the Western allies and the Communist world and, indeed, between the Soviet Communist world and that of the Soviet Satellites and of the Chinese and other Asian Communists. Stalin had concerns in Europe, notably over the need to prevent the re-armament of Germany and the wish to nip in the bud the spread of Titoism both within Yugoslavia and outward to the other Satellites. Stalin’s volatile personality would not have helped to reduce the tensions in the relations between the West and the Soviets but it did have its ups as well as its downs. An example being in October 1951 when the Russia Committee discussed a paper by the Northern Department entitled “Possible Conciliatory moves by the Soviet Government”⁵⁰⁰ which outlined many, mostly fairly insignificant, indications of a softening of Soviet attitudes towards the West. These included such things as the Soviets appointing more Western friendly Ambassadors to key Western postings; the showing of greater affability towards Western counterparts at official gatherings; and even the fact that they had permitted the outgoing British Ambassador

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid. Minutes of Russia Committee meeting held on 23 May 1950.

⁴⁹⁸ TNA: FO 371/86761/NS1053. Minutes of Russia Committee meeting held on 18 July 1950.

⁴⁹⁹ Bulloch. Chapter 4, Page 102.

⁵⁰⁰ TNA: FO 371/94845/NS1053/42. Paper by Northern Department of the Foreign Office dated 15 October 1951.

in Moscow,⁵⁰¹ to have access to places he had hitherto been denied. But these rather feeble 'green shoots' were short lived, and by November 1951 the Russia Committee was noting that there had been a swift return to the truculence formerly demonstrated by the Soviets.

There were also ebbs and flows in the relationship between the UK and the US, though arguably of less far reaching consequences but, nevertheless the closeness of the alliance seemed diminished, with the US acting more independently over, for example, Korea. Throughout the period, though, the Russia Committee maintained its role of information gathering and the disseminating of information and advice to those at the heart of the British Government.

One major change which occurred towards the end of the second phase of the Russia Committee's life-span was the loss of the Foreign Office's highly esteemed political supremo. In March 1951 Ernest Bevin resigned when his ill health reached the point of his no longer being able to carry out his punishing work schedule. This was swiftly followed, on 14 April 1951, by his death. He had been, by any accounts, a towering figure as Foreign Secretary and a major player in both the post-war Attlee governments and in the war-time coalition government. As Alexander Cadogan, in his diaries, said of Bevin: "He was the heavyweight of the Cabinet and will get his own way with them".⁵⁰²

Elsby gives another example of how Bevin was fully master of his Foreign Policy brief and not having to worry about keeping in step with the wishes of No 10 when he quotes another senior diplomat, Oliver Harvey, as saying: "...we hear nothing of No 10 these days, none of those Ministers going back and forward.....We have a Foreign Secretary who is master in his own house"⁵⁰³

The loss to the Foreign Office was felt not just because of Bevin's stature as an outstanding statesman and Foreign Secretary but because, on a personal level, he was revered, even loved, throughout the Foreign Office as revealed by the circumstances of

⁵⁰¹ Sir David Kelly.

⁵⁰² Dilks, Page 776, entry for 28 July 1945.

⁵⁰³ Eslby. Page 121. Quoting from the Oliver Harvey papers held in the British Library.

his farewell party. Bevin's biographers, notably Bulloch and Williams, give accounts of the touching farewell party given to Bevin on his resignation as Foreign Secretary. But perhaps the most intimate of the accounts was by Sir Roderick Barclay who was Bevin's PPS at the time of his departure and who, therefore, unlike Bulloch or Williams, had both a Foreign Office official's perspective and contemporary first-hand experience, when he wrote: "It had been agreed, in view of the affection and esteem in which he was held throughout the Foreign Service, that we should join together to give him a seventieth birthday present, and though the suggested contribution was (if I remember right) only two shillings ⁵⁰⁴we had no difficulty in collecting a considerable sum of money." ⁵⁰⁵

Nor was it just the UK diplomats who had placed such a high value on their Foreign Secretary. On the world stage he was recognized as being a great statesman. Truman, for example, credited Bevin with being the leading force behind the Marshall Plan and the setting up of NATO. ⁵⁰⁶

So, Ernest Bevin, who had worked himself into the ground and, perhaps against all likelihoods, had become one of the most respected, ever, Foreign Secretaries by his officials, relinquished the job - unwillingly but resignedly, as he knew his health would not permit him to carry on much longer. To his chagrin, he was succeeded by Herbert Morrison whom Bevin much disliked and who, in the remaining six months of the Attlee government, did not cover himself in glory in the post. Indeed, as Barclay said of his six months as Foreign Secretary: "This relatively short period amply sufficed to show up his inadequacy for the job" ⁵⁰⁷. In his defence, before Morrison could settle into his new job he was required, in April 1951, as Deputy Prime Minister, to assume the government's helm as Attlee went into hospital to have treatment for a duodenal ulcer, and he was: "faced with the biggest internal political crisis of this Labour government" ⁵⁰⁸ namely, the controversial scheme to impose charges for the supply of false teeth and spectacles under the National Health Service and which resulted in the

⁵⁰⁴ Other reports, including those of Bulloch and Williams, refer to the contribution being 6 pence.

⁵⁰⁵ Barclay. Chapter 2, Pages 50-51.

⁵⁰⁶ McCullough, David. Truman. Published Simon & Schuster, 1993. Part 5, Page 735.

⁵⁰⁷ Barclay. Chapter 5, Page 94.

⁵⁰⁸ Donoghue, Bernard and Jones G W. *Herbert Morrison: Portrait of a Politician*. Published Phoenix Press, 2001. Chapter 36, Pages 484-485.

resignation of Aneurin Bevan, Harold Wilson and John Freeman. Once the dust had settled on that crisis Morrison was able to concentrate more on his Foreign Secretaryship but one problem followed another in quick succession. Perhaps the most notable of which was the spy scandal of Burgess and Maclean which “was a hammer blow to Morrison”.⁵⁰⁹ He, of course, cannot have been responsible for the circumstances that led to their defections but his handling of the situation, in common with his handling of other crises, was poor, and he faced criticism in the Press and in the House of Commons for these shortcomings. Morrison became increasingly unhappy and disillusioned with his job. He was irritated with his inability to produce a concrete solution to any of the problems on his desk. At one point he told an American journalist:⁵¹⁰ “Foreign Policy would be okay except for the bloody foreigners”.⁵¹¹ Morrison’s unhappy tenure in the post lasted until the General Election in October 1951 which returned Churchill to No 10 and found Anthony Eden back in the post of Foreign Secretary. With Eden back in charge it might perhaps have been hoped that there would have been a revival in the stature of the Russia Committee but this was not to be. In his memoirs, Lord Gladwyn⁵¹² said that: “Bevin took much interest in [the Russian Committee] but I believe that when Eden returned to the office in 1951 it rather faded out”.⁵¹³

So, the second phase of the Russia Committee’s existence saw three quite different Foreign Secretaries but this considerable churn in political leaders was different from the situation with regard to the officials. While the period also saw three different Chairmen of the Russia Committee, all three were diplomats with long experience and deep expertise in the subject matter and they, and the other experts on the Committee, provided continuity and stability as the Russia Committee continued its work through the changes and upheavals.

From the end of 1949 through to the end of 1952 the Russia Committee continued to operate on a consistent and regular basis, usually meeting on a fortnightly basis. They

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. Chapter 36 Page 496.

⁵¹⁰ Sulzberger, C L. *A Long Row of Candles* Published 1969. Page 574.

⁵¹¹ Donoughue, Bernard and Jones G W . Chapter 36, Page 498.

⁵¹² Formerly Sir Gladwyn Jebb.

⁵¹³ Gladwyn. Chapter 13 Page 227.

met a total of 24 times during 1949; a total of 27 times in 1950; in 1951 they met on 16 occasions before the October General Election and a further 3 times from October through to the end of 1951; and they met on 11 times during 1952. Clearly then, by the end of 1952 there was a significant falling off in the frequency of the meetings and the Committee may, indeed, have started to 'fade away'. But for the time being – and for a further five years - it continued to exist. And while there remains a question mark over the extent of the influence of the Committee's work, what can be said is that this middle phase of its existence resulted in the production of more papers and regular reports that were seen by those in Government who made the policy decisions. That may not be much of a claim to make for a such a high-level body which invested considerable time and resources into its work, and the claim might be to underestimate the Committee's contribution. It is neither possible to prove the extent of the Committee's influence, nor to disprove it.

Chapter 7 Foreign Policy Highlights for the Attlee Administrations

Previous chapters have focused on the detail of the Russia Committee's work from 1946 through to 1952 which largely coincided with the span of time of the two post-war Attlee administrations and the period of Ernest Bevin's tenure as Foreign Secretary. This chapter aims to look in the wider context at a few of the issues of statecraft that dominated the work of the Attlee government as the international scene was in a state of churn following the end of the War. Many such foreign policy issues were discussed by the Russia Committee and the three selected are: the development of the atomic bomb; the development of non-Soviet Communism in the Soviet Satellite country of Yugoslavia and the emergence of Titoism; and the changes in international relationships in the Far East brought about by the establishment of Mao Tse-Tung's People's Republic of China in 1949 followed by the Korean 'war' which began in 1950.

Dictionary definitions of the term 'Statecraft'⁵¹⁴ vary marginally but are essentially variations of 'the art of conducting state affairs' and therefore are bound up with how a state is managed both internally and externally. Externally, or intra-nationally, statecraft is about formulating and putting into effect foreign, military and security policy and: "...concerns the whole range of risks and opportunities which far-sighted statesmen must appreciate and evaluate in the conduct of his craft".⁵¹⁵

When Attlee became Prime Minister in July 1945 and immediately appointed Bevin Foreign Secretary they faced numerous issues domestically and internationally. Bevin's primary focus was, naturally, on developing foreign policy across a considerable range of post-war international issues, though with his Trade Union and wartime coalition Minister of Supply experience he was also influential on domestic economic issues. Quite apart from the many domestic issues with which, as a senior member of the Cabinet, he was concerned (including housing, employment, food shortages) his own portfolio was formidable and included: formulating policy on Britain's response to the

⁵¹⁴ The Oxford English dictionary definition, for example, is 'The skillful management of state affairs'; Collins English dictionary definition is 'The art of conducting public affairs'.

⁵¹⁵ Thatcher, Margaret. *Statecraft: Strategies for a Changing World*. Published Harper Collins, 2003. Introduction, Page xix.

US development of the atom bomb; maintaining British influence on the world stage; working with former allies on settling issues outstanding at the end of the war, issues on borders, on reparations, on Germany; on Palestine and the setting up of the State of Israel; on responding to the calls from parts of the British Empire for independence. As the months and years went on the statecraft issues were constantly changing and shifting as relations with former allies altered; and not just as the Cold War began with the West harbouring suspicions towards the Soviet Union's intentions but also over changing relations with the United States. During these years foreign policy had to keep pace with the changing circumstances and while Bevin and his Foreign Office Ministerial team made decisions on foreign policy, they were advised on all the issues that demanded their attention by the numerous expert diplomats from within the Foreign Office and through the offices of such expert advisory bodies as the Russia Committee.

Atomic Race

Bulloch describes the "...issues around the atomic bomb as the most difficult for any government to handle"⁵¹⁶ and this was one of the first issues confronting Attlee and Bevin at the start of the Labour administration. Despite their close relationship with Churchill through their senior roles in the wartime coalition government, neither Attlee nor Bevin had been informed by Churchill of the 'Tube Alloys' project⁵¹⁷ which must have come as quite a shock. In his first speech to the House of Commons as Foreign Secretary, on 20 August 1945, Bevin spoke of the need to formulate policy on this issue when he said: "War is not caused by the intervention of weapons. It is policy that makes war...the intention to go to war....I am perfectly certain that the late Lord Rutherford had no idea at all...It is we in the form and control of our policy, who misdirect the results of scientific research".⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁶ Bulloch. Chapter 5, Page 184.

⁵¹⁷ Tube Alloys was the codename given to the highly secret project on developing the atomic bomb and on which the British had been collaborating with the United States.

⁵¹⁸ HC 20 August 1945.

Formulation of British policy during the following six years of Attlee's governments was largely in the hands of those half a dozen Ministers⁵¹⁹ who formed the membership of the ad hoc Cabinet Committee known as General 75, but "Attlee and Bevin together played a greater role than any other Ministers in shaping British atomic policy".⁵²⁰

In May 1947 the Chiefs of Staff of the Ministry of Defence produced a major, and deeply gloomy, report on future defence policy spelling out what they saw as the serious threat from Soviet territorial and ideological expansionism and foresaw the inevitability and imminence of their acquiring nuclear weapons. The report argued that the only means of preventing the Russians from using such weapons against the West was by: "...facing her with the threat of large scale damage from similar weapons if she should employ them....we believe that the knowledge that we possessed weapons of mass destruction and were prepared to use them would be a most effective deterrent to war itself".⁵²¹

As Hennessy says: "The nuclear factor was central throughout the Cold War"⁵²² and was a high priority in the immediate aftermath as both the US and the Soviets continued to develop their capabilities. He also says that: "the Cold War, like no conflict before or since, was soaked in the nuclear factor in a manner that everyone, expert or inexperienced, could understand. If it had come to it, and the nuclear taboo which had held since the atomic bomb fell on Nagasaki on 9 August 1945 was broken, the world, or at least what was left of it if the East and West had unleashed their arsenals against each other, would have been transformed for ever".⁵²³

Attlee, like his predecessor Churchill, had a strong interest in the concept of nuclear deterrence and a firm belief that Britain needed to have its own nuclear capability for the purpose of such deterrence. In August 1945, having been elected as Prime

⁵¹⁹ Attlee, Bevin, Cripps, Morrison, Greenwood and Dalton.

⁵²⁰ Bulloch. Chapter 5, Page 185.

⁵²¹ TNA: CAB 131/4 and DO(47)44 : Future Defence Policy, Report by the Chiefs of Staff, 22 May 1947.

⁵²² Hennessy, Peter. *The Secret State: Preparing for the Worst 1945-2010*. Published Penguin Books, 2010. See Chapter 2 for an examination of the importance of being nuclear capable to both Labour and Conservative governments.

⁵²³ Ibid. Chapter 2, Page 48.

Minister the previous month, Attlee wrote: "It is difficult for people to adjust their minds to an entirely new situation....Even the modern conception of war to which in my lifetime we have become accustomed is now completely out of date...it would appear that the provision of bomb-proof basements in factories and offices and the retention of ARP [Air Raid Precautions] and Fire Services is just futile waste...The answer to an atomic bomb on London is an atomic bomb on another great city".⁵²⁴

Bevin took the same view. The British had been closely involved in the US development of their nuclear capability through the close participation of British scientists but this was brought to an abrupt end by the US Congress passing the McMahon Act in August 1946 which prohibited the transfer of classified atomic energy information to all foreign countries, including Britain. For a country that had worked so closely with the US on this and all intelligence issues for a long time this was a blow to Britain and to her 'special relationship' with the US. It was apparent by late 1946 that "if the United Kingdom was eventually to develop and produce its own stockpile of nuclear weapons it would have to do so alone".⁵²⁵ And it was the severing of co-operation with her former close ally that acted as a catalyst for Britain to decide to develop its own deterrent. She had the expertise through her knowledge of "the science of the bomb"⁵²⁶ but was not rich in resources or the industrial know-how of the US and so hard decisions had to be taken by the British Government as to whether to allocate scarce resources to such a costly venture. Hennessy describes a Cabinet Committee discussion, in the Autumn of 1949, about whether to agree to fund the building of a £30 to £40 million gaseous diffusion plant for the production of uranium, where the 'sparse minutes' record, first, the line put forward by Dalton and Cripps:⁵²⁷ "In discussion it was urged that we must consider seriously whether we could afford to divert from civilian consumption and the restoration of our balance of payments the economic resources required for a project of this scale. Unless present trends were reversed we might find ourselves faced with an extremely serious economic and

⁵²⁴ TNA: CAB 130/3 GEN 75. Papers 1945-1947. GEN 75/1 The Atomic Bomb. Memorandum by the Prime Minister, 28 August 1945.

⁵²⁵ Jones, Matthew. Chapter 1 Page 9.

⁵²⁶ Hennessy, Peter. *The Secret State: Preparing for the Worst 1945-2010*. Chapter 2, Page 49.

⁵²⁷ Hugh Dalton, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade

financial situation in two to three years time.”⁵²⁸ and then the counter argument put up by Bevin, which won the day: “.. we could not be left behind in a field that was of such revolutionary Importance from an industrial, no less than from a military point of view. Our prestige in the world, as well as our chances of securing American co-operation would both suffer if we did not exploit to the full a discovery in which we had played a leading part at the outset”.⁵²⁹

As Blackwell puts it: “The possession or control of atomic weapons had become the sine qua non of great power status and real independence in the post war world”.⁵³⁰ Bevin, According to Sir Michael Perrin, who had attended the GEN 75 meeting as a representative of the Ministry of Supply, Bevin - in response to a line taken by Dalton and Cripps said: “No, Prime Minister, that won’t do at all. We’ve got to have this. I don’t mind for myself, but I don’t want any other Foreign Secretary of this country to be talked at, or to, by the Secretary of State in the United States as I just have in my discussions with Mr Byrnes. We’ve got to have this thing over here, whatever it costs. We’ve got to have the bloody Union Jack on top of it”.⁵³¹

So it was that by the time the Korean ‘War’ started in 1950, the United States had “been piling up nuclear weapons for over five years”⁵³² and the Soviets had detonated their first atom bomb a year earlier. Britain was lagging behind in terms of producing their own nuclear capability, but was catching up fast. The policy decision to ‘go it alone’ in developing a British nuclear deterrent was one of the most far reaching policy decisions of the early Cold War and it was brought about largely as a result of the tensions and rivalries between the former Western and Eastern War time allies

Given that the atomic race was such a dominating issue in the early Cold War and was a central plank in the opposing camps of the West and the Soviets, the Foreign Office’s Russia Committee might have been expected to be closely involved in advising

⁵²⁸ TNA: CAB 130/2 GEN 75/15th Meeting. 15 October 1946.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Blackwell Chapter 10 Page 135.

⁵³¹ Hennessy, Peter. *The Secret State: Whitehall and the Cold War*. Published Allan Lane, The Penguin Press, 2002. Chapter 2, Page 48.

⁵³² Deutscher. Page 585.

Ministers on the subject. However, it was not a major preoccupation for the Committee. That is not to say that they did not discuss the issue, and it certainly featured in their fortnightly 'Crystal Gazers' and there are examples of when they discussed papers on the subject produced by others.⁵³³ But, as Goodman⁵³⁴ makes clear, it was the Russia Committee's closely connected fellow Whitehall Committee - the JIC - that was the main generator of such papers and of advice to Ministers on the subject. As there had been a JIC representative as a Member of the Russia Committee since its inception this constituted a clear and important link between the two bodies. In a sense, the JIC was primarily a creature of the COS whereas the Russia Committee was the Foreign Office's. This is in no way surprising. The Russia Committee was best placed to acquire information on policy issues behind foreign policy decisions whereas the information required about nuclear capabilities was of a more technical nature and related more to intelligence and to the Soviets military capabilities and was more within the MOD's bailiwick.

Titoism

Marshall Josip Broz Tito had been in complete control of Yugoslavia since mid-1945, and largely so before that, and he was a formidable personality.⁵³⁵ As Lawrence Freedman puts it, having become President of Yugoslavia after leading his partisan forces as they "hounded the Germans out of his country" he "had no intention of being dictated to by Stalin".⁵³⁶ Equally Stalin was wary of other Communist leaders who were independent from Soviet Communism. Stalin had formed the Cominform, according to Deutscher: "...in order to recentralise and rediscipline the Communist parties"⁵³⁷ in the satellite countries but no sooner had he done so than the Yugoslav members of the new organisation, and Tito in particular, challenged his authority.

⁵³³ See papers noted in Appendix 1, for example FO 371/NN2190/1052 dated 1 March 1949.

⁵³⁴ Goodman, Michael. *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee Volume I: From the Approach of the Second World War to the Suez Crisis*. Published Routledge, 2014. Chapter 10 Pages 277-296.

⁵³⁵ Dixon. Chapters 8 and 9, pages 144 to 177 give a good description of Tito's personality before and after he gained complete control, see the accounts of his meetings with Churchill and Eden at the Yalta and the Potsdam conferences.

⁵³⁶ Freedman. Page 23.

⁵³⁷ Deutscher, Isaac. *Stalin*. Published Pelican Books, 1966. Chapter 15, Page 577.

There had been no more “dogmatic and fanatical”⁵³⁸ supporter of Stalin than Tito in the years up to 1948 but: “...the years of armed revolutionary struggle in his own country had transformed the puppet into a man and leader. Stalin sensed the change, and grew suspicious”.⁵³⁹

The tensions between Stalin and Tito grew as the Soviets “set out to plan the economic development of their satellites to meet not only internal but also Soviet needs”.⁵⁴⁰ But Yugoslavia had no wish to concentrate on heavy industry, which the Soviets wished them to do, for fear of this having an adverse impact on the standard of living of Yugoslavs. By June 1948 Stalin had had enough of Tito’s independent stance and Yugoslavia was expelled from Comintern. But despite the savage economic and military blockade Stalin imposed on Yugoslavia, Tito was not brought to heel and Stalin found himself to be unsuccessful against an opponent who was a fellow Communist leader. And worse still for Stalin, Tito’s brand of independent Communism found favour with other European Communists. Tito’s break with Russia in 1948 was, as George Kennan saw it: “the first overt breach in the monolithic unity of the Moscow-dominated Communist bloc. For long, it remained the only one”.⁵⁴¹

Against that background, by 1949 the Russia Committee were discussing radio reports of guerilla fighting in Yugoslavia and noting that, in general, there was no apparent abatement in the virulence of the Soviet campaign against Tito. They noted a reference to an Observer report that the Soviets were planning a general withdrawal from the Balkans – though the Russia Committee saw no evidence to support this assertion - and they also noted that there was fresh evidence of Russian troop movements towards Yugoslavia, although the numbers were thought to be insufficient as yet to support large scale operations.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁸ Ibid. Chapter 15, Page 578.

⁵³⁹ Ibid. Chapter 15, Page 578.

⁵⁴⁰ McCauley, Martin. Chapter 7, Page 75.

⁵⁴¹ Kennan. Chapter 15, Page 366.

⁵⁴² TNA: FO 371/77624/N8287/1052/38G. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 13 September 1949.

There was a further interesting discussion on the state of play with Tito at the Russia Committee meeting at the end of September 1949⁵⁴³ which concluded that the Soviets probably calculated that the Western Powers would not go to war for the sake of Yugoslavia; that active intervention by the Red Army might very well be needed to dislodge Tito; that although the possibility of armed intervention was not excluded, the Soviets would probably wait until the Spring to bring matters to a head. The Russia Committee invited the Northern and Southern Departments of the Foreign Office to prepare, for Bevin, a joint paper on the probable developments of the Soviet/Yugoslav dispute. In October 1949 the Committee discussed Yugoslavia's economic position at greater length.⁵⁴⁴ In early November 1949 Sir Charles Peake,⁵⁴⁵ HM's Ambassador, Belgrade, attended the Russia Committee meeting⁵⁴⁶ and reported that he had seen Marshall Tito the previous week at the latter's request. The general tenor of their discussions had been that Tito believed that Yugoslavia had the situation regarding the Soviets and the Soviet Satellites in hand and that Stalin could only wait while Yugoslavia consolidated her independence. Tito believed the people of Yugoslavia foresaw that a new system would arise in which the Satellites dropped away from the Soviets and grouped themselves around Yugoslavia as independent Communist states and would be able then to talk to the Soviets on equal terms. Ambassador Peake said that he thought that the Yugoslavs would continue to need economic help over the next 18 months to 2 years to encourage her. He also noted that in the face of Tito's independent stance the Soviets had engineered the appointment of a Russian - Marshall Rokossovsky – to become head of the Polish armed forces, a move that they would surely have known would anger Poles greatly and it was thought that the appointment provided a 'magnificent opportunity for Tito' to emphasise the inevitability of Russian dominance over the Satellites. The Committee saw this as evidence that the Soviets were disturbed by the state of feeling

⁵⁴³ TNA: FO 371/77624/N8287/1052/38G. Meeting held on 27 September 1949.

⁵⁴⁴ TNA: FO 371/77624/N8287/1052/38G Meeting held on 25 October 1949.

⁵⁴⁵ Rothwell. Chapter 7, Pages 392 and 393 gives an account of Sir Charles Peake's arrival in Belgrade as HM Ambassador-Designate who had yet to present his credentials and was ordered not to do so as the Yugoslavs had just shot down two US planes and their own Ambassador-Designate had declined on this basis not to present his own credentials and the Foreign Office wanted to show solidarity. But Peake ignored orders and as a reward was given an informal meeting with Tito, which turned out to be one of many such meetings.

⁵⁴⁶ TNA: FO 371/77624/N9737/1052/38G. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 8 November 1949

in Satellite countries and were taking steps to counteract it by obtaining more military control over them.

There was further discussion about 'Titoism' at the Russia Committee's end November meeting.⁵⁴⁷ Jebb referred to the prevailing tendency to treat all manifestations of Communism throughout the world as Soviet inspired and/or controlled, whereas Yugoslavia was evidence that Communism need not always be so and there were thought already to be signs of support for Titoism in Norway, France and, indeed, in the UK. And he noted that Count Sforza⁵⁴⁸ had told Bevin that among Italian Communists there was a growing tendency towards 'Titoism'. The Soviets, on the other hand, according to Molotov, speaking at the time of Stalin's birthday party in January 1950,⁵⁴⁹ thought that the downfall of Tito was not far off. Jebb commissioned a paper on Anti Stalinist Communism and the paper, which was finalised in February 1950, was a key one in drawing together the intelligence on the state of play with Titoism. The detailed paper was five pages long plus a six page Annex. The conclusions are set out in Part IV of the main paper as follow: "16. (a) Titoism and other manifestations of anti-Stalinist feeling in Communist parties are a potentially valuable force working against both international Communism and Russian imperialism. (b) The value ... is, however, qualified by the fact that in particular cases, eg China, Western Germany and Austria, it may broaden the Communist appeal and so present dangers of its own...c) The appeal of Titoism depends essentially on the character of a "pure" Communist doctrine, independent of, and indeed theoretically hostile to, the capitalist West. Any overt support we might give it would ...play into the hands of Soviet propaganda. (d) Subject to (b) and (c) above, we should exploit the differences between national and Kremlin-controlled Communism, in existing Communist parties. Our attitude must, however, be governed by the circumstances of each case..."⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁷TNA: FO 371/77624/N9737/1052/38G. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 22 November 1949.

⁵⁴⁸ Count Carlo Sforza was the Italian Foreign Minister, and therefore Bevin's counterpart in Italy.

⁵⁴⁹ TNA: FO 371/86761/NS1053/1. Memorandum by the Russian Committee Sub-Committee on 'Anti-Stalinist Communism, dated 9 January 1950.

⁵⁵⁰ TNA: FO 371/86751/NS1052/19. Paper by the Russia Committee entitled "Anti-Stalinist Communism (Final) and dated 18 February 1950.

This paper provides a good example of the kind of information and analysis provided by the Russia Committee on a given subject, gleaned from experts in the field with first-hand experience and top-level access to people and events in relevant countries, through the Foreign Office's network of Embassies and Consulates. Jebb considered this paper important enough to send to the PUS, William Strang, and through him, to Bevin, and the cover note is worth quoting extensively:

I submit a paper, prepared and approved by the Russia Committee, on the subject of Titoism and other manifestations of "National" or "anti-Stalinist" Communism.

2. The paper is based on information supplied by certain of HM Missions abroad, who were asked to report whether Tito's example had had any effect (a) on local Communist parties, or (b) non-Communist fellow-travelling opinion, and whether there was any evidence of attempts by the Yugoslav Government to form a Titoist International. It also embodies information, supplied by the security authorities, on the effect of Titoism on the British Communist Party.

It is proposed, if you agree, to circulate the paper to the Prime Minister and the other recipients in London of the "Summary of Indications regarding Soviet Foreign Policy", and also to the chief posts on whose reports the memorandum is based (see attached list).⁵⁵¹

Jebb thought it essential that care be taken in distributing the Memorandum, to emphasise the need for careful handling given the secret nature of the material it contained. Interestingly, despite this concern over secrecy, he wanted the UK's Embassy in Washington to give a copy to the most suitable official in the State Department and enquire whether the Americans had prepared any similar study and if they had done so to ask whether they would share it with the UK.⁵⁵² The cover note accompanying the Memorandum was signed by Jebb and initialed by William Strang and by Bevin, the latter adding a manuscript addendum saying: "I agree".⁵⁵³ Bevin then sent the paper on to Attlee saying:

I send you herewith a copy of a memorandum prepared by the Russia Committee on the subject of Titoism and other manifestations of "National" or "anti-Stalinist" Communism.....

3.If you have not time to read the whole paper you will, I think, be interested to glance at the first five pages, which contain a general survey and the conclusions.

⁵⁵¹ The distribution list comprised the top 34 senior posts abroad plus the UK High Commissioners in Delhi, Canberra, Karachi and Ottawa, and the UK Delegation to the United Nations in New York.

⁵⁵² This is slightly odd in that it would normally fall to the SIS to liaise with the US over the sharing of intelligence reports.

⁵⁵³ TNA: FO 371/86751/NS1052/19. Minute from Jebb to Strang and to Bevin dated 23 February 1950.

4. Copies of the memorandum and of this minute are being sent to the Lord President, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Minister of Defence and the Secretaries of State for Commonwealth Relations and the Colonies.⁵⁵⁴

That Attlee read the paper is proven by a copy of a Minute sent by his PPS to Bevin which reads: "Foreign Secretary's Minute, (PM (50)12) of 18 3 50 enclosing copy of a memorandum by the Russia Committee about Titoism and "anti-Stalinist" Communism. The Prime Minister has seen and noted".⁵⁵⁵

In October 1950 Charles Peake⁵⁵⁶ again attended a Russia Committee meeting⁵⁵⁷ and was invited to update the Committee on his views of the current position in Yugoslavia and, in particular, he was asked how stable he regarded Tito's regime to be. He said that he saw two main internal dangers for Yugoslavia. The first was that since the end of July he had been aware of disagreements among high party leaders, some of whom gave the impression that they wanted to rejoin their spiritual home in Moscow and that Tito had told Brigadier Maclean that the Cominform was trying to sow disaffection not only in the party as a whole but also among the Marshall's own collaborators. The second internal danger, Peake said, was that Yugoslavia might emerge from the winter weakened by hunger and disease – especially tuberculosis – and the workers would lose the will to work. The circumstances would then prevail for the Cominform to undermine the Tito regime. Resultant strikes and unrest would enable the Russians to claim that Tito was no longer in control of the situation.

But for all that, Tito remained in control and on 13 January 1953 he was elected President of the Federal Assembly of Yugoslavia just over six weeks before Stalin's death at the beginning of March 1953. Thereafter, Tito continued to enjoy a cordial relationship with the UK and the US. Attlee - no longer British Prime Minister but still Leader of the Labour Party - saw certain countries within the Communist bloc, notably Yugoslavia, as being "more biddable and capable of being peeled away from the Soviet

⁵⁵⁴TNA: FO 371/86751/NS1052/19. Top Secret Minute from Bevin to Attlee dated 18 March 1950.

⁵⁵⁵Ibid. Copy of Minute by Attlee to Bevin dated 23 March 1950.

⁵⁵⁶Still, at this time, His Majesty's Ambassador in Belgrade.

⁵⁵⁷TNA: FO 371/86761/NS1053. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 24 October 1950.

orbit".⁵⁵⁸ He found that Tito had developed a "system very different from that of totalitarianism" and found the Yugoslavs "full of humour, with nothing of the austere nature of the Russians".⁵⁵⁹ As such, Attlee was hopeful that other Communist countries could follow suit, he having seen hopeful signs of dissent against Communism in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland. Although this may not have transpired in the way that Attlee had hoped, nevertheless, as far as Yugoslavia was concerned, Tito remained at the helm until he died in 1980 a few days before his 88th birthday and his legacy to Yugoslavia in maintaining its independence from Soviet domination endured.

The Russia Committee advice to Ministers on Titoism, as outlined above, is perhaps one of the few tangible examples of a senior Minister, in this case the Foreign Secretary, finding the advice from the Russia Committee to be worthy of troubling a busy Prime Minister with reading. Whether this can be seen as tangible evidence of the Russia Committee helping to form foreign policy towards Tito is uncertain but it could be argued that it was likely to have done so.

China

As Isaac Deutscher puts it, "While Stalin was fiercely hitting out at Titoism, a heresy far more potent and dangerous was rearing its head in Peking".⁵⁶⁰ In May 1949, over twelve months before the Korean 'war' began, there was the emergence of an interest on the part of the Russia Committee in what was going on in China and the possible relationship between the Chinese Communists and the Soviets. In May the Committee was given a talk⁵⁶¹ by the UK's Commissioner General in South East Asia, Mr Malcom Macdonald, and the essence of his address was that the future policy of a Communist Government of China was an important question as was the issue as to whether such a Government would be able to embark upon Foreign adventures, as well as coping with

⁵⁵⁸ Bew. Chapter 21, Page 519.

⁵⁵⁹ Letter from Clem Attlee to his brother Tom dated 9 August 1953, quoted by Bew . Chapter 21, Page 518.

⁵⁶⁰ Deutscher. Chapter 15, Page 580.

⁵⁶¹ TNA: FO 371/N4901/1052/38. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 24 May 1949.

the situation in China itself, or would need to undertake such adventures in order to divert attention from the Chinese situation.

It appeared to Macdonald that the Soviets had very little direct association with events in South East Asia, where others were doing their work for them, but that there was reason to suppose that the Soviets were in touch with the Chinese Communists. This surmise was supported by evidence in that, as Isaac Deutscher noted, in December 1949, no sooner had the People's Republic of China been proclaimed, than Stalin invited Mao to Moscow and "received him in the Kremlin with every honour and every sign of friendship and respect".⁵⁶² Macdonald described the Russian Embassy in Bangkok as a focus of trouble and he thought that Russian tactics were mainly to support dissident elements, such as the Chinese minorities, which had great economic power in South East Asian countries.

At the end of December 1949, at their last meeting of the year, the Russia Committee had a further talk on the Far East, this time by HM's Ambassador to China, Sir Ralph Stevenson, who was visiting London. Addressing the Committee,⁵⁶³ Stevenson saw it as being accidental that the Communists had successfully completed a Chinese revolution begun 38 years previously. There were, he thought, three main factions in the Chinese leadership: those with exclusive devotion to Russia; those who believed in the need for reasonable relations with countries besides Russia; and those who had a hatred of all foreigners. Chou-en-Lai seemed to think that a clash between the first and second factions was unlikely; Mao-Tse-Tung appeared to float above all three factions. As to the hatred of foreigners, there was much xenophobia throughout China, largely indiscriminating, but there was a particular hatred of Russia in the north. In general, Stevenson said, the new Chinese rulers were utterly ruthless and would rather let millions of Chinese die than yield to foreign pressure. Asked whether the Chinese Communists were subservient to Moscow and whether the Soviets could, as she had in all other Satellite countries except Yugoslavia, gain control through the secret police, he said that most Chinese Communists were Marxists but not all were pro-Soviet. The

⁵⁶² Deutscher. Chapter 15, Page 582.

⁵⁶³ TNA: FO 371/77624/1052/38G. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 6 December 1949.

younger ones tended to look mainly to the Soviets though he doubted that any foreigner could establish a grip on China.

In December 1949 the Russia Committee noted that information had been received – and would be included in the next ‘Crystal Gazer’ – to the effect that Mao Tse-tung had recently visited Moscow and there was concern that this could suggest a possible Soviet-Chinese Treaty and the Committee requested further information on this front be obtained by the Foreign Office Far Eastern Department so that Ministers could be kept up to date.

The Russia Committee, therefore, by the end of 1949 was focusing more attention on China and the Far East than on Soviet issues, which prompted the Chairman, Gladwyn Jebb, to query whether this meant that the ‘Cold War’ was now centered on that area or whether it merely reflected exceptional diligence on the part of the Foreign Office Departments concerned. It transpired that the contributions on the Far East had been deliberately increased at the request of the Committee at an earlier meeting, from which Jebb had been absent.⁵⁶⁴

This focus on China as well as on Russia was to be reflected upon several times over the following two years as the situation in Korea would place Chinese Communism and the relationship between the Soviets and the Chinese higher up the agenda of the work of the Russia Committee.

In January 1950 the Attlee government recognized the Chinese People’s Government (CPG) and it seemed keen at first to secure good relations and, perhaps of greater importance, good trading links with the CPG, no doubt partly to safeguard British interests in Hong Kong which were thought to be rendered vulnerable by the emergence of the new Chinese Communist government. These early intentions to foster good relations were short lived.

⁵⁶⁴ TNA: FO 371/86761/NS1053/10. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 4 April 1949.

The morning of Sunday 25 June 1950 saw the beginning of the Korean 'war',⁵⁶⁵ which was to overshadow Stalin's last few years, when the surprise invasion of South Korea by North Korea took place. The North was supported by China and, in the background, by the Soviet Union – many assuming that Mao and Stalin had planned it during their Moscow meetings. But although the Soviets were thought to have had advance notice of the aggression, it seems unlikely that Stalin and Mao would have planned it together since the relationship between them was a delicate one. Stalin mistrusted any non-Soviet Communism but he "had learned from his mistake about Tito".⁵⁶⁶ So while Stalin and Mao clearly managed to carve out an alliance it could not be regarded as a close working relationship.

Whatever advanced notice the Soviets received, the Chinese aggression had certainly come as a surprise to the US and this led to criticism of the CIA in Congress. According to Christopher Andrew: "Communist North Korea's invasion of the South in the early hours of 25 June was as big an intelligence surprise as Pearl Harbour".⁵⁶⁷ Hennessy says that the failure to predict the invasion "cannot easily be explained away"⁵⁶⁸ but as Aldrich points out the apparent intelligence failure was more complicated than to warrant blanket disapproval.⁵⁶⁹ For one thing, Aldrich claims, the North Koreans were very good at signals security as they had been very well trained by the Russians and left little to be 'picked up' by the Western eavesdroppers, even assuming they had been sufficiently well equipped to pick up the signals. Christopher Andrew goes into some detail as to why the CIA station in Seoul was not well placed to have picked up the signs in the run up to the 'war'.⁵⁷⁰ Whatever the reasons for the intelligence failure, the fact remains that the invasion by North Korea was a surprise, as was the speediness of the US response to the aggression. As Bennett says: "The swiftness of

⁵⁶⁵ Technically, as with the Falklands 'war', this was not a war since war was not officially declared by the participants and President Truman described it as "police action".

⁵⁶⁶ Deutscher, Page 582.

⁵⁶⁷ Andrew, Christopher. *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5*. Published Allen Lane, 2009. Chapter 4, Page 390.

⁵⁶⁸ Hennessy, Peter. *The Secret State: Whitehall and the Cold War*. Published Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 2002. Page 26.

⁵⁶⁹ Aldrich, Richard J. *The Hidden Hand: Britain and Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Published John Murray, 2001. Chapter 13 sets out the realities on the ground, for example the fact that although the small CIA station established in Seoul in 1949 had managed to insert several dozen agents in North Korea in 1949, only a few had managed to survive.

⁵⁷⁰ Andrew. Chapter 4, Page 390.

the US response, securing within three days a UN Security Council Resolution to support South Korea and moving forces to the area, seems equally to have surprised the Soviet leader, Josef Stalin.”⁵⁷¹

The UN Resolution would not have been so easy for the US to obtain had the Soviets not walked out of the UN a few months earlier and thereby forfeited their right of veto. The South was, therefore, supported by the UN but, with the United States contributing 88% of the UN military and other resources, it was effectively the United States that supported South Korea. It was, however, important to them that it should be seen to be a UN initiative and just as important for the maintenance, or even the repair, of the US/UK ‘special relationship’ that the British Government should support the US in this action. The British government recognised the need to do so. At the Cabinet meeting on 25 July 1950⁵⁷² this was discussed and no-one argued against the decision to send British troops to Korea. This resolve was strongly supported by Attlee and Bevin who, while unable to attend the Cabinet meeting as he was in hospital, nevertheless transmitted his views from his hospital bed.

Against that political overview, where was the Russia Committee in all this? It certainly discussed the Korean situation at its meeting on 4 July, the secretariat having circulated two interesting papers for discussion at that meeting. The first, dated 1 July, was a paper by Northern Department, entitled “Soviet Union and Korea”.⁵⁷³ It stated that there could be little doubt that the Kremlin had prior knowledge of, and had given approval to, the military operations in Korea and that such an operation would be suitable for Soviet involvement for a number of reasons, among them: Southern Korea was weak and a ‘vacuum’ area; the US had withdrawn their troops from Southern Korea as it was seen as being strategically unimportant and untenable; the Soviets were not required to commit troops, as such, and therefore need not actively be involved; if the Northern Koreans were successful it would be a powerful blow at US and Western prestige in the Far East. What was less clear was the timing of the

⁵⁷¹ Bennett, Gill. *Six Moments of Crisis: Inside British Foreign Policy*. Published Oxford University Press, 2013. Chapter 1, Page 13.

⁵⁷² TNA: CAB 128/18 CM(50) 50th Meeting (13).

⁵⁷³ TNA: FO 371/86756/NS1052/68.

military operations. The possible reasons included: pragmatism in that the Northern Korean military forces had reached a point where they had overwhelming superiority in numbers and training and could well seem to the Soviets to be ripe to give a fillip to Communism in the Far East. The paper concluded that Korea was a suitable terrain for a Soviet probe of Western defences and constituted a flagrant provocation of the US and the UN and a heightening of already existing world tensions. The Soviets were also sure to make propaganda over UN/US retaliation as being evidence of Western military aggression.

The second paper was a telegram from Sir David Kelly, HM's Ambassador, Moscow, described as being "of particular secrecy and should be retained by the authorised recipient and not passed on".⁵⁷⁴ The list of those 'authorised recipients' was very high level, beginning with: The King; The Prime Minister; the PS Secretary of State – which was de-facto Mr Bevin; other FCO Ministers; the Head of the Foreign Office, the PUS, William Strang; and Pierson Dixon, the Chairman of the Russia Committee. That he was included was not just an indication of his seniority and importance – he, after all, was close to Bevin as he had been his PPS before being promoted and knighted - but of the importance of the Russian Committee itself.

As a document which illustrates the thinking of the Ambassador on the Soviet tactics and intentions over the Korean situation it is interesting. David Kelly saw the main elements of the situation as follows: he, too, thought that the attack was certainly launched with Soviet knowledge and, most certainly, at Soviet instigation. The campaign began well and the Soviets probably hoped for a swift walk-over. The UN Security Council had reacted with unexpected speed and the prompt reaction of the US had not been foreseen and from the Soviet press it seemed that the Soviets would be happy to exploit this as evidence of US aggression while not being in any hurry to commit themselves to the North Korean cause. He concluded that the North Korean attack was intended to exploit a favourable local situation, not to provoke a general conflict.

⁵⁷⁴ TNA: FO 371/86756/NS1052/70.

An article in the British Observer Newspaper by journalist Frank Robertson ⁵⁷⁵ who had toured extensively in South East Asia, questioned the effectiveness of the UN action following the invasion of South Korea largely because, as he put it: “most articulate Asiatics are convinced that all Asia is going Communist’ and that ‘repugnant as this prospect is to many’ there exists a ‘certain unreasoning satisfaction that this will mean the end of the white man’s rule over the Asiatic peoples’. He said that he had found ‘unperturbed acceptance of the prospect of Communist rule among even the wealthiest class of Asiatics.

The Russia Committee kept abreast of the developments in Korea and included the information they obtained in their fortnightly ‘Crystal Gazers’. The general feeling of the Committee was that there were two possible explanations for the Chinese intervention in Korea. Either Russia had pushed China into intervention to keep US forces in Korea whilst maintaining the Soviet pose as peace champions; or the inspiration had come from the Chinese and was mainly based on fear of US intentions and their possible advances beyond Korea.

In December 1950, and a month later, the Russia Committee again welcomed David Kelly, to their meetings to discuss a paper covering a JIC memorandum on the Chinese Communist threat in the Far East and South East Asia. The JIC paper assumed that the Chinese would be likely to call a halt to their action in Korea if given an ultimatum as they would shrink from war. The Committee chairman saw no evidence for this as he believed that China was not afraid of war with the US. David Kelly’s view, however, was more nuanced. He thought that Chinese intentions could only be discovered if an offer to open negotiations was made; she would not take such an initiative and she would, he thought, certainly try to destroy UN forces unless some such steps were taken soon. He thought it unwise to count on Sino Soviet differences. The interests of the two governments ran largely in parallel and the Soviets would certainly be glad to see US forces bogged down in the Far East.⁵⁷⁶ The Russia Committee considered that, as far as the Sino-Soviet relationship was concerned, the Soviets must welcome the

⁵⁷⁵ Article dated July 15 1950 by Frank Robertson, Observer Correspondent, entitled ‘Asia Sees Victory for Communism: Fatalism is Widespread.

⁵⁷⁶TNA: FO 371/86761/NS1053/35 and FO 371/94842/NS1053/3G. Minutes of Russia Committee Meetings on 5 December 1950 and 3 January 1951.

prospect of China's expulsion of Western influence from the Far East but the Soviets could not contemplate without anxiety the prospect of China fresh from a successful revolution, expanding her area of dominion. Moreover, the Committee felt that Chinese actions in Korea showed that they had no fear of war with the US but that the Soviets would not want to go that far and thus might act as a restraining influence.

As the 'war' in Korea waxed and waned the Russia Committee continued to keep abreast of, and to report to Ministers on, the latest developments. By mid-1951 the Chinese had agreed a cease fire with the UN and at their 21 August meeting the Committee considered a paper ⁵⁷⁷ by the Secretariat on 'Certain Reports on Soviet and Chinese Intentions' which concluded that both attached great importance to Japanese re-armament and the fact that the Russians had probably counted on the over-running of Korea before turning attention to Japan but the UN's success had compelled them to think again and the re-emergence of Japan was thought to be very disturbing to the Chinese and the Soviets.

It is hardly surprising that the Korean 'war' occupied such a large degree of the Russia Committee's energies, given that the Committee existed to monitor Communist expansionism but it gave rise to some head scratching on the part of the Committee. In the first place, it had been necessary to re-think the structure of the fortnightly "Crystal Gazers" into different sections on 'Soviet' and on 'Chinese' Communist activity. And it led to consideration, in November 1952, as to whether the Committee should change its name from the Russia Committee to reflect the importance they now attached to Chinese Communist activity. It was decided to retain the title.

In his article in the *Electronic Journal of International History*,⁵⁷⁸ David Clayton analyses the economic impact of Britain's foreign policy towards China in this period and argues that the primary driver in developing British foreign policy was not just the need to protect the British interests in Hong Kong which was such an important financial centre but also to foster prestige and influence in Asia. The question arises again, then, as to whether, in their analysis of the changing situation in China, the

⁵⁷⁷ TNA: FO 371/94842/NS1053/35G. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting held on 21 August 1951.

⁵⁷⁸ Clayton, David. *British Foreign Economic Policy Towards China 1949 to 1960*. *Electronic Journal of International History*. ISSN 1471-1443, Article 6.

Russia Committee influenced British Ministers decisions regarding their foreign policy towards China. Such may not be proven - or disproven – but it is indisputable that the Committee had access expert information on China which seems likely to have influenced their policy decisions.

Chapter 8 The End of the Russia Committee and the Growth of Parallel Foreign Affairs Advisory Bodies Within Government

The period from 1953 through to 1957 saw the final, and probably least important, years of the Russia Committee. It was no longer the organisation which was of primary importance in terms of providing Ministers with information and advice on all aspects of Soviet and Chinese Communism. Additional committees had been established whose purpose was, at least in part, to assess and monitor the Communist threat. Although the purpose, scope and, indeed, ownership, of such bodies differed from the Russia Committee they all had some overlap with the latter and several of them had co-existed for some time. Some were clearly more senior, some were extended in scope beyond the Foreign Office, some focused more on intelligence and some had an interest in issues beyond Communism. So, despite the fact that the Cold War at this period was at its height, the need for the Russia Committee diminished as other bodies came along that took its place.

In addition, then, to the Russia Committee, by 1952 there existed the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), the Information Research Department (IRD); the Permanent Under Secretary's Committee (PUSC); the Official Committee on Communism (Home) (AC(H)); the Official Committee on Communism (Overseas) (AC(O)); and the Overseas Planning Committee (OPC). The AC(H) and the AC(O) were both official Cabinet Committees.⁵⁷⁹

The JIC, when it was first set up in 1936, was a military planning committee under the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) which was the forerunner of the Cabinet Office⁵⁸⁰ and it was a sub-committee of the Chiefs of Staff. It later moved to the Cabinet Office, in the 1950s, where it remains. As its name suggests, it was, and is, essentially an intelligence gathering committee which straddles the various intelligence agencies as well as Departments including the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence.

⁵⁷⁹ Official Cabinet Committees being Cabinet Committees with membership of officials rather than ministers.

⁵⁸⁰ Seldon, Anthony. *The Cabinet Office 1916-2016*. Published Biteback Publishing, 2016. Chapter 1, Pages 14 and 15.

According to Goodman the JIC: “was born out of the anxieties over the military rise of Nazi Germany; it reached maturity in dealing with the very different concerns of the Cold War and the threat of nuclear annihilation”.⁵⁸¹

The JIC, which predated the Russia Committee, had some parallels with the latter. Both were Whitehall Committees with membership drawn from officials not politicians, both in essence were bureaucratic devices for gathering and disseminating information in their particular sphere of interest. For the JIC, this covered the whole panoply of intelligence. For the Russia Committee it covered all matters relating to Communism, including intelligence. The JIC’s remit in intelligence terms was therefore much wider than was ever that of the Russia Committee though the two were in close touch from through JIC attendance of Russia Committee meetings and circulation of papers. Another important difference between the two Whitehall Committees was that the JIC, although situated within the Cabinet Office, was by its very nature a cross-departmental body whereas, despite the Russia Committee allowing officials from other departments and agencies to attend their meetings and even to be co-opted as members, it was essentially a Committee under Foreign Office ownership and with the Foreign Office in the driving seat. Such a distinction ought, perhaps, not to have much significance but there can be tensions between different Departments of State and one way of dealing with them is to ensure all participants have an equal status and voice as would be true for members of inter-departmental policy committees like the JIC.

In January 1948 the Foreign Office’s Information Research Department (IRD), was set up following a proposal by Christopher Mayhew, then a junior Foreign Office Minister, to Bevin. Its forerunner, according to Goodman, was the Cultural Relations Department of the Foreign Office, and when it became the IRD it was intended to work: “alongside.....the Russia Committee; a group.....charged with political warfare

⁵⁸¹ Taken from the transcripts of a lecture given by Michael Goodman at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, on 18 January 2013.

activities that would ensure that JIC intelligence assessments were factored into policy advice”.⁵⁸²

The IRD was designed to operate as a very secret Foreign Office Department, reporting to the PUS, and charged with collecting information on Communism and disseminating material in order to counter Communist propaganda worldwide. It was, in effect, a propaganda committee, disseminating information to journalists and politicians who were sympathetic to the anti-Communist cause with, according to Maguire, initially an ostensibly foreign remit but this quickly extended into both foreign and domestic spheres such that: “IRD analysis of Soviet propaganda from 1948 consistently revealed its main target audiences to be trade unionists and labourers, in addition to students, left-wing socialists, and the armed forces”.⁵⁸³

IRD’s methods of operation were covert in that they were un-attributable and they dispersed their propaganda messages through what Maguire describes as “safe-private networks” but they were careful to ensure that their material was recognised to be truthful so as to maintain IRD’s reputation. The Soviets would have been well aware of the existence and work of the IRD not least because Guy Burgess, who subsequently defected to Russia, worked in IRD for a short time in 1948. For many years a shadowy, secret, organisation, the IRD was disbanded in 1977 and its papers first began to be released at TNA in late 2012 and in 2013 and more are sure to follow.

In early 1949 the Foreign Office’s Permanent Under-Secretary’s Committee (PUSC) was established. Lomas⁵⁸⁴ argues that the origins of this move stemmed from the tensions between the MOD’s Chiefs of Staff and Ministers and the Foreign Office officials and Ministers. In March 1949 the Minister of Defence⁵⁸⁵ wrote to Attlee: “..informing him of the growing disquiet among the military at the apparent inadequacies of Britain’s

⁵⁸² Goodman. *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee Volume I* . Chapter 8, Page 243.

⁵⁸³ Maguire, Thomas J. *Counter-subversion in early Cold War Britain: the Official Committee on Communism (Home), the IRD and ‘state-private networks*.

⁵⁸⁴ Lomas, Daniel W B. *Intelligence, Security and the Attlee Governments, 1945-51*. An uneasy relationship? Published Manchester University Press, 2017. Chapter 4, Page 128.

⁵⁸⁵ A V Alexander, then Minister of Defence.

organisation for conducting the cold war".⁵⁸⁶ In effect, this was a strong criticism of the Russia Committee and was another symptom of the rivalry between MOD and the FO on this issue. Alexander recommended to Attlee that: "something should be done to stiffen the present Russia Committee".⁵⁸⁷

He also attached a paper by Sir John Slessor⁵⁸⁸ which argued that the existing machinery for fighting the Cold War needed to be expanded so that it was in closer touch with the Chiefs of Staff and should be a higher-level body. He later wrote a note to Attlee in which he called for the setting up of a "Cold War Committee".⁵⁸⁹ Attlee must have seen some value in this proposal as he sent a copy of the paper to Bevin indicating that a staff conference should be held. But neither Bevin nor his top officials thought much of the idea and even the Cabinet Secretary, Norman Brook,⁵⁹⁰ had concerns, noting the many flaws in the arguments of the military and pithily saying that they: "had been misled by the term 'Cold War'" and believed "it was their business, when in fact it is foreign policy and not their business at all".⁵⁹¹ Nevertheless a review followed by the Foreign Office who then introduced a change whereby the Russia Committee continued to exist but at the same time the PUSC, a higher level body, was also set up because, according to Foreign Office historians, it: "had become apparent that the Russia Committee was the wrong body to consider 'long-term and general questions of foreign policy' arising from its collation of information about Communism from various sources, and to recommend counter-measures".⁵⁹²

So, the PUSC was to do the strategic thinking while the Russia Committee collected the data. This, surely, has to be seen as a diminishing of the Committee's status, despite

⁵⁸⁶TNA: PREM 8/1365. Alexander to Attlee, 7 March 1949.

⁵⁸⁷ Lomas. Chapter 4, Page 128.

⁵⁸⁸ Sir John Cotesworth Slessor a senior commander in the Royal Air Force and at the time of the paper he was the outgoing Commandant of the Imperial Defence College. Later, in early 1950s, became Chief of the Air Staff.

⁵⁸⁹TNA: PREM 8/1365. *The Cold War*. Note by the Commandant of the IDC dated 20 July 1949.

⁵⁹⁰ Norman Brook served as Cabinet Secretary from 1947 to 1962, succeeding Edward Bridges, who, in turn, succeeded Maurice Hankey in 1938, Hankey being the first person to hold this post. See Beesley, *The Official History of the Cabinet Secretaries*, Published by Routledge, 2017. Chapter 2 Page 693.

⁵⁹¹ Lomas. Chapter 4, Page 129, and referring to an undated minute from Brooke to Attlee in TNA: PREM 8/1365.

⁵⁹² Quote from TNA Press preview of 21 May 2013, relating to release of Foreign Office file FO 1093/576-582, which includes papers dated from 2/21949 to 11/8/1950.

their being allowed to continue to exist and being: “entitled to recommend immediate counter-measures against communism”.⁵⁹³

This begs the question as to what it was that the PUSC brought to the table that could not have been brought by the Russia Committee. The obvious difference was that the interests of the PUSC were wider than those of the Russia Committee which was only concerned with the threat of Communism. There was another difference according to a current PUSD expert⁵⁹⁴ and that is that PUSC reflected the historical role of the Foreign Secretary as a point of liaison between the Foreign Office and the British secret intelligence apparatus.⁵⁹⁵ The intelligence organizations at the time operated under a security blanket and were not avowed until the 1990s. And the Foreign Office was then, as it is now, the Department whose Secretary of State had responsibility for the SIS, the secrecy surrounding which even extended to the budget for paying for this organisation. But for all its, what might be described as, greater glamour than the Russia Committee, the PUSC was nothing more or less – as was the Russia Committee – than an administrative body that existed solely as a Foreign Office entity to provide information to those who were responsible for agreeing policy decisions, namely the elected Ministers.

To add to the number of Communist ‘watching’ government committees, later in 1949 it was decided to set up an inter-departmental official Cabinet Committee⁵⁹⁶ to keep the Communist threat under review – not just by monitoring what was happening abroad but also within the UK, and to make proposals for dealing with it. The Committee was called the Anti-Communism – or “C.” Committee. The fact that it was chaired by a senior Foreign Office official – the first Chairman being Gladwyn Jebb, the then Deputy Under Secretary of State (Political Affairs) who was also at the time the Chairman of the Russia Committee – is a further indication that the Foreign Office was seen as the lead department in dealing with policy issues relating to combating

⁵⁹³ TNA: FO 0/1/57 (also in JIC 165/57).

⁵⁹⁴ Private information.

⁵⁹⁵ Bennett, Gill. FCO Historians History Note. *From World War to Cold War: Records of the Foreign Office Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, 1939-51.*

⁵⁹⁶ Official Cabinet Committees are made up of senior officials from relevant government departments whose membership would keep their Ministers informed and such Committees will often, though not always, be mirrored by Ministerial Cabinet Committees.

Communism. The Membership of C Committee was drawn from officials in the Foreign Office, the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Joint Intelligence Bureau (JIB), the Colonial Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Secret Intelligence Service. It is clear, therefore, given the similar membership, that there must have been cross-over between this Committee and the Russia Committee. The purpose of this new body was to: “stimulate and co-ordinate...all anti-Communist activities (including those related to information) overseas”.⁵⁹⁷ Lomas describes this body as having superseded the Russia Committee which, “while continuing to meet regularly, was restricted to reviewing and forecasting Soviet Policy”.⁵⁹⁸ From May to November 1949 the new Committee was busy drawing up proposals for a more coordinated policy and: “machinery for action, offensive and defensive, against the Soviet and Communist menace in all spheres (political, military, economic, and social) at home and abroad”.⁵⁹⁹

This Committee was subsequently split into two:⁶⁰⁰ The Official Committee on Communism (Home) (AC(H)) and the Official Committee on Communism (Overseas) (AC(O)). These were highly influential bodies – not confined to ‘ownership’ by the Foreign Office. Not only did they, like the Russia Committee and other Foreign Office committees, include representatives from other central Whitehall Departments and the intelligence agencies and the military, but also, as they were official Cabinet Committees, this brought their influence into a different and wider sphere. The inclusion on the membership of all of these ‘Soviet watching’ Committees of individuals representing the UK Intelligence services was significant not least because, according to the JIC, the intelligence agencies had firmly concluded as early as June 1946 that the Soviet Union should be ‘the first charge on our intelligence resources’.⁶⁰¹ The AC(O) Committee was subsequently disbanded in 1956 but the AC(H) Committee

⁵⁹⁷ TNA: CAB 134/3 AC(O) (49) 1. Official Committee on Communism (Overseas) Composition and Terms of Reference, 31 December 1949.

⁵⁹⁸ Lomas. Chapter 4, Page 132.

⁵⁹⁹ TNA: CAB 21/2504: C (49)1. Composition and Terms of References, dated 24 May 1949, by Cabinet Secretary, Norman Brook.

⁶⁰⁰ Maguire, Thomas J. Counter-subversion in early Cold War Britain: the Official Committee on Communism (Home), the IRD and ‘state private networks’. This article cites the date for the formation of AC(H) as ‘mid-1951’ (on page 18). The Committee held its first meeting, under the Cabinet Secretary’s Chairmanship, on 15 June 1951

⁶⁰¹ TNA: JIC(46)57(O) Revise: TNA, CAB 81/133.

continued for another six years and was disbanded in 1962. There was also a Ministerial Cabinet Committee mirroring the Official Committees ⁶⁰² which existed from 1949 to 1951 but from the scarcity of its papers it met infrequently.

In 1957 the Foreign Office was tasked with establishing the Overseas Planning Committee (OPC) whose membership was again drawn from across Whitehall, and included the military and the intelligence agencies. Hennessy says that this initiative arose after the 1955 Geneva Conference “when it became plain that the Russians were about to indulge in competitive coexistence”.⁶⁰³ This was supported by a lower-level official body called the Political Intelligence Group, again with inter-departmental representation. The terms of reference of the OPC required the Committee to attempt to forecast: “Communist and extreme nationalist subversive aims in any part of the world and to recommend counter-measures.” ⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰² TNA symbol for the Ministerial Committee was AC(M).

⁶⁰³ Hennessy, Peter. *Having it So Good: Britain in the 1950s*. Published Allen Lane Penguin Books, 2006. [Page 308](#)

⁶⁰⁴ TNA: FO 0/1/57 (also in TNA: JIC 165/57) .

The End of the Russia Committee

There had been, as described in earlier chapters, several attempts over the years from 1949 onwards to re-organise the Russia Committee to make it more effective.

Perhaps the most far reaching was that of March 1952 when Pierson Dixon was about to relinquish the Chairmanship of the Committee. He reported to William Strang, the then PUS: "I have for some time felt increasing doubts about the usefulness of the discussions in the Russia Committee and the papers produced by it.....I held a small meeting recently with senior members of the Committee to consider means of adapting the Committee's work to present circumstances...Briefly, we recommend that there should be a smaller and more high-powered committee with meetings monthly instead of fortnightly....The "Crystal Gazer" has, I think you will agree, become a rather pedestrian and uninspired production, and, if the Committee is to fulfill its function as an interpreter of Soviet policy, we clearly need a more thoughtful document....". On the same date William Strang added a manuscript note saying: "I agree. Let us try this".⁶⁰⁵

Even given William Strang's immediate approval of the proposals they were not put into effect until the end of 1952 by which time Frank Roberts had become Chairman, but it is clear that the writing for the Russia Committee was on the wall. Although it continued in existence until 1957, it was not the force it had been for the early Cold War years from 1946 through to 1952. The Foreign Office had won its way in the early years by seizing the initiative to take control of the information gathering and disseminating of all foreign policy issues relating to Communism. But its membership, terms of reference and outputs had been subject to change as other more senior far-reaching government committees were set up.

It might be argued that, as a body, the most useful and potentially influential time for the Russia Committee had coincided with the two Attlee governments and, in particular, with the period up to the resignation of Bevin who had been Foreign Secretary from just before the Committee's inception until March 1951.

⁶⁰⁵ TNA: FO 371/ZP12/2/G. Minute dated 17 March 1952 to Sir William Strang (PUS) from Pierson Dixon

By the end of 1957 the Foreign Office was again reviewing the committee structure of its anti-communism bodies and, recognising that there was overlap between the OPC and the Russia Committee, consideration was then given to merging the two.⁶⁰⁶ The apparatus for combating the Communist threat was therefore turning full circle, following an active and productive decade in which the Foreign Office had managed to persuade the politicians of the importance of their work. The Russia Committee was finally disbanded in 1957.

⁶⁰⁶ TNA: FO 371/128994: NS1022/16. Papers discussing the Dissolution of the Russia Committee. Various papers dating from August through to December 1957

Chapter 9 Conclusion - The Russia Committee in historical perspective

This conclusion seeks to draw together the threads of the foregoing chapters and to try to place the Russia Committee in historical perspective. It attempts to assess the Committee's achievements in terms of influencing the British Government in forming its foreign policy decisions in the light of the perceived emerging threat of the spread of Soviet Communism in the early years of the Cold War.

One of the motivations for researching the Russia Committee flowed from the desire to establish why the Foreign Office saw the need to set up the Russia Committee and this led to a need to examine the political landscape at the end of the Second World War and the way the sands were shifting in the relationships between the former three big war time allies. The seeds were there by 1945, as illustrated in Chapter 2, and the officials who were expert Soviet watchers in the US and in Britain were becoming concerned that their political masters needed to be alerted to what was happening and to take action against it. Towards the end of the War, with Anthony Eden as Foreign Secretary, the British government were aware of the warning signs that the relationship with the Soviets might have some serious challenges ahead, for example with their demands to receive punitive reparations from Germany, to unpick agreements reached at Yalta and at Potsdam. The views of Anthony Eden and his officials were closely aligned and he was well regarded – see, for example, his relationship with Pierson Dixon⁶⁰⁷ - and some key officials were already voicing concerns about Soviet expansionism. The Stock Taking After VE Day Memorandum was commissioned by Anthony Eden before the General Election in October 1945⁶⁰⁸ and it was this, together with the Long Telegrams of Kennan and Roberts⁶⁰⁹ in early 1946 that, several contemporary historians⁶¹⁰ have asserted, prompted the setting up of the Russia Committee, by the newly promoted PUS of the Foreign Office, Orme Sargent. As is clear from his 'Stock Taking' Memorandum, he had a thorough

⁶⁰⁷ Dixon. Chapters 4, 8 and 15.

⁶⁰⁸ See Thesis Chapter 2

⁶⁰⁹ See Thesis Chapter 4.

⁶¹⁰ Richard Aldrich, Greening and Bennett have all expressed this view as shown in Thesis Chapter 3.

knowledge of what was happening in the Soviet Union born of many years diplomatic experience. And while some thought him “too old for the post”⁶¹¹ he was the most senior diplomat in the Foreign Office and was well up to the job. His knowledge and experience had convinced him of the need to gather as much information as possible about Soviet intentions so that the Foreign Office could optimize its ability to advise Ministers of what was happening.

As noted in earlier chapters, it has been claimed that Bevin was, for some time after becoming Foreign Secretary, reluctant to be convinced of the need to take actions against the Soviets. But this thesis takes the view that, shrewd man that he was, and on all fours with Eden over foreign policy as he was, Bevin was acting pragmatically with an eye on both the need to keep at bay his Labour party critics and the need to try to maintain working relations with his Soviet counterparts. He may not have been prepared to go public with his concerns until after the abortive November 1949 Foreign Ministers conference but that does not mean that he did not agree with his advisers. Indeed, as has been shown, Bevin was his own man, ready to listen carefully and weigh up information before making decisions to which he tended to stick. But that does not mean that he was not influenced by his Foreign Office advisers. It is clear that Bevin shared many of their views. He shared their aversion to Communism. He also shared their views on the wish for Britain to remain a world power as was evidenced, for example, by his arguments in Cabinet that Britain needed to develop its own nuclear capability, despite the cost of so doing to a Britain in a parlous economic position. His core views were reflected in the attitudes of his Foreign Office officials and this is one reason why they were able to influence him because, in a sense, they were not struggling to persuade him into decisions but were pushing at an open door. Indeed, it is perhaps unlikely that he would have thought so highly of his Foreign Office advisers if he had been seriously at odds with them over their views about the threats posed by the Soviets.

Research for the early chapters of this thesis, therefore, established why there was a real need to set up a body that was equipped to gather accurate information from

⁶¹¹ Richardson, Adam. *The Berlin Embassy, The Foreign Office and German Aims 1945-1949*, Chapter 6,

experts in the field and experts in Whitehall in order to assess what the information meant in terms of likely actions by the Soviets and to advise Ministers accordingly. The international situation in the years following the Second World War was a fluid and developing one. No-one had a clear idea of what was going to happen. In such a changing dynamic situation all that could be done was to make judgements, based on the best information available, as to the likely future turn of events.

By far the most difficult aspect of the research for the thesis was to try to establish what the Russia Committee could be said to have uniquely contributed, which has not hitherto been explored and written about. The starting point for this was to look afresh at what it was *aiming* to achieve. The aims were formally set out in the Committee's terms of reference which, though subject to some changes following the several reviews to which the Committee was subject, were to remain substantially unchanged during its life span, namely: "To review ...all aspects of soviet policy and propaganda and soviet activities throughout the world, more particularly with reference to the soviet campaign against this country....to consider what action is required as a result of the Committee's reviewand to ensure that the necessary recommendations as to policy are made either by the departments of the office concerned or by the Committee to Sir Orme Sargent....".⁶¹²

This central aim of the Committee was achieved as is shown by the vast number of reports, 'Crystal Gazers' and bespoke advice on specific subjects, provided to Ministers over the life span of the Committee. Although the wording of the terms of reference is quite precise and clear it does not actually say what must clearly have been another central aim of any high level official committee of this kind, that is not just the collection of as much valuable information about Soviet intentions as possible from expert sources, but the use to which it is put. The purpose of such information gathering must have been to enable the Foreign Office experts to analyse the information and to try to predict what positions/actions the Soviets were likely to take in any given set of circumstances and to advise Ministers so that the latter could make informed decisions on the way forward. This is not an unimportant point. It is central

⁶¹² TNA: FO 371/56885/ N5170/38. 12 April 1946. Russia Committee Terms of Reference.

to any understanding of the workings of the British civil and diplomatic services that they exist to serve their political masters. As Bennett has said: “government policy is made by government ministers, not by officials...”.⁶¹³ Officials, special advisers and others may have influence on the decisions of their Ministers and, indeed, may be failing in their duty if they do not, but the decisions are made by the Ministers who are publicly accountable for them.

In addition to looking at whether the Russia Committee fulfilled the remit from its terms of reference this thesis also looked at what others perceived the purpose of the Committee to be. For example, as outlined in Chapter 4, Richard Aldrich saw the setting up of the Committee as a move by the Foreign Office to take control of a key foreign policy issue by creating their own “coordinating centre”⁶¹⁴ rather than being a participant in a similar body controlled by the Cabinet Office or even the Chiefs of Staff. This thought is echoed by Richardson who personalized this into: “Sargent did not like other governmental bodies interfering in foreign policy. For him this was the sole work of the Foreign Office and he endeavored for the office to have control”.⁶¹⁵

Orme Sargent proved successful in putting the Foreign Office in control of foreign policy and, importantly, in gaining Bevin’s support.⁶¹⁶ Aldrich also saw the retirement in early 1946 of the long-serving PUS at the Foreign Office, Alexander Cadogan, as offering a timely opportunity for the Foreign Office to introduce an organisation of the nature of the Russia Committee. He believed that Cadogan had an aversion to ‘planning’ but that his successor, Orme Sargent, who had a different mind-set, felt that it would be valuable to have a joint planning committee like the Russia Committee because he believed it to be: “imperative to get organized since the military were now the Foreign Office’s rivals for control of Britain’s Cold War”.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹³ Bennett, Gill. *Six Moments of Crisis: Inside British Foreign Policy*. Published Oxford University Press, 2013. Page 4

⁶¹⁴ Aldrich. *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and the Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Chapter 5, Page 128.

⁶¹⁵ Richardson. Chapter 6,

⁶¹⁶ TNA: FO 371/64246/c6552/53/18. Minutes dated 6 January 1947 and 10 January 1947 entitled Notes for the Secretary of State.

⁶¹⁷ Aldrich. *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and the Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Chapter 5, Page 128.

One view as to the purpose of the Russia Committee, therefore, was to ensure that the Foreign Office was firmly in the driving seat of forming foreign policy. Given the previously mentioned tensions between the Foreign Office and the MOD, this seems likely to be true. Ulricke Thieme saw that another purpose of having such a Committee was to ensure “effective diplomacy”⁶¹⁸ by being able to anticipate Soviet actions through being as knowledgeable as possible about what was going on through the collection of information from the experts.

So, the reasons for setting up the Russia Committee and its aims could be said to include: providing a much needed information gathering, coordinating and planning body which had ready access to the necessary expertise; keeping Ministers up to date on developments; using expertise to analyse the information gathered in order to form views on the actions likely to be taken by the Soviets; and advising Ministers on what could and should be done as a result. There was also a narrower, even parochial, reason which was around enabling the Foreign Office to regain the initiative and maintain its position as the primary mover in enabling the determination and driving forward of the formation British foreign policy. The reasons for setting up the Russia Committee seem obvious enough but how successful it was in delivering those aims is a separate issue.

Clearly the Russia Committee achieved its aim of gathering information from experts which they did on a regular basis over a period of twelve years, justifying Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick’s assertion that the: “ Foreign Office was the first department of State to go in for information in a big way”.⁶¹⁹ With the hundreds of papers, many of them very detailed, produced by and/or discussed by the Russia Committee members over its twelve years existence, it certainly gathered a vast amount of information and it took the information from experts in the subject, often from key players in relevant Embassies. It succeeded, therefore, in delivering one of its main aims, to collect and disseminate information on Soviet Communist expansionism in a coordinated and

⁶¹⁸ Thieme. Pages 84 to 88.

⁶¹⁹ Kirkpatrick. Chapter 10, Page201.

thorough way, rather than in a piecemeal fashion had this been left to individual Foreign Office departments. In so doing it also served to highlight and publicise the issues involved as there was one central body, which involved many of the Foreign Office departments and several other government departments and agencies and was able to take a broad look, from a senior influential level, at all aspects of the subject.

It is also demonstrably true that the Russia Committee achieved its aim of keeping Ministers up to date on developments and providing advice to them as required. There are examples outlined in earlier chapters of Bevin or Attlee seeking papers on specific issues but perhaps the most obvious proof of the Committee advising Ministers was the regular production and dissemination of the 'Crystal Gazers' which, as has been shown, were produced for a very illustrious set of recipients including the King, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. Although these were changed in format and coverage as circumstances dictated, the 'Crystal Gazers' were a regular feature for several years. They had to have been regarded as worth producing, not least because the recipients were individuals whose time should not be wasted on wading regularly through unnecessary information. That these outputs from the Committee were influential seems highly probable but what cannot be measured is the extent of such influence.

One claim for the Russia Committee, that it put the Foreign Office in the lead on Soviet watching, is perhaps more easily verified. For a time, at least, the Committee was the lead body in coordinating policy advice on Soviet Communism and, given that it included individuals from the JIC, the Chiefs of Staff, the Colonial Office and the Dominions Office, it was acting in the mode of an inter-departmental Committee while still being 'owned' by the Foreign Office. As illustrated in Chapter 8, from early 1952 the Russia Committee began to decline in importance not just as a result of the setting up of the Foreign Office's IRD and the PUSD but also by the other more senior official Cabinet committees that were to come into existence from 1951 onwards. Nevertheless, for a time the aim of putting the Foreign Office in the driving seat was accomplished. In some ways what is surprising about the whole Foreign Office/MOD tensions is why they existed at all since it seems self-evident that the Foreign Office

should lead on foreign affairs, which were at the core of the issues under consideration by the Russia Committee, while the MOD were clearly left to major on military issues.

So what did the Russia Committee, for so long a virtually unknown Whitehall organization, achieve and what contribution did it make to the development of the foreign policy of containment of Soviet expansionism? Undoubtedly the Committee was in a strong position, with the Foreign Office Embassies and Consuls placed all around the globe, to act as a rich information gathering body and it clearly did that. HM's Ambassadors in key embassies were often able to have personal and influential dealings with the political leaders of the countries in which they were based – for example, Tito and Stalin, as has been shown, had personal dealings with senior British Ambassadors, who they clearly regarded as being of sufficient importance to warrant their personal attention. But did any of this contribute to the formation of foreign policy or even help to adjust the shaping of that policy? This is very difficult to assess in the absence of specific claims by policy makers of the day that they had found the Committee's output to be useful in their determination of policy decisions. But with so many high-level diplomats being involved with the Committee it surely had to have had some impact. Hardly a ringing endorsement of its importance, perhaps, but at least some recognition of its worth. And it could be argued that the fact that politicians followed a considered path in their relations with the Soviets must have in part been on the advice and information they received from their officials including those on the Committee.

As previously observed there are relatively few references to the Russia Committee in the papers, diaries and memoirs of those who were central players in the organization and still less in such secondary sources to illustrate what Bevin thought of the Committee. One important exception is from the memoirs of Gladwyn Jebb in which he says:

Towards the end of 1948 I presided over a body known as the 'Russia Committee'. This grew up quite naturally in order to coordinate policy in the light of that new phenomenon, the Cold War. One of its functions was to make appreciations of what we believed the Soviet Government was up to and how and how far we ought to disregard, or alternatively pay attention, to their frequent dire threats. The idea was that all the political Under-Secretaries –

and notably Frank Roberts – who had more to do with our Russian policy than anybody else – should meet every so often and discuss what I suppose would now be called ‘position papers’... and I believe the experience was an undoubted success....Later this body was taken over by the Permanent Under-Secretary himself and became, in effect, a planning machine.....Bevin himself welcomed the committee and took much interest in it but I believe that when Eden returned to the office in 1951 (sic)⁶²⁰ it rather faded out.....I believe the Russia Committee did fulfill a useful function. Certainly it conditioned our whole policy for ‘containing’ Soviet expansion during a very critical time.⁶²¹

There are several strands from the Jebb quote that bear scrutiny. First, it should be remembered that when Orme Sargent penned his ‘Stock Taking’ Memorandum and then sought comments on his paper from his colleagues, Jebb had submitted comments which Sargent characteristically had chosen not to reflect in the amended version.⁶²² Since the Memorandum was one of the key pieces in the jigsaw leading up to Sargent’s setting up of the Russia Committee, this chain of events establishes Jebb as someone who was involved in the Committee from its earliest days until, as he claimed, “it rather faded out”⁶²³ on Eden’s return as Foreign Secretary in Winston Churchill’s Administration from 1952. He was also Chairman of the Russia Committee from late 1948 through to 1951 and was specifically appointed by Sargent because the latter perceived the need for the Committee to be both better focused and to both include other organizations⁶²⁴ and maintain the seniority of its membership.

Secondly, Jebb’s comments about the working together of the ‘Under-Secretaries’ is interesting as an insight into the relationships between the senior people in the Foreign Office. Since the people he describes were not elected politicians but senior officials, it might be tempting to regard their “Great efforts... to arrive at a common ‘official’ view”⁶²⁵ as unimportant politically, or even irrelevant. But this would be to misunderstand the influence of such individuals. Ministers decide, and rightly, as they are generally drawn from a body of people elected by the public.⁶²⁶ But Ministers

⁶²⁰ In fact Anthony Eden did not return to the Foreign Office as Foreign Secretary until 1952 when the general election returned the Conservative party to power.

⁶²¹ Gladwyn. Chapter 13, Pages 226-227.

⁶²² See Thesis Chapter 2.

⁶²³ Gladwin. Chapter 13, Pages 226-227.

⁶²⁴ To include the Ministry of Defence representatives; the Colonial Office; on occasion the JIC; and the CRO.

⁶²⁵ Gladwyn. Chapter 13, Pages 226-227.

⁶²⁶ The exception being those appointed from the House of Lords.

decide on policy often on the basis of what Jebb called 'position papers' which will have been prepared for them by officials and which will have, in those times⁶²⁷ provided Ministers with all that they needed to form their own views on the subject. It is inconceivable that such a body of very senior diplomats who were experts in their fields would not have had an influence on the thinking of the political masters whom they advised, and therefore on policy itself.

Thirdly, Jebb's observation that the Russia Committee faded out in 1951 when Eden returned as Foreign Secretary perhaps could imply – as the comment followed on from saying that Bevin 'took much interest in it' ⁶²⁸ - that Eden did not have regard for the work of the organization. Indeed, Jebb says: "All Secretaries of State have their own ways of running things and there is no doubt that Eden's knowledge of the techniques of diplomacy was superior to Bevin's, so he may have found a 'planning' body ...to be a hindrance rather than a help....Much depends on personalities and the essential thing, if possible, is to have a highly knowledgeable and practical Permanent Under Secretary working with an imaginative minister. In such ideal circumstances there is probably no need of 'planning' as such. ⁶²⁹ This does not necessarily imply that Eden had no regard for the Committee but, if Jebb's assessment has validity, rather that it was no longer needed as a planning body. It must, however, still have had some value or it would not have continued to exist for a further six years, although it has to be acknowledged that its importance was diminished after the setting up, in 1951, of a government review of British information activities which resulted in the IRD of the Foreign Office taking a closer role, under the eye of the relatively newly established PUSC. Indeed, this is confirmed in government papers, released at TNA in May 2013⁶³⁰ which included reference to the fact that the PUSC was established in 1949 when it became apparent

⁶²⁷ Before the advent of computers and, more importantly, e-mails, policy advice from senior civil servants to Ministers would have been presented in comprehensive written papers setting out all the pros and cons and weighting the options relating to a particular policy issue – ready for the Minister to see clearly the whole picture before taking a position (in the case of a matter for decision at Cabinet level) or a decision (on a departmental matter). The advent of e-mails and the increasing pressure on time has tended to lead to a more fragmented, piecemeal approach to policy advice. This matters less in the short-term as all the pieces of the jigsaw are reasonably readily available, but for future historians/researchers the piecing together of the evidence will be much more challenging.

⁶²⁸ Gladwyn. Chapter 13, Pages 226-227.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

⁶³⁰ TNA: FO 1093/576-582. Minutes of meetings of Permanent Under-Secretary's Committee from 1949-1950.

that the Russia Committee was the wrong body to consider “long-term and general questions of foreign policy”⁶³¹ arising from the Committee’s collection of information from various sources about communist expansionism.

Fourthly, and perhaps most tellingly in the context of this thesis, is Jebb’s assertion that the Russia Committee “Certainly.. conditioned our whole policy for ‘containing’ Soviet expansion during a very critical time”.⁶³² It might be said that as a key official intimately involved in the work of the Committee he might be thought to have been exaggerating their influence but nevertheless it is a very big claim from someone who was an expert on this field and should not be ignored.

Another, somewhat, curious secondary reference to the Russia Committee is found in a book by Victor Rothwell where he accords the Committee, wrongly, the status of a Cabinet Committee. He is describing the Cabinet’s decision on 14 May 1946 to provide aid to Germany on political and humanitarian grounds in part to try to avoid the danger of Germany falling completely under Russian influence, and he states that: “The final stamp of approval was given to Bevin’s policy by the Russia Committee of the Cabinet on 14 May”.⁶³³ Clearly, since the Committee was never part of the machinery of Cabinet, this is a mistake on Rothwell’s part but given the date of the book, which pre-dates any release of information on the Russia Committee, it may be a result of a faulty memory – to which one must assume such personal accounts can be subject - that could not have been verified at the time. It is perhaps useful if only through the recognition of the close link between Bevin and the advice of the Committee.

Two other references to the Russia Committee in academic works are found in: the Official History of the JIC,⁶³⁴ and in *The Hidden Hand*,⁶³⁵ both of which are rooted firmly in the sphere of Intelligence gathering and both of which provide some indications that the product of the Committee was valued. In his official history of the

⁶³¹ TNA: FO 1093/583-88

⁶³² TNA: FO 1093/583-88

⁶³³ Rothwell. Chapter 6. Page 321.

⁶³⁴ Goodman. *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee, Volume I*. Chapter 8, Page 242.

⁶³⁵ Aldrich, Richard. *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Published John Murray, 2001. Chapter 5, Pages 122 to 130 to 141.

Joint Intelligence Committee, Goodman describes the Russia Committee in 1948 as being the existing machinery in the Foreign Office for coordinating action against Soviet expansionism and notes that this Committee: “would ensure that JIC intelligence assessments were factored into policy advice”.⁶³⁶ This assessment is likely to be true since the JIC were represented at most Russia Committee meetings and JIC assessments/papers regularly featured in their discussions. In the *Hidden Hand*, Aldrich, too, draws a close link between the JIC and the Russia Committee. Referring back again to the foreign policy turf war, he says that: “..the creation of the Russia Committee was also a symptom of the continuing Cold War within Whitehall. During bitter arguments about future Soviet intentions, diplomats had used the JIC as a brake on the work of the military planners. But diplomatic control over the JIC could not be guaranteed. Creating the Russia Committee provided a key coordinating centre that was controlled by diplomats...This explains its strange remit, which included the work of high-level intelligence appreciation”.⁶³⁷

This thesis claims to add to previous knowledge in one major respect and in several more marginal respects. Firstly, the major respect. The research for this thesis has involved a closer and more thorough examination of the output of the Russia Committee than any other previous academic work. It has covered the whole of its twelve-year existence, although the thorough cataloguing of minutes and some papers concentrates on its first six years. This in-depth, extensive, research was greatly facilitated by the Head of Histories in the Foreign Office⁶³⁸ who had encouraged the study and provided unprecedented access to his own collection of papers.

More marginal claims to adding something new to existing knowledge include a closer look at some of the diplomats who were involved with the work of the Russia Committee and on their relationships with their political masters, notably Ernest Bevin. Another, perhaps even more marginal claim is, in some small way, to have thrown a little new light of the workings of Whitehall as seen from an insider’s point of view.

⁶³⁶ Goodman. *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee Volume 1* . Page 243.

⁶³⁷ Aldrich, Richard. *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence*. Published John Murray, 2001. Chapter 5, Page 128.

⁶³⁸ Professor Patrick Salmon, formerly of Newcastle University.

Clearly then the research benefitted from access to vast primary material in the form of official government archives. However, one of the more difficult challenges in researching and writing this thesis has been the sparsity of secondary material on the work of the Russia Committee which, of itself, underlines the lack of verifiable evidence of the impact that the Committee had on policy formation. Nor is there much of substance in the personal archives examined for this thesis and in the diaries and biographies of key players, though good use has been made of such material. It remains the case, therefore, that there is little material available from studies of the subject by historians so that their interpretations of the contribution of this Committee to the understanding of the issues and the formation of policy, are largely non-existent.

So, what if anything can be said, that is evidence based, about the impact of the work of the Russia Committee on the thinking of those Ministers responsible for taking foreign policy decisions in relation to the Communist threat as perceived by the various administrations in the early Cold War years? Surely any organization which exists for twelve years, and survives the changes wrought by three different governments during this period, and whose membership is drawn from the great and the good of the diplomatic corpus, had to have been seen to be useful and worth continuing. Even if the Committee had been deemed no longer suitable as a force for containment by the mid-1950s, it was nevertheless at the earliest part of the Cold War the only information gathering body working in the field. Moreover, the work it had been doing had, by definition, to have been considered worthwhile or it would not have been necessary for other similar bodies to have been set up. The PUSC, the IRD, the AC(H) the AC(O) were all, in some sense, successors to the Russia Committee. So, while circumstantial evidence may be all that exists to determine the importance of the Committee's work, it cannot reasonably be dismissed.

Much of the period covered by the thesis was dominated by the two Labour Administrations under Clement Attlee and, in particular the first one which lasted a full term and which was not hampered – as was the second Administration – by having a very weakened majority in the House of Commons. The first Labour government is

commonly recognized as a 'reforming' government. For most chroniclers of this time the achievements of the reforming government would relate to the domestic policy changes which were introduced, most notably the Welfare State. The early Cold War years were arguably equally important for the achievements of the Labour government and, in particular of Attlee and Bevin working so closely on the international scene. As Bennett has written: "As Foreign Secretary since 1945 he had not only dominated British policy but had been the major player in the development of Western security policy and institutions".⁶³⁹ He, it was, who was the driving force behind the Marshall Plan, the setting up of the United Nations, the setting up of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Bennett goes on to say that Bevin's "workload and pressure were prodigious" and he was not someone to do things by halves. Roderick Barclay, who became Bevin's Private Secretary in March 1949 records that: "he was told by the Foreign Office, by Buckingham Palace, and by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that his first duty was to keep the Foreign Secretary from working himself to death".⁶⁴⁰ Clearly, Barclay was not successful in preventing Bevin from doing just that.

For virtually the whole of the most productive time of the Russia Committee's existence Bevin was the Foreign Office's political master and well aware from the very outset of the Committee's work which he clearly valued. Once Bevin was no longer around, the Russia Committee declined in importance. It is because of the centrality of Bevin and his cadre of top diplomats to the story of the Russia Committee, and the close regard that existed between them, that this thesis argues that the Committee has to be seen as having influence, albeit unquantifiable and unverifiable, in the forming of Bevin's foreign policy towards the Soviet Union from his early days as Foreign Secretary until his departure in 1951.

To conclude, there is clear circumstantial evidence that the formation of foreign policy towards the Soviets in the early years of the Cold War would have been guided by the wealth of information assiduously collected and analysed by the Russia Committee and provided to Bevin and other Ministers. There is proof that their advice was seen by,

⁶³⁹ Bennett, Gill. *Six Moments of Crisis*. Chapter 1, Page 17.

⁶⁴⁰ Barclay. Page 30.

and read by, the great and the good. It seems inconceivable that such advice would not have constituted a significant element in the factors that influenced the policy makers. As Bennett has said, the Russia Committee played a major part: “in determining how to deal with the emerging circumstances and tensions from the end of the war”.⁶⁴¹ Beyond that, it is not possible to identify previously unknown specific outcomes flowing directly from the work of the Committee.

Returning to the epistemological discussions outlined in Chapters 1 and 7, historical fact, even assuming that such a concept has validity, is not what this thesis has been about. Nor has it been about providing proof of consequences. Rather it has been about forming conclusions of likely results on the basis of information available. It is not possible, for example, to determine exactly when Bevin reached the view that the Soviets needed to be firmly countered. Had he, as argued here, from very early on, had serious doubts about the West’s future relations with the Soviets? Had he held back from publicly voicing his views until much later because it was necessary to avoid alienating the pro-Soviet backbench MPs in the Labour Party, as well as some of his Cabinet colleagues? Or, had he started off with a genuine belief that the Soviets could be brought to agreement, for example on the future of Germany, but been persuaded out of that view by the eloquent arguments of his Foreign Office advisers? Did he, in short, like Christopher Warner, have a change of heart? The answer to these questions is that we simply cannot tell.

The Russia Committee, so long a secret outside of Whitehall, was the first committee after the Second World War to examine Britain’s developing, and changing, relationship with the Soviets. This was a new situation. Nobody knew how things were going to develop, nor what would be required to meet the new challenges. In its time the Russia Committee was a vital piece in the jigsaw of intelligence provision to the British government on Soviet Communist expansionism, and for a time was the only body collecting and analysing all aspects of Soviet activities. It helped to determine how to deal with the emerging circumstances and tensions and inevitably

⁶⁴¹ From an interview with Gill Bennett on 17 January 2018

influenced the decisions taken by Ministers. The inability to prove the extent of that influence does not negate the case for such influence to have occurred.

So, finally, what did the Russia Committee actually contribute to the Foreign Office and the British government's knowledge and view of Russia and what was unique about it? It contributed a huge amount. The Committee, being a Foreign Office body, was uniquely well placed to be the first and the most comprehensive information collection agency on all that was newly occurring in Soviet foreign policy changes. It enabled the Foreign Office, as Aldrich has said,⁶⁴² to create their own "co-ordinating centre" rather than just being a participant in an inter-departmental body. It did not just gather important information from a wide base of expert contributors, it used its experts to analyse the data and prepare policy advice papers for Ministers. As we know from Cabinet papers and from Bevin's statements in Debates in the House of Commons the Russia Committee was influential in the decisions that Ministers made. It was the first such body working in the area of Soviet watching at a time when politicians were facing new and swiftly changing circumstances. As Jebb claimed,⁶⁴³ and which does not seem to be too high a claim, it "conditioned our whole policy for 'containing' Soviet expansionism during a critical time".

⁶⁴² See page 195.

⁶⁴³ See page 192

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APPENDIX 1 Russia Committee Minutes and Key Papers

List of, and summary of, Russia Committee Minutes and Key Papers From 1945 (Before the Committee was set up in March 1946) through to 1952.

- 11 July 1945** **FO 371/50912.** Minute from Sir Orme Sargent to his then boss as PUS Sir Alexander Cadogan, reporting that the Secretary of State – then Anthony Eden – had commissioned him to write a ‘Stock Taking’ Memorandum on the general political situation at the end of the European War. Also attached, as was Cadogan’s commendation of the Memo to Eden and Eden’s manuscript note saying that the Memo and Annexes were all valuable and that he wanted the PM and the Cabinet to see them.
- 11 July 1945** **FO 371/50912.** A copy of what Sargent described as his ‘hurried’ attempt at the Stock Taking Memo. 4 single spaced typed pages, 16 paragraphs. The final paragraph sums up the contents of the Memo and reads as follows:
- (a) We must base our foreign policy on the principle of co-operation between the three World Powers. In order to strengthen our position in this combination we ought to enrol France and the lesser Western European Powers and also the Dominions, as collaborators with us in this tripartite system.
 - (b) We must not be afraid of having a policy independent of our two great partners and not submit to a line of action dictated to us by either Russia or the United States, just because of their superior power or because it is the line of least resistance, or because we despair of being able to maintain ourselves without United States support in Europe.
 - (c) Our policy, in order not to be at the mercy of internal politics or popular fashion, must be in keeping with British fundamental traditions and must be based on principles which will appeal to the United States, to the Dominions and to the smaller countries of Europe, especially in the West. It must be definitely anti- totalitarian, and for this purpose be opposed to totalitarianism of the Right (Fascism, & c.) as much as to the totalitarianism of the Left (Communism & c.). In pursuance of the policy of “liberalism” we shall have to take risks, and even live beyond our political means at times. We must not, for instance, hesitate to intervene diplomatically in the internal affairs of other countries if they are in danger of losing their liberal institutions or their political independence. In the immediate future we must take the offensive in challenging

Communist penetration in as many of the Eastern countries of Europe as possible, and must be ready to counteract every attempt by the Soviet Government to communise or obtain political control over Germany, Italy, Greece or Turkey.

- (d) We must not desist from this course or be discouraged even if the United States give us no help and even if they adopt a policy of appeasement towards Russian domination, as well they may.
- (e) We must exert every effort to grapple with the economic crisis in Europe – not only in our own interests (a prosperous Europe is Great Britain's best export market) but in order to use the material resources at our and America's disposal as a makeweight throughout Europe against Communist propaganda, which the Soviet Government will use for their own ends wherever possible.

21 Aug 1945 **FO 371/50912.** Pierson Dixon manuscript note to Secretary of State, now Ernest Bevin, mentioning Orme Sargent's 'Stock Taking' Memo "which you have already read" and asking Bevin if he wants it circulated to Cabinet. EB's almost indecipherable response apparently giving assent.

c24 Sept 1945 **FO 371/50912.** Stocktaking After VE Day (Revise) which takes in comments accepted by Orme Sargent (very few – mostly as originally drafted in July) and retains same date (11 July) though it is on file after a minute dated 24 September 1945.

2 Oct 1945 **FO 371/ N13101/9.** Minute from Pierson Dixon to C F A Warner entitled 'Russian Aims and Tactics' refers to a conversation between Bevin and Molotov on October 1st when the latter revealed the intensity of Russian jealousy of the UK's strong position in the Mediterranean since France and Italy had ceased to be first-class powers and that there had been a singular bitterness in Molotov's attitude at the Council of Foreign Ministers Conference in London, then in its final day.

3 Oct 1945 **FO 371/N13101/9.** Minute, from C F A Warner to Orme Sargent headed 'Russian Behaviour at Council of Foreign Ministers' and referring back to, and commenting on, Pierson Dixon's 2 October observations and concluding that the Soviets were quite shocked at the failure of their tactics and at the coverage in the Press which had been a novel experience for them. Warner thought that it was possible that they would go away and re-think their future tactics as a result.

4 Oct 1945 **FO 371/N13101/9.** Added Minute to end of Warner's 3 October note, from Orme Sargent to Ernest Bevin saying that he agrees with Warner's analysis and that he suspects that Molotov miscalculated the temper of the US and UK governments etc. The end of the Minute is initialled by Bevin as having seen/read it but with no additional comments.

- 12 Oct 1945** **FO 371/N13452/18/38.** Minute/Telegram from Mr C F A Warner to Frank Roberts in the British Embassy in Moscow saying that he has received authorisation, as a special exception to the rule, almost certainly from Orme Sargent, to his sending Roberts copies of minutes about Russian behaviour at the Council of Foreign Ministers, and to seek his views.
- 12 Nov 1945** **FO 371/13432/18/38.** Response from Roberts saying the 12 October Telegram had only just reached him and he would be responding but that he had sent a letter on 12 October putting London in the picture about speculations concerning Stalin's health etc. He had also been critical about Russia eg on Persia (para 777) where Russia had put in troops in contravention of earlier agreements and Bevin was aware of this. But he had chosen simply to say that he was sure that the Persian Government would take this up with the Soviets.
- 22 Feb 1946** US Department of State Telegram 8963. George Kennan to George Marshall. Harry S Truman Administration File, 'Elsey Papers'.
- 4 March 1946** **CAB 128 20 CM(46).** Ernest Bevin, under item 2 'Persia', informed the Cabinet that without prior notification to HMG and contrary to the provisions of Article 5 of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of 1942 with Persia, the Soviet Government had publicly announced their intention to retain troops in parts of Persia after 2 March 1946. He informed the Cabinet of the terms of his note of protest to the Soviets pointing out that they were in breach of their Treaty obligations.
- 8 March 1946** **COS (46)69(0)** Chiefs of Staff Committee paper 'Russia's Strategic Interests and Intentions.
- 8 March 1946** **CAB 80/100.** Sir Orme Sargent Top Secret Minute to the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee, saying: "The Foreign Secretary has received the report on Russia's strategic interests and intentions which has been sent to him by the Chiefs of Staff. We wish to ask His Majesty's Embassy in Moscow for their comments...I enclose copies of the telegrams which have been drafted....let me know as soon as possible whether the Chiefs of Staff have any comments on these drafts....I understand that the Chiefs of Staff considered that in no circumstances should the report itself be transmitted to Moscow. But I presume that they will have no objection to a summary of the conclusions being telegraphed so that His Majesty's Embassy may know against what background they are being asked to send their comments....in order to meet the requirements of secrecy the Embassy are being instructed to burn that telegram after perusal...".

8 March 1946 **JIC (46) 1 (O)** (Limited Circulation) Final Revise Annex I to Annex IV.

11 Mar 1946 **CAB 195/4**: Taken from CM 23(46). Discussion in Cabinet about Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech in Fulton, Missouri on 11 March 1946. Extract from Cabinet Secretary Notebooks recording Cabinet Members views of the unauthorised speech of the leader of the opposition and Bevin saying that it was suggested in the US press that the UK Government had been consulted by WSC in advance but they had not.

18 March 1946 **FO371/N5574**. Report of a meeting in Orme Sargent's room to brief Sir Maurice Peterson (His Majesty's Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1946 to 1949) to discuss Russian policy and British attitude towards it. Also present were CFA Warner, Mr Vivyan, Mr Kirkpatrick, Mr Hall-Patch and Mr Caccia – notably all of whom were subsequently involved in the RC.

This meeting is of great significance re the setting up of the Russia Committee. Orme Sargent – by then the Permanent Under Secretary at FCO, presided over a meeting which took a strategic overview of the position re the Soviet Union. His first concern was that the Chiefs of Staff were not as yet persuaded to take an interest in the Soviet attitude to the Middle East but the Foreign Secretary saw this as being of 'high importance' and need to be looked into 'most carefully'. It was felt that the Soviets were not just interested in Middle East oil and that the 'probability was that their aim was not either economic or defensive or ideological, but all three combined'. Secondly the meeting considered whether the Russians were playing from strength or from weakness. If from weakness, they would be unlikely to resort to armed force. If from strength, it would be more dangerous but the JIC paper (see above) had concluded that that the Russians would not be prepared to engage in a major war for the next five years. Either way, the Russians were dangerous. Thirdly, the meeting looked at what might be done to counter the spread of Communism and Communist propaganda. It was felt that it would be easy to counter propaganda 'if the Government decided to attach Communist doctrines, but not otherwise'. Orme Sargent suggested that a paper needed to be put up but it would need to clearly define the aim of our propaganda. It was suggested, too, that the Dominions Office and the Colonial Office should be involved in discussions about how to counter Communist propaganda in the British Empire. NB both were subsequently represented on the RC.

2 April 1946 **FO 371/N56885/N5169/38**. Minutes of 1st meeting on Soviet Policy Co-ordination Committee – later called the Russia Committee. Mr Oliver Harvey (then Deputy Under-Secretary) in the Chair and the Secretary was Mr Robin Hankey. Mr Harvey who explained that the outcome of a recent meeting with Sir Orme Sargent was that:

“a general paper should be put up to the cabinet on policy towards the Soviet Union, which it was clear had returned to pure Marx-Leninism, was becoming dynamic and aggressive and had opened an offensive against Great Britain as the leader of social democracy in the world...Recommendations were to be made to the cabinet for a coordinated defence against this long term attack and possibly for the adoption of a defensive-offensive in reply...”

The meeting then reviewed the situation in various parts of the world: Far East; Middle East; Central and South East Europe; Scandinavia; Austria; and Germany; and International Organisations.

2 April 1946 **FO 371/56832 N6344/605/38.** Top Secret Memorandum entitled ‘The Soviet Campaign Against This Country and Our Response to It’ by C F A Warner, to be discussed at the RC Meeting 7 May 1946 – see below.

The paper (which subsequently became known as ‘The Warner Memorandum’ sets out in seven single spaced typed pages, 28 numbered paragraphs, the evidence of the Soviet campaign the future developments; and the ideas for the counter attack. It concludes: *“28. To sum up, the Soviet Government, both in their recent pronouncements and in their actions have made it clear that they have decided on an aggressive policy, based upon militant Communism and Russian chauvinism. They have launched an offensive against social democracy and against this country.....The Soviet Government makes coordinated use of military, economic, propaganda and political weapons and also of the Communist “religion”. It is submitted therefore that we must at once organise and coordinate our defences against all these and that we should not stop short of a defensive-offensive policy. If general approval is given to these propositions, further study should be given as a matter of urgency to the various suggestions outlined in this memorandum”.*

9 April 1946 Reference to a key paper (not yet found) by Sir William Strang to the Foreign Secretary entitled “Soviet Policy in Germany”.

9 April 1946 **FO 371/56885/ N5170/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee meeting. Mr Oliver Harvey in the Chair. Mr Warner was commissioned to draft terms of reference in consultation with Sir Nigel Ronald (which were duly published on 12 April as below). The Committee looked at Economic Questions and also reviewed the situation in the same counties as on 2 April but in addition, the Balkans.

- 12 April 1946** **FO 371/56885/ N5170/38.** Terms of Reference for Committee:
 “To review weekly the development of all aspects of Soviet policy and propaganda and Soviet activities throughout the world, more particularly with reference to the Soviet campaign against this country, to ensure a unified interpretation thereof throughout the political and economic departments of the Foreign Office, to consider what action is required as a result of the Committee’s review with particular reference to the probable degree of support to be looked for from the United States of America and to a lesser degree, from France and others: and to ensure that the necessary recommendations as to policy are made either by the departments of the Office concerned or by the Committee to Sir Orme Sargent, as may be appropriate. The Committee will maintain close contact with the J.I.C. with a view to coordinating intelligence and policy at every stage.
 A brief report of each meeting is to be submitted to Sir Orme Sargent.”
- 16 April 1946** **FO 371/ 56885/N5406.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr Oliver Harvey in the chair. The meeting considered inter alia the strategic position of the British Commonwealth and the need, in the face of severe manpower restrictions in the armed forces, to try to get the Dominions to contribute manpower. A new committee had been set up by MOD to look at the manpower problems which would not be solved despite the plans for three years conscription. The FCO was to be represented by Hall-Patch – a Russia Committee member so the latter would be kept in the loop on developments.
- 17 April 1946** REF “Paper entitled ‘Relations with the United States’ – NB just front page as the rest is Retained under Section 3.4 of the Public Records Acts(PRA).
- 23 April 1946** **FO/371/56885/N5407.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr Oliver Harvey in the Chair. The meeting discussed inter alia the importance of securing reductions in Russian troops in central and south eastern Europe because of the knock-on effect on Britain’s manpower shortages. The Minister was to raise this with the Americans at his forthcoming visit. Much discussion on countering Communist infiltration into national and international organisations and agreement to put up proposals to Sir Orme Sargent on dealing with this. Stock taking on the by now standard Agenda items including: Far East; Middle East; Europe; Economic questions and transportation. Under Europe, two interesting points were made: Sir N Ronald said that the growth of Communist influence in France was having a marked effect on the governments of Netherlands and Belgium who were becoming nervous of having close connections with France; and that Czechoslovakia was “falling more and more into the Soviet sphere”. The Russia Committee is casting its net wider than just FO as it becomes clear

that the issues under discussion draw in others from, for example, the Home Office, Chiefs of Staff, JIC, COI.

25 April 1946 **FO 371/ N5407/5169/G38.** Several memos, including hand written, RMA Hankey asked one of his team to find out from Sir Nigel Ronald what had led him to make the assertion about Czechoslovakia so that this could be included in the letter Hankey had been commissioned to write to the Ambassador in Prague. One of Ronald's staff, Mr Warner, reported back in a handwritten almost unreadable memo as follows:

"what Sir N Ronald had in mind was the Czechoslovakian Govt's hesitation over joining E.C.O.. First we had Mr Magargu over here stating categorically that they would join, then we had enquiries by the Czech Ambassador that they would join, then he went back to Prague & there were interdepartmental difficulties, then we had enquiries by the Czech Ambassador that made it look as though they were getting down to it; finally there was Prague telegram 57 saying to the effect that the Council of Ministers had decided to join, but procedure might take some little time.

In the course of making up their minds the Czech Govt asked Mr (Pridley?) to visit Prague (he was at the time – successfully – converting the Poles in Warsaw) to explain E.C.O. to them. They were then most unforthcoming & he left Prague in disquiet.

Sir N Ronald thought all of this indicated a tug of war with the Russians going on in the background".

30 April 1946 **FO 371/ 56885/N5490/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr R G Howe in the Chair. The meeting noted the paper on the Soviet Campaign Against Great Britain and the response to it had been approved by the Prime Minister. (my underlining). The meeting focused, as well as on the by now usual topics, on Sir Orme Sargent's wanting the committee:

"to pay special attention to economic policy as well as political and to the co-ordination of the two"

The Committee is thus widening out its sphere of interest and involving yet more other state departments eg Treasury. Concern reiterated about the Russia making propaganda use of Great Britain not having supplied wheat to France when asked:

"the Russians had speeded up their campaign of vilification against us saying for instance that Russians had only given wheat because the Anglo-Saxons had failed to help France".

- 1 May 1946** **FO 371/N 5407/5169/38.** Letter (classified Secret) Lambert, FO to A E Welch, Board of Trade: Report that Soviet government prevented British commercial representatives from going anywhere in Russia and that we needed to consider whether to adopt reciprocity by not letting the Soviets into our commercial areas eg rubber in Malaysia. FO seeking BoT advice on whether this would have serious commercial disadvantages in terms of further reciprocity.
See reply to Lambert in letter dated 22 May from Board of Trade's John Lechie below
- 3 May 1946** **FO 371/ N 5407/5169/38.** C F A Warner provided Hall-Patch with a draft circular (which Orme Sargent had commissioned) and invited Hall-Patch to make any changes he thought fit and then to pass it on to Orme Sargent.
- 4 May 1946** **FO 371/ N 5407/5169/38.** Hall-Patch passes this on to Sir Orme Sargent on 4 May 1946 commenting:

"This circular covers the Russian aspect of the Committee's work very well. It makes no mention of any more general activities. You may wish to add something to cover this, or it may be better to leave things as they are and see how the work of the Committee develops"
- 6 May 1946** **FO 371/ N5407/5169/38.** Sir Orme Sargent responds: in his recent minute: "I should like to be certain that this meets the points raised by Mr Coulson minute".
- 6 May 1946** **FO 371/56885/N6092/5169/38.** Note for discussion at Tuesday's Meeting. The Note is by J M Troutbeck (member of the Russia Committee) who had been asked by Brimelow for his views on Paragraph 2 of Warner's paper on Soviet policy. The Notes discuss the appalling economic state of Germany and the arrangements within the British Zone for political management and the representation of the various political parties and whether the Communist parties should be allowed to be represented.
- 7 May 1946** **CAB 195/4:** Taken from CM 43(46). Extract from Cabinet Secretary Notebooks recording Cabinet Members views on Bevin's proposed Policy Towards Germany.
- 7 May 1946** **FO 371/N56885/N6092/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr R G Howe in the Chair. Mr Lambert, Secretary. The meeting was updated on the items discussed at the 30 April meeting but notable both for discussing the Warner Memorandum and for a reference to recommending to the JIC that they prepare a paper on Russian strategy in the Middle East, showing the cross fertilisation of the work/interests of these two bodies.

- 10 May 1946** **FO 371/N56885.** Note by Mr C F A Warner to Sir Orme Sargent giving a draft paragraph to be included in a Circular to FCO Heads of Department on the Russia Committee which the latter had already approved.
- 13 May 1946** **FO 371/56885.** Top Secret Circular from Sir Orme Sargent to Heads of Political and International Departments of the Foreign Office, headed "Committee on Policy Towards Russia. Key document which refers to the Memorandum (immediately below) and a shorter version of it which has been circulated and it explains why, in paragraph 2, it was felt necessary to set up the Russia Committee.
- 13 May 1946** **FO 371/56885.** Top Secret Circular to Heads of Political and Functional Departments entitled 'The Soviet Campaign against this Country and our Response to it'. Essentially this is the Warner memorandum as at 2 April 1946 above.
- 14 May 1946** **FO 371/56885/N6092/5169/38.** Minute (classified Most Secret) to Sir Arthur Street by Sir Orme Sargent (no signature but looks like his writing) commenting on putting into effect the policy in regard to the Soviets as in the Memorandum (shortened version to PM dated 23 April) noting that FO is to begin an anti-Communist propaganda campaign. Also concludes that it is important in future to try to foresee Soviet attacks on this country. Reference also to the "explosive nature" of the Memorandum.
- 14 May 1946** **FO 371/56885/N6523/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr R G Howe in the Chair. Mr C T Candy Secretary. The meeting focused on three things: that use should be made of the attitude of Roman catholic church to counter the Soviet Union campaign against the UK, as suggested by Lord Addison; Field-Marshal Montgomery's notes on the situation in Germany; and Mr Robert's minute on Montgomery notes. (NB Victor Rothwell in Chapter 6 of his *Britain and the Cold War* quotes this paper ref as 'FO 55587/5224 and says "The final stamp of approval was given to Bevin's policy by the Russia Committee of the Cabinet on 14 May". Very confused reference
- 14 May 1946** **FO 371/56885/N6478/5169/38.** The text of a draft letter from Sir Orme Sargent to Oliver Harvey of the British Delegation on Paris attending an international conference in Paris to agree a Treaty on, among other things, Reparations. Sargent stresses the need for Ridsdale, a senior FO representative at the conference, to be charged with making known, particularly to the Italian press, the Russian attitude to the reparations - i.e. that it was the Russians alone who were insisting that Italy paid reparations and as a result were delaying the agreement of this aspect of the Treaty. The notes attached to the draft letter include a note from Ridsdale on 24 May saying that
- "...The Russian attitude in regard to Italian reparations was brought out clearly and persistently whenever the opportunity presented itself in my press

conferences in Paris...I cannot tell to what extent the Italian correspondents dealt with the subject or how their dispatches were reproduced in Italy I only know that the Russian demand for reparations and the resistance to it by ourselves and the Americans was well and truly stressed”.

15 May 1946 **FO 371/56885/N 6092/5169/38.** Memorandum (classified Secret) entitled ‘General Review of Intelligence Concerning Russian Military Activities in Europe and the Middle East’ under cover note from A E. Lambert, Secretary to Committee, which says that the paper is circulated to Russia Committee members: NB The paper, dated 8 March 1946, was also found in COS (46)69(0), entitled Chiefs of Staff Committee paper ‘Russia’s Strategic Interests and Intentions. The paper outlines three studies being prepared on Russian activities:

- a) Russia’s Strategic Interests and Intentions – a Report prepared by the JIC (ref JIC (46)1(0)) – to be updated six-monthly to see if the conclusions needed amending.
- b) Fortnightly reports on Russian Troop Movements in South East Europe and on the Persian frontier. Short reports to be produced keeping info updated.
- c) A paper in preparation on Russia’s Strategic Interests and Intentions in the Middle East- to be reviewed and updated monthly – possibly to include a section on India and Afghanistan.

The Memorandum also records that the Russia Committee, in addition to ensuring that they had sight of the above three regular report updates, would also, “as sufficient material becomes available” prepare studies on:

- a. Russian activities in Western Europe;
- b. Russian activities in Austria and Hungary;
- c. Russian activities in Chinese Northern Provinces and in the use of Chinese communism to further Russian aims;
- d. The spread of communism throughout the world and the extent of its direction from Moscow including Russian use of Diplomatic Privileges and Missions for subversive purposes.

15 May 1946 **FO 371/56885/N 6092/5169/38.** Memorandum (classified Secret) by I A Kirkpatrick entitled ‘Anti-Communist Propaganda’. A key document, it sets out the factors that need to be kept in mind for a scheme for anti-Communist propaganda in a paper circulated to the Russian Committee by the Secretary (A Lambert) for discussion at the Committee’s next meeting.

Summary of factors to be borne in mind setting up propose anti Communist propaganda:

1. Unlike Russians, UK cannot control domestic organs of publicity – dependent on goodwill of our publicists;
2. Success of propaganda dependent upon engaging Ministers etc.;
3. Propaganda must be backed up with policy and deeds;
4. US support 'invaluable' and must be maintained;
5. This is an education campaign and therefore long-term.

Action at Home needed:

1. Inform and obtain co-operation of Ministers and Home depts.
2. Enlist cooperation of MOD Admiralty, War Office and Air Ministry
3. Engage BBC Home Service via Governors
4. Engage Chatham House to include suitable material in their publications
5. Include suitable people in "our Intelligence Summary"
6. Carefully and gradually influence Home Press and foreign correspondents

Action Abroad:

1. Keep Heads of Missions fully updated on purpose/scope of propaganda campaign
2. Provide Missions with info on malpractices of Soviet Govt as opposed to Communist party
3. Enlist support of BBC foreign services who are "much more amenable" than Home Service
4. Request COI to carry suitable material in: London Press Service; feature articles which get into large number of foreign newspapers newsreel and documents
5. Arrange for despatch of suitable political lecturers
6. Prepare a bibliography and dispatch selected books and pamphlets to libraries
7. Arrange visits of foreign TU leaders, politicians etc. to propagandise on return

- 15 May 1946** **FO 371/56885/N6274/5169/38.** Manuscript Note by Thomas Brimelow stating:
 "Attaches draft circular to Heads of Departments, with a paragraph drawing attention to the necessity for foreseeing and preparing to meet in advance Russian moves. Further reference on the Note as follows: "See within Minute by Sir Orme Sargent of 25/5 circulated to heads of Political & functional departments". (NB no such circular attached)
- 22 May 1946** **FO 371/56885/N6847/5169/38.** Letter classified Secret from John Leckie of the Board of Trade to A E Lambert replying to the latter's 1 May letter, basically arguing that to

comply with the Russia Committee Secretary's request for reciprocity to the Soviets action of preventing British businessmen from travelling around Russia. Interesting manuscript notes accompanying the letter and commenting on Leckie's letter. Thomas Brimelow, commenting on 27 May said:

"Mr Leckie and ourselves are talking at cross purposes. He has taken our view to be to secure increased facilities for ourselves in the USSR; whereas what we wanted was to exclude the Russians from S.E.Asia".

Lambert then commented that his letter to Leckie was possibly "badly worded" and there was a need to explain to the Board of Trade what the FO meant by reciprocity, viz: 1) We have no illusions about getting facilities for our own people in Russia; 2) The Russians say they don't believe in reciprocity; 3) we propose to say 'But we do. Ergo, if you don't give us anything you won't get anything from us.

25 May 1946 **FO 371/56885/N 6274/ 5165.** Top Secret Circular from Sir Orme Sargent to Heads of Political and Functional Departments entitled 'Communist Activities in International Federations and Congresses. This Circular warns recipients that the Soviets were penetrating existing – and influencing the creation of - international federations of various kinds, for example the World Federation of Trade Unions for their own propaganda purposes so that such bodies "are made to serve the ends of Soviet propaganda and in particular for unscrupulous attacks against this country". The Circular offers advice on how to handle such issues and which departments of the FCO should be informed/asked to advise etc.

28 May 1946 **(Ref? None on paper but clearly from FO 371)** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr R G Howe in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Committee reviewed the events of the week; discussed several specific issues (eg sale of British aircraft engines; Tehran telegram etc.) and two substantive ones:

- the draft circular to HM Representatives abroad regarding the Soviet campaign against the UK and response to it: the draft had been submitted to Sir Orme Sargent who had returned it, asking whether it might not be better to send Mr Warner's Memorandum to a select number of Heads of Missions rather than give it a wider circulation. However, "The Committee took the view that it was important to inform all Heads of Missions that the policy recommended in Mr Warner's Memorandum had received the P.M. approval and therefore formed the basis of HMG's attitude towards the Soviet Union".
Key document
- the circular to Heads of Departments on Communist activities in International Federations: Mr Caccia, referring to para 3 of the Circular which dealt with consulting MI5, asked that such consultations should be done through him.

- 30 May 1946** **FO 371/56885/N6847/5169/38** Letter (Secret) from Board of Trade's 'H.....' to Lambert FO, extending the debate about the free movement of British commercial visitors to Russia and to the Balkan countries, and taking a line more in keeping with FO views.
- 31 May 1946** **FO 371/56885/N 6847/5169/38** Letter from Lambert FO to J Leckie, Board of Trade, replying to his 22 May letter – see above – and starting off by saying that his 1 May letter had been unclear and that what was exercising the FOs Russia Committee was: “Apart from political objections to having Soviet representatives establish themselves in South East Asian territories under our control, we feel that there may be more purely economic arguments against encouraging any Russian penetration there and we wanted to have your views on this subject. The easiest and most logical way of keeping them out of South East Asia is to make their entry conditional on reciprocal permission.”
- 1 June 1946** (No Ref) 5 page memo from J S Steele, Office of the Commander-in-Chief, HQ, Allied Commission for Austria (British Element), classified Top Secret, to Sir Arthur Street, Head of the Control Office For Germany and Austria, based in Norfolk House, London SW1, setting out the former's very detailed and considered views on the substance of the Memorandum produced by Warner, of the Russia Committee, and sent to Street by Sir Orme Sargent on 14 May 1946. Both Street and Steele regarded with concern and suspicion Soviet policy towards the Western Powers and in particular towards Austria which Steele saw the maintenance of Austria's independence “as an essential factor in British foreign policy; for Austria is a salient into the territories that lie behind the so-called iron curtain, and the importance of an effective counter to Communism here accordingly goes far beyond the confines of Austrian domestic politics”.
- 4 June 1946** FO371/56885/N7515/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr O C Harvey in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. In addition to updating themselves on developments since the previous meeting, two items of substance were discussed:
1. Mr Warner's Memorandum: as in the previous meeting, it was noted that Sir Orme Sargent had ruled that the draft dispatch to representatives abroad should not be sent out but instead Mr Warner's Memorandum should be sent under a suitable covering letter to “a restricted number of posts”. The meeting discussed the terms of the covering letter to be drafted. “It was agreed that in view of the Secretary of State's refusal to approve the paper on propaganda (see 2 below) the covering letter should make it clear that while the analysis contained in Mr Warner's paper had been accepted, its recommendations were still under

consideration and could not yet be acted upon. Heads of Mission should however be invited to comment, to discuss its applications to their own posts and to advise on measures that might be taken to implement the policy. The draft covering letter and suggestions as to who should receive the Memorandum and covering letter to be discussed at the next meeting.

2. Mr Kirkpatrick's Memorandum on Propaganda: this had been submitted to the Secretary of State but it had not been approved. He had requested that "instead of publicizing the misdeeds of the Communists, we should concentrate on extolling our own achievements. In this connection he wanted the new Insurance and National Health Bills to be particularly stressed".

11 June 1946 **FO 371/56885/N7816/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr O C Harvey in the Chair. Mr C T Gandy Secretary. The meeting included two main items:

- 1: discussion about circulation of the Warner Memorandum (see 14 May Meeting Minutes above). The RC noted that on Sir Orme Sargent's instructions the Memorandum had been redrafted to be sent under cover of a letter and would be addressed to a limited number of posts only. Concerns were identified about the secure handling of the Memorandum.
- 2: the RC discussed the JIC paper (JIC (46) 38 (0)) as circulated to RC members, and its main conclusions on Russian Strategy in the Middle East, in particular in relation to Persian oil fields; and discussions on Russian attitudes to British interests in Afghanistan and India.

12 June 1946 **FO 371/56885/GN7959/5169/38.** Letter from John Leckie, Board of Trade, to Mr A E Lambert in response to the latter's 31 May letter, and internal FO manuscript reactions to the letter from various FO staff through to August 17 as penultimate recipient had mislaid the correspondence. Leckie argues that there are no economic arguments for preventing the admission of Soviet consular and commercial agents to British controlled areas of South East. The manuscript notes are interesting as an illustration of FO working methods.

18 June 1946 **FO 371/N8183/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr Hall-Patch in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The meeting reviewed the main events of the past week, viz:

- 1: Sir Orme Sargent had approved the dispatch of the Warner Memorandum to those posts suggested by the Committee provided adequate security could be ensured;
- 2: Soviet attitude towards existing combined purchasing agreements where there were signs that the Soviets were by-passing agreement machinery;

- 3: financial and banking developments in Germany where Soviet actions in closing all banks and freezing assets in the Soviet zone were seriously undermining any hope of establishing a united Germany;
- 4: situation in Persia – the Minister of Fuel and Power would be in Tehran on 20 June and would discuss with the Ambassador the best way to protect Britain's oil interests.
5. helping 'our friends' - in reference back to the Memorandum on Soviet policy, the RC discussed what economic, diplomatic and publicity action might be taken once Ministers had approved the recommendations in the Memorandum
6. application of policy outside FO purview – the RC noted the importance of drawing in other departments where the policy impacted their responsibilities.

- 25 June 1946** **FO 371/ 56885/N8376/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr Hall-Patch in the Chair. Mr C T Gandy, Secretary. The Committee followed up their discussions at their previous meeting: on Persia the Committee decided that the US Service Departments, in addition to the State Department needed to be kept apprised of developments on Persia; the Dominions needed to be kept updated on the Committee's work and Hall-Patch duly was to set up a 'permanent liaison' with the Dominions Office; US pressing for the Bank of International Settlement to be wound up as discussed at Bretton Woods – concern as this would adversely impact on Britain and France both financially and in loss of influence.
- 25 June 1946** **FO 371/56885/N8467/5169/387.** Top Secret Note to Sir Orme Sargent from Sir Arthur Street of Control Office for Germany and Austria entitled "The Soviet Campaign Against Great Britain in Germany", comprises a 9 page note giving comments on a Top Secret FO Memorandum "about policy towards Russia" sent by Orme Sargent on 14 May 1946.
- 3 July 1946** **FO 800/N8550/971/38.** Telegram to Secretary of State, Ernest Bevin, from Washington Embassy (Lord Inverchapel, Minister in Washington. on behalf of HM Ambassador Balfour, setting out in detail the deterioration in relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers and the growing conviction that it was 'becoming impossible to bridge the ideological gap between them'. It reports on two recent published articles by John Foster Dulles the central thought of which was that the Soviet rulers do not consider that the security of their country can be guaranteed until it is possible to eradicate the non-Soviet type of society which dangerously divides the one world into incompatible halves.
- 9 July 1946** **FO 371/ 56885/N9162/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr R G Howe in the Chair. Mr A D M Ross, Secretary. Otherwise, usual membership plus 'Mr P Dean' –

Patrick Dean later to become the Permanent Under Secretary of the FCO and to be the official sent by Eden in 1956 to Paris to discuss the Sevres Protocol. The main item of interest was discussion on UK relations with Iraq following discussions between Sir Hugh Stonehewer Bird (HM Ambassador to Iraq) and the Iraqi Prime Minister who had posed two questions to Sir Hugh: 1. If his government were to take severe repressive measures against Iraqi Communist parties how would, in the UK's view, the Russians react? The answer given was that Russia would increase the propaganda against the Iraqi government and against Iraq's friendship with the UK but as to possibly more drastic steps, it was difficult to judge. And, 2. Would Iraq be able to count on GB support if the Iraqi's were to take repressive measures, the answer being that GB would not go so far as to place armed forces at Iraq's disposal but would provide every other support.

15 July 1946 **CAB 128 68 CM(46).** Ernest Bevin, under item 1 'Council of Foreign Ministers, gave the Cabinet an account of the proceedings at the recently concluded Council of Foreign Ministers in Paris. He outlined the very intransigent line taken by Molotov on reparations and the latter had made many charges that Britain was not playing their part but had declined Bevin's proposal for an enquiry and Bevin concluded that it would be well to bring publicity to bear on Russian activities in this matter. Cabinet also discussed Persia in the light of a general strike in the Persian oil fields and he proposed emergency plans to evacuate British and Indian personnel to protect lives, and possibly to deploy British forces even though one of the consequences would be the probable consequences would be for Russian forces to be deployed in northern Persia.

16 July 1946 **FO 371/56885/N9543/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr R G Howe in the Chair. Mr C T Gandy Secretary. The Committee concentrated on a report from Mr Hall-Patch on the Conference of Foreign Ministers. He said that the UK had been forced to give way to the Russians which he ascribed to the weakness of our bargaining position for which he identified two causes: 1 the US had been so anxious to get the Peace Conference off the ground that they had acceded to many of the demands of the Russians to include items and 2, and the main problem, UK had a small delegation of generalists whereas the Russians had arrived mob handed with specialists in all of the fields under discussion. He reported that the Council had been unable to reach agreement on Germany where it was the US and GN wish for German Unity but it was concluded that such unity might be dearly bought at the expense of a nation-wide domination of Germany by Russia through the Communist party. The projected talks would fail, and German unity be unachievable unless the Western powers and the Russians could agree on an exact interpretation of the Potsdam Agreement. At the

moment the Russians were construing certain ambiguous passages in this document in a sense which did not coincide with our interpretation. The Secretary of State had declared his intention of circulating in due course to the Foreign Ministers a document giving the British interpretation of the Potsdam decisions.

- 16 July 1946** **FO 371/56887/N9460/605/38.** Secret Minute to Secretary of State Ernest Bevin from Sir Maurice Peterson, HM Ambassador in Moscow, dated 16 July 1946. Seven-page minute which records the Ambassadors views on Soviet foreign policy and, indeed, on the Soviet mindset. He expresses surprise and pleasure that the Soviets unexpectedly, at the Second Conference of Foreign Ministers in Paris, had shown themselves willing to try to unlock the deadlock that had transpired at the end of the previous Conference. He discusses the need to improve communications – “There are no half-tones in Russia and the foreign commentator must steer a middle course between the Scylla of flattery and the chaybidis of insult” – and to see whether some agreement could be reached on the Russian obsession over increasing “bases”. An important Minute because it is to Bevin and pulls no punches about the trickiness of the Soviets.
- 26 July 1946** **FO 371/N10141/5169/38.** Agenda for Russia Committee meeting to be held on 30 July. Two items:
1. Weekly review of important events
 2. “The Prime Minister has drawn attention in a minute to a suggestion made by General Gardner that ‘as Russian tactics in Europe and Asia follow the same pattern, it would be useful if our representatives in the East could be given early notice of tactics followed in the West and vice versa, so that they would be forewarned’. It is proposed to discuss the best means of carrying out this recommendation”.
- 28 July 1946** **FO 371/56885/N9929/5169/38.** Covering minute from A E Lambert to members of the Russia Committee saying that the courses of action suggested in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the attached memorandum were to be discussed by the Committee at the earliest opportunity, and to make recommendations.
- 28 July 1946** **FO 371/56885/N9929/5169/38.** Secret Memorandum, by Mr Montagu-Pollock entitled ‘British Participation in an International Student Congress To Be Held in Prague in August. The paper outlines the issue of Communist infiltration into various student organisations and the alleged methods adopted by Communists to wield undue influence. Paragraphs 10 and 11 summarised as follows:
- Paragraph 10: the Congress was, inter alia, to “lay plans for the establishment of a World Student Federation to be affiliated with” the World Federation of Democratic

Youth, described as a Communist instrument. The Memorandum considered the circumstances that would be faced by any British delegation, members of which would be nominated by the NUS, and the pressure they would be under.

Paragraph 11: outlined three alternatives “open to us”

- (a) To discourage the delegation from going to the Congress on the grounds that they would find themselves the tools of the Communist propaganda machine.
- (b) Not to discourage them but to warn them what they are in for.
- (c) To take no action but to ensure that the proceedings of the Congress are reported in their true light.

29 July 1946 **FO 371/56886 and FO 371/N9930/5169/38.** Minutes of a Meeting of the Russia Committee Sub-Committee on Publicity. Sub-Committee, chaired by CFA Warner with Lambert, again, as Secretary, examined the questions raised by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of State re making available to the Libraries of the House of Commons reviews of the Soviet Press and considered the advantages of giving wider circulation to such reports. The best reviews for this purpose were those compiled by the British Embassy in Moscow viz a weekly review of Soviet daily press on international issues and a Monthly Review of the main omissions and the peculiarities in the presentation of world news by the Soviet Press. The sub-committee agreed to put to the next full Russia Committee meeting their recommendations that that:

- a. The idea of putting the material in the House of Commons library should be pursued with the Min of State’s office
- b. Before the additional material was circulated to a wider selection of public and some public bodies, the PM should be asked to communicate with the Press to the effect that the British Government would have no problem in their using the material.

30 July 1946 **FO 371/56885/N10141/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr Neville-Butler in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The substantive item (see Agenda dated 26 July above) was discussed and it was agreed that “it would be best to compile a monthly summary on Russian tactics as revealed in the “tour d’horizon” made each week by the Russia Committee and to pass this summary by telegram to His Majesty’s Representatives in Tokyo and Nankin and to Lord Kilearn, the first summary would be prepared at the end of August. In addition, His Majesty’s Consul-General at Saigon should be instructed to inform us of any Russian moves in French Indo-China. The Russia Committee directed that the above should be embodied in a note for submission through Sir Orme Sargent to the Prime Minister”. Evidence, therefore, that

the PM was aware of the Russia Committee 's existence. The Committee also discussed the Student Congress to be held in Prague in August and concluded that the only action necessary was to tell the British Ambassador in Prague that we had withheld encouragement or support from the delegation and asking him to report fully on the proceedings.

- 6 Aug 1946** **FO 371/56886/N10437/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr R G Howe in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. Three Agenda items: a. usual update from previous meeting; b. the Paris Peace Conference discussed the future statute of the international territory of Trieste and the proposal by the Russians that it should come under Yugoslavian (and therefore Soviet) control rather than being independent. Publicity problems – it was agreed that in order to see that the publicity machine was working at full efficiency “in order that it might be able to meet the possibility of Ministers approving an all-out anti-Communist campaign”; and c. the fact that there was a shortage of newsprint in London which could hamper the efficiency of the publicity machine.
- 13 Aug 1946** **FO 371/56886/N10647/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr R G Howe in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. One item, in addition to the usual update on issues of interest to the Committee, was item 4(a) reporting on the Devastated Areas Sub Commission and stated that the Russian and satellite representatives on the Commission were resisting any attempt to include the ex-enemy countries (the definition of which apparently excluded Austria) in the list of countries to be considered by the Commission. The Russian representatives had, however, left it to the Poles to openly resist. The Russia Committee felt that the Russians should be made to come out into the open with their views which should then be publicised in Italy and Austria.
- 20 August 1946** **FO 371/56886/N10901/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr R G Howe in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Committee returned to discussing the issue of the British Press being reluctant to report anything critical of Russia in case the British Government were thought to be against such reports (see 29 July Meeting Note) and reverted to the proposal from the end of July that a lead should be given to the Press indicating that HMG did not wish to deter the Press from reporting Russian activities that would be detrimental to GB.
- 22 August 1946** **FO 371/56886/N11231.** Note by Lambert to say that it was decided at the Russia Committee's meeting on 30th July that the Committee's Monthly Reports on Developments in Soviet Policy should be distributed to 25 named HM Missions abroad

and to the following other government departments: India Office; Colonial Office; Burma Office; Dominions Office; and the Control Office.

26 August 1946 FO 371/N10647. Hand-written notes to Mr Gandy (a member of the Russian Committee) from Gordon Boyd who had explained in some detail the background to the machinations in the Sub Commissions meetings (see 13 August meeting above) and that the Russians were playing a low key role leaving things to the Poles and the Czechs who were the two countries east of the iron curtain hoping to benefit most from the Sub Commission's recommendations.

28 August 1946 FO 371/56886/N11284/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr C F A Warner in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The discussion turned again to questions of publicity and to the "increasing evidence to show that the Press...was still abstaining from the publication of items reflection (sic) unfavourably on Soviet policy". Evidently the Committee proposed to draft a minute for the Foreign Secretary to send to the Prime Minister to deal with this but decided that the draft should await discussions at the forthcoming Paris conference on the Balkan Treaties which might generate publicity. The Committee agreed, therefore, to put this on hold for discussion a fortnight hence.

28 Aug 1946 FO 371/N10437. Hand written notes on Minutes

6 Sept 1946 FO 371/56886/N11516/5169/38. Cypher to HM FCO Reps Overseas. An update to Overseas Reps on the developments during August 1946 in each of the areas covered by Sir Orme Sargent's Top-Secret Memorandum dated 21 June 1946.

17 Sept 1946 FP 371/56886/N12335/5169/38. Minutes of Russia Committee. Mr Warner in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. Wide ranging discussion notable for illustrating the breadth of the RC's interests and concerns in general and for two issues in particular: firstly, the Chairman, noting that:

"our publicity in general was not keeping the public fully informed on two important aspects of the present situation, via. The extent and virulence of the Russian propaganda campaign against us over the last six months, and the reign of terror and oppression which was mounting in countries behind the iron curtain". (ref para 9)

The RC decided against asking the Secretary of State to ask the Prime Minister to intervene with the Press. However, Warner told the meeting that he had been instructed by Sir Orme Sargent to prepare a minute for the SoS on these matters. Secondly, Warner said that Sir Orme Sargent had suggested that General Jacob of the MOD Chiefs of Staff, who was vitally interested in the subjects discussed but the RC,

should be invited to attend meetings. Warner noted that the RC had decided "some time ago" to confine membership to the Foreign Office but given Orme Sargent's suggestion the RC decided that General Jacob should be invited to attend "in his personal capacity".

- 24 Sept 1946** **FO 371/56886/N12615/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee. Sir Oliver Harvey in Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. Normal range of subjects discussed notable for two items: reference to Roberts' dispatch of 4 September but which RC members had yet to see so discussion was deferred until next meeting: and fact that future weekly meetings were to be re-timed to accommodate General Jacob's attendance. However, the RC felt that he should not receive RC papers routinely because of security but that this 'decision' would need to be cleared with Orme Sargent.
- 25 Sept 1946** **FO 371/56886/N12449/5169/38.** Confidential Memorandum from Ernest Bevin in Paris to Cabinet colleagues reporting on a conversation he had had with US Secretary of State Byrnes about UK policy towards Russia. Byrnes had called attention to the conduct of the Russians at the Paris Peace Conference and in the Security Council where they had attacked the US and the UK without notice and without reason despite the US having tried hard to bring about peace and amity with them.
- 5 Oct 1946** **FO 371/56886 /N12819/5169/38.** Confidential Cypher to heads of embassies in a range of countries giving a monthly update of developments in Soviet foreign policy affecting various areas of the world.
- 9 Oct 1946** **FO 371/56886/N12107.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Oliver Harvey in Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. Clearly a lengthy meeting and in addition to normal membership was attended by HM Ambassador in Moscow, Sir Maurice Peterson, and Mr Ashley Clark, from HM Embassy, Paris. Includes a lengthy discussion on the establishment of "Cominform" in Belgrade and Russia's attitude thereto; a discussion on economic self-sufficiency in Eastern Europe; and a draft dispatch on Communist activities at Non- Governmental International Conferences, a subject that was to feature again and again in RC discussions.
- 13 Oct 1946** **FO 371/56886/N13901.** Cypher Tokyo to Foreign Office. Records that the summaries provided in the Telegrams (see 5 October above) were extremely useful to them in Tokyo and that they hoped to continue to receive them. It goes on to describe how a series of strikes, accompanied by considerable violence had swept the American Zone in South Korea and there was evidence that this was Communist inspired.

- 14 Oct 1946** **FO 371/56887/N85609. And on FO 371/N15609/5169/38.** A draft directive, circulated by C T Gandy to RC members, entitled "Russia in the Middle East Publicity Directive" dated 11 October and written by Mr I A Kirkpatrick. This makes the case that although Britain's problems in the Middle East were not created by Russia, they were being "deliberately aggravated by a savage Soviet campaign anti-British propaganda" through the Soviet press and radio etc. He argues that the British reply should be twofold: to show to the Middle East that it is to Britain they should look for guidance and support; and to deal factually with the Russian campaign of misrepresentation.
- 17 Oct 1946** **FO 371/ N/3201/5169/GP.** Cypher Tokyo to Foreign Office. Provided further update on strikes situation at request of the Prime Minister's Special Representative in Japan.
- 17 Oct 1946** **FO 371/56886/N13583/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Hall-Patch in Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. General Sir Ian Jacob in attendance in personal capacity for first time. In addition to the by now usual updates, the RC discussed Mr Kirkpatrick's draft directive (see above) and agreed some changes to be made to the final version. General Jacob expressed reservations as to whether the BBC, to whom the Directive would be sent, would be willing to compromise the independence with which the wider world viewed their broadcasts by engaging in resisting anti British propaganda by the Soviets.
- 19 Oct 1946** **FO 371/56887.** Note from Mr E A Radice to Mr R M A Hankey, covering his Note entitled 'The Dependence of the USSR on Imports from the UK and USA'. The note is interesting because it outlines the kinds of goods the Soviets needed for reconstruction after the devastations they suffered during the War. It says that they are not short of raw materials but do need electrical equipment, mining and metallurgical plant, oil drilling and refining equipment etc. and it notes that the Soviets had assumed that such material would have been forthcoming from reparations from Germany and credits from the US, neither of which were likely to be forthcoming as the Soviets would have wanted. The paper also alludes to the question of possibly prohibiting exports of certain types of security products or products that could be used to develop security products.
- 24 Oct 1946** **FO 371/56887/N13979.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. N M Butler (later Sir Neville Butler) in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. In addition to the normal review of recent developments, the meeting discussed Mr Radice's Note (see above) and decided to prepare a letter to the Chiefs of Staff asking them to take note of the RC views and to consider including in the 'Security List' equipment that could not specifically be described as having a military character but which would nevertheless

play a part in the process of rearmament; and also discussed Mr Kirkpatrick's Publicity Directive which had now been approved by the Secretary of State.

- 24 Oct 1946** **FO371/13583/5169/38.** Note to the Secretary of State, Ernest Bevin, from Tlfor Rees of the British Delegation, Bolivia, entitled 'Indications of Soviet Activity in Bolivia' and outlining some relatively low level recent Communist activities in Bolivia, including the fact that the Minister of Labour in the Provisional Government had hung a portrait of Lenin in his office.
- 24 Oct 1945** **FO371/13583/5169/38.** Note by R M A Hankey to Sir Nigel Ronald giving detailed comments on the latter's draft circular, about which Hankey was quite critical (see Memorandum and Circular below which puts Hankey's comments into perspective).
- 31 Oct 1946** **FO371/56887.** Note by W I M Pollock also giving detailed comments on the Sir N Ronald's draft circular.
- 1 Nov 1946** **FO 371/56887/14732.** Secret Cover Note by A E Lambert to members of the Russia Committee attaching Sir Nigel Ronald Memorandum and draft circular for discussion by the Committee.
- The lengthy Memorandum -5 page single spaced, 14 paragraphs – is a think piece about the difficulties presented to the Western world by the spread of communism. The Circular attached to the Memorandum essentially asks overseas representatives to provide answers to six questions: are there any signs that the interest of any important organised body or community, political, religious etc. are being threatened? From what quarters do such groups apprehend danger? What tactics are being deployed for defence and how successfully? Any special precautions against infiltration being taken? Any groups receiving international directives? Is any coalescing?
- 6 Nov 1946** **FO 371/N13576/5169/38.** Confidential Cypher to heads of embassies in a range of countries giving a further monthly update of developments in Soviet foreign policy affecting various areas of the world.
- 7 Nov 1946** **FO 371/56886/N14607/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. G H Howe in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. Committee decided in future to hold a general review fortnightly rather than weekly, unless particularly important material needed to be noted. They then discussed the draft circular and memorandum to HM representatives abroad which had been prepared by Sir Nigel Ronald after discussion with the Minister of State. It was generally felt that the draft was likely to be

interpreted too widely by representatives to elicit useful information and would cause representatives abroad a lot of unnecessary work.

- 21 Nov 1946** **FO 371/56887/N15456/5169/38. And FO 371/56887.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. G H Howe in the Chair. Mr Lambert, Secretary. The meeting began with a report by Sir Nigel Ronald on the current situation in France and Germany and Russia's interests in both. In terms of the French elections, Sir Nigel Ronald described how although the proportion of Communists had remained fairly steady the centre was dividing up between the left and right and this was strengthening the Communist position in France which he described as having the strongest Communist party outside of Russia. General Jacob asked how many people in France who voted Communist actually held Communist cards; Sir Nigel Ronald said he did not know but would look into it. He concluded that the trends of events in France appeared likely to assist the Russians at many points and to make our task in limiting Russian encroachment in Europe more difficult. There was an equally detailed discussion of the Soviet policy re Germany on which Sir Nigel Ronald thought the Soviets were undecided but Mr Warner thought that it was not so much that the Russians were undecided but that while running the Soviet zone of Germany under their exclusive control, they reaped the advantages of quadripartite control and might thereof over-do lip service to the principle of economic unity of Germany without having to carry out any of the obligations it involved – a similar principle governed their attitude to the UNO.
- 26 Nov 1946** **FO 371/66364/N2322/271/38.** Note from A E Lambert to Russia Committee members covering comments received on the 'Warner' Memorandum sent by Orme Sargent in June 1946 to overseas representatives. Comments from Oslo, Helsinki, Stockholm and Copenhagen.
- 28 Nov 1946** **FO 371/N15458/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. N M Butler in the Chair. Mr Lambert, Secretary. Sir Nigel Ronald gave another report to the Committee following up his report at the previous Meeting and, answering General Jacob's previous question said that the Communists said that there were about one million Communist card holders and the numbers who had voted Communist in the election was between 5 and 6 million. There then ensued a further lengthy discussion about both the situation in France vis a vis Communism and the Soviet policy in respect of Germany.
- 4 Dec 1946** **FO 371/ 56887/N15013/5196/38.** Cypher giving a report to overseas representatives on the concessions made by the Soviet delegates in the General Assembly and the Council of Foreign Ministers.

- 6 Dec 1946** **FO 371/ N13576/5169/38.** Usual monthly cypher to overseas representatives giving an update on developments over Soviet foreign policy.
- 10 Dec 1946** **FO 371/56887/N15843/5169/38.** Note by Lambert to members of the Russia Committee attaching a paper 'Anglo Soviet Relations' prepared by HM Ambassador, Moscow, Sir Maurice Peterson, for discussion at the Committee's next meeting. He also circulated a note by R M Hankey which, basically, argued that Sir Maurice's central theme of putting a list of conditions to the Soviets with the aim of improving relations, would be unlikely to produce the desired improvements.
- 12 Dec 1946** **FO 371/56887/N16004/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. R G Howe in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Committee discussed HM Ambassador Sir Maurice Peterson's memorandum on the Anglo-Soviet relations and agreed that it would be wrong to dismiss lightly any means of improving relations with Russia, not least because there would be virtue in trying so to do and it would enable the Secretary of State to assure his Labour party colleagues that he had done his best to improve Anglo-Soviet relations. On the other hand, any weakening of the firm line taken with the Soviets to date could cause problems. Following a very full discussion it was concluded that the question of an approach to the Soviet Government as suggested in the Memorandum deserved the fullest consideration but the Committee did not feel able to advise the Secretary of State that any radical change of heart on the part of the Soviet Government would be likely to result. It was agreed, therefore, that no approach should be made unless it could be represented as an answer to an initiative already taken by the Russians. It was agreed that the Secretary of State should take with him to Moscow a paper setting out the lines of an approach to the Soviet Government, to be used if he thought it desirable.
- 19 Dec 1946** **FO 371/56887/N16244/5169/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. R G Howe in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The meeting reviewed developments on HMG's policy towards Greece and Turkey, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. On Greece and Turkey it was noted that a decision on HMG's future policy would not be taken before Christmas. A paper was in preparation on HMG's future attitude towards countries in Eastern Europe where there was a tension between maintaining the UK's anti-totalitarian principles on the one hand and seeking to improve Soviet relations by not resisting their expansionist policy towards, for example, Bulgaria, Poland and Romania.
- 20 Dec 1946** **FO 371/56887/N16336/5169/38.** Cover note by R G Howe to Russia Committee members seeking their comments on the attached Draft Memorandum entitled 'Anglo-Soviet Relations' - same paper as above.

- 2 Jan 1947** **CAB 195/5: Taken from CM 1(47).** Extract from Cabinet Secretary Notebooks recording Ernest Bevin report to Cabinet, and Cabinet colleague's responses, on latest state on Foreign Affairs including latest position on Peace Treaties discussions with Soviets and US.
- 4 Jan 1947** **FO 371/56887/ N16363/5169/38.** Monthly update cypher to overseas representatives which inter alia notes that Soviet policy had been more restrained in December 1946 than for some time past which was thought to be due in part with the Soviets being satisfied with the outcome of the General Assembly. Other than that the cipher updated the normal issues.
- 9 Jan 1947** **FO 371/66362/N613/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Oliver Harvey in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Meeting had two items to consider: first, the Chairman asked for views on the question raised in the recent memorandum on Communist activities as to whether the FCO should imitate the US State Department in appointing to UK Diplomatic Missions, specialist in Communism. It was decided in discussion that this was not necessary as HM representatives were in general sufficiently aware of the need to report fully on Communist activities; secondly, the Committee discussed the revised draft of the minute on Anglo Soviet Relations circulated on 20 December and to consider whether the recommendations therein were sufficiently positive to put forward to the Secretary of State. A decision on this was postponed until the following meeting when they would have in attendance HM Minister in Moscow, Mr Frank Roberts) and could take his views.
- 16 Jan 1947** **FO 371/ NO REF.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Oliver Harvey in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. Mr Frank Roberts (of Long Telegram) attended the meeting. Sir Oliver drew attention to the apparent hardening of expert opinion in Whitehall in regard to the possibility of maintaining future peace with the Soviets and asked Mr Roberts to opine on whether this was justified. He described Soviet problems both internal and external. Their internal problems were largely economic as the 5-year plan was not going to schedule and the bad grain harvest in 1946 had led to food rationing bordering on starvation in the Ukraine; the people were becoming disillusioned. Externally, the Soviets feared the closeness of the US and UK and, of course, the US atomic bomb. A distinction was drawn between Molotov and his aggressiveness – which was perceived by many to be the 'real' stance of the Soviets and the sometimes more conciliatory comments by Stalin. Interestingly, the Committee felt that the appearance of a more accommodating Soviet mood might be

designed to provide communication for the critics in the Labour Party who were pressing Ernest Bevin to make more concessions re the Russian attitude than he had previously been prepared to do.

- 20 Feb 1947** **CAB 129 (47) 68.** Memorandum to Cabinet by Secretary of State, Ernest Bevin, entitled 'Main Short-term Problems Confronting US in Moscow. The paper concentrates on what would be likely to be the most crucial part of the discussions in the forthcoming March Moscow meeting, namely the short-term economic and political problems of Germany. Bevin, speaking to Cabinet colleagues rather than to Labour Party critics, makes harsh assessments throughout the paper on the Soviet stance and their going back on Potsdam agreements. He says that: "It is most important ...that the responsibility for failure at Potsdam should be placed fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the Russians who are entirely responsible for the present state of affairs" (paragraph 11).
- 26 Feb 1947** Warner circular letter on Communism outside of the Soviet Union. Not yet found.
- 27 Feb 1947** **FO 371/66365/N3125/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Butler in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Committee discussed Soviet propaganda against the UK; Revisions of Anglo-Soviet Treaty; developments in the previous two weeks; Communist parties in Italy and France; and the Far East. On the first item, Mr Warner informed the Committee that the Soviet propaganda machine had now been turned against the internal policy of the UK Government and was attacking the leadership of the Labour Party. Bevin had therefore decided that he would mention this in his next Foreign affairs speech and had duly included a passage in his next debate speech. Warner had also suggested to Bevin that he should confront Stalin and ask him whether such a policy of hostility could be reconciled with the Treaty of Alliance and Collaboration to which he was a signatory. In addition, the Committee endorsed a suggestion by Mr Jebb (also present for the meeting) that he should prepare a dossier of Russian attacks on the UK in the United Nations, which Bevin might also wish to point out to Stalin.
- 24 March 1947** **FO 371/66439.** A collection of papers on lectures on Russia given by Thomas Brimelow (later Lord Brimelow) to the Joint Services Staff College in March, July and September 1947 (and February 1948).
- 10 April 1947** **FO 371/66369/N6359/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr R M Makins in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The meeting discussed Communist parties outside of Europe; The Anglo-Soviet Treaty; and the Russian internal economic situation. On the first of these topics the Committee agreed to redraft Warner's

circular in the light of any comments received to his circular of 26 February and the final draft would then be sent for comments to HM Embassies in Moscow and Washington and then, afterwards, perhaps circulated to Ministers. The Committee discussed the tactics for revising the Anglo-Soviet Treaty and the Committee agreed that Mr Warner should submit a minute to Sir Orme Sargent giving his observations and suggesting that the UK delegation in Moscow should have their attention drawn to several points that were giving rise to concern in the Russia Committee. On the Russian internal economic situation the Committee discussed and gave comments on a paper circulated by Mr Hankey and Mr Radice and agreed that once their comments had been taken on board the paper should be submitted to Sir Orme Sargent with a view to its being circulated for information to major posts abroad.

24 April 1947 **FO 371/66368/N4991/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr I A Kirkpatrick in the Chair. Mr Lambert, Secretary. The Committee discussed the outcome of a meeting on 21 April between HM Ambassador in Moscow and M Vyshinsky on a revised version of the British draft Treaty which had been sent to the Soviet Government on 3 April. No progress had been made at the meeting and no date fixed for a further meeting. It was felt that the Soviets would put blame on the UK for failure to achieve progress. It was noted that the Daily Worker, in an article on 23 April, had started attacking HM Government and, in particular, the Foreign Secretary. The Committee then went on to outline the lines which should be taken in response to a Russian propaganda campaign. They concluded that two papers should be prepared for submission to the Secretary of State: the first should comprise guidance to the British Press; the second should cover the more technical points arising out of the Treaty.

29 April 1947 **FO 371/66368/N5124/271/38.** Minute by R M A Hankey to the Russia Committee which refers to an earlier discussion (see 9 January minutes) about whether to follow the US example of appointing staff in Embassies etc. abroad who were experts in Communism and the fact that it was felt that this policy did not amount to very much more than was already done within UK overseas missions and that the Russia Committee itself, which transmitted to, and received information from, UK representatives abroad, was itself an important piece of machinery for coordinating the work of the political and publicity departments. However, it was agreed that as an additional source of information, diplomats from abroad who were on leave in London or otherwise on duty should be encouraged to visit the Northern Department and report any information of relevance. Hankey expressed the view that such a request should properly come from Sir Orme Sargent as the PUS.

- 2 May 1947** **CAB 195/4: Taken from CM 43(47).** Extract from Cabinet Secretary Notebooks recording Bevin's report to Cabinet on the Moscow meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers (which ended after six weeks on 25 April) which itemised all the areas of disagreement between the US and UK and the Soviets.
- 8 May 1947** **FO 371/66369/N6314/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Edmund Hall-Patch in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The latter gave the Committee a report on the Moscow Conference. The UK delegation had arrived in Moscow 'full of apprehension'. The Secretary of State had refused to commit to partial solutions to the outstanding problems at the initial stages of the Conference and subsequently tabled a paper 'Revised Potsdam' which surprisingly the Russians had seemed to accept in large measure. German reparations were, as always, the main stumbling block with the Russians seeking more than the US and UK were prepared to go along with. The next Council of Foreign Ministers would be held in November when decisions on reparations would need to be made. The Committee also referred back to the 28 April proposal and agreed that visiting Heads of Chancery etc. could be invited to attend Russia Committee meetings while in London.
- 16 May 1947** **FO 371/66368/N5124/271/38.** Note by A E Lambert to Heads of Chancery and His Majesty's Missions Abroad, setting out the request discussed on 29 April above.
- 22 May 1947** **FO 371/66369/N6315/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Oliver Harvey in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Committee considered the responses from overseas representatives to Mr Warner's 26 February on Communism outside of the Soviet Union. Need missing 26 Feb paper to make sense of comments but Committee agreed that once the Memorandum had been amended to reflect their comments it should 'go forward'. The Committee also discussed inter alia the state of negotiations for a revised Anglo-Soviet Treaty. M Vyshinski had had further discussions with HM Ambassador in Moscow with a measure of success in reaching some agreement on the terms of the revision, albeit with some difference in view about the revisions between Sir Orme Sargent and the Chiefs of Staff. In connection with the Treaty, Izvestia had published an editorial with 'a slashing attack' on the Secretary of State's recent speech in the House of Commons, claiming that his version of the negotiations for a revised Treaty did not correspond with the facts and that the UK version would worsen, not improve, the present Treaty.
- 25 May 1947** **FO 371/66369/N6315/271/38G.** Minute by Mr Ashton-Gwatkin, following the discussion on Communists outside of the Soviet Union, giving his further views (he had been at the 22 May RC meeting) basically arguing that Communists outside of the

Soviet Union were likely to become disillusioned as they witnessed how things were so much better in the US and even in the UK as compared with in Russia, and suggesting that the facts of Russia's poverty and backwardness, so obvious to anyone visiting the country, should be given greater publicity.

- 16 June 1947** **FO 371/66369/N6315/271/38G.** Note by Thomas Brimelow commenting on Ashton-Gwatkin's note and that this had been discussed at a meeting on 9 June under Mr Jebb's chairmanship and noting that Mr Troutbeck (who had also been present at RC Meeting on 22 May) had written: "Personally, I feel we should do better to put the whole proposition into cold storage for the moment" because it seemed doubtful that it was the right time to open propaganda campaign against the economic weaknesses of the USSR.
- 17 July 1947** **FO 371/66371/N8811/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr I A Kirkpatrick in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Committee discussed: the Marshall Offer; the next session of the General Assembly; the Japanese Peace Treaty; and circulation of the Committee's minutes. Discussion on the Marshall offer centered on the disruptive behaviour of the Russians at the recent Paris Conference where they had walked out at once and subsequently caused their satellites to leave the conference, and their reasons for so behaving. Despite this behaviour the Secretary of State was of the view that European unity should not be despaired of until after the November conference of Foreign Ministers. On the General Assembly, Mr Jebb reported that the US view was that the next session should see an all-out Anglo-American campaign against Russia and satellite behaviour in Eastern Europe. But this would not be compatible with the current idea of doing a deal with the Russians over the admission of new members so the Committee agreed that the US Embassy should be informed that their proposal could not be decided upon until nearer the time. On circulation of the Committee's minutes, Sir Orme Sargent had enquired whether they were sent to HM Embassy in Moscow. They were not and the Committee agreed it was not necessary to do so.
- 31 July 1947** **FO 371/66371/N9345/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr I A (Ivone) Kirkpatrick in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Meeting discussed: publicity about USSR; Socialist parties in eastern Europe; Ex-Italian North Africa; troubles in Indonesia; and Anglo-Russian relations generally. On publicity, the Committee considered a minute circulated by Mr Kirkpatrick setting out arguments for and against a more actively critical line in UK publicity about Russia in the light of the failure of the Trade talks and their attitude to the Marshall offer. They agreed that it would not be politic to recommend any drastic changes to the policy until after the November Conference

and that a campaign of propaganda against Russia by the BBC at that time would serve to undermine the latter's reputation for objectivity. It would also be at odds with the situation with satellite countries which was impacted by the directive earlier in 1947 by the Secretary of State to HM representatives abroad to maintain correct relations with the satellites. Moreover, obstructive Russian tactics were already showing signs of damaging Communist influence in the UK and clumsy Russian propaganda was serving our cause well in the US. Therefore, the Committee agreed that no recommendations on publicity should be made to the Secretary of State at the present stage. On Anglo-Russian relations generally, the Committee was informed that the revised Anglo-Soviet Treaty was in cold storage though if the Russians suggested a further meeting the UK would agree. On Anglo-Soviet Trade Talks, the Soviet Government had decided to pay only 50% of the instalment due on 1 August.

14 Aug 1947 **FO 371/66371/N9549/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr C F A Warner in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Committee considered: the general policy towards Russia; the Ratification of Treaties; the Marshall Plan; United States Aid Broadcasts to the USSR; the international situation: and Commonwealth relations. With Sir Maurice Peterson (HM Ambassador in Moscow) present at the meeting, he described how the atmosphere in Moscow had changed for the worse recently and the breach between East and West now appeared to the Russians to be an accomplished fact, and one that the US also acknowledged. The Secretary of State (who had to contend with the risk of a split in the Labour Party) continued to maintain that we should not sanction any policy of despair at being able to reach some agreement with the Russians until after the November Conference. However, as the hope of a change of heart on the part of the Russians was so slight there was a need to make alternative plans. On the Russian internal situation, Sir Maurice Peterson reported that the grain harvest had proved better than in 1946 though it had still not reached pre-war levels. He had seen few signs of the much-publicised mechanisation under the Five-Year Plan and thought that the oil production of the USSR was between 50 and 60% of pre-war levels. Sir Maurice was asked what he thought liable to happen on Stalin's death and said that although Molotov was the "heir to the throne" he lacked popular appeal and it might fall to some other member of the Politburo to fill the gap.

28 Aug 1947 **FO 371/66371/N10279/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr C F A Warner in the Chair. Mr Brimelow acting as Secretary. The meeting discussed: a review of current events; membership of Russia Committee; Mr Passant's minute on the resemblance between the Soviet political system and the one-party system of the defeated Axis powers; EID paper on Soviet Trade agreements with the satellites. On membership of the Committee, it was agreed that Mr Gee should be invited to future

meetings and that Mr Passant should become a member. On Mr Passant's paper, Mr Warner suggested that a paper should be drafted, not for publication, but as a basic brief for use in the Middle East and possibly for use elsewhere if Ministers at any time authorize anti-Communist and anti-Soviet publicity. Once drafted the paper would be circulated to the Russia Committee for discussion at a future meeting.

11 Sept 1947 **FO 371/66372/N10896/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr I A (Ivone) Kirkpatrick in the Chair and three guest attendees. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Meeting discussed: Germany; and Austria. On Germany, the focus was on what the Russian attitude was likely to be at the forthcoming November Council of Foreign Ministers where it was feared that they would press for unreasonable concessions and, if and when unsuccessful, would blame the Western powers for non-achievement of German unity. On Austria, Mr Dean reported that there had been no progress on the Austrian Peace Treaty because the Russians would only sign if they could acquire a large portion of German assets in Austria and he emphasised that it was important the UK agreed a common line on Austria with the US.

26 Sept 1947 **FO 371/66371/N11688/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr C F A Warner in the Chair. Mr Lambert, Secretary. Sir Maurice Peterson (HM Ambassador, Moscow) in attendance. The meeting discussed: Russian participation in the Japanese peace settlement; and recent developments affecting Russian policy. On Japan, the Committee noted that the Russians had rejected the US proposal for a preliminary conference on the Peace settlement with Japan. It was debated whether one should press on without Russian participation and whether the UK should wait to see what the US decided or should tell them of the UK views; it was noted that the US Presidential elections also affected the US attitude and the timing. The Committee discussed the likelihood of the subject being raised at the November Conference and concluded that the Russians could well raise the subject. It was concluded that it would be to the UK's advantage to give the UK's views to the US and the Japan Department would be asked to prepare a minute for submission. The Committee also noted that when they had had time to examine the JIC's report on Communism in South East Asia the question of improving liaison between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office on matters concerning Communism in colonial territories should be re-examined. Finally, reference was made to a recommendation by the JIC that the number of Soviet officials stationed in the UK should be reduced but there were difficulties with such a proposal which the Committee would need to re-examine in consultation with the Security Departments.

- 8 Oct 1947** **FO 371/66296/N13332/49/38.** Note by Mr Lambert to Russia Committee, entitled 'Communist tactics at International Congresses, covering a draft paper on Communist activities at non-governmental international conferences for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee.
- 9 Oct 1947** **FO 371/66372/N12137/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Oliver Harvey in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Committee discussed the establishment of 'Cominform' (Communist Information Forum) founded by Stalin in September 1947 to draw together the Communist satellite countries in Belgrade; economic self-sufficiency in Eastern Europe; and the draft dispatch on Communist activities at non-governmental international conferences. A wide-ranging discussion took place on the significance of the Russian move to set up Cominform which had been the subject of a telegram (No 2212) from Frank Roberts. It was felt that the Russians might believe that the present economic difficulties in Europe would increase and spread to the US and thus that the whole non-Communist world might be ready to plunge into economic chaos. But, with the November Council of Foreign Ministers around the corner the tactic appeared to have finally caused Monsieur Bidault to lose patience with the Russians. And in the UK the public's attention had been drawn to the Russian campaign against the UK which had hitherto largely gone unnoticed. The Committee discussed how to present this situation to the Secretary of State and it was decided that when Mr Roberts' fuller analysis had reached London it should be correlated with the Committee's discussions and a note prepared for circulation and, if necessary, an ad hoc meeting of the committee would be held, after which it would be submitted to the Secretary of State together with draft Intel to posts abroad for his approval. The Committee then considered a paper drafted by Mr Radice on the prospect of Eastern Europe becoming economically independent of the West in the near future in which he concluded that this could happen by 1950 or 51. Finally, Mr Warner raised the subject of the draft circular on Communist activities at non-governmental international conferences saying that he was not satisfied with the draft which gave the impression of the Committee despairing of ever taking any action in London to warn British delegates against Communist tactics at such conferences. He suggested and the Committee agreed that other government departments should be asked to inform the Foreign Office before important conferences took place so that the FO could consider whether anything could be done against anticipated Communist tactics.
- 23 Oct 1947** **FO 371/66374/N13701/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Kirkpatrick in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Committee continued their earlier discussion

on 'Cominform' and were informed that the Secretary of State had taken note of Mr Roberts' preliminary analysis but had ruled that no 'Intel' on the subject should be sent out, as had been suggested at the Committee's last meeting because he wished to wait for further evidence of the effect on which the setting up of the 'Cominform' was going to have on Communist plans in Europe and would probably await the outcome of the November Conference. Later in the meeting General Jacob said that while the Russians were coming more and more into the open with their attacks on the US and UK there was no sign of any official reaction in the UK and as a result our publicity organs were handicapped.

- 5 Nov 1947** **FO 371/66296/N13332/49/38.** Note by Mr Lambert to Mr Warner attaching a redrafted note on Communist manoeuvres at international non-governmental congresses, redrafted to pick up on the comments made by the Committee at their 9 October meeting. An added manuscript note shows that Mr Warner was happy with the redraft.
- 6 Nov 1947** **FO 371/66373/N13180/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Oliver Harvey in the Chair. Mr Gandy, Secretary. The Committee business included: a paper on the 'foundation of Stalinism'; economic relations with Eastern Europe; and political developments in Eastern Europe subsequent to the establishment of the 'Cominform'. The paper on Stalinism was deferred for discussion at a meeting scheduled for 13 November after which it was proposed to submit it to the Secretary of State. The Committee considered Mr Radice's paper as circulated on 20 October and agreed that it should be submitted to the Secretary of State under a short covering minute emphasizing that it contained a purely factual appreciation.
- 7 Nov 1947** **FO 371/66373/N12755/271/38.** Top Secret Memorandum by Mr A E Lambert, Secretary to the Russia Committee, Headed 'Russia Committee - The Cominform' as circulated to FO Heads of Department. Interestingly it begins by saying that the Secretary of State is suspending judgment on the real significance of the Cominform until we can see whether it results in changes to Soviet policy and tactics. However, the Russia Committee still decided to circulate to Heads of Department and to ask them to keep their eyes open for changes.
- 8 Nov 1947** **FO 371/66373/N12959/271/38.** Memorandum from Sir Maurice Peterson, HM Ambassador in Moscow, to Secretary of State, Ernest Bevin (received 13 November) providing, in advance of the November Council of Foreign Ministers meeting to be held in Paris in November, a lengthy analysis of the course if Anglo-Soviet relations since

the last meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow in April 1947. It is a pessimistic analysis from the man on the spot in Moscow.

- 10 Nov 1947** **FO 371/66373/N12755/271/38.** Top Secret Memorandum by Mr Warner to Heads of Mission and HM representatives abroad making the same point as Lambert above re Secretary of State's stance and asking that representatives to draw to the Russia Committee's attention anything which seems to constitute evidence in support of the theory of a new phase in Soviet attitudes and tactics as the Committee wishes to collect and collate such evidence for the Secretary of State.
- 13 Nov 1947** **FO 371/66373/N12959/271/38.** Memorandum from R M A Hankey to Mr Warner and also initialled by Sir Orme Sargent as having been read by him, describing and attaching Sir Maurice Peterson's 8 November Memorandum and putting his own gloss on Peterson's views.
- 21 Nov 1947** **FO 371/66297/N13619/49/38.** Covering minute from Mr Lambert to Sir Oliver Harvey attaching the first periodical summary for the Secretary of State on concrete evidence that the Declaration of the Cominform marks a new departure in Communist and Soviet policy. The attached Top-Secret Memorandum pulls together comments received, to be passed on to Ernest Bevin, from Embassies in Austria; Hungary; Bulgaria; Czechoslovakia; Yugoslavia; Romania; France and Italy.
- 22 Nov 1947** **FO 371/66296/N13332/49/38.** Minute William Hayter to J A Drew, Cabinet Office, following up earlier discussions on the question of counteracting political manoeuvres of Communist delegations to international non-governmental congresses and the steps that might be taken to put British delegates on their guard. The remedy would be to get hold of such British delegates in advance and warn them but this could be misinterpreted and resented as infringement of freedom and he spelt out how this might be done but said that they required some machinery for centralizing the information the Foreign Office received and asked whether the Working Party on which he, Hayter, represented the Foreign Office – and therefore a Cabinet Office Working Party – might be willing to circulate the paper to the Government Departments most likely to be concerned.
- 5 Nov 1947** **CAB 128/10/90 (47)2.** Cabinet Minutes where the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, spoke to colleagues about his lack of optimism about the fifth Council of Foreign Ministers Conference that was to open in London later that day. The minutes record Bevin as saying:

"There were no indications that the Soviet Government would be more accommodating than they had been at the last meeting in Moscow. Indeed,

their action in establishing the Cominform, in strengthening their political control in the satellite countries of Eastern Europe and in fomenting industrial troubles in many parts of Western Europe seemed to suggest that they had no present desire to reach agreement with the Western powers for the peaceful settlement of Europe. There was, therefore, little ground for hoping that the Council of Foreign Ministers would be able to make much progress towards agreement on the main issue still outstanding in connection with the Peace Treaties for Germany and Austria. The Foreign Secretary said that, if the proceedings at this meeting confirmed his fears, he would have to ask the Cabinet to consider a fresh approach to the main problems of our foreign policy". (Item 2)

This underlines that although Bevin was being cautious with the suggestions coming from his FO team, and was careful in the House not to antagonize his pro-Russia Labour colleagues, he clearly had not only reached a pessimistic view of Soviet tactics but was prepared to go on record – albeit in the controlled environment of the Cabinet - to express these views.

- 4 Dec 1947** **FO 371/66375/N14304/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr C F A Warner in the Chair. Mr Pridham, Secretary. The Committee discussed inter alia the draft memorandum on Cominform; the Council of Foreign Ministers; and US attitude towards Russian policy. The terms of the draft memorandum relating to Cominform were agreed subject to certain amendments and it was agreed that it should go forward not just to the Secretary of State but also the Minister of State and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary but not be circulated to posts abroad or given further distribution in London. On Council of Foreign Ministers Conference then taking place in London, the Committee suggested that it was important to foresee what the UK publicity should be in the event of a breakdown (which did occur) and General Jacob drew attention to the fact that Ministerial speeches were an essential preliminary to any propaganda operation and that the Secretary of State should be advised to make a statement either at the Conference or immediately following it to give maximum effect to the publicity and Mr Warner agreed to discuss this matter with Sir Orme Sargent.
- 18 Dec 1947** **FO 371/66375/N14892/271/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr I A Kirkpatrick in the Chair. Mr Pridham, Secretary. The Committee agreed, subject to some amendment, that the draft periodical summary seen at the previous meeting should go forward. The Committee went on to discuss Mr Gladwyn Jebb's draft Memorandum on the future of the United Nations and the Soviet's attitude to the UN and the whole question of security that the UN could provide to its members.

- 5 Jan 1948** **CAB 129/23 CP (48)5.** Memorandum to Cabinet by Ernest Bevin entitled 'Policy in Germany' (circulated to Cabinet on 6 January). This paper sets out the situation resulting from the breakdown of the Conference of Foreign Ministers, explaining that it was not unexpected, though Bevin had, before the Conference, not abandoned hope that the issues around trying to reach agreement on German policy would be resolved. He now felt that the UK and Western powers had to consider urgently but soberly what their future policy in Germany should be in response to Russia's intransigence.
- 4 Jan 1948** **CAB 129/23 CP (48)6.** Memorandum to Cabinet by Ernest Bevin entitled 'The First Aim of British Foreign Policy' (circulated to Cabinet 5 January). When discussed by Cabinet on 8 January (see below), the Cabinet endorsed the policy outlined in CP(48)6 but felt that too much emphasis should not be laid on its anti-Soviet aspect. In reply Bevin was reported as saying: *'it would be impossible for him to give an effective lead without being critical of Soviet policy, but it was his intention to concentrate mainly on the positive and constructive side of his proposals'*.
- 5 Jan 1948** **CAB 129/23 CP (48)7.** Memorandum to Cabinet by Ernest Bevin entitled 'Review of Soviet Policy' (circulated to Cabinet 6 January). This paper is partly based upon Sir Maurice Peterson's 8 November Memorandum to Bevin. The Cabinet 'took note' of the contents of this Memorandum.
- 7 Jan 1948** **FO 371/*****.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. NB Minutes missing
- 8 Jan 1948** **CAB 128/12 CM (48)2.** Minutes of Cabinet Meeting. Very important paper from Russia Committee viewpoint. Under Item 5, Ernest Bevin referred to the above Memoranda that Cabinet had before them and the Minutes record his saying:

'...although the recent Soviet attempts to stir up trouble in France and Italy had largely failed, some closer form of union should be created in Western Europe in order to resist the increasing penetration of Soviet influence. It would have been premature to take action in this direction before the recent meeting of the Council of Foreign Minister, but the breakdown of that conference ...had opened the way for an attempt to secure a greater measure of co-operation among the countries of Western Europe'.

Significantly, in Russia Committee terms, Bevin was also reported as saying:

'The most effective method of countering Soviet propaganda was to provide specific information refuting the misrepresentations made by the Soviet

Government. The Prime Minister's recent broadcast illustrated how this could be combined with encouragement of Socialist principles'.

'It might be desirable to establish some form of inter-departmental organisation, including the Board of Trade, the Colonial Office, and the Commonwealth Relations Office, to work out the basic principles of co-operations and advise on the lined which propaganda should follow'.

- 15 Jan 1948** **FO 371/71687/N765/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Lambert, Secretary. The meeting began with Mr Gladwyn Jebb informing the Russia Committee that Sir Orme Sargent had asked him to assume Chairmanship of the Committee in succession to Sir Oliver Harvey. The business then concentrated on the approvals given by Cabinet on 8th January. Key document in relation to Cabinet decisions (see previous entry).
- 16 Jan 1948** **FO 371/71687/N765/765/38.** Minute from Gladwyn Jebb to Orme Sargent in which he says that 'to his astonishment' when chairing the meeting he discovered that, with the exception of Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, the Russia Committee members – all of whom of course were very senior diplomats, had not seen the papers as circulated to the Cabinet and therefore "it was really not possible for [the Russia Committee] to function very intelligently". He therefore proposed some special circulation rules to circumvent the stringent rules governing Cabinet papers circulation from preventing the efficient working of the Russia Committee. Orme Sargent then sent to minute to Mr Roberts (Ernest Bevin's Principal Private Secretary) for the Secretary of State to see. Key document
- 22 Jan 1948** **Hansard. HC Debate Vol 446 cc383-517.** Significant Hansard Extract. Bevin reported to Parliament following the breakdown of the December meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers. This marked the official recognition on Bevin's part that relations between Western Powers and the Soviet Union had seriously broken down and that actions, as had long been suggested by his Russia Committee Foreign Office officials, had to be recommended to his Cabinet colleagues and, now, in Parliament. His speech was a lengthy one where he painstakingly described the changes in relations since Potsdam onwards – after which, he said, 'things had begun to go wrong' - and gave examples of what he described as the 'war of nerves and pressure upon weaker neighbours' exercised by the Soviets since the war. He said that Mr Marshall's proposals for a European Recovery Programme, which he saw as an opportunity for really trying to get Europe on its feet - had been the catalyst for further deterioration in relations between the West and the Soviets who could not accept the concept of the

unity of Europe. He re-iterated that Molotov had threatened both the UK and France if we went on with the European Recovery Programme and it was soon after that the Soviets established the Cominform, the objective of which was to prevent the Programme from succeeding. Against that background, which was not encouraging, the planning for the November London Council of Foreign Ministers went ahead. Bevin went on: *'The flood of abuse against ourselves and the world by M Vyshinski in New York was calculated to raise tempers...we still went on trying to get the conference on a proper basis as I reported to the House before the Recess. Every day when there was a proposal discussed and an effort made to reach a practical conclusion we had to waste a whole day listening to abuse of the Western Powers.I ask each one here to try to imagine what it is like to sit there hour after hour and to have thrown at one almost every invective of which one can think and not answer back.....Now we have to face a new situation.....the free nations of Western Europe must now draw closely together'*.

On Germany, Bevin stated: *'We stand for a united Germany, not a dismembered or divided Germany. We have been in favour of a centralised German Government but not an over-centralised German Government which in our view could be a danger to peace. In this, I believe the Americans, the French and ourselves, despite slight differences between us, can reconcile our views. On the other hand, the Soviet Government are pressing for an over-centralised Government which we know could be used in the same way to develop a one-party dictatorship as has been done in the Eastern European countries, and we cannot agree to it'*.

On how to meet the change in Soviet policy, Bevin said: *"Despite all the artificial barriers set up, and the propaganda blared out, which no doubt will increase after this Debate, we shall pursue a course which will seek to unite Europe. If the present division of Europe continues, it will be by the act and the will of the Soviet Government..... However, we shall not be diverted, by threats, propaganda or fifth column methods..."*

29 Jan 1948 **FO 371/71687/N1372/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Edmund Hall-Patch in the Chair. Mr Lambert, Secretary. The Committee business included discussion of a paper on recent developments connected with Cominform and agreed amendments so that the paper could be submitted to Ernest Bevin. The Committee then discussed a recent speech by Winston Churchill; a conversation Mr Warner had had about the probable effects of the death of Stalin should it occur and the recent Cabinet Conclusions on foreign affairs – now that they had seen the papers. Key document.

- 7 Feb 1948** **FO 371/*******. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. NB Minutes missing.
- 19 Feb 1948** **FO 371/71687/N8166/765/38**. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Lambert, Secretary. The Committee business included: a discussion on the World Federation of Trade Unions and the TUC's attendance at a proposed meeting; Cominform Survey; Chinese Communists; Anti Communist Propaganda; and Churchill's view on Anglo Soviet Relations.
- 26 Feb 1948** **FO 371/71670/N2433/9**. Memorandum from Vernon Bartlett to W Ridsdale. Very interesting Memo on a conversation between Vernon Bartlett, then a British Member of Parliament, and the former Czechoslovakian Ambassador, Slavik. The latter, whose judgement Bartlett felt to be excellent, spoke of the Soviets not, as was commonly thought, being alarmed by the prospect of another war for several reasons: the few British and US troops left in Europe could be overrun quickly; there was no force to prevent the very rapid and complete occupation of Western Europe including Britain; once Britain was occupied the US would be reluctant to interfere.
- 28 Feb 1948** **FO 371/71670/N2433/9**. Note by William Hayter to Mr Roberts (of British Long Telegram but who was by then Private Secretary to Ernest Bevin) saying that Roberts had asked for his views on the Vernon Bartlett Memo (as above). He said that he, the JIC and the FO 'have always taken the view that the Russians would not be prepared to face the outbreak of a major war with any confidence before about 1956 or 1957' and that he was not shaken in his view by the Bartlett Memo. Roberts then adds a manuscript note to Ernest Bevin saying that he might like to see the attached Memo.
- 4 Mar 1948** **FO 371/71687/N2915/765/38**. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Lambert, Secretary. The Committee business included: the proposed Treaty, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg; the Cabinet paper on China; and the Czech crisis and the situation in Italy.
- 18 Mar 1948** **FO 371/71687/N3866/9**. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Makins in the Chair. Miss Rolleston, Secretary. The Committee was informed that the Cabinet paper on China which had been prepared in accordance with the recommendation of the Russia Committee would not now be circulated to the Cabinet by the Secretary of State. On Sir Orme Sargent's instruction it was being recast in the form of a memorandum which was to be distributed to Cabinet. Christopher Warner asked for the Committee members' help in ensuring that matters requiring publicity should be drawn to the attention of the recently formed Information Research Department which was relying on the Russia Committee to provide information to them while the organisation was still engaged in being set up.

- 24 Mar 1948** **FO 371/71687/N3866/9.** Memo from Mr Lambert to Mr Hankey, referring back to the Minutes of the Russia Committee meeting on 18 March.
- 30 Mar 1948** **FO 371/71677/N3820.** Memo from Orme Sargent to Sir T Lloyd, Colonial Office, saying that the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, is anxious to have periodical (fortnightly) surveys of Communist activities in countries outside the Soviet Union, and asking Sir T Lloyd to supply the Northern Department of the FO (i.e. the Department that runs the Russia Committee) with information about Communist activities in British overseas territories. Thus, what was to become colloquially known as the "Crystal Gazer" came into being and until November 1948 was only distributed within the UK, always classified both "Top Secret" and "Personal".
- 31 Mar 1948** **FO 371/71677/N3820.** Papers relating to a lengthy (17 page) paper by Mr W Barker, Head of the Russian Secretariat at the British Embassy in Moscow, entitled "The Practice of Stalinism" and a cover note from Sir Maurice Peterson (HM Ambassador in Moscow) to Ernest Bevin dated 24 March 1948 in which he says:

"2. What emerges from the study with incontrovertible clarity is that Soviet policy has always been, still is, directed towards the ultimate goal of bringing about world revolution.....During this desperate struggle for survival....when the peril was especially great, the Soviet leaders were compelled to jettison, at least temporarily, many of the fundamental principles of Leninism both at home and in their relations with that part of the capitalistic world with which they were compelled to make common cause....."

3. The years 1946 and 1947 saw, in pursuance of this policy, the development of a ponderous propaganda campaign for the reconditioning of the Soviet peoples, who during the stress of war had been allowed to stray so far from the narrow path of Marxism-Leninism.

5. It is possible that the Soviet leaders would have been prepared to rely mainly on the normal development and exploitation of the crisis, had not firstly the Truman Doctrine as applied to Greece and Turkey, and, secondly, the birth of the idea of Marshall Aid' given them a sense of urgency. For, as the Kremlin was quick to appreciate, this latter idea if realised in practice, raised the possibility not only that the impending crisis of the capitalist world might be deferred, but that common action by the governments of the capitalist states might even lead to the long term stabilisation of the capitalist system This no doubt accounts for the violence of the Soviet reaction to the European Recovery Programme".

- 1 April 1948** **FO 371/71687/N8167/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick in the Chair. Mr Rob, Secretary. The main item of discussion was whether there was a need for a more formal means of exchanging information regarding the Soviet Union with the US State Department. Close, but informal, contact existed between US and UK Embassies in Moscow and between, for example, Mr Warner and his opposite number in the State Department and these contacts and resultant information sharing was satisfactory.
- 1 April 1948** **FO 371/71670/N4057/9.** Minute from Geoffrey Harrison, British Embassy, Moscow, to R M A Hankey of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office about a report being produced by the 'US Embassy in Moscow on 'Soviet Intentions'. The gist of the report was that the belief on the part of the US was that the Soviets would do everything 'short of war' to achieve their objectives.
- 15 April 1948** **FO 371/71687/N8168/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Lambert, Secretary. The Committee business included consideration of a draft Summary of Indications regarding Soviet foreign policy which were to be circulated to Ministers though consideration of the format of the summaries which would best suit the Foreign Secretary had yet to be determined. It was suggested that the Committee should consider undertaking more detailed analysis of the Soviet press and radio. The Committee also considered Mr Harrison's 1 April minute (see above).
- 29 April 1948** **FO 371/71687/N8169/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. The Committee business included: further consideration of the Summary of Indications regarding Soviet foreign policy and the Committee approved the draft and noted that the Foreign Secretary had now agreed that these summaries were in future to be seen by the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Minister of Defence and Lord President.
- 3 May 1948** **FO 371/71650/N5404/31/38.** Minute from R M A Hankey to Mr Crosthwaite (then Head of FCO Western Department) entitled 'The Communist Campaign: The Next Phase' setting out his ideas and seeking Crosthwaite's comments with a view to having a joint memorandum agreed between them for discussion at the Russia Committee's meeting on 13 May.
- 13 May 1948** **FO 371/71687/8169/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Rob, Secretary. Mr Harrison, from the British Embassy, Moscow, in attendance to discuss a further draft (Number 5) of the Summary of Indications regarding Soviet foreign policy. Mr Harrison also reported that the Soviets had taken

the action of publishing recent correspondence between Molotov and General Bedel Smith of the US which the Soviets had calculated, correctly, would place them in a good light by laying claim to their having made peaceful proposals which had been rejected by the Imperialists in the US.

- 27 May 1948** **FO 371/71687/N8170/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. Mr Dixon (now HM Ambassador, Prague, formerly PPS to the Foreign Secretary) in attendance. The Committee discussed a further draft (Number 6) of the Summary of Indications regarding Soviet foreign policy and decided to add to it something on developments in Palestine and the role played by Christian churches in resisting communism in Eastern Europe. They also decided that the Molotov/Bedel Smith correspondence should be printed and circulated in the Foreign Office and to posts abroad. Finally, the Committee discussed a draft memorandum on the Economic situation in Russia and its effect on Soviet foreign policy - which was an update of a paper produced a year earlier with annexes provided by EID and the JIB. It was decided to recast the memorandum in the light of the Committee's discussions and be reconsidered at a later meeting.
- 10 June 1948** **FO 371/71687/N7350/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. The Committee discussed a further draft (Number 7) of the Summary of Indications regarding Soviet foreign policy and spent the remainder of the meeting discussing the relative merits of using various terms to describe 'Communism', 'totalitarianism', 'Stalinism', 'Soviet government', 'the Politburo' etc.
- 24 June 1948** **FO 371/71687/N8171/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. The meeting began with Mr Jebb reporting an opinion expressed by Winston Churchill that there would be war before August. The Committee agreed that despite the crisis over Germany, they would not endorse this opinion. Then, in addition to their discussing further draft (Number 8) of the Summary of Indications regarding Soviet foreign policy, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick then told the Committee that at present there were sufficient food-stocks in Berlin for 27 days and coal stocks for 40 days. The Committee business included: the situation could only be solved either by the Soviets relaxing their present restrictions or by bringing in food by air to Berlin. Sir Ivone outlined three possible courses:
1. To fly in sufficient foodstuffs for our troops and leave the people of Berlin to starve;
 2. To leave Berlin; placing the onus on the Russians;
 3. To tell the Russians they must be responsible for the feeding of Berlin.

- Date?** **FO 371/70272** Future of Russia Committee and relations between the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff, Code 50, file 7836
- 8 July 1948** **FO 371/71687/N8172/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Rob, Secretary. Sir Charles Peake, HM Ambassador, Belgrade, in attendance. The Committee discussed the Berlin air lift and concluded that the difficulties of keeping it going would increase over the winter months, particularly the transport of coal.
- 8 July 1948** **CAB 128/12 CM (48)48.** Minutes of Cabinet Meeting. Item 3: Germany. The Foreign Secretary said that the Governments of the United Kingdom, United States and France had now presented to the Soviet Government notes of protest against the Russian blockade of the Western sectors of Berlin. No reply had yet been received to these notes...Meanwhile, very satisfactory progress had been made with the arrangements for supplying Berlin by air.
- Item 4: Eastern Europe. The Foreign Secretary gave the Cabinet a short appreciation of the situation in Eastern Europe. It was impossible to forecast what policy the Soviet Government would eventually pursue towards Yugoslavia. Meanwhile there was no weakening of the support for Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia. It would be convenient if we could take advantage of this confused state of affairs in the Balkans to clear up the situation in Greece.
- 21 July 1948** **FO 371/71687/N8559/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Secretary, Mr Mackenzie. Sir Maurice Peterson, HM Ambassador, Moscow, in attendance. The Committee business was again dominated by the Berlin situation with Sir Maurice suggesting actions against the Soviets, including: breaking off of trade negotiations; more visits of warships to the Baltic and the Black sea; a blockade of Russian Pacific ports; securing the departure of Franco and the entry of Spain into the UN; economic sanctions; and refusal to give transit visas to all unofficial Soviet Cominform travellers. Mr Glebb raised the question of how the Soviets would be likely to retaliate in the face of such actions.
- 19 Aug 1948** **FO 371/71651/N9471/31/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the chair. Mr Lambert back as Secretary. The Committee discussed a further draft Summary of Indications Regarding Soviet Foreign Policy which was approved for submission. They then went on to discuss two substantive items. First, the Foreign Secretary had asked the Committee to produce, in response to a request to the Foreign Secretary from the Minister of Defence, an appreciation by the Foreign Office of the most likely Russian moves in the near future at points other than in Austria. In

discussion, the Committee agreed that a Memorandum responding to this request should be drafted by Northern Department to include the following main points:

1. The situation in the Western Zones of Germany remains of overriding importance.
2. While the Russians using methods of political warfare or exploiting local discontent, are in a position to make trouble at any point, and while the situation in the Far East is developing favourably for the Russians without their direct intervention, the area in which the most dangerous threat may be expected is the Middle East.
3. The possibilities of the Russians being able to stir up serious trouble for us in the Middle East are such that we ought to be prepared to meet it by every means at our disposal including the stocking up of our bases at such points as Amman and Habaniyah.
4. The most urgent need is for the reinforcement of our security and intelligence services all over the world in order to forestall trouble and enable us to dispose our forces accordingly.

Secondly, the Committee was informed that a Survey of the Strength of Communism in Various Countries outside the USSR for which Sir Orme Sargent had called in March was now ready. Mr Jebb explained that this was intended as a work of reference and suggested that it should be circulated in the Foreign Office and to HM Missions abroad and kept up to date periodically.

19 Aug 1948 **FO 371/71651/N9471/31/38.** Minute from Gladwyn Jebb to Sir Orme Sargent covering a Memorandum of 21 July by Research Department entitled 'Survey of Communism in Countries Outside the Soviet Orbit'. Cover note reminds Orme Sargent that he had asked the Russia Committee in March to prepare a Survey of the Strength of Communism in various countries outside the USSR. Gladwyn Jebb apologised for the length of delay in producing the Memo which was due to shortage of staff and said that the draft had been produced by the Research Department and it was proposed to update it at stated periods.

24 Aug 1948 **FO 371/71651/N9471/31/38.** Orme Sargent note in manuscript at end of 19 August Minute above, saying: *"The S/S said that he liked this paper & that he wished the Research Dept & those who prepared it to be thanked. He thinks, however, that the paper speaks for itself & that the introduction which tends to draw broad conclusions and express opinions should be suppressed. He would therefore like the paper to be circulated to the Cabinet minus the introduction and with a short covering note*

explaining what the paper is & adding that it will be brought up to date as and when further information becomes available”.

- 2 Sept 1948** **FO 371/71687/N8559/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Bateman in the Chair. Mr Rob, the Secretary. The Committee considered a further draft Summary of Indications Regarding Soviet Foreign Policy (No 13). The Committee agreed the draft subject to a few more amendments.
- 16 Sept 1948** **FO 371/71687/N10232/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Gladwyn Jebb back in the Chair. Mr Robb, Secretary. Sir Donald Gainer, HM Ambassador, Warsaw and Mr Sterndale Bennett, now Minister at Sofia) were also in attendance. The Committee considered a further draft Summary of Indications Regarding Soviet Foreign Policy (No 14). The Committee agreed the draft subject to a few more amendments.
- 16/17 Sept 1948** **FO 371/ 71630/N10454/1/38.** Minute from Gladwyn Jebb to Minister of State and from Mr F A Warner to Mr Mason and Mr F B A Rundall reporting the Minister of State's views on the paper as follows: *“This is a reasonable paper and represents substantially my own thinking....We are now collecting stuff, but we must index it and have it available at every conference ready to pullout...Above all we must overcome our reluctance not to use a point more than once. If it is good we must learn to plug the theme”.*
- 20 Sept 1948** **FO 371/ 71630/N10454/1/38.** Minute by Mr Rundall giving notice that a meeting had been arranged for 22 September to discuss with Information Research Department (which had been set up in January 1948) the general question of Russian tactics at United Nations meetings and the possibility of combating them.
- 24 Sept 1948** **FO 371/ 71630/N10454/1/38.** Note of the meeting on 22 September which had been attended by representatives from the following Foreign Office Departments: IRD; Northern Dept; United Nations Political Dept; Economic Relations Dept; European Recovery Dept. The meeting discussed strategy and tactics in relation to future UN meetings. On strategy, they decided that as soon as the agenda was promulgated for a UN meeting those at this meeting should meet to consider the line they thought the Russians would take on agenda items; their suggestions for British delegates to reply; an agreed memorandum embodying their conclusions would then be submitted for approval to the Russia Committee; IRD, with assistance of Northern Dept, would prepare notes for delegates on the basis of the memorandum as approved by the Russia Committee. On tactics, this would largely depend on the leader of the British delegation; it would be useful if leaders could be supplied with a handbook of material

for refuting stock Soviet lines of argument and propaganda on given subjects. NB shows how IRD and Russia Committee were working closely together.

- 30 Sept 1948** **FO 371/71687/N10730/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Rob, Secretary. Sir Maurice Peterson (HM Ambassador, Moscow) and Sir Ralph Stevenson (HM Ambassador in Nanking) both in attendance. The Committee considered a further draft Summary of Indications Regarding Soviet Foreign Policy (No 15). The Committee agreed the draft subject to a few more amendments. In addition, Mr Jebb gave the Committee a review of the course of the General Debate in the UN Assembly. The Berlin dispute had been referred to the Security Council by the Three Western Powers as a threat to peace under the UN Charter. If the Soviets exercised their veto in the Security Council the intention was to refer the matter to the UN Assembly.
- 14 Oct 1948** **FO 371/71687/N11144/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. The Rt Hon Malcolm Macdonald, HM Commissioner General for South East Asia in attendance. The Committee business included a lengthy and detailed report by Mr Macdonald the situation in Malaya; a paper by the Joint Intelligence Bureau on Soviet purchases of rubber, from, primarily, Malaya and Ceylon; and a review on a recent meeting of the United Nations in Paris.
- 28 Oct 1948** **FO 371/71687/N11882/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. The meeting was interesting because they discussed a letter from Herbert Morrison, Lord President of the Council, to The Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, on Anglo Soviet relations which contained views with which the Russia Committee disagreed. Herbert Morrison had expressed the view that "war was unlikely between now and next May but that the likelihood would increase between May and September 1949", and drew the conclusion that the UK should use the intervening months to put more pressure on the Soviets. The Committee, however, thought that there was no basis for Mr Morrison's conclusion and agreed that they should minute Mr Bevin to this effect. Another interesting aspect of this meeting was when the Committee discussed Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick's paper on anti-Communist propaganda where the latter (who was in attendance) pointed out:

'..that we were in danger of using the term "cold war" in a wrong sense. It was a term invented to describe the Soviet Government's policy of trying to get the better of the Western Powers by every means short of military action. We had now come to apply the term to what was, in fact, merely propaganda. Our "cold war" rested on a policy calculated to frustrate Russian designs'.

Sir Ivone emphasised that it was important that policy on anti-Communist propaganda was established first before deciding on the ancillary support of propaganda to be used. He said that the political aspects of the policy were being provided for but that economic aspects needed to be addressed i.e. it needed to be decided whether it was in the UK's interest to conclude trade agreements within the Soviet orbit, commenting that such agreements should not be concluded unless the UK was satisfied that it was in its interest to do so, and not enter upon them under the illusion that it would earn political goodwill. Nor did he think that the UK should fall into the habit of 'nagging at the Russian' but should deliver our case with the utmost vigour and then let it have time to take effect. Continual reiteration of the UK viewpoint, he felt, was merely wearying to ourselves and to the public. General Jacob added that it was more important, in his view, to emphasise the advantage of living under a democratic regime than to try to explode the "myth" of the Soviet Union.

11 Nov 1948 **FO 371/71687/N12279/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. The Committee business included discussion of a draft letter on propaganda towards the Soviets which the Committee initially proposed that the Foreign Secretary send to certain ministerial colleagues as a suggestion for the broad lines on which they should base themselves when making public speeches. They concluded, however, that the draft should be recast in the form of a memorandum and, once cleared with Christopher Warner, should be given to the Foreign Secretary with the suggestion, if he agreed, that he talk to the Prime Minister about it, with a view to the PM bringing it to the attention of his Ministers – presumably because this would hold greater authority.

22 Nov 1948 **FO 371/71687/N12649.** Personal minute from Christopher Warner to Gladwyn Jebb. Key document. This minute is interesting for what it says about the Russia Committee, its membership and ways of working. In the first paragraph, Warner, at one point, lays claim to having set up the Russia Committee though later in the same paragraph he notes, in effect, the view held by Moley (i.e. Orme Sargent - Warner's boss) that the Committee was needed. The minute is so important that what Warner says to Glebb, should be reproduced more or less in full as follows:

"I have for some time wondered whether it is not a mistake for the Russia Committee to spend the bulk of its time looking through a long draft intelligence summary in great detail. When the Committee was originally set up at my instance, the idea was that the political and economic Under-Secretaries should pool recent information regarding Russian doings affecting their various areas in order to get a collated picture and consider what action,

political, economic or in the publicity sphere, should be taken as a result. I remember Moley saying that although he did not believe in a Joint Planning Committee for the whole work of the Office, he thought it would be valuable to have a Joint Planning Committee ...for matters concerning the Russians...it made sense to try to assess their plans and make counter plans.

This started quite well, but afterwards failed because Oliver Harvey, who was Chairman and also ought to have spoken at each meeting on Germany and Western Europe, practically never turned up and gradually other Under-Secretaries dropped out too.

I gather that during my absence a plan was instigated for reviving something of this kind by having a small sub-committee to consider specific problems thrown up by the Russians ...but this will not work if the main work of the Committee takes an hour or so considering the draft intelligence summary, as happened last time.

....it would be much more valuable to revert to something like the original idea, making a great effort to get all the Under-Secretaries that matter to come or to send adequate substitutes if they cannot.....”.

24 Nov 1948 **FO 371/71687/N13016/765/38.** Terms of Reference for “Cold War” Sub-Committee of the Russia Committee. These TORs said ‘Given the following objectives:

- (a) Loosening the Soviet hold on the orbit countries and ultimately enabling them to regain their independence;
- (b) Pending the attainment of this...long term promoting civil discontent, internal confusion and possibly strife in the satellite countries so that they will be a source of...weakness to Russia and a drain on her resources of manpower and trained personnel.....
- (c) Seizing every opportunity of discrediting the Soviet regime or weakening its position.

Should there now be a planning staff to consider means whereby these objectives can best be achieved by methods other than the present ones; and, if so, how should it be constituted and what should it plan?

25 Nov 1948 **FO 371/71687/N13016/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. The Committee business included: discussion of a paper by Mr Hankey on “British policy towards the Soviet orbit in Europe”. This was an extraordinary discussion. Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick put forward a suggestion that as the

UK was financially strapped it “..would be best to start any kind of offensive operation in a small area “ and suggested Albania. He asked “..whether it would not be possible to start a civil war behind the Iron Curtain and by careful assistance to produce a state of affairs that the Russians had produced in Greece”? He suggested making use of the forces of opposition/resistance within Albania and adopting SOE type tactics. Others on the Committee, Frank Roberts among them, pointed out the dangers in so doing and the need to march in step with the Americans. Lord Tedder (Marshall of the Royal Air Force) who attended for discussion of this item, stressed the importance of setting up a planning staff to examine the various means available and said he was sceptical of the value of SOE type operations unless followed up by military action. He also said that he thought “we should aim at winning the cold war (by which he meant the overthrow of the Soviet regime) in five years time”. Mr Jebb stressed the importance of having a Cabinet decision on the proposal to indulge in anything like SOE operations as well as on the setting up of the proposed organisation to plan these actions. Mr Jebb summed up by suggesting that a sub-committee be set up to examine this question and report back to the full Russia Committee. He read out the terms of reference for the Sub-Committee, prepared earlier (see above) which the Russia Committee agreed.

10 Dec 1948 **FO 371/71687/N13469/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Bateman in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. The Committee business included discussion of further drafts of various papers seen in earlier drafts by the Committee.

14 Dec 1948 **FO 371/71632A/N13467/9.** Report of the first meeting Sub-Committee set up to examine the problem of planning in relation to policy towards the Soviet Union and the Soviet orbit. **Key document.** Following the meeting on 24 November the Sub-Committee agreed to recast their Terms of Reference as follows:

- (a) Making the Soviet orbit so disaffected that in the event of war it would become a dangerous area requiring large armies of occupation, and not a source of useful manpower for Russia.
- (b) Loosening the Soviet hold on the orbit countries, and ultimately enabling them to regain their independence.
- (c) Seizing every opportunity of discrediting the Soviet regime or weakening its position within the frontiers of the Soviet Union.
- (d) Frustrating the Soviet effort to build up the economic war potential of the Soviet Union and the satellites.

The Sub-Committee agreed that they should seek to attain the above objectives by “all means available short of war” and that the mooted special planning organisation should remain an off-shoot of the Russia Committee from whom it should take its

directives and to whom it should report; that the Chairmanship should be a Foreign Office person of the rank of Under Secretary but with representatives from the MOD Chiefs of Staff, The Treasury, The BBC and C's organisation (i.e. The Secret Intelligence Service/ Box 850). They should concentrate initially on Yugoslavia, Albania, the Soviet Zone of Germany and, possibly, China.

16 Dec 1948 **FO 371/71687/N13677/765/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. Key document. The Committee had met for an additional meeting (now meeting fortnightly and it was only one week since the previous meeting) to have a preliminary discussion on the report of the first Sub-Committee (see above) which raised two problems: (i) whether the objectives as formulated should be recommended to the Foreign Secretary; and (2) if so, whether the planning organisation outlined by the Sub-Committee was the best means of attaining those objectives. There was clearly some concern re the first problem that the objectives agreed at the 14 December meeting were over ambitious and that since Ministerial sanctioning was necessary if the work were to go ahead, it would be important that a case for each objective and an indication of what action could be taken to achieve them, should be properly worked out because analogous suggestions had been considered by the Foreign Secretary at various times and not been approved. As to the second issue, there was general agreement to the proposal to create a small permanent Planning Section under the Foreign Office but with representatives from other government departments, but would it be appropriate for such an inter-departmental committee, even if under Foreign Office chairmanship, to be under the ambit/control of the Russia Committee and, if so, the latter's Terms of Reference would need recasting. After a lengthy discussion of the issues the Committee concluded that the Sub-Committee should prepare:

- (1) A memorandum analysing the advantages of a policy of counter offensive against Soviet attacks.
- (2) A separate paper setting forth the views of the Committee on the Planning Organisation which would be required if the policy discussed in (1) were approved.

17 Dec 1948 **FO 371/77623/N1052.** Note of a meeting held in Sir Orme Sargent's room. Key document. Other attendees: Sir William Strang; Sir N Charles; Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick; Mr Makins; Mr Jebb; Mr Bateman; Mr Warner; Mr Dening; Mr Caccia; Mr Wright; Mr Hayter; Mr Roberts; and Mr Hankey. Sir Orme Sargent had clearly called this meeting directly as a result of the meetings held on 24 November, 14 December and 16 December concerning the proposals around the setting up of the Sub-Committee, its

objectives and proposed planning machinery. He clearly wanted to take control of what was happening and said that there were several questions to be discussed:

- (a) The re-organisation of the Russia Committee;
- (b) The desirability of setting up an organisation for planning;
- (c) The question of what action should be taken to educate the service departments in the methods and function of the Foreign Office.

The meeting discussed whether the new Committee (by which was meant a reconstructed Russia Committee) should be a purely Foreign Office body or should have, for example, a MOD Chiefs of Staff representative and the thought was that if it were decided to pursue a more offensive policy towards Russia and the Soviet orbit, as implied by the Sub-Committee meeting proposals, it might be necessary for ultimate decisions to be taken by a Cabinet Committee. Sir Orme Sargent said that if the Secretary of State were to agree to a more offensive policy, it might be necessary to set up an inter-departmental planning organisation in co-operation with the Chiefs of Staff and others concerned. He thought the Secretary of State would not agree to an offensive policy undertaking the encouragement of subversive documents and such other activities that would require the involvement in parallel of the PWC and SOE and still less would he allow the Defence Committee to run foreign policy.

Summarizing the discussion, Sir Orme Sargent said that a Policy Committee would be useful and commissioned Mr Jebb to prepare a paper containing Terms of Reference, taking account of the Terms of Reference of the Russia Committee.

23 Dec 1948 **FO 371/*******. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. NB Minutes missing.

13 Jan 1949 **FO371/N1793/1052/38G**. Minute from Sir Orme Sargent to Sir P Leisching of the Commonwealth Relations Office and to Sir Thomas Lloyd of the Colonial Office inviting them to send representatives to Russia Committee meetings. In this Top-Secret minute Sir Orme Sargent says:

"You may be aware that there exists in the Foreign Office a Russia Committee with Terms of Reference as shown in the enclosed Annex to this letter. This Committee meets once a fortnight under the Chairmanship of one of the Deputy Under-Secretaries, and is at present attended by senior officials of the Foreign Office and by representatives of the Chiefs of Staff and of the Overseas Service of the BBC. It has occurred to us that you might find it useful to send a representative of your Department to the meetings of this Committee, and the Foreign Secretary has agreed to my inviting you to do so. One of the functions of the Committee is to produce a fortnightly summary of probable Soviet intention. This summary, which contains Top Secret material, is sent to a few selected Ministers. If your Secretary of State would like to receive a copy we should be glad to supply him with one. I should be grateful if you would let me know if you wish to send a representative to these meetings, and if so, who he would be. The Committee deal with much Top-Secret information and we therefore hope that your representative would be fairly senior. The FO members of the Committee are of Under-Secretary or Counsellor rank."

The Terms of Reference of the Russia Committee were appended to Sir Orme Sargent's minute but in a manuscript note on the registry copy of the minute Hankey has written "Get enclosure from Mr Hayter. It must be the new terms of reference". (NB this was triple underlined). The new terms of reference as appended were as follows, with the changes from the original TORs of 12 April 1946 shown in red:

"To review at fortnightly intervals the development of all aspects of Soviet policy and propaganda and Soviet activities throughout the world, more particularly with reference to the Soviet campaign against this country; to ensure a unified interpretation thereof throughout the political and economic departments of the Foreign Office; to consider any immediate action that might be required as a result of the Committee's review, and to make recommendations accordingly. The Committee will maintain close contact with the Chiefs of Staff and J.I.C. with a view to coordinating intelligence and estimates of Soviet intentions at every stage".

These TORs are shortened considerably with two main omissions: the first is excision of the words "... particular reference to the probable degree of support to be looked for from the United States of America and to a lesser degree, from France and others: and to ensure that the necessary recommendations as to policy are made either by the departments of the Office concerned or by the Committee to Sir Orme Sargent, as may be appropriate"; and removal of the words "and policy" from the final sentence.

- 18 Jan 1949** **FO371/N643/1052/38G.** Letter from to Sir P Leisching of the Commonwealth Relations Office to Sir Orme Sargent accepting the latter's proposal to send a representative of the CRO to the Russia Committee and asking for a copy of the fortnightly Russia Committee summary for his Secretary of State.
- 21 Jan 1949** **FO 371/N847/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Mackenzie, Secretary. As the first meeting of 1949 and after the end year proposed enhancements of the Russia Committee membership, the numbers attending increased and there was an MOD representative (Admiral Lord Fraser) and a Colonial Office representative (G F Seel) as well as Sterndale Bennett and the Minister designate in Bucharest). The meeting considered three papers, notably a further draft summary of indications regarding Soviet Foreign Policy.
- 3 Feb 1949** **FO 371/N1388/1052.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee business included discussion of three draft papers (RC/9/49; RC 12/49; and RC/15/49) but was of particular interest for two other reasons. First, for the discussion following an enquiry by Bevin "about the newly created Council for Economic Mutual Assistance in Eastern Europe; and secondly, as an indication that the Russia Committee, now under Gladwyn Jebb's Chairmanship and with extended membership now including the MOD, CRO and the CO, was ramping up

its status and was proceeding in a crisper more business like fashion. The latter is an impression and cannot be proved but the minutes are set out more crisply and formally than in the past (NB from next meeting they considered the minutes of the previous meeting – a normal and formal way of running a Committee) and the membership had certainly expanded in number and status (eg two Major General's from MOD) and the Committee was being asked for their views by the Secretary of State and by the Permanent Under Secretary. As to Bevin's request, he had asked the Russia Committee:

"for a considered appreciation of the probable results of the creation by the Soviet Government of a Council for Economic Mutual Assistance with reference to the following:

- (a) Was the formation of the new body...likely to lead to the gradual disappearance of the Cominform?*
- (b) Were we likely to receive feelers from Eastern Europe in regard to closer trade relations?*
- (c) Would the new step mean a genuine lessening of international tension or not?"*

The Russia Committee discussed these points and agreed that they would have their views summarised and sent to Bevin, their main conclusions being: on (a) that there was no evidence that Cominform was about to disappear and that the main difference between the two bodies was that the new Council represented governments whereas the Cominform was an organisation of Communist Party representatives; on (b) that the general conclusion was that the creation of the new Council might lead the satellites to adopt a tougher attitude in their trade negotiations with the West; on (c) no definite conclusions could yet be drawn from the Russians attitude to the wheat negotiations.

15 Feb 1949 **FO 371/N1727/1052.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair (NB first time he is so described). Mr Barnes as Secretary. The main business of the Committee was consideration of a further draft of the Summary of Indications regarding Soviet Foreign Policy (RC/20/49) and the Chairman was quite critical over the length of the 'general' section of the paper and suggested this section should only include points of major interest and detail should be included under the country concerned – a further evidence of the Chairman making changes to the way the Russia Committee worked.

1 March 1949 **FO 371/N2190/1052.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes as Secretary. The main business of the meeting was to discuss a telegram, dated 18 January 1949, from HM Ambassador in Moscow about the future trend of Soviet policy in which he implied that the Soviet Union might wish to wage war if it felt that there was a strong case for so doing. Mr Hayter noted that this view

was not generally accepted by the Foreign Office and argued that the Soviets could achieve their 'aggressive imperialism' by other means. Sir John Edelsten (NB Vice Admiral) disagreed, adding that it was the view of the Chiefs of Staff that we should be doing something to disrupt the course the Soviet build-up of military potential. The Chairman summing up, noted that the US interpretation of the Soviet situation largely coincided with the Ambassador's view. "Russia had no particular need to accelerate a war and she still had the vast area of Asia and all the potentialities of Communist fifth columns in all the countries of the world to exploit". He also said that it could do no harm, and possibly some good, to encourage defection of Soviet scientists in order to sabotage the Soviet atom bomb development. The Committee recommended that the telegram be circulated to recipients of the summary of indications with a brief covering minute setting forth the views of the Committee.

15 March 1949 **FO 371/77623/N2694/1052/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Bateman in the Chair. Mr Harrison, Secretary. The Committee business included: a paper by the Foreign Office Research Department on the prospects of a Communist opposition to Moscow in Germany; a minute on recent reports of Russian troop movements in South-East Europe; and a further draft Summary of Indications regarding Soviet foreign policy. The latter dominated the meeting and these, by now fortnightly, Summaries – this was Summary of Indications of Soviet Foreign Policy No. 26 (Ref RC/41/49) – are circulated to a select number of Ministers, including the Foreign Secretary and other Foreign Office Ministers and the Prime Minister. This particular Summary included references to: Molotov's translation of Soviet foreign policy; Voznesensky's (described by Radice as a competent economist-statistician) having been sacked as Deputy Prime Minister and from the Politburo and being replaced by his own deputy and the Committee agreed that this information needed to be included in the Summary of Indications.

23 March 1949 **FO 371/77616.** Strang to Bevin. NB unable to locate this paper.

12 April 1949 **FO 371/N3583/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Hayter in the Chair. Mr Barnes, as Secretary. The Committee business included: a paper by Mr Radice of Soviet industrial potential; and a further draft summary of indications regarding Soviet foreign policy. Mr Radice's paper had been commissioned by Mr Bevin and the Prime Minister and largely concerned the Soviet economy and the estimated Soviet expenditure on armaments over which there was some dispute about the accuracy. It was largely agreed that the present strength of the Soviet Union lay in its numerous front-line soldiers in Germany and was not dependent on basic economic factors. The figures in the paper showed that the Soviet standard of living was

supporting an increasing productivity and also provided a higher food standard than West Germany. It was agreed that the paper needed to be refined and considered again by the Russia Committee before being submitted to the PM and Foreign Secretary under cover of a minute by the Committee. The Committee then looked at the latest 'Summary of Indications' paper and agreed it could be circulated.

26 April 1949 **FO 371/N3817/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee business included: a copy of a dispatch by HM Ambassador, Moscow on possible effect on Soviet policy of recent changes in Soviet hierarchy; a minute by Information Research Department (IRD) on British participation in the Paris Peace Conference; a further draft 'Indications' paper. Of main interest was the latest 'Indications' paper which drew attention to the announcement in Tass regarding a possible lifting of the Berlin blockade and a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers which the Soviets had stated could be a means of ending the deadlock. The Summary was also to include a reference to the defection of the former editor of the newspaper "British Ally" in Moscow. Sir Anthony Rumbold was then invited to give the Committee his impressions of Czechoslovakia. He gave an overall impression of how things were in the country, noting that although the great majority of the people hated the Communist regime there was no chance of a revolution or of any effective resistance and the Communists had complete control. The standard of living had been steadily going down.

10 May 1949 **FO 371/N4342/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee business comprised 4 items: a paper on 'Peace Offensive, Tactical Deviation or Change of Policy?'; a memorandum concerning the replacement of Molotov by Vishinsky; a revision of Mr Radice's 'Soviet Industrial Potential Paper first discussed at the 12 April meeting; a further 'Summary of Indications' paper. On Molotov's move, the Russia Committee took a different view from that of HM Ambassador, Moscow, who had implied heavily that Molotov had been sacked whereas the Russia Committee members, in discussion, felt that there was no evidence to support this. Mr Radice introduced his revised 'Soviet Industrial Policy' paper which had been commissioned by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, both of whom had seen the original version and had agreed, subject to any comments by the Minister of Defence, it should be circulated to the Cabinet. The Ministry of Defence now wished to circulate a parallel paper giving the latest estimates of Russian armament production. However, the original version had already been amended in accordance with Joint Intelligence Board and MOD comments, so the Russia Committee agreed that the revised paper should be sent to the Foreign Secretary under a covering minute making this clear. As to the 'Summary of

Indications', new items to be included: the fact that the Soviet Peace Initiative (see previous Minutes) regarding the possible lifting of the Berlin blockade appeared to date from Molotov's move; the 'radio war' and whether the Soviets were concerned to try to disturb the US and British propaganda broadcasts; whether there was substance in HM Ambassador's assertion that the Soviets were diverting their efforts from the West to Asia – the Russia Committee did not feel that the evidence as yet supported that view.

24 May 1949 **FO 371/N4901/1052/38.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee was joined by Mr Malcolm Macdonald, Commissioner-General in South East Asia and the main business of the meeting was given over to his address to the Russia Committee, the essence of which was as follows: the future policy of a Communist Government of China was an important question and whether such a Government would be able to embark upon foreign adventures, as well as coping with the situation in China itself, or would need to undertake such adventures in order to divert attention from the Chinese situation..... It appeared that Russia had very little direct association with events in South East Asia, where others were doing their work for them, but there was reason to suppose that Russia was in touch with the Chinese Communists. The Russian Embassy in Bangkok seemed to be a focus of trouble..... Russian tactics were mainly to support dissident elements, such as the Chinese minorities, which had great economic power in South East Asian countries, the extreme left-wing elements, as in Indo-China, and the Siamese Navy who hoped misguidedly to use the Communists to help them gain power in Siam. The future depended on the course of both Communist policy and of nationalism in South East Asia. Nationalist movements could be influenced by the Western attitude to them, particularly if some of them could be enlisted in opposition to Communism..... The influence of the Indian Government had been consistently against Communism and the latter's decision to stay in the Commonwealth might be compared with that of the policy which had culminated in the Atlantic Pact in the West. There was, at present, a struggle between Communist China and democratic India for the leadership of Asia.

8 June 1949 **FO 371/N5326/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee business included a paper by Economic Intelligence Department on the possible emergence of a rouble area (RC/81/49; N5328/1111/38G) and a further draft 'Summary of Indications' (RC/82/49; Final – N5177/1023/38G). New items for the latter included a discussion about the Soviet concern that the Berlin blockade was adversely affecting trade/economy of the East and that the Soviets might wish to restore trade between the sectors to avoid

comparisons between the standard of living in the two sectors because of the possible effect on satellite countries, particularly Poland and Czechoslovakia. There was a reference to the defection of the head of the British Council in Warsaw.

- 21 June 1949** **FO 371/N5675/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee business included: a statement by the Chairman on the resistance to the Russians in Lithuania (no detail of the statement is recorded in the minutes); Sir Stafford Cripps', the Chancellor of the Exchequer, comments on two Russia Committee papers (RC/77/49 "Peace Offensive"; and RC/86/49 'Tactical Deviation or change of Long-Term Policy) a further draft of the 'Summary of Indications'. On the 'Peace Offensive' paper, the Chairman noted that Bevin thought Cripps' comments 'apposite and shrewd' and thought that they should redraft the paper in the light of his comments and should discuss the redraft at their next meeting. Mr Berthoud also raised the question as to whether policy towards the Soviet Union and satellites should be modified following the Council of Foreign Ministers. The Chairman said that only the delegation to the Council would be able to speak with authority but there was no apparent reason in principle to change the existing policy.
- 5 July 1949** **FO 371/N6143/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee had four items of business: a paper by EID (RC/92/49: N6144/1121/38G) on the reported Russian withdrawal from the Soviet/Satellite joint companies; a minute by the German Political Department on the effects on East-West trade of the recent Council of Foreign Ministers (RC/94/49: N6145/1155/38G); a Statement by Mr Hankey on the 'Krajina v Tass' case; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'.
- 19 July 1949** **FO 371/N6594/1052/309.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Hayter in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee business comprised three items: a further draft of 'Summary of Indications'; an extract from a report written after the defection of the former Chief of the Czechoslovak Military Mission in Berlin; a minute by German Political Department on the Soviet-inspired "National Front" in Germany.
- 9 Aug 1949** **FO 371/77624/N7277/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Bateman in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee business comprised: a record prepared by Northern Department of the interrogation of M Heidrich, former Secretary-General of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs; a JIC review of developments in the Soviet Zone of Germany in the last three months; a paper by Northern Department on 'Deportations in the Soviet Union'; and a further 'Summary

of Indications' draft. On the JIC paper the Russia Committee noted the War Office view that it was too soon to assume any substantial Russian demobilisation in Germany at present and that no further information was likely until the end of Autumn; they also noted that the Air Ministry did not think that the increase in the size of runways was very significant – more likely to do with some technical development in Soviet aircraft.

- 30 Aug 1949** **FO 371/77624/N7883/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Hadow, Secretary. The Committee had four items of business: comments from Sir David Kelly on EID's rouble paper; papers by Northern Department of Foreign Office on Soviet Gold Dealings and on Soviet Policy in the Far East; a further draft 'Summary of Indications'.
- 8, 10, 12 Sept** **FO 371/77624//N7883/1052/38G.** Exchange of correspondence between CRO and Mr Hadow where the former disputed the wording in the previous Russia Committee Minutes of something said by the CRO representative.
- 13 Sept 1949** **FO 371/77624/N8287/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Hayter in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee had two items of business: a further 'Summary of Indications' paper; and a paper by the Economic Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office (EID) on 'Soviet Use of the Price Mechanism'. Re the former, interesting items included: Moscow radio having reported guerrilla fighting in Yugoslavia – and in general there being no apparent abatement in the virulence of the Soviet campaign against Tito; reference to an Observer report that the Soviets were planning a general withdrawal from the Balkans – the Russia Committee saw no evidence to support this assertion; and fresh evidence of Russian troop movements towards Yugoslavia but in insufficient numbers as yet to support large scale operations.
- 27 Sept 1949** **FO 371/77624//8665/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Hayter in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee business comprised four items: a further 'Summary of Indications'; revised Northern Department paper on 'Soviet Policy in the Far East'; correspondence about Russian intentions with regard to Yugoslavia; and a paper by IRD on 'The Communist Peace Offensive'. The 'Summary' included reference to a Tass communiqué about an atomic explosion on Russia which appeared to show that Soviet warlike preparations were further advanced than had been expected – RC/123/49; a report from the International Bank said that the Yugoslav balance of payments position over the next four months would be "unbelievably serious". Interesting discussion on state of play with Tito which concluded that the

Russians probably calculated that the Western Powers would not go to war for the sake of Yugoslavia; that active intervention by the Red Army might very well be needed to dislodge Tito; that although armed intervention was not excluded, the Russians would probably wait until the Spring to bring matters to a head. The Russia Committee invited the Northern and Southern Departments of the Foreign Office to prepare a joint paper on the probable developments of the Soviet/Yugoslav dispute for the Secretary of State.

- 11 Oct 1949** **FO 371/77624/N8944/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Hayter in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee business included four items: a further 'summary of Indications' paper; an IRD paper on Communism in Africa; a minute by Southern Department on the probable development of the Soviet/Yugoslav dispute; an IRD paper on 'The USSR and the Satellites: Organisation, Distribution of Power and Channels of Command'. Of these perhaps the most interesting was the Southern Department's minute which the Russia Committee agreed accurately represented its view on the situation and agreed that copies should be sent to HM Embassies in Washington, Moscow and Belgrade and that Washington should be authorised to show it to the US State Department and that the Russia Committee Chairman would also show it to the JIC – ref N8931/1023/38G.
- 25 Oct 1949** **FO 371/77624/N9313/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. The Committee had three items of business: an EID paper on Yugoslavia's Economic Position – RC/137/49; an IRD paper on Communism in Egypt; and a further 'Summary of Indications'. On Yugoslavia things had improved and the US was now likely to provide additional \$11million credits against a net Yugoslav deficit of \$12million therefore meeting Yugoslavia's short-term requirements for raw materials. New issues for the 'Summary' included the fact that Russia had not made as many concessions as expected to the new Eastern German Government and had retained means of control over it; the election of Yugoslavia to the Security Council was seen as being unlikely to affect Soviet Policy towards Yugoslavia.
- 8 Nov 1949** **FO 371/77624/N9737/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Hayter in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. HM Ambassador, Belgrade, Sir Charles Peake, attended the meeting. The four items of Committee business were: a statement by Sir Charles Peake; a further 'Summary of Indications'; a dispatch from the High Commissioner, New Delhi, about Communism in India; and an IRD paper on 'Trends of

Communist Propaganda, 18 October – 4 November'.⁶⁴⁴ Sir Charles reported having seen Marshall Tito the previous week at the latter's request. The general tenor was that Yugoslavia had the situation regarding Russia and the Satellites in hand and Stalin could only wait while Yugoslavia consolidated her independence. Yugoslavia also believed that a new system would arise in which the Satellites dropped away from Russia and grouped themselves around Yugoslavia as independent Communist states and would be able then to talk to Russia on equal terms. The Yugoslavs thought that Stalin could not prevent this development except by use of force. Tito said that he would use all necessary means of self-defence and was less sanguine than some fellow Yugoslavs that such force would not be forthcoming. He expected trouble on the frontiers. The Yugoslavs needed economic help over the next 18 months to 2 years to encourage her.

Re the 'Summary', it included an interesting issue relating to Poland and the appointment by the Russians of Marshall Rokossovsky as head of the Polish armed forces which would annoy Poles greatly and that the appointment provided a 'magnificent opportunity for Tito' to emphasise the inevitability of Russian dominance over the Satellites. The Russia Committee saw this as some indication that the Russians were disturbed by the state of feeling in Satellite countries and were taking steps to counteract it by obtaining more military control over the Satellites.

22 Nov 1949 **FO 371/77624/N10086/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb back in the Chair. The Russia Committee saw a different approach at this meeting. There were no papers as such (except for the 'Summary of Indications'). The first item was a discussion as to whether in future the fortnightly 'Summaries' should be less of an intelligence summary and more of 'an inspired guess'. They clearly needed a re-look and the Russia Committee agreed to consider the future format at their next meeting. Secondly, they had an interesting discussion about 'Titoism'. Sir Gladwyn Jebb referred to the prevailing tendency to treat all manifestations of Communism throughout the world as Soviet inspired, but Yugoslavia was evidence that Communism need not always be Soviet controlled. The Russia Committee considered the rumoured setting up of a Titoist Communist International organisation but it was too early for them to have gleaned information on this, though there were thought to already be signs of support for Titoism in Norway, France and, indeed, the UK. The Committee invited Mr Harrison to arrange for a paper to be prepared on 'manifestations of Titoism in national Communist parties.

⁶⁴⁴ FO9 371/87650 – I949 box.

6 Dec 1949 **FO 371/77624/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. Sir Ralph Stevenson, HM Ambassador, China, and Sir Edmund Hall-Patch, UK Delegate to OEEC, Paris, were both exceptionally in attendance. There were two items on the agenda – again no papers other than the latest ‘Summary of Indications’. Sir Ralph addressed the Committee with reference to the passages in the ‘Summary’ relating to the Far East. He said it was only accidental that the Communists had successfully completed a Chinese revolution begun 38 years ago. There were three main factions/ tendencies in the Chinese leadership: exclusive devotion to Russia; belief in the need for reasonable relations with countries besides Russia; hatred of all foreigners. Chou-en-Lai seemed to think a clash between first and second to be likely; Mao-Tse-Tung appeared to float above all three factions. There was much xenophobia throughout Chin, largely indiscriminating, but particular hatred of Russia in the north. In general, he said, the new Chinese rulers were utterly ruthless and would rather let millions of Chinese die than yield to foreign pressure. Asked whether the Chinese Communists were subservient to Moscow and whether Russia could, as she had in all other Satellite countries except Yugoslavia, gain control through the secret police, Sir Ralph said that most Chinese Communists were Marxists but not all were pro-Russian. The younger ones tended to look mainly to Russia though he doubted that any foreigner could establish a grip on China through the secret police and he thought it very unlikely that Russia could order a purge of China.

17 Dec 1949 **FO 371/77623/N171/1052/38G.** Report of a Special Meeting on the Functions and Re-organisation of the Russia Committee. Meeting held in Sir Orme Sargent’s Room. This was a very important meeting attended by the ‘top brass’ of the Foreign Office and chaired by the PUS himself. Its purpose was to discuss three issues: the question of whether to re-organise the Russia Committee; the desirability of setting up an organisation for planning; and what action should be taken to educate the Service Departments in the methods and function of the Foreign Office. In attendance, alongside Sir Orme Sargent, were: Sir William Strang; Sir Noel Charles, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick and key regular Foreign Office members of the Russia Committee, including the current Chairman, Sir Gladwyn Glebb, and the sometime former Chairman Christopher Warner. Such stellar attendees – all of whom were Foreign Office and excluding all the non-Foreign Office regular Russia Committee attendees - were a clear indication of the then current importance of the Russia Committee and the need to revisit whether it remained fit for purpose and whether, and if so what, any changes were needed.

Sir Gladwyn Jebb began the discussion by saying that at present the Russia Committee were considering two questions: whether a more offensive policy should be pursued

towards Russia and the Soviet orbit; and, if such a policy were to be pursued, what organisation would be required. Added to these considerations were the somewhat separate questions as to whether the Russia Committee should be re-organised and, if so how, its functions and whether planning staff would be needed. Sir Gladwyn believed that the Russia Committee could usefully be transformed into a Committee of Under-Secretaries under the Chairmanship of the PUS, the Head of the Office, and might consider major policy (not the day to day work of the office) once a week, with the PUS setting the agenda. There should, he said, be a dedicated team of 2 or 3 people to form the Secretariat and to prepare papers, as commissioned by the PUS, to go to the Secretary of State. He said that: "Even is such a committee were not useful in itself, it could deprive the Chiefs of Staff of their argument that there was nobody in the Foreign Office for considering and co-ordinating long-term policy".⁶⁴⁵

Following discussion, Sir Orme Sargent agreed that such a Policy Committee would be useful and requested Sir Gladwyn to prepare a paper containing its terms of reference taking account of the terms of reference and functions and composition of the Russia Committee. He should also work out the terms of reference for the Secretariat in cooperation with Mr Hayter. It was also agreed that the regular fortnightly 'Summaries of Indications regarding Soviet Policy' should be continued and Sir Gladwyn would consider 'what would be the best system' and that its preparation should remain the work of the Russia Committee and not the new Policy Committee. The meeting also considered what more could be done to educate the Service Departments regarding the organisation and function of the Foreign Office and concluded that it would be valuable if the Head of the Office (Orme Sargent) could meet with the Chiefs of Staff from time to time.

20 Dec 1949 **FO 371/77624/N10886/1052/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Hadow, Secretary. The final Russia Committee meeting of the year had just two items under discussion: a further draft 'Summary of Indications'; and the question of diplomatic relations with Bulgaria. The meeting began with a discussion on whether the cold war had lulled and concluded that there was at least no acceleration in tempo at present. Among the items to be included in the next 'Summary of Indications' was the fact that Mao Tse-tung had visited Moscow and whether this suggested a possible Soviet-Chinese treaty and the Chairman directed the Secretariat to consult the Foreign Office's Far Eastern Department on this. As to relations with Bulgaria, the Americans were minded to break off diplomatic relations with Bulgaria should they declare the American Minister persona non grata.

⁶⁴⁵ FO 371/77623/N171/1052/38G. Report, dated 17 December 1949, of a Special Meeting on the Functions and Re-organisation of the Russia Committee. Page 2, Paragraph 5.

The Foreign Office, however, felt it important to retain representation behind the iron curtain in order to have some source of information about developments there. It was agreed that the Russians did not want to squeeze the missions of the Western powers out of Satellite countries completely, rather wishing to emasculate and depreciate them but still be able to preserve the myth of Satellite independence. The Foreign Office view was that even if our missions were reduced to two or three people they would still be of value as listening posts.

- 9 Jan 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/1.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. Four items for discussion: a dispatch from HM Ambassador, Moscow; a Memorandum by the Russian Committee Sub-Committee on 'Anti-Stalinist Communism'; a memorandum by Northern Department on 'The British Press on Stalin's Birthday; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. Of interest from the latter was a reference to the fact that the US State Department attached great importance to Molotov's remark at the Stalin birthday celebrations that the downfall of Tito was not far off.
- 24 Jan 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/4.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. Two items for discussion: a further draft 'Summary of Indications'; and a paper by the Information Research Department on 'Trends of Communist Propaganda in 1949 – an Interpretive Analysis' (Ref RC/10/50). On the latter paper, the Russia Committee agreed that the draft paper should be circulated to all Foreign Office Departments for comments and then, after any amendments, should be circulated widely. The Chairman then noted that at the next meeting of the Russia Committee the paper on 'Anti-Stalinist Communism, previously circulated as RC/5/50, would be discussed.
- 7 Feb 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/5.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. Three items for discussion: the draft 'Anti-Stalinist Communism' paper as previously noted; a paper on the use of the term 'Cold War'; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications' paper. On the first item, Sir Gladwyn noted that Count Sforza had told Bevin that among Italian Communists there was a growing tendency towards 'Titoism'. The Russia Committee agreed that the paper should be amended in the light of their discussions and a further draft considered at their next meeting. They then discussed whether the term 'Cold War' should be replaced with another term as there had been criticism of the Permanent Under Secretary's Committee (PUSC) using the term in a recent paper. After some discussion the Chairman put forward, for discussion at the next meeting, the following as an

alternative: "A struggle against Stalinist Communism on a world-wide scale not involving a world war".

- 11 Feb 1950** **FO 371/86751/NS1052/13.** Top Secret paper by the Russia Committee entitled "Anti-Stalinist Communism (Second Revise)". See final paper as 18 February below.
- 14 Feb 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/1.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Three items for discussion: Text of remarks by Acheson on 8 February; the redrafted paper on 'Anti Stalinist Communism': and the possible change in the use of the term 'Cold War'. As to Acheson's remarks as reported in the Times, he had put forward the idea that the Cold War should be called off on the grounds that the US saw no chance of reaching agreement with the Soviets. The redrafted second paper was discussed and it was agreed, subject to approval by the Foreign Secretary, it be sent to HM representatives abroad and to the US State Department. Interesting point, within the discussion, was that Sir David Kelly was reported as assessing the effectiveness of the UK's propaganda against the Soviets as 94% ineffective! As to the revised terminology suggested by Sir Gladwyn for the 'Cold War' the Russia Committee agreed his suggested definition. An example of the Russia Committee taking themselves perhaps a bit too seriously.
- 18 Feb 1950** **FO 371/86751/NS1052/19.** Top Secret paper by the Russia Committee entitled "Anti-Stalinist Communism (Final)". Key paper. Five pages long plus a six-page Annex. Conclusions are set out in Part IV of the main paper as follow:
- "16. (a) Titoism and other manifestations of anti-Stalinist feeling in Communist parties are a potentially valuable force working against both international Communism and Russian imperialism.*
- (b) The value of this force to us is, however, qualified by the fact that in particular cases, eg China, Western Germany and Austria, it may broaden the Communist appeal and so present dangers of its own. We should regard the estrangement of national Communist parties from Moscow not as an end in itself, but as a step towards the disruption of Communism in all its forms.*
- (c) The appeal of Titoism depends essentially on the character of a "pure" Communist doctrine, independent of, and indeed theoretically hostile to, the capitalist West. Any overt support we might give it would prejudice this appeal and play into the hands of Soviet propaganda.*
- (d) Subject to (b) and (c) above, we should exploit the differences between national and Kremlin-controlled Communism, in existing Communist parties. Our attitude must, however, be governed by the circumstances of each case; eg while we may feed such movements in France and Italy (where Titoist propaganda is likely to split the*

Communists than to attract fresh recruits to them), we should deprecate the spread of National Communism in countries where the Communist threat is not strong or which, like China, may develop a powerful international appeal even after severance from Moscow”.

21 Feb 1950 **FO 371/86761/NS1053/1.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Two items for discussion: the Minutes of the 14 Feb Russia Committee meeting; and a further draft ‘Summary of Indications’ paper. On the first item, the Russia Committee instructed the Secretariat to ask Sir David Kelly to clarify his comments on the effectiveness of propaganda as there was some thought that he had been referring only to the BBC broadcasts to Russia.

23 Feb 1950 **FO 371/86751/NS1052/19.** Top Secret Minute from Sir Gladwyn Jebb to Sir William Strang and to Ernest Bevin which was a cover note to the Russia Committee paper at 18 February entry above. Important paper worth quoting extensively:

“I submit a paper, prepared and approved by the Russia Committee, on the subject of Titoism and other manifestations of “National” or “anti-Stalinist” Communism.

2. The paper is based on information supplied by certain of HM Missions abroad, who were asked to report whether Tito’s example had had any effect (a) on local Communist parties, or (b) non-Communist fellow-travelling opinion, and whether there was any evidence of attempts by the Yugoslav Government to form a Titoist International. It also embodies information, supplied by the security authorities, on the effect of Titoism on the British Communist Party.

3. It is proposed, if you agree, to circulate the paper to the Prime Minister and the other

recipients in London of the “Summary of Indications regarding Soviet Foreign Policy”, and also to the chief posts on whose reports the memorandum is based (see attached list)⁶⁴⁶, with a suitable covering dispatch emphasizing the secret nature of the memorandum. At the same time, we would ask our Embassy in Washington to give a copy to the most suitable official in the State Department and enquire whether the Americans had prepared any similar study which they would care to convey to us.

The Minute was signed by Gladwyn Jebb and initialed by William Strang and Ernest Bevin the latter saying “I agree”.

⁶⁴⁶ The distribution list comprised the top 3433 senior posts abroad plus the UK High Commissioners in Delhi, Canberra, Karachi and Ottawa, and the UK Delegation to the United Nations in New York.

7 March 1950 FO 371/86761/NS1053/9. Minute from Sir Gladwyn Jebb to Major General K W D Strong, member of the Joint Intelligence Bureau (JIB) agreeing to the latter's request to become a member of the Russia Committee.

7 March 1950 FO 371/86761/NS1053/10. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Four items for discussion: a paper on 'Sovietisation and Purges in Eastern Europe'; a paper on 'Communism in Latin America'; a paper on the 'Exchange Rate of the Rouble'; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. The Committee agreed to ask the IRD to amend the second of the papers in the light of the recorded Russia Committee discussions and they would then consider the redraft at their next meeting.

18 March 1950 FO 371/86751/NS1052/19. Top-Secret Minute from Ernest Bevin to the Prime Minister which reads:

I send you herewith a copy of a memorandum prepared by the Russia Committee on the subject of Titoism and other manifestations of "National" or "anti-Stalinist" Communism.

2. The paper is based on information supplied by certain of HM Missions abroad, who were asked to report whether Tito's example had had any effect:-

(a) on local Communist parties, or

(b) non-Communist fellow-travelling opinion, and whether there was any evidence of attempts by the Yugoslav Government to form a Titoist International. It also embodies information, supplied by the security authorities, on the effect of Titoism on the British Communist Party.

3. If you have not time to read the whole paper you will, I think, be interested to glance at the first five pages, which contain a general survey and the conclusions.

4. Copies of the memorandum and of this minute are being sent to the Lord President, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Minister of Defence and the Secretaries of State for Commonwealth Relations and the Colonies.

21 March 1950 FO 371/86761/NS1053/1. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Three items for discussion: a paper on the 'Strengthening of Soviet Political Control in Eastern Europe: Interpretation of the 'Purges''; the text of an address to the University of California by Acheson; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. Acheson's speech, in conjunction with his pronouncements discussed at the Russia Committee's 14 Feb meeting, was thought to be an important reflection of US policy which was to refute the moves to high level meetings between leaders and to adopt the Kennan policy of 'firm but patient

containment' in building up resistance to Russian expansion. In the 'Summary' there is reference to Molotov having been a tired man when he ceased to be Foreign Minister and was succeeded by Vyshinsky who was thought to be 'only a puppet' and that the Russians extremely successful handling of the Chinese situation was largely down to Stalin's personal interest.

- 23 March 1950** **FO 371/86751/NS1052/19.** Copy of Minute by the Prime Minister to Ernest Bevin which reads: "Foreign Secretary's Minute, (PM (50)12) of 18 3 50 enclosing copy of a memorandum by the Russia Committee about Titoism and "anti-Stalinist" Communism. The Prime Minister has seen and noted".
- 4 April 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/10.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. Three items for discussion: a revised paper on 'Communism in Latin America'; 'East-West Trading Policy'; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. The first paper had been revised as agreed by a special meeting of the Russia Committee Sub-Committee under Mr Warner's chairmanship and also reflected the comments on it from H M Ambassador at Caracas and other Heads of Missions and would be discussed at the next Russia Committee meeting to which the Treasury and Board of Trade would be invited to send representatives. In discussions on the latest 'Summary' the Chairman noted that it contained much more on the Far East and South East Asia than on any other part of the world and asked whether this meant that the 'Cold War' had now been transferred to that area or whether it merely reflected exceptional diligence on the part of the Foreign Office Departments concerned. It transpired that the contributions on the Far East had been deliberately increased at the request of the Russia Committee at an earlier meeting but that it was true that the 'Cold War' was at present much more active in the Far East than elsewhere. The 'Summary' also noted that the JIC was studying the implications of a recent report that Russian aircraft had been seen in China.
- 19 April 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/14.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Bateman in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Four items for discussion: a revised paper on East West Trading Policy; a paper by the Northern Department on 'Relations between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union' consisting of: a draft brief for talks between Mr Bevin and Mr Acheson and a memorandum summarizing and commenting on certain United States views regarding Soviet intentions (which was not gone into in detail); a further draft 'Summary of Indications' paper; and a paper by Northern Department on 'Foreign Policy through the looking glass' – discussion of which was put on hold until the next meeting of the Russia Committee three weeks hence.

- 9 May 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/17.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Bateman in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Two items for discussion: the 'Foreign Policy through the Looking Glass' paper deferred from the previous meeting; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications' paper. The purpose of the 'Looking Glass' paper by Northern Department was to look at themselves (i.e. the Foreign Office) as others might 'see us'. The paper assumed that the main motive of Russian foreign policy was defence against capitalist encirclement. Another important motive, however, was the Leninist thesis that until capitalism and imperialism were annihilated, socialism could not be safe. In discussion it was felt that if Soviet foreign policy was motivated purely by ideological considerations, there was no hope for the future but it was assumed that there existed a realist element in the Soviet make-up which led the Russians to respect situations of strength of the Western Powers. The thought was that a characteristic of the Communist State, as of the Nazi State, was the feeling that it was not secure unless it was expanding all the time.
- 23 May 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/18.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Gladwyn Jebb back in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Four items for discussion: Moscow dispatches on East-West trade; a further draft 'Summary of Indications'; a revised version of 'Foreign Policy Through the Looking Glass'; and a paper by Northern Department on 'Western Measures to Contain Soviet Communism'. Sir Gladwyn introduced Sir Pierson Dixon who was to take over as Chairman. After further discussion of the 'Looking Glass' paper the Russia Committee agreed as the next step to send it to HM Embassy, Moscow, for comment. As to the 'Western Measures' paper by Northern Department, which had been commissioned by Mr Bevin, Sir Gladwyn said that it was well written and contained useful material but was too long for busy Ministers to have to read so suggested that Mr Bevin should be asked what he wanted to be done with it and then possibly have it re-cast.
- 6 June 1950** **FO 371/86762/NS1053/9.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Four items for discussion: a revised version of the 'Western Measures' paper; a minute by Southern Department; a minute on East-West trade; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications' paper. The Chairman suggested recommending to Mr Bevin that a re-cast 'Western Measures' paper be circulated to Cabinet, though the Russia Committee would seek changes/contributions to a redraft first.
- 20 June 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/20.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Three items for discussion: a draft paper for submission to Cabinet on East-West Trade; a survey of Communism in Africa; a further

draft 'Summary of Indications'. The East-West Trade paper was likely to be circulated to Cabinet within a week so the Russia Committee's views were needed, particularly on the political section of the paper and the conclusions and on the sense in which the Foreign Office representative should be briefed for the Cabinet meeting. They therefore had a lengthy discussion and agreed changes to be included in Ministerial briefing. The Committee also agreed to ask African Department and the Research Department to redraft and re-circulate the 'African' paper.

- 1 July 1950** **FO371/86756/NS1052/68.** Minute by the Russia Committee Secretariat (Messrs Barnes and Moss) for discussion at 4 July meeting, entitled: 'Soviet Union and Korea'. Important paper.
- 3 July 1950** **FO371/86756/NS1052/70.** Copy of a telegram circulated by the Russia Committee Secretariat (Messrs Barnes and Moss) for discussion at 4 July meeting, giving HM Ambassador, Moscow (Sir David Kelly) views on Korea situation. Important paper
- 4 July 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/21.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Four items for discussion: a draft note by the JIC on the likelihood of further Russian aggressive moves following the action in Korea; a revised paper on 'Communism in Africa'; a revised paper on 'Western Measures to counter Soviet Expansion'; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. The Russia Committee agreed that the revised Africa paper was improved and should be widely circulated immediately; As to the 'Western Measures' paper, Sir Pierson said that in view of the recent events in Korea the paper was largely out of date and an updated version would be needed as soon as possible.
- 15 July 1950** **FO 371/86758/NS1052/81.** Annex A. Article dated July 15 by Frank Robertson, Observer Correspondent, entitled 'Asia Sees Victory for Communism: Fatalism is Widespread. In this article Frank Robertson, having toured extensively in South East Asia questioned the effectiveness of the UN action following the invasion of South Korea largely because, as he put it, 'most articulate Asiatics are convinced that all Asia is going Communist' and that 'repugnant as this prospect is to many' there exists a 'certain unreasoning satisfaction that this will mean the end of the white man's rule over the Asiatic peoples'. He said that he had found 'unperturbed acceptance of the prospect of Communist rule among even the wealthiest class of Asiatics.
- 15 July 1950** **FO 371/86757/NS1052/74.** Minute dated 13 July by Mr F R H Murray, circulated to the Russia Committee by the Secretariat, on 'indications of possible Soviet action derived from current Soviet Propaganda'. Mr Murray noted that the Foreign Office now had a 'whole time expert devoted to studying...all sources and channels available'.

It stated, inter alia that: the Soviet propaganda continued to build against US aggression and intervention in Asia; and that the Chinese pledged 'resolute support' to the peoples of Korea, Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines in their struggle against the US.

- 18 July 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Reilly in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. Four items for discussion: a revised 'Western Measures' paper; papers about Communist interrogation methods; a minute of current Soviet Propaganda; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. After further discussion on the latest 'Western Measures' paper it was agreed that a final, further shortened, version should be prepared for approval by Sir Pierson and Sir William Strang and submitted to Mr Bevin. Discussion of the second paper was deferred until the next meeting as it was of particular interest to Sir Pierson who would then be back;
- 1 August 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/17.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir A Noble in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Four items for discussion: 'Communist interrogation' paper; 'Survey of Communism in countries outside Soviet orbit'; a further draft 'Summary of Indications' paper; and statement on East-West trade. A 'technical annex' to the first paper, which IRD had been commissioned to produce, was not ready so discussion was postponed; it was agreed that the factual survey paper need be produced annually – Sir Pierson Dixon's suggestion and the Russia Committee agreed to study the latest survey for discussion at the next meeting.
- 4 August 1950** **FO 371/86757/NS1052/78.** Summary of Indications Regarding Soviet Foreign Policy No 60. Included here as an example of one of the fortnightly "Crystal Gazers". Divided into 5 parts: I General; II Europe; III Middle East; IV South and South East Asia; and V The Far East. On China and Korea, part V, the Note states that "We have no firm evidence of any further recent extension of Soviet penetration of China or of any increase, since the aggression in Korea, of Soviet military or technical assistance to China. Close coordination of Sino-Soviet policy, however, appears to continue and finds expression in Chou En Lai's Note to the Security Council challenging the validity of their resolution on Korea. This Note parallels the Soviet line on the same question".
- 10 August 1950** **FO 371/86758/NS1052/81.** Cover Note to an Observer article on the Korean situation circulated for information to the Russia Committee – see July 15 entry above.
- 15 August 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretary. Four items for discussion: 'Communist interrogation' redrafted paper; 'Survey of Communism in Countries Outside Soviet Orbit'; a paper on the situation in Korea; a further draft 'Summary of Indications'

paper. On the first paper, after discussion it was agreed that a non-official short book, by a lawyer, might be the way forward, and invited the IRD to consider this and who might write it. Approval would first be required from Mr Bevin. The 'survey', it was agreed, should now be produced annually. As to the latest 'Summary' the Chairman (Sir Pierson Dixon) said that it: "was too long. It should be compressed more in the form of an intelligence summary, to bring out points of importance which were otherwise obscured by the somewhat conversational style" (Ref Page 4, paragraph IV, 1).

29 August 1950 **FO 371/86761/NS1053.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Reilly in the Chair. Mr Dawbarn, Secretary. Just one items for discussion – a further draft 'Summary of Indications' paper.

12 Sept 1950 **FO 371/86761/NS1053.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Reilly in the Chair. Mr Moss, Secretary. Again, just one item on the agenda for discussion, again the latest draft 'Summary of Indications'.

26 Sept 1950 **FO 371/86761/NS1053.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Reilly in the Chair. Mr Dawbarn, Secretary. Again, just one item on the agenda for discussion, again the latest draft 'Summary of Indications'.

10 Oct 1950 **FO 371/86761/NS1053.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. Yet again just one item on the agenda for discussion, the latest draft 'Summary of Indications'.

24 Oct 1950 **FO 371/86761/NS1053.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. Two items on the agenda: a discussion with Sir Charles Peake, HM Ambassador, Belgrade, who was attending the meeting: and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. The Ambassador was asked how stable he regarded Tito's regime to be. He saw two main internal dangers for Yugoslavia. The first was that since the end of July he had been aware of disagreements among high party leaders, some of whom gave the impression that they wanted to rejoin their spiritual home in Moscow and that Tito had told Brigadier Maclean that the Cominform was trying to sow disaffection not only in the party as a whole but in the Marshall's own collaborators as well. The second internal danger, he said, was that Yugoslavia might emerge from the winter weakened by hunger and disease – especially tuberculosis – and the workers would lose the will to work. The soil would then be ready for the Cominform to undermine the Tito regime. Resultant

strikes and unrest would enable the Russians to claim that Tito was no longer in control of the situation.

- 7 Nov 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/17.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir A Noble in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. Just one item on the agenda for discussion, the latest draft 'Summary of Indications'. Two new major developments were to be included in the 'Summary': Russian proposals for a Council of Foreign Ministers; and General MacArthur's communiqué about Chinese intervention in Korea. On Korea, the Chairman said that there were two possible explanations of the Chinese intervention in Korea: either Russia had pushed China into intervention to keep US forces in Korea whilst maintaining the Soviet pose as peace champions; or the inspiration came from the Chinese and was mainly based on fear of US intentions and their possible advances beyond Korea. As to how far China planned to go, the Russia Committee considered whether it was a limited operation to scare off the US and deter them from undertaking a winter campaign in Korea or whether the Chinese contemplated a major effort to push the UN forces back to the 38° Parallel or even right out of Korea. They concluded that, despite the obvious dangers of the situation, it seemed unlikely that the Chinese were deliberately seeking to provoke a major war.
- 21 Nov 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/33.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. Two items on the agenda: a draft brief by the Northern Department on Russian Strategic Intentions and the Threat to Peace; and a further draft 'Summary of Intentions' paper. The latter was interesting because it was now to be in a new form: a summary in front and two separate parts concerning Russia and Chinese policy respectively.
- 5 Dec 1950** **FO 371/86761/NS1053/35.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Mr Dawbarn, Secretariat. Sir David Kelly, HM Ambassador, Moscow, was in attendance. Two items on the agenda: a paper covering a JIC paper on the Chinese Communist threat in the Far East and South East Asia; a further fortnightly 'Review' (formerly referred to as 'Summary of Indications' but now in new format). On the JIC paper, the Chairman took issue with the JIC's assumption that the Chinese action in Korea would be likely to call a halt if given an ultimatum as they would shrink from war. He saw no evidence for this as he believed that China was not afraid of war with the US. Sir David Kelly said that Chinese intentions could only be discovered if an offer to open negotiations was made; she would not take such an initiative and she would, he thought, certainly try to destroy UN forces unless some such steps were taken soon. He thought it unwise to count on Sino Soviet differences. The interests of the two

governments ran parallel and the Soviets would certainly be glad to see US forces bogged down in the Far East. The Russia Committee invited the Far Eastern Department to re-write the paper in the light of their discussions.

- 19 Dec 1950** **FO 371/86762/NS1053/36.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir A Noble in the Chair. Mr Barnes, Secretariat. Just one item on the agenda for discussion, the latest draft fortnightly 'review'. There was discussion as to whether it was thought that Russia would leave the UN and it was thought that if she did she was unlikely to do so until after the forthcoming Council of Foreign Ministers but even then might be very hesitant to leave an organisation that might one day be of use to her.
- 2 Jan 1951** **FO 371/94819: NS 1021/10.** Note by the new Chairman of the Russia Committee, Sir Pierson Dixon, to Sir John Sterndale Bennett, HM Ambassador, Singapore. Important document. Sir Pearson explained to Sir John that he had recently taken over the Russia Committee chairmanship from Sir Gladwyn and explained that at their fortnightly meetings they approved the regular 'Summary of Indications' papers (colloquially now known as the "Crystal Gazer") which went to the King, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary and a very few other senior people, always under a tight security classification. He went on to explain that until recently, from the start of the Crystal Gazers, they had been concerned with Soviet Policy but given recent events in the Far East they papers had begun to focus also on China. It had therefore been decided that in future the papers would be in two parts with a short summary covering both parts. He was therefore proposing to include Sterndale Bennet in the recipients list and to ask him to contribute/comment as necessary in relation to issues concerning the Far East, and to treat the papers with special care given their sensitivity and to destroy his copies after three months.
- 2 Jan 1951** **FO 371/94842: NS 1053/2.** Note by Russia Committee Secretariat to members enclosing a draft Telegram to go to Washington to be discussed at the special meeting of the Russia Committee on 3 January, after which a redraft would be prepared.
- 3 Jan 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/3G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Mr Dawbarn, Secretariat. Sir David Kelly, HM Ambassador, Moscow, was in attendance. The one item on the agenda was the draft telegram as above. The draft telegram was intended for the use of HM Ambassador, Washington in his preliminary discussion with US and French representatives about tactics for the proposed Four Power discussion with the Soviet Union. The proposed talks were wanted by the Soviets to discuss the question of German re-armament to which they were totally opposed and the Russia Committee discussed the likely outcome of the

Soviets failing to prevent this. The Committee then considered the Sino Soviet relationship: that the Soviets must welcome the prospect of China's expulsion of Western influence from the Far East but the Soviets could not contemplate without anxiety the prospect of China fresh from a successful revolution, expanding her area of dominion. Moreover, the Committee felt that Chinese actions in Korea showed that they had no fear of war with the US but that the Soviets who would not want to go that far might act as a restraining influence.

- 9 Jan 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/4G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The one item on the agenda was a further draft 'Summary of Indications' / Crystal Gazer paper. One interesting point was reference to an article in the Observer of there being anti-Soviet discontent in Czechoslovakia though it was unclear whether there was hard evidence for this.
- 16 Jan 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/5G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The one item on the agenda was draft JIC paper entitled "Likelihood of War" (JIC (50) 111) on which the Russia Committee were invited to comment before it was considered at the JIC meeting on 18 January. The Committee agreed points on German re-armament and the likelihood of this leading the Soviets to go to war to amend the JIC paper.
- 23 Jan 1951** **FO 371/94820: NS 1021/11.** The first example of the new format of the 'Summary of Indications/Crystal Gazer fortnightly papers. The one page Summary has six paragraphs and makes notes on: the Soviets wish for four power talks; German re-armament violation of agreements; further signs of increased Soviet military preparedness and activity in Eastern Germany; the French having forced the Viet Minh to temporarily break off their new offensive in Tongking; and Chou En-lai's rejection of the UN's cease fire proposals for Korea. The subsequent two sections went into much greater detail on these issues.
- 3 Feb 1951** **FO 371/94820/ NS1021/12.** Paper entitled 'Possible Soviet Reactions to the Rearmament of Western Germany'.
- 6 Feb 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/12G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The one item on the agenda was a further draft of the 'Summary of Indications'.
- 20 Feb 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/14G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The one item on the agenda was a further draft of the 'Summary of Indications'. It noted that Stalin had given an

interview to Pravda which was partly directed to home consumption but with an element of consumption abroad and concerned primarily the subject of Soviet re-armament.

- 6 March 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/16G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The one item on the agenda was a further draft of the 'Summary of Indications' which was concerned with the proposed agenda for the forthcoming meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Four powers and the possibility that the Soviets might be prepared to expand the agenda from solely concentrating on German re-armament.
- 9 March 1951** **NB Ernest Bevin resigns as Foreign Secretary**
- 20 March 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/17G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There were two items for discussion: a letter from HM Ambassador, Moscow, enclosing a 'Kremlin Memorandum' together with a covering note by Northern Department; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'.
- 14 April 1951** **Ernest Bevin dies**
- 3 April 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/20G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The one item on the agenda was a further draft of the 'Summary of Indications'. This referred, inter alia, to the fact that the Chinese remained convinced that they could drive the UN out of Korea and were in no mood for negotiation. The Chairman also noted that the new Foreign Secretary (Herbert Morrison) had asked that papers submitted by the Russia Committee should in future be kept as short as possible – a possible early indication that he valued the Russia Committee less than his predecessor?)
- 17 April 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/22G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The one item on the agenda was a further draft of the 'Summary of Indications'. On the forthcoming Four Power talks, it had become clear that the Soviets now wanted to expand the subjects covered to include Western re-armament and not just German re-armament.
- 1 May 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/23G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There was only one item on the agenda which was a further draft of the 'Summary of Indications' which noted the

Shrill tone of Mr Gromyko and speculated that the Soviets were now less interested in the Four Power talks for which they had hitherto long been pressing.

- 16 May 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/26G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There were two items to discuss: a draft pamphlet on re-armament prepared by the IRD; and a further draft of the 'Summary of Indications'. The draft pamphlet had been prepared by Mr Peck who was congratulated for producing an excellent and coherent account and was an attempt to meet the wishes of the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to clarify the issues involved in the Defence Programme and to provide background for Ministers' speeches. It was agreed, however, that while the possibility existed that the Four Power talks would still go ahead, the pamphlet should not yet be issued.
- 29 May 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/27G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There was only one item on the agenda which was a further draft of the 'Summary of Indications' which noted that the Four Power talks were now further threatened as the French had taken fright at Gromyko's insistence on the inclusion of an item on the Atlantic Pact.
- 12 June 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/28G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There was only one item on the agenda which was a further draft of the new format 'Summary of Indications'. With the French General Elections due on 17 June the French were pressing for the Four Power Talks, which had just begun, As to Korea, the Chinese had withdrawn from Chorwen and Kumhwa but it was not clear why.
- 26 June 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/30G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There were two item on the agenda: a paper by IRD on "The Stability of the Soviet Regime and its effects on Soviet Relations with the non-Communist World"; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. The record of the discussion of the first paper was excluded from the minutes and put in a limited circulation paper (Ref RC 55/51). The Four Power Talks in Paris had been suspended as the Soviets had failed to get their way over its terms.
- 10 July 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/31G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There was only one item on the agenda which was a further draft of the new format 'Summary of Indications'. On Korea there was a cease fire which the Chinese might insist on relating strictly to the 38th parallel.

- 24 July 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/32G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Mason in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Buzzard, Secretariat. There was only one item on the agenda which was a further draft of the new format 'Summary of Indications' and the most important item for this version was said to be the publication of a new Soviet English-speaking periodical "News" but it was too soon to say how far the line of the publication would be put across to the domestic Russian readers.
- 8 August 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/33G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Mason in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The only item under discussion was a further draft of the new format 'Summary of Indications' which was fairly low key. It included a reference to the "News" periodical but only to say that it was possible, given a reversion to 'normal Soviet style' that it was being sold outside Moscow.
- 21 August 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/35G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Mr Dawbarn, Secretariat. There were two items on the agenda: a paper by the Secretariat on 'Certain Reports on Soviet and Chinese Intentions'; and a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. On the first paper, there was a very full discussion on the relationship between the Chinese and the Soviets over the Far East concluding that both attached great importance to Japanese re-armament and the fact that the Russians had probably counted on the over running of Korea before turning attention to Japan but the UN's success had compelled them to think again and the re-emergence of Japan was thought to be very disturbing to the Chinese and the Soviets.
- 4 Sept 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/36G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Mason in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The agenda for the meeting noted that there would be only one item under discussion i.e. a further draft of the new format 'Summary of Indications' but the actual minutes are missing.
- 18 Sept 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/38G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Mason in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There were two items for discussion: a further draft of the new format 'Summary of Indications'; and a paper by Mutual Aid Department on 'East/West Trade'. On the latter, the Chairman explained that the paper had been commissioned following a suggestion that Western controls of East/West trade might be doing serious damage to the Russian economy, hence the latter's proposal for an International Economic Conference. It seemed that the Russians feared that Western Powers might be seriously considering adopting a policy of economic warfare but the UK could not afford such a policy and had made it clear that the existing controls represented the limit to which they intended to go.

- 2 October 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/40G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There were three items on the agenda: a further draft 'Summary of Indications'; Anglo-American appreciation of world Communism; and pointers to modifications of Soviet policy. On the latter there was concern that the US State Department looked at Russia and China as one indivisible ideological bloc moving entirely in step and that they had a wrong idea too about the distinction between subversive Communism and the use of force by Russia. The Committee agreed that it would be useful to discuss this whole issue with the UK's US Embassy. On the final discussion point, the Chairman noted that the Foreign Secretary thought it would be useful if the Foreign Office prepared: a list of moves such as sending Ambassadors of Maisky's type (i.e. a pro-British ex diplomat) which could be interpreted as showing a Russian change of practice; and an indication of the reaction which the Western Powers should adopt to such moves.
- 15 Oct 1951** **FO 371/94845/NS1053/42.** Final version of the paper by Northern Department 'Possible Conciliatory moves by the Soviet Government'. The paper postulated that the conciliatory moves the Soviet Government might make could include: the appointment of some Western minded personalities as Ambassadors in London, Washington or as UN rep (eg Maisky); articles in 'News' expressing more conciliatory attitudes towards the West; greater affability on the part of officials at events; allowance to visit usually non accessible places (eg as recently granted to Sir David Kelly); release of British subjects held in the Soviet Union; the release of the remaining Soviet wives; economic helpfulness eg over timber and wheat; exchanges of more students between UK and the Soviet Union; disbandment of Cominform – though this would be academic as the control over non-Russian Communist parties would remain fully intact). These and other such moves, the paper said, could reflect a policy change but could equally simply be to weaken Western resistance in the interests of the peace campaign. The paper went on in a similarly sceptical fashion for several pages.
- 16 Oct 1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/41G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Mason in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There were two items for discussion: a further draft 'Summary of Indications'; and a paper by Northern Department on "Possible Conciliatory Moves by the Soviet Government". As to the latter, one of the tests of Soviet policy and the main cause of Soviet tension at the Four Power talks was the level of Soviet armaments and one indication of a genuine conciliatory move would be a reduction in their armaments. The Russia Committee agreed certain changes to be made to the paper and, once Northern Department had made the changes the Chairman of the Russia Committee would submit the paper under a cover note to the PUS, Sir William Strang.

- 16 Oct 1951** **FO 371/ 94845/NS1053/43.** Copy of Sir David Kelly's final despatch on relinquishing his post as HM Ambassador at Moscow, after two and a quarter years in the post. The despatch concentrated on what seemed to him to be the most important considerations to be taken into account in the UK's dealings with the Soviet Government. He said that an outstanding fact about Soviet foreign policy is its impersonality: the chain of responsibility is so tightly controlled that even the highest official who has dealings with foreigners has no more initiative than a ventriloquists dummy and the personal factor is negligible; the group at the top are obsessed by a doctrinaire interpretation of world events based on its fundamental assumption of the existence of two antagonistic camps which can only be brought to an end by the decline and fall of one of them. He was concerned that the West needed to continue to do all that was necessary to maintain the balance of power as this, he felt, prevented all out hostilities. He felt it important too that the violent and abusive language adopted by the Soviets should not be reciprocated. And he saw the chief danger, as he left office, in the problem of maintaining the balance both with our own public opinion (which the Soviets in their autocratic state did not need to worry about) and above all with the American government.
- 26 Oct 1951** **FO 371/94845/NS1053/45G.** Agenda for Russia Committee Meeting to be held on 30 October. A manuscript note on the Agenda circulated by the Secretariat notes that the meeting was subsequently cancelled. Perhaps due to the imminent General Election.
- NB 26/10/51 General Election. Conservatives returned with 17 overall majority. Churchill back as PM**
- 13 Nov1951** **FO 371/94842/NS1053/46G.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Mason in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. There was one item under discussion i.e. a further draft of the new format 'Summary of Indications'. It noted that there had been a swift return to the truculence formerly demonstrated by the Soviets after recent apparent conciliatory changes. This was not necessarily a surprise or change of policy but the normal response from the likes of Vyshinski to any attempts, such as Acheson's speech, to wrest initiative from the US. It was also noted that there was no evidence to support any conclusion of a Sino-Soviet rift.
- 27 Nov 1951** **FO 371/94845/NS1053/47.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Mr Mason in the Chair. Messrs Barnes and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The agenda for the meeting noted that there would be only one item under discussion i.e. a further draft of the new format 'Summary of Indications'. The Chairman noted that over the previous fortnight the Russian tactics had been mainly defensive except that they were adopting a more positive line in the Middle East. On Korea there was difficulty in determining the real

reasons behind the Chinese attitude towards an armistice i.e. whether there was a genuine desire for peace or the need to obtain a breathing space.

- 18 Dec 1951** **FO 371/94845/NS1053/48.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Bushell and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The agenda for the meeting noted that the only item under discussion would be a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. No particularly new or significant inclusions worth noting.
- 8 Jan 1952** **FO 371/100840/NS1052/1/9.** Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting. Sir Pierson Dixon in the Chair. Messrs Bushell and Dawbarn, Secretariat. The agenda for the meeting noted that the only item under discussion would be a further draft 'Summary of Indications'. Re talks on re-armament the Russians had realised that the Armistice Talks were unlikely to reach a successful conclusion. They had therefore decided to shift their ground and to work for an Armistice by other means, which incidentally had subsidiary advantages from the Russian point of view, for example by providing a better propaganda platform, chances to slow down the Western defence effort and so on.
- 29 Feb 1952** **FO 371/125005/ZP12/1.** Note by JCW Bushell, of the Russia Committee Secretariat, to Mr Harrison, covering a few ideas he had had on the re-organisation of the Russia Committee that if Mr Harrison agreed could be put to the Chairman Sir Pierson Dixon.
- 1 March 1952** **FO 371/125005/ZP12/1.** Manuscript minute from Mr Harrison to Sir Pierson Dixon covering the draft by Mr Bushell and saying: *"If you agree that the Russia Ctee needs rejuvenating, I think that the attached paper by Mr Bushell provides a very useful basis for discussion ..."*.
- 1 March 1952** **FO 371/125005/ZP12/1.** Manuscript note by Sir Pierson Dixon to Mr Harrison saying: *"I have been feeling for some time that the Russia Committee needs a "new look", & I asked Mr Bushell to consider the matter. His proposals are much to the point & I agree that they shd be circulated & considered at a small meeting as proposed by Mr Harrison. PD"*.
- 29 Feb 1952** **FO 371/125005/ZP12/1.** Draft Memorandum by JCW Bushell, of the Russia Committee Secretariat, to Committee members saying that some weeks ago he suggested to Sir Pierson Dixon, Russia Committee Chairman, that he submit some proposals for the re-organisation of the Committee. This note sets out the case and is essentially as below at 9 Dec entry.

- 1 Mar 1952** **FO 371/125005/ZP12/1.** Manuscript note by Sir Pierson Dixon attached to this is note.
- 13 Mar 1952** **FO 371/125005/ZP12/2/G.** Record of a meeting held in Sir Pierson Dixon's room to discuss the re-organisation of the Russia Committee and which agreed the terms of the minute to Sir William Strang from Sir Pierson Dixon. NB in essence the draft is the same as that finally sent to Sir William Strang by Sir Frank Roberts on 9 December after he had succeeded Sir Pierson Dixon as Russia Committee Chairman – see below.
- 17 Mar 1952** **FO 371/ZP12/2/G.** Minute to Sir William Strang (PUS) from Pierson Dixon saying: "I have for some time felt increasing doubts about the usefulness of the discussions in the Russia Committee and the papers produced by it.....I held a small meeting recently with senior members of the Committee to consider means of adapting the Committee's work to present circumstances...Briefly, we recommend that there should be a smaller and more high-powered committee with meetings monthly instead of fortnightly....The "Crystal Gazer" has, I think you will agree, become a rather pedestrian and uninspired production, and, if the Committee is to fulfil its function as an interpreter of Soviet policy, we clearly need a more thoughtful document...." On the same date Sir William Strang added a manuscript note saying: "I agree. Let us try this".
- 25 Mar 1952** **FO 371/NS1052/12 and 13.** Cover note by Russia Committee Secretariat (12) to Chairman (Sir Pierson Dixon) Note Headed 'Russia Committee' and setting out changes to the "membership and procedure of" of the Committee with effect from 1 April. As Pierson Dixon, the then Chairman of the Russia Committee, said at the end of March 1952⁶⁴⁷, the Committee "was originally set up in 1947 after the Moscow Conference had put an end to our hopes of genuine cooperation by the Russians. The terms of reference of the Committee were devised with the general aim of creating a body whose discussions would draw the attention of Ministers and others to the realities of the situation. He reported that it had therefore been agreed to: reduce the membership; reduce the meetings from fortnightly to monthly; and to abolish the "Crystal Gazer" and replace it with a shorter more general document. Although Dixon was a pains to emphasise the positives of doing this (i.e. saying that the new structure should result in a more high-powered Committee), it is difficult not to see this as a recognition of the reduction in the importance of the Committee and, in a reference at the end of the paper to the PUS Committee, to place it clearly in a subordinate position to the latter body when Dixon says: "Where suitable the Committee may recommend

⁶⁴⁷ FO 371/NS1052/13. Paper dated 24 March 1952 from Sir Pierson Dixon, Chairman of the Russia Committee, to all members of the Committee, Paragraph 2.

that papers which they have considered shall be brought to the notice of the P.U.S. Committee".⁶⁴⁸

- 3 April 1952** **FO 371/NS1052/14.** Circular by Russia Committee Secretariat to all recipients of Russia Committee documents. 'This is the last paper in the present series. In future the Russia Committee will meet on the first Tuesday of each month, starting on Tuesday, the 6th May. The results of its discussions will be summarised in slightly different form, but it is not intended to alter the distribution of final documents...'
- 13 Nov 1952** **FO 371/125005/ZP12/4.** Minute from Russia Committee Secretariat to members on the Re-organisation of the Russia Committee and Consideration of the title and terms of reference and attaching a draft Office Circular. On the title, it was noted that to date it had been agreed that despite the importance of China and Chinese Communist activity in the RC's discussions the original title of "The Russia Committee" should be maintained. It was also noted that Mr Frank Roberts, then a Deputy Under- Secretary and former member of the Committee, had now taken over the Chairmanship of the Committee from Sir Pierson Dixon. As a further indication of the relative greater importance now of the PUS Department, the Note stated: It will be seen that in the previous terms of reference the following sentence appeared:- "The Committee will maintain close contact with the Chiefs of Staff and JIC with a view to co-ordinating intelligence and estimates of Soviet intentions at every stage." It is proposed to omit this sentence from the new terms of reference since it would be seen that effective liaison in this sense is now maintained through PUS Department in the first instance".
- 2 Dec 1952** **FO 371/.....** Minutes of Meeting of Russia Committee. NB Minutes missing.
- 3 Dec 1952** **FO 371/125005/ZP12/4.** Manuscript minute by Russia Committee Secretariat noting that the draft circular referred to under 13 November entry above has been "approved by the Committee at its meeting on 2 December, subject to certain amendments. Approval by Sir W Strang will now be required".
- 9 Dec 1952** **FO 371/125005/ZP12/5.** Minute from Sir Frank Roberts to the PUS, Sir William Strang entitled "Russia Committee" about proposed changes to the Russia Committee, as follows:
- "About six months ago Sir P Dixon obtained your approval to certain measures of reorganisation of the Russia Committee. They have now been tested and the Committee agreed at its last meeting that the time had come to put them on formal record.*

⁶⁴⁸ FO 371/NS1052/13. Paper dated 24 March 1952 from Sir Pierson Dixon, Chairman of the Russia Committee, to all members of the Committee, Paragraph 9.

2. I accordingly submit a draft office circular on the work of the Committee, which might be issued in substitution of the relevant section of the previous circular on 1949 on this subject...The main changes are in respect of meetings and membership, both of which have been cut down, and in the scope of the Committee's work which now includes China. You will notice that the definition of the scope of our monthly survey has been amended to cover this last point: and, similarly, as a consequence, the terms of reference.

We thought it right in present circumstances to omit the sentence on liaison with the Chiefs of Staff and JIC, from the new terms of reference, since this is now the work of the PUS Department in the first instance. The PUS Department was, of course, created after the date of Sir O Sargent's circular.

Although the title is no longer accurate, there was general agreement that it should not be change.

I should be grateful for your approval for the issue of the new circular".

22 Dec 1952 **FO 371/125005/ZP12/5.** Copy of text of Office Circular No 18. Text as follows:

"RUSSIA COMMITTEE

The description of the work of the Russia Committee and Terms of Reference, given in Office Circular No 3 of 17 January, 1949, should now be revised as follows:-

The Russia Committee will meet on the first Tuesday of every month under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Under-Secretary responsible or of the Under-Secretary in charge of Northern Department. The Secretariat will be identical with the Secretariat of the Permanent Under Secretary's Committee. The Committee may be attended by any member of the Permanent Under Secretary's Committee who wishes to come, but its regular membership will be:

Parliamentary Under-Secretary.

Assistant Under-Secretaries in charge of Economic Departments, China and Korea Department, Eastern Department, Information Departments, Northern Department and Permanent Under-Secretary's Department.

Heads of Central, China and Korea, Information Research, Northern and South East Asia Departments, Overseas Planning Section, China and Soviet Sections of Research Department.

Representatives of the Cabinet Office, Colonial Office, Commonwealth Relations Office, Ministry of Defence, Joint Intelligence Bureau and British Broadcasting Corporation.

Other members may be added on a permanent or temporary basis at the discretion of the Chairman.

The Chairman will report to the Permanent Under-Secretary if any item arises in discussion which in his opinion might be referred to the Permanent Under-Secretary's Committee.

The Russia Committee will prepare each month a survey of the trends of policy and propaganda of the Soviet bloc and China, and of Communist activities generally. The general paragraphs of this survey will be drafted by Northern Department and circulated to Central China and Korea, Information Research and Permanent Under-Secretary's Departments and to the Labour Adviser, who will suggest any necessary amendments and add special paragraphs on the subjects for which they are responsible. The Secretariat will prepare the draft paper for the Committee from these contributions and will be responsible for the minutes and the secretarial work of the Committee generally. A. STRANG

ANNEX

Terms of Reference

To review each month the trends of policy and propaganda of the Soviet bloc and China, and Communist activities throughout the world, more particular with reference to Communist intentions towards this country; to ensure the unified interpretation thereof throughout the Foreign Office; to consider any immediate action needed as a result of the Committee's review, and to make recommendations accordingly. The Committee will also undertake or initiate studies of any particular aspect of Communist policy as the Chairman may think necessary".

NB The Russia Committee continued in existence after 1952 with papers listed until 1958 and a few with related titles beyond that time – some of which are listed but not summarised below

FO 371/125258: ZP2/1: Russia Committee brief for Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting held January 31 to February 8, 1954, entitled "Where Does Moscow Stand?"

FO 371/125260: NS ZP2/26. Minutes and papers of Russia Committee from August 1955 to January 1956.

FO 371/122788 NS1022/10. Papers relating to the distribution of Russia Committee papers.

FO 371/128994: NS1022/16. Papers discussing the Dissolution of the Russia Committee. Various papers dating from August through to December 1957

FO 371/129026: NS1054. Minutes of Russia Committee Meeting 5 February 1957.

FO 371/125259: NSZP2/15. Minutes and papers from 1955.

FO 371/143417: NS1023/2. Note dated December 1958 giving change of name of recipients – interesting because it says the IRD copy should go to...i.e. links Russia Committee with IRD)

APPENDIX 2 RUSSIA COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND OTHER KEY OFFICIALS

John Sterndale Bennett

John Sterndale Bennett joined the Diplomatic Service in 1920 following a distinguished military career for which he was decorated with a Military Cross in the First World War. His Diplomatic career saw him serving in many countries and he ended his career as H M Ambassador to Cyprus. In May 1947 Sterndale Bennett was the British Minister in Sofia, Bulgaria, and Keith Jeffery tells how Tony Brooks – an SIS officer and former SOE operator – was sent to Sofia as head of station stationed in the Sofia Embassy to undertake undercover work but that Sterndale Bennett disapproved and kept Brooks so occupied with non SIS type work that he was able to make no progress. In October 1947 Sterndale Bennett ordered Brooks to cease SIS activity altogether. But in May 1948 the Foreign Office confirmed Bevin's wish was to see that "every effort was to be made to penetrate the Iron Curtain" and that "pressure would now be brought to bear" on Sterndale Bennett to lift his ban on SIS activity.⁶⁴⁹

Thomas Brimelow

Thomas Brimelow – known as Tommy to his friends – was the product of a Grammar School education. From early on he demonstrated a combination of hard work and high intellect which was to mark his whole career. He excelled at both Mathematics and Greek and won a scholarship to Oriel College, Oxford, where he gained a first in Modern Languages in 1936. He then joined the Diplomatic Service, gaining entry through the Consular Section. He began his career as a probationary Vice Consul to Danzig; then a spell in New York and then in June 1942 went as third secretary and vice-consul in Moscow where he remained for the rest of the War. He began to acquire that personal experience of the workings of the Soviet state which was to make him, throughout most of the cold war, the acknowledged authority on the interpretation of Soviet policy and the formulation of the British response.

⁶⁴⁹ Jeffery Keith. *MI6 The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949*. Published Clays Limited, 2010. Page 671-6

Brimelow was the best Russian speaker in the British Embassy in Moscow during the Second World War and it was as a young man that he was despatched to cope, face to face, with Stalin, who, having imbibed his vodka, was in the habit of summoning the Embassy late at night or in the early hours to convey his views to Churchill and the British Government.⁶⁵⁰ Later, Brimelow served as Ambassador to Poland from 1966 to 1969 and rose to become Permanent Under Secretary at FCO from 1973 to 1975. His command of the Russian language and his understanding both of the Russian character and of the Soviet system were legendary. Some saw him as the toughest of the cold warriors. Tough he was and having, as he said, “been brought up under Stalin”⁶⁵¹ he had no illusions. But his policy was essentially that of George Kennan, namely: “Stand up to them, but not aggressively and let the hand of time do its work”.⁶⁵² Unyielding in his hatred of the Soviet system, he still worked for better relations and opposed any policy designed to promote instability within the Soviet empire. Brimelow’s papers are held at the Churchill Archives Centre and Churchill College, Cambridge.

Harold Anthony Caccia

Harold Caccia was born in India and was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Oxford where he was a popular all-rounder and gained a rugby blue and second-class honours in philosophy, politics, and economics in 1927. In 1928 he won a Laming travelling fellowship from Queen's College, Oxford. He entered Diplomatic service in 1929 and became APS to Anthony Eden from 1936 to 1939 and was then transferred to Athens until 1941. From 1956 to 61 he was HM Ambassador to the USA. In 1962 he became Permanent Under-Secretary of State and Head of the Diplomatic Service until his retirement in 1965.⁶⁵³ In this post he is credited with having helped to repair the UK’s ‘special relationship’ with the US which had been damaged by the Suez Crisis.

In appearance Caccia was short, stocky, and bald with a fair complexion. He was forthright in speech and energetic in action, and he retained throughout his life a

⁶⁵⁰ Taken from the Obituary on Thomas Brimelow, written by Tam Dalyell in the Independent Newspaper of 3 August 1995.

⁶⁵¹ *The Independent*, 4 Aug 1995

⁶⁵² Kennan, George F. *Memoirs 1925 – 1950*. Published Little Brown and Company, 1967.

⁶⁵³ Obituary New York Times, 12 November 1990.

cheerful and light-hearted, almost boyish, manner, which concealed a serious and thoughtful disposition. He was a good administrator and universally popular. He ended as he had begun, as a great all-rounder. Caccia was happy in his family life and he and his wife were a devoted couple. They had two daughters and one son. But his latter years were saddened by the untimely death of his son, David, in 1983.⁶⁵⁴

Alexander George Montagu Cadogan

Alexander Cadogan was the son of one Earl who had served in Salisbury's Cabinet and been Viceroy of Ireland, and the grandson of another Earl. He was Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign Office from January 1938 to February 1946 - a longer term than normal in this highest position of the Diplomatic Service.⁶⁵⁵

Early in 1936 the Foreign Secretary invited Cadogan to return from China in order to become the senior Deputy Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office. Cadogan accepted, taking up his post in October 1936. He was universally regarded as the perfect embodiment of the senior civil servant. He was highly intelligent, unflappable and said to have sound judgement. In January 1938 he became the Permanent Under-Secretary.

By the time the Second World War broke out in 1939 Cadogan, having received the GCMG insignia in January 1939. He had good relationships with Halifax and with Eden and Churchill. He was not known for being deferential. At a critical moment in Moscow in August 1942, following an acerbic encounter between Churchill and Stalin, he told the Prime Minister flatly and repeatedly and with some effect that his attitude to the draft Soviet communiqué was wrong. "I had never", observed Churchill's doctor, who was present at this encounter, "seen anyone talk to the P.M. like this".⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁴ Oxford Dictionary of Bibliography entry.

⁶⁵⁵ Bullock, Alan. *Ernest Bevin Foreign Secretary*. Published Norton 1983. Chapter 2, page 73.

⁶⁵⁶ Moran, Lord. *Winston Churchill: the Struggle for Survival*, 1966, 78.

From July 1945 Cadogan was appointed the first United Kingdom Permanent Representative at the headquarters of the United Nations (UN) in New York, though he would have preferred the Washington embassy. He left the Foreign Office in February 1946.

There is an interesting story in the memoirs of Ivone Kirkpatrick about Cadogan's involvement in the Rudolph Hess episode in May 1941. Hess, flew to Scotland and met with the Duke of Hamilton who doubted his claim to be Reich Minister Hess but nevertheless told the Prime Minister and Winston Churchill then asked Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, to look into it. They needed to establish that Hess was who he claimed to be but he had neglected to bring proof of his identity. Eden asked Cadogan if he knew of anyone who could actually vouch for Hess being who he claimed to be and Cadogan discovered that Ivone Kirkpatrick knew Hess well and so was duly despatched to Scotland to verify his identity – which he did.⁶⁵⁷

Cadogan was described as being “the punctilious and precise diplomat”, within three days of Bevin's arrival as Foreign Secretary the latter was calling him “Alec”.⁶⁵⁸ Their relationship was a close one as is evidenced when, following Bevin's death in April 1951, he wrote to Mrs Bevin saying:

*“Having been privileged to work for Mr Bevin, I was able to appreciate all his great qualities of heart and mind. He was a great leader who inspired admiration and respect in all those with whom he came in contact and the country has suffered a blow through his loss.”*⁶⁵⁹

Patrick Dean

Patrick Dean was a lawyer and a diplomatist. He was born on 16 March 1909 in Berlin, the only son and elder child of Henry Roy Dean, Professor of Pathology and later Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and his wife, Irene. Patrick Dean was educated at

⁶⁵⁷ For a fuller description of Hess's delightfully absurd venture see Chapter VIII of Ivone Kirkpatrick's *Inner Circle*, published Macmillan, 1959, pages 169 to 185.

⁶⁵⁸ Trevor Evans, *Bevin*, published George Allen&Unwin, 1946, Page 212.

⁶⁵⁹ Letter from Cadogan to Ernest Bevin's widow, dated 16 April 1951, in Ernest Bevin's private papers at Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge.

Rugby School and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he was a classical scholar, gaining first-class honours in part one of the Classics tripos and in both parts of the Law tripos. He was elected a Fellow of Clare College in 1932 and then in 1935, having been called to the bar by Lincoln's Inn the previous year, practised as a barrister until 1939. On the outbreak of the Second World War, he became assistant legal adviser in the Foreign Office and served throughout the war in that capacity, later being responsible for much of the legal preparation required for the War Crimes Tribunal at Nuremberg. In 1945 he accepted appointment as an established member of the foreign service with the rank of Counsellor, and in 1946 he was made Head of the German political department of the Foreign Office, an appointment he held until 1950 during an important period of post-war reconstruction. It was during that time that he had dealings with the Russia Committee. He was appointed CMG in 1947.

In 1950 Patrick Dean became Minister in the Rome embassy before returning to London as senior civilian instructor at the Imperial Defence College. He then became Assistant Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office responsible for relations with the Chiefs of Staff and the intelligence services. He also became chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee for over six years. In the early years of NATO and with no sign of softening in the attitude of Stalinist Russia, defence aspects of Foreign Office work had become of the greatest importance.

Patrick Dean's incisive mind and intellectual grasp enabled him to perform the work with widely acknowledged authority, and in the course of his long tenure he was promoted again to be Deputy Under-Secretary in 1956 at the early age of forty-seven. It was because of his position at the centre of Foreign Office policy making that he became involved, albeit involuntarily, in a highly contentious episode at a late stage of the Suez affair in 1956. The Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, had decided to collaborate with a secret French-Israeli plan to attack Egypt and had also attempted to ensure that no word of this should become known beyond a very narrow circle. Thus Dean had no knowledge of the plan discussed by the Prime Minister with his French counterparts at Chequers on 14 October 1956 and in Paris on 16 October. He first learned of it when he was told by the Prime Minister on 24 October to go to Paris in order to continue discussions with the French and Israeli Ministers begun at Sèvres two days earlier by

the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd. The only instruction given to Dean and his co-emissary, Donald Logan (Lloyd's APS) was to make sure that it was understood that British forces would not move unless there was a clear military threat to the canal. The French recorded the discussion in an accurate memorandum which Dean signed *ad referendum*. To his dismay, however, when he showed this to Eden on his return that evening, Eden was furious and ordered his return to Paris the following day to ensure that all copies of the record were destroyed—a request that was refused after Dean and Logan had been incarcerated for some hours in a reception room at the Quai d'Orsay while awaiting the French decision. Dean naturally felt a sense of humiliation over this episode, but in fact he had done his best to carry out the Prime Minister's instructions. He had had no part in the policy of using force and some years later privately expressed the view that this had been a strange aberration on the part of Eden whom he otherwise much admired.

Dean was made KCMG in 1957 and spent several more years in the Foreign Office before being appointed in September 1960 to be the successor to Sir Pierson Dixon as UK Permanent Representative at the United Nations (UKREP). Following his time in New York, Dean had hoped to be appointed Permanent Under-Secretary in succession to Sir Harold Caccia. But the newly elected Labour government of 1964 decided that his involvement, however innocent, in the Sevres affair was a fatal bar, and with some reluctance they offered him instead the Washington embassy.

Pierson Dixon

Pierson Dixon – in practice always known as Bob - was Bevin's – and before him, Eden's, Principal Private Secretary at the end of the War. His forenames reflected a long-standing family tradition. Before entering the Diplomatic Service he was a Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he read classics and gained a double first. In the Foreword to his published diaries Lord Butler says of him:

One of Dixon's greatest services was as Private Secretary to Ernest Bevin. It was remarkable that a man like Bevin who read papers and wrote with such difficulty, should have been able to handle the immense amounts of Foreign Office material, and be able to be absolutely at peace and ease with his official

advisers. It was largely Dixon's work to bring out the greatness in the man. At the same time Dixon was able to conduct a bipartisan foreign policy through his friendship with Eden.⁶⁶⁰

As Bevin's Principal Private Secretary, Pierson Dixon accompanied him to Potsdam. His personal papers, held by his son, were made available to Michael Blackwell in writing his book "Clinging to Grandeur", published in 1993, his son Piers Dixon having published the first version of his own book drawn largely from his Father's diaries, in 1968, "Double Diploma".

Bob Dixon was Bevin's first PPS as Foreign Secretary and his third PPS, Roderick Barclay, described him as follows:

Bob had been a great success during his two years as Private Secretary to Eden and had been just as highly esteemed by Ernie Bevin. He had all the qualifications for this particular post, and indeed he was in every way an outstanding person, combining great charm of manner with exceptional intellectual gifts. He was just the man to help induct Mr Bevin at the Foreign Office, and he did a great deal to smooth the way for him during his early days there.

Bob Dixon remained with Mr Bevin for more than two years before being appointed Ambassador at Prague. The rest of his diplomatic career was equally distinguished and he ended up as Ambassador in Paris. It was a tragedy that he died suddenly so soon after his retirement.⁶⁶¹

In 1929 Dixon passed the Foreign Office examination comfortably, emerging second out of a distinguished intake which included Harold Caccia and was appointed a third secretary in October 1929. Postings in Spain (1932–6), Turkey (1936–8), and Italy (1938–40) followed in close succession, providing him with a solid grounding in the workings of the diplomatic corps. His spell in the Italian capital also allowed him to observe at first hand British efforts to appease Mussolini. He was, meanwhile, promoted second secretary in October 1934 and first secretary in December 1939. It was not until the outbreak of the Second World War, however, that his career really took off. His wartime years were mainly spent in close proximity to Anthony Eden. In 1941 he accompanied the Foreign Secretary on a lengthy mission to the Middle East and the Balkans, and two years later, in November 1943, he was appointed Eden's PPS,

⁶⁶⁰ Dixon. Page xii.

⁶⁶¹ Barclay. Page 30.

with the rank of counsellor. In this capacity he was present at many of the crucial allied encounters in the course of which both the shape of wartime strategy and the post-war settlement were determined. At the Yalta summit in February 1945 he was responsible for co-ordinating the work of the British delegation and was deeply involved in the frantic attempts to draft a satisfactory communiqué before Roosevelt's earlier than expected departure.

Midway through the Potsdam conference the general election result in 1945 prompted a change in the British government. Labour's victory, however, had no professional impact on Dixon, since he was immediately appointed principal private secretary to Ernest Bevin, Eden's successor. His position at the heart of British foreign policy making thus remained secure. Indeed, in many ways the spell as Bevin's right-hand man must rank as the most impressive of Dixon's career. The Foreign Secretary's schedule was arduous, dominated by the increasingly fraught conferences of foreign ministers at which the wartime allies struggled to contain their growing mistrust of each other and to reconcile their highly divergent priorities for the post-war world. Against this gloomy backdrop Dixon had not merely to act as companion, counsellor, speech-writer, and administrator for Bevin, but also to join the foreign secretary in the late-night singsongs which marked the end of at least some of the foreign ministers' meetings. He was appointed CMG in 1945 and CB in 1948.

In January 1948 Dixon received his first ambassadorial posting, to Prague. He was appointed KCMG in January 1950, and in June of that year returned to London as Deputy Under-Secretary of State, with responsibility first for political and then for economic affairs. He also served as UK representative on the Brussels Treaty Permanent Commission, with the personal rank of Ambassador, until November 1952. Pierson Dixon's personal papers are held at Birmingham University.

Edmund Leo Hall-Patch

Edmund Hall Patch was a delicate child and was sent to a religious house in the south of France. Both these experiences—France and a Roman Catholic education—

strongly influenced his life. In France he became bilingual and he always felt quite as much at ease in France and in Europe as he did in England, while the only home he ever owned and to which, but for financial and legal difficulties, he would later in life have emigrated was in the south of France. Wherever in the world he worked he was always close to the Catholic hierarchy. After a spell at school in England, Hall-Patch returned at sixteen to Paris to train as a professional musician but soon decided he was not good enough. By 1914 he was studying French at the Sorbonne; he joined up, was commissioned in the Royal Artillery, won the Croix de Guerre with palms, was gassed, medically downgraded, and ended the war as a captain and railway transport officer near Paris. In 1935 he was invited to join the Treasury as an Assistant Secretary, and from June 1936 became financial adviser to the British embassy. In 1938 he was appointed CMG and in 1940 became the government's financial commissioner throughout the Far East. In 1941 he returned to the Treasury to keep an eye on the Far East and be involved in negotiations, on such matters as lend-lease, with the United States. In 1944 he was promoted to Under-Secretary and transferred to the Foreign Office to direct and lay enduring foundations for its growing economic work. In 1946 he was promoted to Deputy Secretary and in the following year knighted.

As the principal economic adviser to Ernest Bevin he played a central and demanding role in the British response to the Marshall plan. In 1948 he was promoted again—this time to become Ambassador and leader of the British delegation to the nascent Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, based in Paris, and of which he Chaired the Executive Committee. The OEEC worked in tandem with the ECA to devise annual recovery plans, allocate American aid under the Marshall Plan.

Edmund Hall Patch was considered one of the most notable of the many equally impressive figures who stood in for government Ministers at the head of their national delegations.⁶⁶² Over his four years as Chairman of the OEEC Executive Committee, he worked hard and travelled prodigiously, and was popular with his colleagues—American and European—and seen by them, and perhaps by himself, as

⁶⁶² Entry from Oxford Dictionary of Bibliography

the champion of closer British ties with Europe. In 1951 he was appointed GCMG.

Hall-Patch never felt quite at home in Whitehall and this diminished his influence and effectiveness. He tended to see himself as an outsider looking into the establishment, impelled by an austere conscience to warn his more sheltered and unwary colleagues against facile optimism or complacency. Bevin valued him and was amused by his Cassandra role. 'Morning 'all-Patch', he would say as he saw Hall-Patch lowering ominously in the corridor 'and what's the snags to-day?' When he had heard, he felt forearmed against the worst. Hall-Patch's most lasting achievements were the pioneering and strengthening of the economic side of the Foreign Office and the handling of all the European developments arising from the Marshall plan.

Robin M A Hankey

Robin Hankey was the son of Maurice Hankey who was Cabinet Secretary until 1938. In the last three years of the war was moved from Cairo to Teheran as First Secretary and Head of Chancery. In March 1942, was recalled home to become Deputy Head of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office. In 1945/46 he was the chargé d'affairs in Warsaw.⁶⁶³ He then returned to the Foreign Office in London and from 1946 to 1948 was Head of the Foreign Office's Northern Department. Between 1960 and 1965 he was British Representative to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Oliver Charles Harvey

Oliver Charles Harvey was the son of a Baronet landowner in Norfolk. He was educated at Malvern College and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he obtained a first in part one of the Historical Tripos in 1914. He served throughout the war in the Norfolk regiment, in France, Egypt, and Palestine, and was mentioned in dispatches. After the war Harvey began his career in the diplomatic service. He served as second secretary in Rome from 1922 to 1925, and as first secretary in Athens from 1929 to

⁶⁶³ Roskill, Stephen. Hankey : Volume III 1931-1963. Published Collins, 1974. Page 598.

1931, then as Head of chancery in Paris, where he remained for five years and was a discriminating student of all things French. His path thereafter was an alternation between Paris and London,⁶⁶⁴

Oliver Harvey served for two spells as Principal Private Secretary to Anthony Eden, from 1936 to 1938 and again from 1941 to 1943. This, in itself was a significant achievement as Eden was known at the time to be a difficult man to serve under. Lord Brimelow described Harvey as: "A good Private Secretary; rather pompous; also rather non-committal in his dealings with people".⁶⁶⁵

Harvey served Eden with a devotion to which his posthumously published diary bears eloquent witness. 'Eden gave me his confidence most fully and I endeavoured to return it in the same spirit, loyally and to the best of my ability'. The diary is especially illuminating on his beloved 'AE', and, by way of baleful counterpoint, on the ungovernable Winston Churchill: "Really the PM is a lunatic: he gets in such a state of excitement that the wildest schemes seem reasonable. I hope to goodness we can defeat this one. AE believes the Cabinet and finally the King will restrain him, but the Cabinet are a poor lot for stopping anything".⁶⁶⁶

In 1946 he became Deputy Under-Secretary (political) at the Foreign Office, where he worked closely with Ernest Bevin, whom he much admired. Bevin, too, clearly had great faith in Oliver Harvey and on several occasions commissioned him to brief his senior Foreign Office officials who were engaged in pursuing sensitive missions. For example, August 1946, Harvey, in a briefing note to Patrick Dean, then Head of the Foreign Office German Department, who had been sent to Berlin for discussions on the future of the Western German Zone post Potsdam, conveyed Bevin's views thus: "Mr Dean will realize that it is the policy of the Secretary of State to use our control of the Ruhr not against France or the USA but against the Soviets solely

⁶⁶⁴ Entry from Oxford Dictionary of Biography

⁶⁶⁵ Notes on two conversations with Lord Brimelow 20-21 April 1982. Michael Burd. Lord Brimelow's papers, Churchill Archive Centre.

⁶⁶⁶ Harvey, John, Editor. *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1941-1945*. Published Collins, 1978. Entry for 8 December 1941, Page 70.

to secure the lifting of the Iron Curtain. ...(Russia) hopes to get into the Ruhr while keeping us out of the Eastern zone. But if we are firm and allow absolutely no infiltration she must in the end give way and open the Eastern zone to us".⁶⁶⁷

By June 1948 Oliver Harvey had become HM Ambassador in Paris in succession to Duff Cooper. Speaking of his diaries⁶⁶⁸ he said that its whole value, if it has a value, lies in its 'hotness', in the immediate impression and atmosphere. I am the first to recognise how many of the first reactions and impressions and judgements were proved wrong and would be admitted wrong by myself now, but that is not the point. This is how we saw things at the time. ... The more light that can be shed on the circumstances in which impressions were formed, decisions and actions taken, the better.

Gladwyn Jebb

Gladwyn Jebb was distinguished from other diplomats of his generation not only by his particular contribution to post-war international reconstruction, but by his transition after retirement to an active and eminent position in British politics. After what he described as a shaky diplomatic start in Persia,⁶⁶⁹ Jebb became a distinguished diplomat.

In 1929, Hugh Dalton, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the new Labour government, appointed Jebb as his Private Secretary and later, when Dalton left government, he secured Jebb a Foreign Office posting to Rome. From Italy he observed and reported with guarded sympathy on Mussolini's corporative state and even though he despised fascism he tended to support the line of Italian appeasement taken by Sir Robert Vansittart, then Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office. At the age of 38, Jebb became Private Secretary to the PUS, briefly Vansittart, and then Sir Alexander Cadogan, and thereafter remained at the heart of foreign affairs.

⁶⁶⁷ TNA FO 371/55591/100014. Note Oliver Harvey to Patrick Dean dated 13 August 1946.

⁶⁶⁸ Harvey. *The War Diaries*.

⁶⁶⁹ Gladwyn. Chapter 2, A Shaky Start.

In the summer of 1945 Gladwyn Jebb was chosen to be the Executive Secretary at the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations then based in London, and he guided that embryo body through its founding stages, as Acting Secretary-General, until the appointment of the first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, in 1946.

The arrival at the Foreign Office in 1945 of Ernest Bevin, with whom Jebb struck a chord, had boosted an already buoyant career. A stickleback among piranha, the Foreign Secretary, tired and ailing, was mesmerised by his new and (almost without exception) Etonian team. "You know, Gladwyn," Bevin once confided, "I don't mind the upper class . . . what I frankly can't abide is the middle class." Gladwyn Jebb was deputy to Ernest Bevin at the meeting of Foreign Ministers in negotiations in 1946, by when he had been promoted to Assistant Under-Secretary of State, and was Foreign Office Adviser to the 1947 and 1948 British delegations to the United Nations.⁶⁷⁰

During the post-war years Jebb's high standing was indicated by his chairmanship at the end of 1948 of the Foreign Office's Russia Committee. Even so, as a Deputy Under-Secretary from 1949, he was disappointed not to get the Permanent Under-Secretaryship, and the Paris Embassy in 1954 was a qualified compensation for a man whose natural social diffidence could easily be mistaken for coldness. His retirement came, therefore, with only muted regret and he threw himself into promoting the European cause which he had long supported. Raised to the Lords he first, from a sense of obligation, sat on the cross benches; then with the defeat of the government, joined the Liberal Party and continued the campaign from there.

Ivone Augustine Kirkpatrick

Ivone Kirkpatrick reached the position of Head of the Foreign Office in 1956 when he succeeded Lord Strang. Before WWII he was Head of Chancery at HM Embassy in Berlin leaving there on 15 December 1938. He was from a family of high military and Diplomatic achievement and rank – father a colonel in India, mother the daughter of a General and governor of Gibraltar). A Roman Catholic, Kirkpatrick was educated at Downside School from 1907 to 1914. On the outbreak of the First World War he

⁶⁷⁰ Taken from the Obituary of Gladwyn Jebb in The Independent dated 25 October 1996.

volunteered for active service and was commissioned in November 1914 in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Severely wounded in action against the Turks in August 1915, he was accepted by Balliol College, Oxford, but chose to resume his war service early in 1916 when he was employed in propaganda and intelligence activities.

Kirkpatrick was said to have had an incisive mind, and to be a quick thinker. He was promoted second secretary in December 1920 and first secretary in October 1928. During the 1930s his postings gave Kirkpatrick first-hand experience of dealing with the emerging European dictatorships: three years in Rome, from 1930 to 1933, were followed by a transfer to Berlin in August 1933 as head of Chancery, where he remained until December 1938. These years proved the most formative part of his career, imbuing him with a deep loathing for totalitarian dictatorships of both the Nazi and Communist variants. Remembered by his friend and contemporary Gladwyn Jebb as a 'very brave and forthright man' who was unafraid of 'speaking his mind to his own superiors'.

During the Second World War Kirkpatrick was once again employed in the propaganda and information work which he had so relished twenty-five years earlier. Appointed director of the foreign division of the Ministry of Information in April 1940, he became controller of the European services of the BBC in October 1941. Here he made a major contribution which included the task of interviewing Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess, following Hess's flight to Scotland in May 1941. In September 1944 Kirkpatrick was appointed to organize elements of the Allied Control Commission for Germany, and following the end of the war he served at supreme allied headquarters as British political adviser to General Eisenhower until that organisation's disbandment. By the time he returned to the Foreign Office he had become convinced not only that the USSR was aggressively expansionist, but that Britain's post-war difficulties overseas were being 'deliberately aggravated by a savage Soviet campaign of anti-British propaganda' and that Britain should respond accordingly.

Appointed assistant under-secretary responsible for information work in August 1945, Kirkpatrick was instrumental in the creation of the information policy machinery which

served the Foreign Office during the cold war. Promoted deputy under-secretary in April 1948, he oversaw policy administration for western Europe and then in February 1949 became permanent under-secretary overseeing the German section of the Foreign Office, the former 'Control Office for Germany and Austria'. Both postings brought him into close contact with Ernest Bevin, for whom he had the greatest respect and affection.

Between June 1950 and November 1953 Kirkpatrick was British high commissioner in Germany and, as one of the three joint sovereigns of western Germany, carried immense responsibility particularly with respect to the negotiation of the Bonn conventions during 1951–2, which terminated the occupation regime and (in parallel) prepared the way for the rearmament of West Germany.

Kirkpatrick returned to London in November 1953 to succeed Sir William Strang as PUS in the Foreign Office.

Robert Hamilton ("R.H.") Bruce Lockhart

Journalist, author, secret agent, British diplomat, Lockhart was born in Anstruther, Fife. He attended Fettes College in Edinburgh. He joined the British Foreign Service and was posted to Moscow as Vice-Consul and was Acting British Consul-General in Moscow when the first Russian Revolution broke out in early 1917, but left shortly before the Bolshevik Revolution of October that year. He soon returned to Russia at the behest of Prime Minister Lloyd George and Lord Milner as the United Kingdom's first envoy to the Bolsheviks (Russia) in January 1918.

During the Second World War, Lockhart became director-general of the Political Warfare Executive, co-ordinating all British propaganda against the Axis powers. He was also for a time the British liaison officer to the Czechoslovak government-in-exile. After the war, he resumed his writing career, becoming a long-term editor of the Evening Standard's Londoner's Diary, as well as lecturing and broadcasting. Sir Robert Hamilton Bruce Lockhart, died in 1970 at the age of 82.

Frank Kenyon Roberts

Frank Roberts was educated in Bedales School (1917–20) and then Rugby School (1921–6). At both schools, although diminutive in stature, he excelled in games as well as in academic work. At Rugby his headmaster regarded him as an outstanding all-rounder and he finished his school career by winning a scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge from where he graduated in 1930 with first-class honours in both parts of The History tripos. After spending the customary periods of study with academic families in France and Germany in order to improve his languages he took the Foreign Office examination in 1930. From the first he was recognised as being exceptionally able, and he quickly made his mark. In November 1937 Roberts and his wife returned to London, where he was to serve in the Foreign Office until the last months of the Second World War. Still a very junior official, Roberts was nevertheless in the thick of affairs as a member of the central department, dealing with European questions during the succession of crises just before the outbreak of war. Indeed, he acquired the reputation of always being on hand in the middle of the action. For example, he was the official who took over to the House of Commons the telegram that enabled Mr Chamberlain to announce with high drama the invitation to meet Hitler at Munich in 1938. In March 1939 he was dealing with Polish affairs when Chamberlain made his abrupt change of policy and gave a guarantee to Poland after Hitler's annexation of Czechoslovakia. Later on in the year he accompanied Strang to Moscow for the negotiations that attempted unsuccessfully to enlist Russian help in stemming German plans for further aggressive acts. He was present in the Secretary of State's room at the Foreign Office on 3 September 1939 when the ultimatum ran out and Britain therefore came to be at war with Germany. He was the British joint secretary of the Anglo-French war council in 1939–40. In December 1941, after Hitler's invasion of Russia, he was one of the small group accompanying Eden to Moscow. Later in the war he was largely responsible for negotiating the Azores agreement with Portugal, providing for the allied use of this important naval base. He was then involved in much of the planning for a post-war settlement that went on in the Foreign Office in 1943 and 1944, and he was present at the Yalta conference in 1945.

Promoted acting counsellor, Roberts was transferred to Moscow in January 1945. The next three years, 1945–7, were to be perhaps the most important period of the middle years of his career, as it was from Moscow that—as chargé d'affaires in close consultation with the United States ambassador, George Kennan—he sent back to London his ‘Long Telegram’. The policy of containment advocated therein was shortly adopted and successfully carried out once it became clear that the Soviet Union was not willing to remain in collaboration with its wartime allies in managing the post-war settlement. It was when in Moscow that Roberts (who had been appointed CMG in 1946) was spotted by Ernest Bevin and invited to become his private secretary at the end of 1947. In this capacity he entered once more into the centre of government affairs at home. He was used by Bevin as his right-hand man in discussions with the Russians and the Americans over the Berlin airlift in 1947 and 1948, and he proved a reliable and skilful negotiator. But the normal duties of a private secretary were not really suited to one of such an active turn of mind and, although at the time reluctant to leave Bevin's side, Roberts's next experience, as number two in the high commission in India from April 1949 to August 1951, after which he returned to London to be the deputy under-secretary responsible for European affairs. By this time Eden had returned as Foreign Secretary and Roberts, as his principal adviser on Europe, dealt with the whole complex of problems involved in re-establishing a sovereign state in West Germany and in bringing Germany into the Atlantic Alliance as a major partner of the Western powers.

Brimelow's reaction when asked about Frank Roberts was (with a gleam in his eye) “Ce petit phenomene”. “I have never seen anyone with such a capacity for getting through work; always cheerful; bright as a button; clear-minded. A smiling, quizzical realist content to make the best of the world as he found it. A superlative operator”.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁷¹ Notes on two conversations with Lord Brimelow 20-21 April 1982. Michael Burd. Lord Brimelow's papers, Churchill Archive Centre.

Harold Orme Garton Sargent

Harold Orme Sargent was the only child of Harry Garton Sargent, a gentleman of independent means, and his wife, Henrietta Sarah Finnis Stud Mackinnon, whose sister married the fifteenth duke of Somerset. He had an unhappy childhood, both parents being elderly, strict, and possessive. 'Moley', as he was known from childhood, was educated at Radley College, and then spent some time in Switzerland preparing for the diplomatic service, which he entered in March 1906. He passed on examination in public law in May 1908, was promoted third secretary in October 1911, and served as secretary to the British delegates at the international sanitary conference in Paris, from November to December 1911.

During the early stages of the First World War, Sargent worked in the department of the Foreign Office dealing with the blockade, which gave him a good grounding in commercial and economic affairs. In October 1917 he was promoted second secretary and transferred to Bern; he was promoted first secretary in April 1919. In July that year he was seconded to the British delegation to the peace conference at Versailles. Following the signature of the treaty of Versailles and the disbandment of the British delegation in December 1919, he remained in Paris to work with the conference of ambassadors, which continued to meet to discuss the problems of European security and reconstruction. He returned to London in November 1925. Thereafter he refused to attend conferences or to go abroad for any purpose. It was thought that he suffered from claustrophobia in ships and aircraft. Intelligent, informed, and passionate about defending British interests, he was nevertheless reserved and somewhat aloof with little time for social life. In October 1926 Sargent was promoted counsellor and put in charge of the Foreign Office's central department, which covered Italy, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and the Balkans. In August 1933 he was promoted assistant under-secretary, with additional responsibility for relations with Germany, France, and Poland. Apart from official minutes, he never wrote about his time in the Foreign Office.

There is evidence that as early as the beginning of 1930 Sargent was anxious lest

Germany adopt a forward foreign policy, and welcomed internal wrangles in Germany that could limit this. On 13 November 1934 he wrote to Winston Churchill arguing against Churchill's view that Hitler was plotting a war of aggression in the immediate future. Sargent's analysis was that Hitler hoped to achieve his purpose by playing off one power against the other, and isolating each power in turn, rather than by force. Although Britain was probably the last power on Hitler's agenda, its turn would come. At this stage, however, Sargent's opposition to 'appeasement' was by no means clear-cut. In June 1935 he blamed the French for refusing to make a bargain with the Germans when it had been possible in April 1934; and in a memorandum of 21 November 1935 he and Ralph Wigram of the central department set out the case for coming to terms with Germany. They argued that Britain had a choice of three policies: it could do nothing; it could encircle Germany; or it could come to terms with Germany. Despite the immense obstacles involved, they concluded that an agreement was desirable and hinted that concessions over the Rhineland as well as in the colonial sphere could pave the way for an overall settlement. This was one of the classic statements of appeasement, and, in effect, outlined the policy later followed by Neville Chamberlain when he was Prime Minister. Nevertheless, Sargent found himself increasingly opposed to this policy, especially after Hitler's re-militarisation of the Rhineland in 1936. Later, however, he regarded the Munich agreement, and the enthusiastic reception accorded Chamberlain on his return, as a disgrace;. He is alleged to have remarked that it might have been thought that Britain had won a great victory rather than betrayed a small country. Perhaps because of his now well-known opposition to appeasement, it was only with difficulty that Sir Alexander Cadogan was able to secure Sargent's promotion to the post of deputy under-secretary of state in September 1939.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War, Sargent was increasingly concerned at the prospect of the Soviet Union dominating a devastated post-war Europe. In November 1940 he advanced ideas about taking over the anti-Comintern pact and so attracting Italy, Japan, and Spain to the allied cause. Even after Hitler's attack on Russia, he was determined to limit the power of the Soviet Union: when considering post-war planning in 1942–3 he favoured an Anglo-French alliance in the west, and

two large confederations in middle Europe which could maintain a balance of power and control a united Germany. As the Soviet Union established puppet governments in eastern Europe, Sargent became increasingly alarmed and was responsible for drafting Churchill's telegrams to President Truman urging the Americans to make a stand over this.

Sir John Wheeler-Bennet described Sargent, whom he knew well, as “ a survivor of a past age, almost an anachronism. In appearance, tradition, conventions, standards and values, he was essentially Edwardian with all the elegance and elan of that period”.⁶⁷² Lord Brimelow said of OGS: “‘Moley’ was an absolute model of a civil servant: quiet, orderly, calm; meticulous; thoughtful; fair-minded and expeditious. He could get through an extraordinary amount of work, but never appeared ruffled”.⁶⁷³

William Strang

William Strang⁶⁷⁴ was the son of an Essex farmer. He was educated at Palmer's School, Grays, Essex, and at University College, London, from where he graduated with an honours degree in English language and literature in 1912. While there he won the Quain essay prize, and with the proceeds spent a year at the Sorbonne (University of Paris). On the eve of the First World War he joined the University of London Officers' Training Corps, and he served throughout the war. Following demobilisation Strang considered an academic career, and accepted a post as English at the University of Hong Kong. However, he decided to enter the competition for the diplomatic service. He was successful, joined the service in September 1919, and a week later was posted to Belgrade as third secretary. Promoted second secretary in December 1920, he acted as chargé d'affaires in the summer of 1921 and again in spring 1922. Strang returned to the Foreign Office in September 1922, and for the next eight years served in the northern department, dealing primarily with Soviet affairs. He was attached to the

⁶⁷² Blackwell. Chapter 5, Page 55.

⁶⁷³ Notes on two conversations with Lord Brimelow 20-21 April 1982. Michael Burd. Lord Brimelow's papers, Churchill Archive Centre.

⁶⁷⁴ Details drawn from the Oxford Dictionary of Biography

secretariat of the Anglo-Soviet conference in 1924, and was promoted first secretary in November 1925. In July 1930 he was appointed acting counsellor in Moscow, where he remained until October 1933, being promoted full counsellor and appointed CMG in 1932. On his return to London, Strang was made head first of the League of Nations section (1933–7) and then of the central department, dealing with German affairs (1937–9). He accompanied Neville Chamberlain to his ill-fated meetings with Hitler at Berchtesgaden, Godesberg, and Munich. While increasingly sceptical of the policies that have come to be known as appeasement, he nevertheless worked loyally for Chamberlain, and the Foreign Secretary Viscount Halifax, when Sir Alexander Cadogan was the PUS. In 1939, after the failure of Chamberlain's Munich agreement, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia and then turned his attention to Poland. Strang was sent to Moscow from June to August 1939 to try, with French diplomats, to negotiate a tripartite alliance with Stalin to try to stop the further expansion of the Nazi attempt failed. Hitler instead signed the Nazi–Soviet pact, in which Poland was to be partitioned and the Baltic States annexed by the Soviet Union.

The war marked the second distinct phase of Strang's career. Promoted assistant under-secretary of state in September 1939, for four years he oversaw relations with occupied Europe, and in particular with the governments-in-exile in London. He admired the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, who were now both at the height of their prestige. He accompanied Eden to the Moscow conference in 1943, which laid the foundation for the United Nations Organisation and the European Advisory Commission (EAC). He was appointed British representative on the EAC with the personal rank of ambassador in November 1943, was knighted (KCMG) the same month.

The post-war period saw the third phase of Strang's career as a senior diplomat. Peace brought with it immense problems of economic and political reconstruction, urgent decisions on the correct future policy for Britain. Despite the creation of the United Nations Organisation, meaningful co-operation with the Soviet Union seemed increasingly unlikely. The cold war system, shaped by Marshall aid, the Berlin blockade, the founding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and the creation of a

democratic West Germany, characterised the first post-war decade. For Britain intergovernmental co-operation to create European economic institutions (the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation: OEEC), political and security institutions (the Brussels treaty, the Council of Europe), and the building of an American-led Western community (especially through NATO) were the hallmarks of British policy.

Between the defeat of Germany and early 1949 Strang was concerned with the reconstruction of the British-occupied zone in Germany, first as political adviser to Marshal Montgomery, commander-in-chief of the British army of occupation, and then (from November 1947) as joint PUS in the Foreign Office, in charge of the German section. In February 1949 he was appointed PUS of the Foreign Office and as such was in charge of the Foreign Office during the Korean War (1950–53), at the time of the Colombo plan (1950), the defection of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean (1951), and the changeover of power in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin (1953).

Lord Brimelow said of Strang that he was an: “absolutely top flight civil servant; clear; bright; meticulous. Everyone had the highest respect for him. He was also in Russia before the war and had no illusions about the Russians at all.”⁶⁷⁵

Arthur William Street

⁶⁷⁶Arthur Street was born on the Isle of Wight, the son of a licensed victualler, and was educated at the county school, Sandown. At the age of fifteen he went to London to start in the civil service as a boy clerk. Street was determined to improve his position by further study at King's College, London, and by 1914 he had become an established second division clerk at the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.

During the First World War Street served with the Inns of Court regiment, the Hampshire regiment, and the machine-gun corps. He fought on various fronts—mainly

⁶⁷⁵ Notes on two conversations with Lord Brimelow 20–21 April 1982. Michael Burd. Lord Brimelow's papers, Churchill Archive Centre.

⁶⁷⁶ Details drawn from Oxford Dictionary of Bibliography.

in the Middle East—was wounded, mentioned in dispatches, awarded the Military Cross, and attained the rank of major. On his return to his old department in 1919, Street became PS to Lord Lee of Fareham, who was so impressed with Street's ability that he took him with him to the Admiralty when he became First Lord in February 1921. In 1922 Street returned to the Ministry of Agriculture as a principal. Throughout the thirties Street moved up rapidly in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, serving as second secretary in 1936–8. He was fast gaining a reputation in Whitehall and beyond as a leading civil servant, who combined an intense devotion to duty with an ability to formulate proposals on which Ministers could make decisions on policy. Though much of his career was concerned with extending the sphere of administrative control in British life, Street was a strong individualist who believed that adversity could be overcome by hard work and organisation. He repudiated the 'feather-bed' as an economic symbol for the age and expressed the view that although those who needed help should be given it, the best form of help was to show people how they could do without it.

In 1938 Street was transferred to the Air Ministry, becoming PUS and a member of the Air Council in 1939. A war was imminent which for the first time in history would be extensively fought in the air. The air marshals who formed the Air Council believed passionately in the importance of the Royal Air Force and they considered it Street's function to find the resources they deemed necessary for expansion and as a newcomer he had to work doubly hard to master the unfamiliar facts of a rapidly expanding department. He took to his task carefully, concerned not to overplay his hand, and in consequence spoke little on the Air Council. When he did intervene, though, it was with real authority. By intensive hard work and with his remarkable ability for working with other people, he convinced his fellow members of the Air Council that he had the interests of the Royal Air Force as much at heart as anyone. The air marshals found in Street an adviser and a friend to whom they could bring their problems with the full confidence that they would obtain guidance and inspiration.

John (Jack) Monro Troutbeck

⁶⁷⁷Troutbeck, after attending Westminster School, entered Christ Church, Oxford, as a scholar in 1913, but his studies were interrupted by military service (1914–19) in Queen Victoria's Rifles and the County of London regiment. He was aide-de-camp to his uncle, General Sir Charles Monro, in France, at Gallipoli, and in India. Appointed OBE shortly after demobilisation, he returned to Oxford and completed the war-shortened course in modern history, taking his BA in 1922 and MA in 1929. In November 1920 he joined the Foreign Office as a third secretary in the central department, which supervised relations with central Europe from Germany to Greece.

Troutbeck had seven years' experience of foreign affairs by the time of his first overseas posting, in September 1927, as second secretary at Constantinople. From December 1931 he spent a year at the College of Imperial Defence before serving under Sir William Seeds as first secretary in Rio de Janeiro. Returning to the Foreign Office at the close of 1934, Troutbeck then worked in the American department until sent to the Prague legation in October 1937, again as first secretary. He assisted Basil Newton, the Minister, in conveying to the Czechs just how little support they could expect from Great Britain with regard to the Sudetenland. After the Munich agreement he remained in the country as chargé d'affaires until May 1939, witnessing its disintegration and the German invasion. This made him quick to condemn thereafter any policy that might be construed as appeasement. He became a CMG in January 1939 and was promoted to acting counsellor in October that year.

Apart from three months in summer 1940, Troutbeck spent the first four years of the Second World War on secondment from the Foreign Office to the Ministry of Economic Warfare, where he headed a department after attaining the grade of acting principal assistant secretary in January 1942. His emergence as a significant figure in foreign policy making dated from October 1943, when he became the adviser on Germany, co-ordinating planning for the occupation and peace settlement. This in turn led to his appointment as head of the German department of the Foreign Office in spring 1945

⁶⁷⁷Details drawn from Oxford Dictionary of Bibliography.

and as an assistant under-secretary in June 1946. Hence Troutbeck was much involved in the complex evolution of British thinking on the German question from Draconian early schemes to reduce the birth-rate to later programmes for economic regeneration in the western occupied zones. Though inclined to think that Nazism sprang from deep within German culture, he argued from 1945 that a harsh peace would aid Soviet plans for a Communist take-over in Germany.

Troutbeck impressed Ernest Bevin, who chose him to succeed Arnold Overton as head of the British Middle East office, located in Cairo, in November 1947. The original purpose of the office, set up in 1945, was to organize economic assistance for lands within the British sphere of influence (on the supposition that material progress would neutralize political unrest). However, the British simply could not afford to finance major development schemes. Essential to stability, in his view, was a settlement of the Palestine problem, so he concentrated on analysing intelligence and advising on regional strategy.

Christopher F A Warner

Assistant Under Secretary in the FCO in mid-1940s – reference to him in Blackwell, Page 149.⁶⁷⁸ Head of Northern Department 1941-6 in succession to Collier.⁶⁷⁹ He later became His Majesty's Ambassador in Brussels.⁶⁸⁰

According to Lord Brimelow, Warner was a: "Winchester man; a real intellectual; unmarried. He used to spend his spare time reading detective novels to spot faults in construction. He said it helped him spot errors in the drafting of minutes. He was a perfectionist; but he didn't get there the first time. When you went to speak to him he would speak at great length and his thoughts would evolve as he spoke. You had to do

⁶⁷⁸ Blackwell Chapter 5 Page 149.

⁶⁷⁹ Ross, Graham. *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin: British Documents on Anglo-Soviet Relations 1941-45*. Page 284.

⁶⁸⁰ Dilks, David. *The Diaries of Sir Alex Cadogan 1938-1945*. Published Cassell & Company, 1971. Page 476.

things for him three times. The amount of redrafting was exasperating. But he was the kindest of men".⁶⁸¹

Geoffrey Masterman Wilson

Geoffrey Wilson was educated at Manchester Grammar School and then at Oriel College Oxford where he was a Classical Exhibitioner. He was a staunch Quaker and a close friend of Stafford Cripps. In the Foreign Office's Russia Department in the War he was one of only two people who had actually been to Russia. One of his duties was to translate Stalin's letters to Winston Churchill. He was a member of the British delegation to Yalta where he sat directly behind Churchill to take minutes of the plenary sessions and to empty his ashtray of cigar butts.

Asked by Michael Burd whether Victor Rothschild was right to describe Wilson as "a tireless apologist for Soviet Russia", Lord Brimelow said that he thought not, and Burd agreed that the archives seemed to bear this out and that Wilson did his 'utmost to see the Soviet side of things but by 1945 he had become fairly disillusioned'. Lord Brimelow replied: "Geoffrey was a Quaker and a pacifist. He had had political ambitions at one time; was a protégé of Sir Stafford Cripps; went to Moscow for a time. A lawyer by training; and a very good brain. Quakers are generally inclined to see the best in others. Geoffrey gave the Russians the benefit of the doubt whenever there was any doubt".⁶⁸²

⁶⁸¹ Notes on two conversations with Lord Brimelow 20-21 April 1982. Michael Burd. Lord Brimelow's papers, Churchill Archive Centre.

⁶⁸² Notes on two conversations with Lord Brimelow 20-21 April 1982. Michael Burd. Lord Brimelow's papers, Churchill Archive Centre.

APPENDIX 3 COLD WAR CHRONOLOGY

10 May 1940	Churchill becomes Prime Minister
7 December 1941	Japan attacks Pearl Harbour and US enters War
6 June 1944	D Day landings
9 October 1944	Moscow conference with Stalin, Molotov, Churchill and Eden i.e. leaders and Foreign affairs chiefs to discuss Eastern Europe after the war
6-11 February 1945	The Yalta Conference
12 April 1945	President Roosevelt dies. Vice President Truman becomes President
7 May 1945	Germany surrenders
8 May 1945	Victory in Europe (VE) Day
12 May 1945	In a telegram to Truman, Churchill uses the term 'Iron Curtain' first time
18 May 1945	Churchill writes to Attlee seeking agreement to preserve the Coalition until the end of the war with Japan. Attlee and Bevin favourably disposed but could not get agreement from labour colleagues
21 May 1945	Attlee telephones Churchill from Labour Party conference to say reply to PM's proposal was negative
23 May 1945	Churchill to the Palace to offer his resignation to the King
26 June 1945	United Nations Charter signed by 50 nations

1 July 1945	Churchill gives the US the UK's approval to drop atomic bomb on Japan
11 July 1945	Orme Sargent's first draft "Stock Taking after VE Day" commissioned by Eden
15 July 1945	The Potsdam conference began. Stalin, Churchill, Truman and Attlee.
16 July 1945	US detonates/tests its first atomic bomb in New Mexico
25 July 1945	Potsdam conference adjourned- Churchill, Eden and Attlee – return to UK for election
26 July 1945	Potsdam Declaration called for unconditional surrender of Japan
27 July 1945	General Election. Labour party wins with 47.8% votes and 393 seats on the Commons - overall majority 146 seats. Clement Attlee Prime Minister. 5pm Attlee tells Bevin he wants him as Foreign Secretary, not, as expected, as Chancellor of Exchequer. 9pm Bevin, who was to accompany Attlee to Potsdam to resume the Conference, called at FCO for an hour's briefing on the Conference with Pierson Dixon and Oliver Harvey.
28 July 1945	FCO spend day "seeing one S of S out and another in". Bevin advised by his PPS of the existence of the atom bomb. Then flight (Bevin's first) from Northolt to Berlin (Gatow). Meeting of Big Three resumed at 10.30pm.
29 July 1945	Potsdam continues but no meeting of Big Three as Stalin unwell.

30 July 1945	Stalin still unwell so meeting of Foreign Secretaries took place instead.
31 July 1945	Stalin recovered and meeting of Big Three resumed.
1 August 1945	Final day of Potsdam conference.
2 August 1945	Attlee and Bevin returned from Potsdam
6 August 1945	The first atomic (uranium) bomb was dropped on Hiroshima
9 August 1945	Atomic (plutonium) bomb dropped on Nagasaki
14 August 1945	Japanese surrender ends Second World War
15 August 1945	Victory in Japan (VJ) Day
2 September 1945	British media censorship officially ended
11 September 1945 to 2 October	First 'Big Three' Foreign Ministers conference in London
16-26 December 1945	Foreign Ministers conference in Moscow but fails to achieve agreement
9 February 1946	Stalin's Election speech
22 February 1946	George Kennan's 'Long Telegram'
5 March 1946	Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech at Fulton (without first clearing it with Attlee!).
14 March 1946	Frank Roberts Telegram Section 1 in response to Kennan's
17 March 1946	Frank Roberts Telegram Section 2 in response to Kennan's

18 March 1946	Frank Roberts Telegram Section 3 in response to Kennan's
9 April 1946	First meeting of FCO Russia Committee
25 April-15 May 46	Second Conference of four powers – first session (US, Soviets, Britain and France)
Mid-June 1946	Second conference resumed
29 July-14 October 1946	Peace conference in Paris
1 August 1946	Truman signs McMahon Act establishes the US Atomic Energy Commission
27 September 1946	Noviko Telegram, commissioned by Molotov and reflecting his personal views, which picks up on the points in the Kennan Telegram.
4 November to 12 December 1946	Third conference of foreign Ministers. Molotov refuses to accept proposals on Germany and Austria
12 March 1947	President Truman, in a speech to Congress, sets out Doctrine which encapsulates the US's Cold War policy in Europe and beyond
10 March to 25 April 1947	Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers
5 June 1947	The European Recovery Plan (Marshall Plan) announced by General George Marshall, US Secretary of State.
27 June-1 July 1947	Foreign Ministers conference in Paris. Molotov rejects the supranational organisation to implement the Marshall Plan

22-23 Sept 1947	Cominform (Communist Information Forum) founded by Stalin to draw together the Communist satellites.
25 November- 16 Dec 1947	Council of Foreign Ministers meets in London but ends in acrimony
January 1948	Foreign Office establishes the Information Research Department (IRD)
19 February 1948	Czechoslovakia taken over by Communists
2 April 1948	US Congress approves plans for Marshall Aid
14 May 1948	State of Israel created
24 June 1948	Soviets blockade Berlin heralding the 1948-49 Berlin Crisis. Roads+trains
26 to 29 June 1948	Western Allies respond by organising the Berlin Airlift to carry in supplies for the West Berliners.
25 January 1949	Comecon (Council of Mutual Economic Assistance) set up by Molotov to co-ordinate satellite economic policies
6 March 1949	Roderick Barclay appointed PPS to Ernest Bevin
4 April 1949	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation established in Washington
4 May 1949	Agreement to end Berlin Blockade with effect from 12 May.
11 May 1949	Soviets lift the Berlin blockade
28 June 1949	Yugoslavia expelled from Cominform
29 August 1949	Soviet Union explodes its first atomic bomb

1 October 1949	Permanent Under-Secretary's Committee (PUSC) established in Foreign Office
October 1949	The Communist People's Republic of China established
December 1949	December 1949 Official Committee on Communism (Overseas) (AC(O)) established.
31 January 1950	Truman announces that US will manufacture H bomb
3 February 1950	Klaus Fuchs (British nuclear physicist) charged with passing nuclear secrets to Soviets
23 February 1950	General election. Labour returned with majority reduced to 5.
1 March 1950	Klaus Fuchs found guilty and imprisoned 14 years
25 June 1950	The Korean War begins
9 March 1951	Ernest Bevin resigns as Foreign Secretary due to ill health and Herbert Morrison takes over
14 April 1951	Ernest Bevin dies at 70 years of age
26 October 1951	General Election. Conservatives returned with overall majority of 17. Churchill back in No 10 as Prime Minister
28 October 1951	Eden returns to FCO as Foreign Secretary
21 November 1951	Churchill briefed on Atlee govt work on atom bomb
1951	Official Committee on Communism (Home) (AC(H)) established.
18 February 1952	Churchill says UK will test an atom bomb later in the year
3 October 1952	Britain detonates its first atomic device

4 June 1952	Churchill briefed on the damage Russians atom bomb could inflict on UK
1 November 1952	US detonates the first Hydrogen bomb
13 January 1953	Josip Broz Tito elected President of the Federal Assembly of Yugoslavia
January 1953	Eisenhower inaugurated as President of the United States
3 January 1953	Churchill sails to Washington for talks with Eisenhower
5 March 1953	Stalin dies. Khrushchev takes over
June 1953	Soviets suppress uprising in East Germany (GDR)
August 1953	Soviets detonate their first Hydrogen bomb
5 April 1955	Churchill resigns
5 April 1955	Eden succeeds Churchill as Prime Minister