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BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

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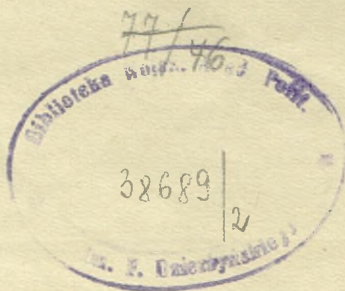
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BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

"Let me say, with regard to the action of our country over the centuries, that in all the great struggles in which we have been engaged we have survived and emerged victorious not only because of the prowess of great commanders or because of famous battles gained by land and sea, but also because the true interests of Britain have coincided with those of so many other states and nations, and that we have been able to march in a great company along the high road of progress and freedom for all."—(Mr. Churchill, 13.4.39.)

INTRODUCTION

Britain in the World

The United Kingdom normally has relations of some kind—political, economic, cultural or other—with every country in the world.

With some it has a special organic relationship in varying and constantly evolving forms. These are the other member countries of the British Commonwealth and Empire. With these the U.K. has at any given time relations ranging—in so far as they are susceptible of precise definition—from trusteeship combined with partnership, in the case of less advanced peoples, to pure partnership between members enjoying equal powers, as in the case of the Dominions. Each of the associates of this latter category has a power of self-determination so complete that, for instance, each declared war on Germany in September, 1939, in accordance with its own free decision at different dates, and the decision of Eire not to join in the defence against German aggression has not been overridden, in spite of the heavy extra burden and risk thereby thrown upon British and United Nations defence in a most critical period for Britain and the free world. In the case of the Dominions who co-operate in partnership with the U.K., the co-operation is, in effect, a constant voluntary, self-determined pooling by all the partners of appropriate parts of their sovereign powers for the purposes of the time.

With all the other countries of the world the U.K. normally has the ordinary diplomatic, economic, etc., relations. Like other states, the U.K. may temporarily combine with one or more Powers in ways which involve, in effect, a temporary voluntary pooling of some parts of sovereign powers, as in the pooling between allies of the powers of disposal of economic resources or command of armed forces, or in the submission of particular categories of differences to mutually agreed forms of arbitration.

The League of Nations experiment in organized international relations, in which Britain played a pioneering part, is at present largely in abeyance. At

the same time, an unprecedented measure of international co-operation has been built up between the United Nations in the course of the present war, and in this Britain has played a leading role.

The following notes deal mainly with the U.K.'s relations with countries other than the members of the British Commonwealth and Empire. Their subject is rather U.K. foreign relations, in general, and particularly certain broad characteristics of British foreign policy.

The Setting of Foreign Policy : International Relations

In order to place British foreign policy in its setting, it is necessary very briefly to recall the general nature and background of international relations.

"Without active co-operation between the peoples of the world, without the removal of the constant threat of war, there is no hope for us anywhere."—(Mr. Eden, Edinburgh, 8.5.42.)

The existence of foreign affairs and foreign policy—as of national armed forces and national wars—is in one sense an anomaly in politics. In one sense they may be said to exist only because the tendency of men to co-operate in society has so far been limited in action. While the trend has always been towards larger and more comprehensive organizations—empires, federations, commonwealths or unions—obstacles of various kinds have hitherto prevented a culminating society embracing the whole area of the globe inhabited by man. An inadequate technical level of speed and ease of communications in relation to the area to be covered has been one such obstacle, and although the Roman Empire knit together with its roads and ships most of the world then known to it, new horizons have outstripped communications. The persistence of historic differences and feuds between peoples who have developed in separated communities in the past have provided another obstacle.

The world is now, however, shrinking, at an ever accelerated pace. The ultimate term is generally recognized by responsible statesmen to be one society covering the planet—"one village street from Edinburgh to Chungking."—(Mr. Eden, Edinburgh, 8.5.42.)

"The world . . . is itself contracting in relation to our powers of locomotion at a positively alarming rate. We have learned to fly. What prodigious changes are involved in that new accomplishment! Man has parted company with his trusty friend the horse and has sailed into the azure with the eagles . . . Where, then, are those broad oceans or vast spreading deserts? They are shrinking beneath our very eyes. . . . To the youth of America, as to the youth of all Britain, I say: You cannot stop. There is no halting-place at this point. We have now reached a point in the journey where there can be no pause. We must go on. It must be world anarchy or world order. . . . We have learned from hard experience that stronger, more efficient, more rigorous world institutions must be created. . . ."—(Mr. Churchill, Harvard University, 6.9.43.)

"We have reached that stage when the issue has to be squarely joined with the earlier darker rule of force, and war as an instrument of national policy has to be finally abjured. Its roots go deep into the past, and even into the structure of our modern society, composed as it is of national sovereign states. But even so the time has come for it to go. Let us make up our minds that it shall go, that no false pride of independent nationhood, of isolated sovereignties shall defeat the great hope and vision of a peaceful ordered human society, steadily moving

forward to the attainment of the high social and spiritual ideals which have been the inspiration of the greatest spirits of our race."—(Field-Marshal Smuts, Premier of the Union of South Africa, London, 19.10.43)

"We must either build an orderly, law-abiding international society, in which each nation can live and work freely, without fear or favour, or we shall all be destroyed in a welter of barbaric strife."—(Mr. Eden, 23.7.42.)

In the meantime, until this term is reached, a number of sovereign societies exist side by side in the world with no comprehensive organization as yet equipped to guarantee ordered relations between them. In the absence of such international authority, foreign affairs are inevitably liable to partake of the character of the relationships of raw and uncivilized nature, whose features are anarchy, insecurity, secrecy and a tendency to reliance on quickness on the draw to establish claims and further points of view. The foreign affairs of a nation—like its military affairs—often cannot even be satisfactorily discussed in full in open parliamentary debate, as can others of its political concerns. The history of international relations is very largely one of anarchy and conflict mitigated by temporary balances of power or periods of exhaustion and recuperation from combat.

"In our day we have never known an orderly international society. . . . It is only if we are able to create a genuine international society that we shall be able to create a genuine peace."—(Mr. R. K. Law, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign Office, now Minister of State, 19.7.43.)

During this unsatisfactory phase of human affairs there is, however, at any given time, some common denominator of generally agreed common interest shared in some degree by all or most of mankind. For instance, just as in Europe in the first years of the 19th century, there was a general majority interest in preventing Napoleonic domination, so in the years 1919-1939 on the world stage the desires of the majority of politically conscious mankind were set on two common objectives—which, unfortunately, became mutually exclusive—namely, the avoidance of a second world war and, later, the prevention of German or Japanese world domination.

The common pursuit of common objectives of this kind are the obvious growing points, at this stage in the history of human affairs, towards a universal organization reflecting the overriding common interests of mankind.

SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

How does British foreign policy appear, against the general background recalled above?

British foreign policy over the last 150 years at least, and indeed over a much longer period, shows one principle constantly coming into action, which is fundamentally the same although functioning in terms of the different circumstances and concepts of different times.

This principle is, broadly speaking, *the search for and pursuit of common ground and mutual interest and advantage with others, as the only reliable and durable basis on which Britain's own interests can be sure to prosper. The principle applies both to relations in peace and to common defence.*

The principle has been applied in relations with individual countries; with groups, such as the European nations; and with the nations of the world as a general whole. There have, of course, been occasions when the characteristic

trend has faltered : such deviations may be traced in the less happy periods of British relations with the original American colonies, for instance, or with Ireland. But such exceptions throw into relief the broad characteristic trend.

Some light may be thrown on the general nature of this trend, by the following two quotations from expert authorities, one British, one German, writing in the same year.

1. The "Civilian" Conception of Diplomacy

Mr. Harold Nicolson (*Diplomacy*, 1939) has portrayed the typically British foreign policy and diplomacy in describing what he has called the "mercantile or shopkeeper" or "civilian" conception as contrasted with the "warrior or heroic" :—

(pp. 52-54). "Let us call the first the 'warrior or heroic' theory; and the second the 'mercantile or shopkeeper' theory. The former regards diplomacy as 'war by other means'; the latter regards it as an aid to peaceful commerce.

"It is not only the aims of the warrior school which are predatory. The methods by which they give effect to those policies are conceived and managed from the military rather than from the civilian point of view. Negotiation under such a system resembles a military campaign, or at the best, autumn manoeuvres; and the means which such negotiators employ are more akin to military tactics than to the give and take of civilian intercourse. Diplomacy is regarded as an unremitting activity directed towards ultimate triumph. The strategy of negotiation thus becomes an endeavour to out-flank your opponent, to occupy strategical positions which are at once consolidated before any further advance is made; to weaken the enemy by all manner of attacks behind the lines; to seek for every occasion to drive a wedge between your main enemy and his allies; and to hold your opponent on one position while planning an attack elsewhere. The actual tactics employed by these negotiators are also military in character. You have the surprise, and often the night, attack; you have the trench-raid or 'Kraftprobe' designed to test the strength of the enemy's position at any given point; you have the strategical retreat at moments, and the stealthy occupation of key positions; you have intimidation, ruthlessness and force; and you have elaborate containing actions while your main forces are being massed in some other direction.

"It is obvious that under such a system conciliation, confidence and fair-dealing are not very apparent. A concession made, a treaty concluded, is apt to be regarded, not as the final settlement of an isolated dispute, but as evidences of weakness and retreat, as an advantage which must immediately be exploited in preparation for further triumphs.

"As opposed to this warrior conception of diplomacy, there stands the commercial, the mercantile or the shopkeeper conception. This civilian theory of negotiation is based upon the assumption that a compromise between rivalries is generally more profitable than the complete destruction of the rival. That negotiation is not a mere phase in a death-struggle, but an attempt by mutual concession to reach some durable understanding. That 'national honour' must be interpreted as 'national honesty' and that questions of prestige should not be allowed to interfere unduly with a sound business deal. That there is probably some middle point between the two negotiators which, if discovered, should reconcile their conflicting interests. And that to find this middle point, all that is required is a frank discussion, the placing of cards upon the table, and the usual processes of human reason, confidence and fair-dealing."

2. A German View of British Foreign Policy

Count Pückler, a protégé of von Ribbentrop and before the war London correspondent of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, has given a German view of the elements characterizing British foreign policy (*Wie stark ist England?* Berlin, 1939; English translation, *How Strong is Britain?* London, 1939):—

(pp. 256-263) "Great wealth and military power, joined in a unique combination, represent the real strength of Great Britain, and behind this combination stands her foreign policy, deciding how all its power factors shall be used. We have now examined these factors and knowing fairly accurately how they are made up, we should be able to appreciate more or less what their effect would be if they were used to the full in concrete circumstances.

"However, the strength of the nation is not tested and proved in actual struggle only. The strength of a nation is a permanent magnitude in the interplay of world political forces. This peace-time weight of a nation, which must be taken into consideration daily in the political decisions of other nations, is not based on economic, military and moral power alone; it depends further on the question of how far this fighting power can be exerted at any given time, whether it can be exerted to the full at the moment decided on by the nation and its government.

"Great Britain's power can be sent into action only for political aims which are ethical in the eyes of the world, aims which can be amply justified on moral grounds.

"Today the position is already such that British foreign policy requires clear moral justification not only in the eyes of the outside world, but also in the eyes of the member countries of the Empire itself. We are not thinking here merely that any tyrannical exercise of power over subject peoples must be avoided, because that is something which was recognized long ago by Great Britain and put into practice wherever normal circumstances permitted. We are thinking of the recent developments in the relationship between her and her sovereign Dominions, which we have already discussed in a previous chapter. The member countries of the British Empire regard their association as a league of peoples to preserve world peace, to place justice in the stead of tyranny, and to make agreement the instrument for settling international disputes instead of war. That was laid down very clearly at the Empire Conference of 1937, and it means that Great Britain can no longer pursue an unethical and unjust foreign policy without risking losing the support of her closest allies, the Dominions.

"We need not discuss the question of how far the British Government acts ethically as a matter of inner conviction. For us the point is that willy-nilly it must act ethically. It is not a free agent. It must do its best to win over world public opinion, and it must therefore be in a position to justify its policy morally. Now there are certainly many cases in which it is possible to put forward a hypocritical moral justification by misrepresenting the facts or saddling the rival with malicious motives, but the longer a government is compelled to justify its acts and omissions the more the nation behind it accustoms itself to taking the necessity for such moral justifications very seriously. Under such circumstances the matter is never considered as a burdensome political necessity, but as a moral postulate necessitated by the idealism and pride of the nation. This development has already gone very far in Great Britain, and it is highly doubtful whether the British people would be prepared to take up arms for any purely egoistic national interest at the expense of other peoples. In order to

arouse the combativeness of the British people a sort of crusading spirit has to be created, and from year to year it becomes more and more dangerous for a British Government to whip up such a spirit by hypocritical propaganda, because from year to year the British people feel more and more strongly that Great Britain's mission in the world is to obtain the triumph of justice and morality in international politics.

"Great Britain's power cannot therefore be used arbitrarily. It cannot be thrown into the scales in support of any undertaking which is condemned as unethical by the British people and by world public opinion. The British government would have the choice of abandoning such unethical undertakings altogether or of seeking to give them a moral cloak by means of propaganda. However, the effect of such propaganda will always be limited by the decency of the overwhelming majority of the British people, by the mistrust and by the special interests of the Dominions, and by the critical judgment of the rest of the world.

"On the other hand, it follows from this moral check on Great Britain's foreign policy that no country in the world has anything to fear from her, no matter how strong she may be, providing its own foreign policy is as strictly ethical as Great Britain's is compelled by circumstances to be. In fact, if the foreign policy of any other country is even more moral than the world will observe the spectacle of Great Britain's famed diplomacy deprived of its most powerful weapon and condemned to impotence."

"With all its riches and all its power the British Empire has determined on a great undertaking. It wishes to make itself the crystallization point of a new and bigger commonwealth of peoples, and one in which peace and justice will reign."

"Great Britain desires and must pursue a morally justifiable foreign policy. The country whose policy is more moral than hers will therefore defeat her without even crossing swords—unless she has already become its friend."

(This German appreciation of the principle of British foreign policy finds its complement in the German appreciation (Prince Lichnowsky) of the practice of that policy, quoted on page 7.)

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN ACTION

The past action of British foreign policy in the search for and pursuit of common ground and mutual interest and advantage with others, as the best basis of durable prosperity for British interests, is followed out in some illustrations given below.

1. In Relations with Individual Powers

With a number of countries Britain's relations have been kept consistently good and mutually advantageous over a very long period—for instance, with Belgium, Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Yugoslavia and many of the Latin American Republics. With others—France or Italy, for instance—the same condition has obtained over very considerable periods of modern times. For these countries and periods, particular illustrations are therefore superfluous.

In other cases the successful alignment of interests has been so effective for so long as to have been largely lost to notice. The concert of interests arrived at in 1823 by the British Foreign Secretary, Canning, and the American Minister in London, Richard Rush, provided the solid basis for the Monroe Doctrine, and "was so successful that later generations thought the beneficent results were due to the nature of things—for example to the width of the ocean—and not to an act of the highest statesmanship. . . . The Anglo-American concert conferred such enormous benefits in keeping two continents free of imperialism and of war, and for so long exacted no payment in return, that in our times men have refused to recognize, because events did not compel them to recognize, that the effective substance of an alliance with Britain was the cardinal element in American foreign relations."—(Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy*, Boston, 1943.) Events of 1940, if not of 1917, forcibly recalled the facts.

But perhaps some of the most remarkable illustrations of the characteristic of British foreign policy are to be found in policy towards countries who had recently been Britain's enemies in war. Such, for instance, are the mutually advantageous policies pursued with France after 1815, or with the Afrikaners after the South African War. Cases where similar policy was pursued by Britain in vain are no less effective and distinctive illustrations of how the policy was still the same in kind. It was only when it failed—as it could always be made to fail by a lack of response from the other side—that Britain unflinchingly resorted to the only alternative, again identifying her interests with those of the majority of mankind, this time as a champion in arms. For example, British policy towards Germany before 1914, and between 1919 and 1939.

For the first of these examples it will be sufficient to recall the well-known subsequent testimony of the German Ambassador in London at the time, Prince Lichnowsky (*My Mission to London, 1912-1914*, confidentially distributed by the author in 1916, reproduced in the Swedish paper *Politiken* in March 1918, translated and published in London, Cassell and Co., 1918).

(p. 4) "When I came to London in November 1912 the excitement over Morocco had subsided, as an agreement with France had been reached in Berlin. It is true that Haldane's mission had failed, as we had required the assurance of neutrality, instead of being content with a treaty securing us against British attacks and attacks with British support. Yet Sir Edward Grey had not relinquished the idea of arriving at an agreement with us, and in the first place tried to do this in colonial and economic questions." (Notably Africa, on which an agreement negotiated with von Kühlmann was ready for signature when war broke out, and the Bagdad Railway, on which a convention had been initialed in June 1914.)

"The British statesman, after having settled all outstanding points of difference with France and Russia, wished to make similar agreements with us. It was not his object to isolate us, but to the best of his power to make us partners in the existing association. As he had succeeded in overcoming Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian differences, so he also wished to do his best to eliminate the Anglo-German, and by a network of treaties, which would in the end no doubt have led to an agreement about the troublesome question of naval armaments, to ensure the peace of the world, after our previous policy had led to an association—the Entente—which represented a mutual insurance against the risk of war.

"This was Sir E. Grey's plan. In his own words: Without interfering with our existing friendship with France and Russia, which has no aggressive

aims and does not entail any binding obligation on England, to arrive at a friendly rapprochement and understanding with Germany, 'to bring the two groups nearer'."

After reviewing the very different conduct of policy on the German side, Prince Lichnowsky concluded (p. 40): "It is no wonder that the whole of the civilized world outside Germany places the entire responsibility for the world-war upon our shoulders."

With regard to British attempts to meet Germany in the years before September 1939, it will hardly be necessary to substantiate that British foreign policy under Mr. Neville Chamberlain's government went to very great lengths—indeed some thought perhaps too far—in that direction.

2. In Relations with the Nations of the World in General

The characteristic illustrated in past British foreign policy on relations with the nations of the world in general is again the search for, pursuit, promotion and defence of the highest common measure of agreed general or majority interests at any given time, as the surest basis for the prosperity of British interests.

The prevailing views of the common interest of nations have of course varied and evolved from one period to another.

On certain things there has long been general agreement, an outstanding example being resistance to any attempt by any despotic power to dominate by force the continent of Europe and thence other parts of the world. Here British policy has played a foremost part, over several centuries, in the combination of successful resistance.

War against Philip II of Spain	(1585–1604)
War against Louis XIV	(1702–13)
War against Napoleon	(1803–15)
War against Wilhelm II	(1914–18)
War against Hitler	(1939–?)

Changing Conceptions of the Common Interest

On other, more positive, aspects, the major consensus of effective opinion among the nations has held at different times different views of the common interest and of the means of promoting it.

For instance, it will be recalled that over the past 150–200 years, three distinct broad conceptions have succeeded one another. They have, of course, overlapped in time and the ideas of each of them have existed in some measure in the period mainly characterized by a particular one of them. They may be very briefly summarized as follows:—

1. The earliest was the conception of the common welfare of mankind depending upon the stable preservation of "legitimate" monarchs and authorities to order the well-being of the subjects committed to their care on earth by Providence. Its view of the method to be followed was ultimately exemplified in the Holy Alliance. It inherited much from the mediæval theories and ideals of the Holy Roman Empire. Its great servant was Prince Metternich, whose Habsburg masters only resigned the crown of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806. The Vienna settlement of 1815 was its outstanding work.

2. By the beginning of the nineteenth century a new conception had long been gathering strength and was well on the way to undermining and prevailing

against its predecessor. This new view found the key to general human welfare in a certain conception of freedom. National independence and self-government ("constitutionalism" as it was then termed) was its goal, and its method was to secure the free play of independent national sovereignties against the interference of a dominant power or group of powers, by maintaining a "balance of power". Its corollary in the field of economic relations was the teaching of Adam Smith, Cobden and Bright, and the reliance on unbridled competition between individuals following their own profit, and on uncontrolled freedom of trade, to bring about rising general prosperity.

3. This conception in its turn had been considerably undermined by the turn of the century and was to give way increasingly to a newer conception of the common needs. This latest body of opinion is still in process of taking shape, but is broadly distinguished by its demand for the elimination of war and aggression by greater organization and control of international relations, and its method is the development of international arrangements. It lays emphasis on the interdependence of nations. ("In international affairs the capital lesson today is that of the interdependence of nations"—(Mr. Eden, Bristol, 7.10.44).) In Europe some shadow of concerted control by conferences of the Powers had never quite disappeared even in the heyday of nineteenth century political laissez-faire, and after the world war of 1914-18 the new tendencies found expression in a pioneer experiment of a League of Nations of the world, which failed initially through inexperience and lack of adequate resources and support. Today the same views of the common interest are seeking forms of organized co-operation of the United Nations of the world. Its economic corollary is emphasis on the economic interdependence both of nations and individuals and the planning of international economic relations.

What has been the characteristic of British foreign policy against the background briefly recalled above?

A distinguishing feature of British foreign policy has been a general attitude of seeking to align and identify British interests with each of the above prevailing conceptions of the common interest of the nations, as they grew, in turn, to command general or majority acceptance. While generally careful not to get too far ahead of the general movement of opinion, Britain has often acted as a pioneer of the newer conception of the common interest, and when convinced of the majority acceptance of a conception has not hesitated, when necessary, to champion it, seemingly alone against enemy odds.

This continuing feature of British policy may be briefly illustrated here.

1. Britain and the European Attitude to Revolutionary and Napoleonic France

In this period Europe was still the absorbing centre of the British foreign political world. Britain identified herself with the defence of the European order of those days against the challenges of revolutionary and Napoleonic France.

In a dispatch of December 31, 1792, from Lord Grenville to M. F. Chauvelin the common case against the French Revolution was made:

"England will never consent that France shall arrogate the power of annulling at her pleasure, and under the pretence of a pretended natural right, of which she makes herself the only judge, the political system of Europe, established by solemn treaties, and guaranteed by the consent of all the powers.

"As to what relates to me and to my colleagues, the King's Ministers owe to His Majesty the account of their conduct; and I have no answer to give you on this subject, any more than on that of the appeal which you propose to make to the English nation. This nation, according to that constitution by which its liberty and its prosperity are secured, and which it will always be able to defend against every attack, direct or indirect, will never have with foreign powers connexion or correspondence except through the organ of its king; of a King whom it loves and reveres, and who has never for an instant separated his rights, his interests, and his happiness, from the rights, the interests, and the happiness of his people."

Slower than others to take up the sword against revolutionary France, against Napoleon Britain was dogged and dauntless in her co-operation with European coalitions of resistance. "Let us hope," said Pitt after Trafalgar had provided a gleam of light in a dark sky, "that England, having saved herself by her energy, may save Europe by her example." In spite of Napoleon's military victories and the political triumphs of Presburg, Tilsit and Schönbrunn, Pitt's successors saw his hope realized.

In the forefront of the instructions for the British plenipotentiary for the peace-making it was laid down: "Lord Castlereagh is . . . to endeavour to establish a clear and definite understanding with the Allies, not only on all matters of common interest, but upon such points as are likely to be discussed with the enemy, so that the several Allied Powers may in their negotiations with France act in perfect concert, and together maintain one common interest. . . . In all communications on the expediency of peace, the same course to be pursued as heretofore—viz., to evince a desire to conform as far as possible to the general interests of the Continent" (Cabinet Memorandum of 26.12.1813).

The subsequent Vienna settlement largely conformed to the general interests of the Continent as conceived by the majority of effective opinion at the time, and Europe was torn by no major wars for over half a century.

2. Britain and the Age of Nationalism and Balance of Power

British foreign policy did not stand still after the work of Vienna. It was alive to the important new forces, stemming largely from the French Revolution and from earlier revolution and evolution in Britain, which were carrying new conceptions of the common interests of the nations into power. In the British way, it was gradually but continually identifying itself with the proved elements of the new growth while preserving the still effective values of the old, pruned of their dead wood.

Even under Castlereagh, who had been one of the architects of the Vienna settlements, the outlook of British foreign policy began to move away from alignment with that of the "Holy Alliance" monarchies. In the State Paper of May 5, 1820, on the foundations of British foreign policy Castlereagh emphasized the obligation of his country to follow a "system strongly national and popular." Britain did not join in the European monarchs' efforts to impose the preservation of the old order in Spain and Naples. Convinced that the newer conceptions of the common good were fast gaining the adherence of the majority of mankind, Britain hesitated less and less to champion them, for the time being alone.

Canning was well aware of the growing identification of his country, in the eyes of the world, with the new forces. His one concern was that Great Britain

should use her position to avoid conflict and cataclysm in the evolution from the old to the new. "I fear that the next war to be kindled in Europe, if it spreads beyond the narrow limits of Spain and Portugal, will be a war of most tremendous character—a war not merely of conflicting armies, but of conflicting opinions. I know that if into that war this country enters (and if she do engage, I trust it will be with a most sincere desire to mitigate rather than exasperate, and to contend with arms, rather than with the more fatal artillery of popular excitation), she will see under her banners, arrayed for the contest all the discontented and restless spirits of the age, all those who—whether justly or unjustly—are dissatisfied with the present state of their own countries. The consciousness of such a situation excites all my fears, for it shows there exists a power to be wielded by Great Britain, more tremendous than was perhaps ever yet brought into action in the history of mankind. But though it may be 'excellent to have a giant's power it may be tyrannous to use it like a giant.' The knowledge that we possess this strength is our security; and our business is not to seek opportunities of displaying it but to content ourselves with letting the professors of violent and exaggerated doctrines on both sides feel that it is not their interest to convert an umpire into their competitor" (speech of December 12, 1826, on the new source of England's power). Under Canning British foreign policy broke up a European Congress system which had become in the now prevailing view a mere league of despots. His statesmanship was characterized by patronage of national and liberal movements in Europe, and his policy towards the republics of America "called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old."

Palmerston was generally pre-occupied to keep England on the side of the new liberal opinions. He sought to support constitutional monarchies against despotic ones, to promote the growth of constitutional and parliamentary government, so as to restrict by opinion—a power in human affairs in which he strongly believed—the military forces of despots and the Neo-Holy Alliance. He recalled that "When Bonaparte was to be dethroned, the Sovereigns of Europe called up their people to their aid; they invoked them in the sacred names of Freedom and National Independence; the cry went forth throughout Europe; and those, whom Subsidies had no power to buy, and Conscription no force to compel, roused by the magic sound of Constitutional Rights, started spontaneously into arms. The long-suffering Nations of Europe rose up as one man, and by an effort tremendous and widespreading, like a great convulsion of nature, they hurled the conqueror from his throne. But promises made in days of distress, were forgotten in the hour of triumph" (*Hansard*, Deb., March 10, 1830). In Palmerston's view "the independence of constitutional States, whether they are powerful, like France or the United States, or of less . . . importance, such as the minor States of Germany, never can be a matter of indifference to the British Parliament, or, I should hope, to the British public. Constitutional States I consider to be the natural Allies of this country; and . . . no English Ministry will perform its duty if it be inattentive to the interests of such States" (*Hansard*, Deb., August 2, 1832). Britain took no part in the efforts to suppress the national and constitutional upheaval in Europe in 1848-9.

Both Palmerston and Russell moved so far with the new liberal conceptions that they had thrown off Canning's misgivings about the potential dangers of the new forces, and tended rather to believe that free scope for nationalism and constitutionalism would promote stability and the rule of law in the world.

But the principle of the Balance of Power was the overriding consideration which was relied upon to preserve the free play of national and popular forces in the common interest against the danger of a dominating Power or group of Powers in a Europe still composed of autocratic and imperial as well as constitutional and national States.

At that time the Balance of Power was generally considered to be the best attainable means of striving for peace while avoiding such domination as had been achieved in the past by the Roman Empire and attempted by Philip II of Spain, Louis XIV and Napoleon.

In the absence of effective international authority, based on co-operation, it was indeed the only alternative hope. This has been recognized by responsible statesmen in much more recent times. "I have never held a brief for the balance of power type of peace," wrote the United States Ambassador in Moscow to Mr. Sumner Welles on March 26, 1938, "but it is infinitely better than the dominance of the aggressors and it is a closer approximation to a peace based upon considerations of international morality than peace that is based upon Fascist projections of power politics" (Joseph E. Davies, *Mission to Moscow*, pp. 193-194).

Consequently, the preservation of the Balance of Power was considered by mid-nineteenth century British Foreign Secretaries as overriding in the common interest even the importance, in the same common interest, of full satisfaction of national aspirations for constitutional independence. When in 1849 the Hungarian national rising threatened to diminish Austrian power and thereby unsettle the Balance of those days, Palmerston put this consideration foremost, even while pointing out that the Hungarian question could much better be composed by constitutional concessions and amicable arrangement than by Habsburg and Romanoff bayonets. "There are higher and larger considerations which ought to render the maintenance of the Austrian Empire an object of solicitude to every English statesman. Austria is a most important element in the balance of European power. Austria stands in the centre of Europe, a barrier against encroachment on the one side, and against invasion on the other. The political independence and liberties of Europe are bound up, in my opinion, with the maintenance and integrity of Austria as a great European Power; and therefore anything which tends, by direct, or even remote, contingency, to weaken and to cripple Austria, but still more to reduce her from the position of a first-rate Power to that of a secondary State, must be a great calamity to Europe, and one which every Englishman ought to deprecate, and try to prevent. . . . It is therefore much to be desired, not simply on the principle of general humanity, but on the principle of sound European policy, and from the most friendly regard to the Austrian Empire itself—it is, I say, devoutly to be wished that this great contest may be brought to a termination by some amicable arrangement between the contending parties, which shall, on the one hand, satisfy the national feelings of the Hungarians, and on the other hand, not leave to Austria another and a larger Poland within her Empire" (*Hansard*, Deb., July 21, 1849).

With Gladstone the conceptions inaugurated by Canning, Palmerston and Russell continued. "The foreign policy of England should always be inspired by the love of freedom. There should be a sympathy with freedom, a desire to give it scope, founded not upon visionary ideas, but upon the long experience of many generations within the shores of this happy isle, that in freedom you lay the firmest foundations both of loyalty and order; the firmest foundations

for the development of individual character, and the best provision for the happiness of the nation at large. In the foreign policy of this country the name of Canning ever will be honoured. The name of Russell ever will be honoured. The name of Palmerston ever will be honoured by those who recollect the erection of the kingdom of Belgium, and the union of the disjointed provinces of Italy. It is that sympathy, not a sympathy with disorder, but, on the contrary, founded upon the deepest and most profound love of order—it is that sympathy, which, in my opinion, ought to be the very atmosphere in which a Foreign Secretary of England ought to live and move." (Speech at West Calder, Midlothian, November 27, 1879.)

Beaconsfield, Derby, Salisbury, Rosebery and others continued in the same conceptions; and in 1907 the remarkable Memorandum by Sir Eyre Crowe formulated these in the fullness of their maturity. Writing on the general character of England's foreign policy, the distinguished Under-Secretary, as he was later to become, had recalled the essential condition "that the national policy of the insular and naval State is so directed as to harmonize with the general desires and ideals common to all mankind, and more particularly that it is closely identified with the primary and vital interests of a majority, or as many as possible, of the other nations." He then proceeded to formulate these common interests in terms of the conceptions still generally prevalent in the world of his day:—

"Now, the first interest of all countries is the preservation of national independence. It follows that England, more than any other non-insular Power, has a direct and positive interest in the maintenance of the independence of nations and therefore must be the natural enemy of any country threatening the independence of others and the natural protector of the weaker communities.

"Second only to the ideal of independence, nations have always cherished the right of free intercourse and trade in the world's markets and in proportion as England champions the principle of the largest measure of general freedom of commerce, she undoubtedly strengthens her hold on the interested friendship of other nations. . . ."

"History shows that the danger threatening the independence of this or that nation has generally arisen, at least in part, out of the momentary predominance of a neighbouring State at once militarily powerful, economically efficient and ambitious to extend its frontiers or spread its influence, the danger being directly proportionate to the degree of its power and efficiency and to the spontaneity or 'inevitableness' of its ambitions. The only check on the abuse of political predominance derived from such a position has always consisted in the opposition of an equally formidable rival, or of a combination of several countries forming leagues of defence. The equilibrium established by such a grouping of forces is technically known as the balance of power, and it has become almost an historical truism to identify England's secular policy with the maintenance of this balance by throwing her weight now in this scale and now in that, but ever on the side opposed to the political dictatorship of the strongest single State or group at a given time" (Memorandum of January 1, 1907).

With regard to British policy in the period of overseas colonial imperialism in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the following conclusions of an Australian authority—who has fully recognized and condemned the abuses arising with the early contacts between Europeans and backward and primitive peoples—may be quoted.

" During the last twenty years of the nineteenth century . . . were the years of scramble for colonies in Africa and the Pacific Ocean. The British government joined in the scramble. How did it justify itself? Other nations, it argued, surrounded the territories which they annexed with protectionist tariffs. Their monopolistic practice damaged the interests of British traders and all other traders as well. Great Britain felt bound to take precautionary action against this evil. She took her stand on the principle of the open door. In the territories which she annexed she offered equal opportunity to the traders of all nations. She did not exercise a selfish sovereignty. She exercised trusteeship 'for the commerce of the world.' That was the British claim. Throughout the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century, the claim was justified. The clue to British practice at that time is to be found in the doctrine of Adam Smith. The object of British policy was a free commerce, not an exclusive sovereignty. The economic impulses of British society were the dynamic which made the British Empire; but these impulses were not confined within the British Empire. They took the whole world for their province, and in return they offered the whole world equal opportunity in territories marked red on the map. Times have changed since then, and the present generation is quick to impute hypocrisy to any nation which claims to be virtuous in the conduct of its commercial dealings. Let us not therefore ascribe the open door policy pursued by the British Empire to high and virtuous motives; let us write it down as self-interest. But let us also admit that British self-interest harmonized very well with the interests of other nations" (W. K. Hancock, *Argument of Empire*, pp. 69-70).

" By a merciful law of human society, the profits of pillage are a wasting asset. An honest two-way exchange of goods and services usually proves itself in the long run to be more profitable. It is therefore understandable that Great Britain, as the commercial nation with most experience, pioneered the assault upon the slave trade and led the world both in the theory and practice of honest commerce. One hundred and fifty years ago the most intelligent and progressive British traders were disciples of Adam Smith. His great book, *The Wealth of Nations*, does not contain any high-pitched moralizing; its professed object is to instruct intelligent people in the way of getting rich. But Adam Smith's instruction had great moral effects. It helped people to look upon wealth not as a limited *heap* of things to be snatched and fought for, but as a *flow* of things produced by the co-operative labour of all nations. The more conflict and pillage, the less wealth: the more co-operation and mutual aid, the more wealth. British merchants were made to think of themselves as intermediaries between producers in different countries. They were taught to regard with satisfaction the increasing wants, the rising economic demand, of populations across the seas" (Ibid, p. 72).

3. Britain and the Age of Internationalism

The conceptions of the common interests of the nations set forth in Sir Eyre Crowe's Memorandum quoted above (p. 13) were already due, when he wrote, to give way to a succeeding order of ideas. These had already been germinating and growing in the latter half of the nineteenth century and within a few decades of 1907 Britain was to be playing an outstanding part in experiment in full application of them.

As far back as the eighteen-seventies Gladstone, though still rating national independence as the great common good of all nations, had been in some measure influenced by ideas which implied international interdependence, and obligation to a paramount common authority arising from world public opinion, not from compacts of imperial autocrats. "As I understand Lord Clarendon's (his Foreign Secretary's) ideas," he had written for the Queen on April 17, 1869, "... they proceed upon such grounds as ... that she (England) should seek to develop and mature the action of a common or public, or European opinion, as the best standing bulwark against wrong, but should beware of seeming to lay down the law of that opinion by her own authority, and thus running the risk of setting against her, and against right and justice, that general sentiment which ought to be, and generally would be arrayed in their favour ... " "Certain it is," he had written in 1879, "that a new law of nations is gradually taking hold of the mind, and coming to sway the practice of the world; a law which recognizes independence, which frowns upon aggression, which favours the pacific, not the bloody settlement of disputes, which aims at permanent and not temporary adjustments; above all, which recognizes, as a tribunal of paramount authority, the general judgment of civilized mankind" (*Edinburgh Review*, October, 1870). In 1879 he had formulated as a principle of British foreign policy: "to strive to cultivate and maintain, ay, to the very uttermost, what is called the concert of Europe; to keep the Powers of Europe in union together. And why? Because by keeping all in union together you neutralize and fetter and bind up the selfish aims of each. I am not here to flatter either England or any of them. They have selfish aims, as unfortunately, we in late years have too sadly shown that we too, have had selfish aims; but then, common action is fatal to selfish aims. Common action means common objects; and the only objects for which you can unite together the Powers of Europe are objects connected with the common good of them all" (Speech at West Calder, Midlothian, November 27, 1879). On occasions when the European Concert functioned to some effect, as, for instance in bringing Sultan Abdul Hamid II to book in 1880, Gladstone had rejoiced in this manifestation of international authority. He wrote to Mrs. Gladstone: "It is the working of the European Concert for purposes of justice, peace and liberty, with efficiency and success, which is the great matter at issue. This has always been the ideal of my life in Foreign Policy; and if this goes forward rightly to the end, it will be the most conspicuous instance yet recorded, the best case of success achieved" (letter of October 10, 1880).

It has been pointed out by Grey that already in Salisbury's and Rosebery's time Britain was deviating from pure Balance of Power policy to the extent of supporting in 1886 and following years the dominant Triple Alliance group so long as they appeared to represent a peaceful and stabilizing and not an aggressive element (*Twenty-Five Years*, London, 1926, Vol. I, pp. 5-8).

The European Concert precedents and the examples of the useful employment of the conference technique on a number of occasions from Berlin, 1878, to the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 and the London Conference of 1912-13—though conference was rejected by Germany in July 1914—were among the formative elements leading to the League of Nations conceptions elaborated between British and Americans and others during the war of 1914-18.

With these new ideas on the nature and means of promotion of the common interest of nations, British foreign policy progressively identified itself. The

ideas themselves have at times been nebulous and uncertain in their early progress. A wide range of tentative and very varying formulæ of "collective security", "disarmament", "peace by understanding", "conciliation", "appeasement", "sanctions", "international police force", "functional co-operation" and others have sought to give form to the prevailing conviction that threats of aggression and domination should in some way be exorcised in advance and not risk having to be corrected, as hitherto, by reacting coalitions resorting to large-scale wars. The search for the appropriate means has been reflected in British foreign policy.

When the League of Nations machinery was tested in 1935 by the Italian threat to Ethiopia, both the "conciliation" and the "sanctions" approaches were tried. Britain did not hesitate to face the odium of giving a lead and taking the risks of failure in pioneer experiment with the new ideas. She was only not prepared, in the circumstances at that time, to act alone.

Four years later, after the only machinery up to that time devised to embody the new ideas had broken down, Britain nevertheless maintained her characteristic policy of championing the common interest, and, though at one time alone, eventually saw rallied beside her the majority of mankind.

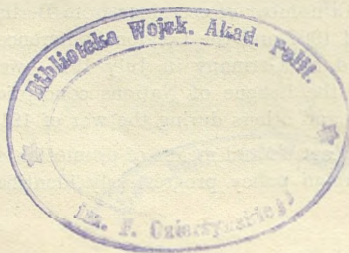
British foreign policy is today engaged in the task of organizing with the greater part of the nations of the world the promotion in common of the common interest in the light of the conceptions generally now prevailing.

CONCLUSION

The pursuit by nations of their common interest, as seen by the generation of the day, provides the growing points towards the wider world society—the "peaceful ordered human society" of General Smuts' vision—whose distant, ultimate term must involve the disappearance of "foreign policies" as of national wars.

In basing itself on this "civilian" approach, British foreign policy follows an often more difficult but an ultimately surer path than the "warrior" school with its "winner takes all" philosophy. Like democratic self-governing processes, the British policy is inevitably at some times and in some ways slower, more complicated, less spectacular. But in the long term it has worked, and not without success both for Britain and for her fellow nations in the world.

"Let me say, with regard to the action of our country over the centuries, that in all the great struggles in which we have been engaged we have survived and emerged victorious not only because of the prowess of great commanders or because of famous battles gained by land and sea, but also because the true interests of Britain have coincided with those of so many other states and nations, and that we have been able to march in a great company along the high road of progress and freedom for all" (Mr. Churchill, 13.4.39).



APPENDIX

BRITISH PRIME MINISTERS AND FOREIGN SECRETARIES, 1782-1944

Date	Prime Minister	Date	Foreign Secretary
1782 Mar.27	Marquis of Rockingham	1782 Mar.27	Charles James Fox
Jul. 4	Lord Shelburne	Jul. 17	Lord Grantham
1783 Apl. 2	Duke of Portland	1783 Apl. 2	Charles James Fox
Dec.19	William Pitt	Dec.23	Marquess of Carmarthen
1801 Mar.17	Viscount Sidmouth	1791 Jun. 8	Lord Grenville
1804 May10	William Pitt	1801 Feb.20	Lord Hawkesbury (afterwards Earl of Liverpool)
1806 Nov.11	Lord Grenville	1804 May14	Lord Harrowby
1807 Mar.31	Duke of Portland	1805 Jan.11	Lord Mulgrave
1809 Oct. 4	Spencer Perceval	1806 Feb. 7	Charles James Fox
		Sep.24	Charles Grey, Lord Howick
		1807 Mar.25	George Canning
		1809 Oct. 11	Earl Bathurst
		Dec. 6	Marquess Wellesley
		1812 Mar. 4	Viscount Castlereagh (afterwards Marquess of Londonderry)
1812 Jun. 8	Earl of Liverpool	1822 Sep.16	George Canning
1827 Apl.10	George Canning	1827 Apl.30	Viscount Dudley and Ward (afterwards Earl Dudley)
Aug.31	Viscount Goderich	1828 Jun. 2	Earl of Aberdeen
1828 Jan.22	Duke of Wellington	1830 Nov.22	Viscount Palmerston
1830 Nov.22	Charles Grey, Lord Howick (afterwards Earl Grey)		
1834 Jul. 16	Viscount Melbourne	1834 Nov.15	Duke of Wellington
Nov.17	Duke of Wellington	1835 Apl.18	Viscount Palmerston
Dec.10	Sir Robert Peel	1841 Sep. 2	Earl of Aberdeen
1835 Apl.18	Viscount Melbourne	1846 Jul. 6	Viscount Palmerston
1841 Sep. 6	Sir Robert Peel	1851 Dec.26	Earl Granville
1846 Jul. 6	Lord J. Russell	1852 Feb.27	Earl of Malmesbury
1852 Feb.27	Lord Derby	Dec.28	Lord John Russell (afterwards Earl Russell)
Dec.28	Earl of Aberdeen	1853 Feb.21	Earl of Clarendon
1855 Feb.10	Viscount Palmerston	1858 Feb.26	Earl of Malmesbury
1858 Feb.25	Lord Derby	1859 Jun.18	Lord John Russell (afterwards Earl Russell)
1859 Jun.18	Viscount Palmerston	1865 Nov. 3	Earl of Clarendon
1865 Nov. 6	Lord J. Russell	1856 Jul. 6	Lord Stanley (afterwards Earl of Derby)
1866 Jul. 6	Lord Derby		
1868 Feb.27	Benjamin Disraeli (afterwards Lord Beaconsfield)	1868 Dec. 9	Earl of Clarendon
Dec. 9	William Ewart Gladstone	1870 Jul. 6	Earl Granville

Date Prime Minister			Date Foreign Secretary		
1874	Feb. 21	Benjamin Disraeli (afterwards Lord Beaconsfield)	1874	Feb. 21	Earl of Derby
1880	Apl. 28	William Ewart Gladstone	1878	Apl. 2	Marquess of Salisbury
1885	Jun. 24	Marquess of Salisbury	1880	Apl. 28	Earl Granville
1886	Feb. 6	William Ewart Gladstone	1885	Jun. 24	Marquess of Salisbury
	Aug. 3	Marquess of Salisbury	1886	Feb. 6	Earl of Rosebery
1892	Aug. 18	William Ewart Gladstone		Aug. 3	Earl of Iddesleigh
1894	Mar. 3	Earl of Rosebery	1887	Jan. 14	Marquess of Salisbury
1895	Jul. 2	Marquess of Salisbury	1892	Aug. 18	Earl of Rosebery
1902	Jul. 12	Arthur James Balfour (afterwards Earl of Balfour)	1894	Mar. 11	Earl of Kimberley
1905	Dec. 5	Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman	1895	Jun. 29	Marquess of Salisbury
1908	Aprl. 8	Herbert Henry Asquith	1900	Nov. 12	Marquess of Lansdowne
1915	May 26	Herbert Henry Asquith			
1916	Dec. 7	David Lloyd George	1905	Dec. 11	Sir Edward Grey (afterwards Viscount Grey of Falloden)
			1916	Dec. 11	A. J. Balfour (afterwards the Earl of Balfour)
			1918	Jul. 19	Lord Robert Cecil (now Viscount Cecil of Chelwood) (Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs till January 1919)
			1919	Oct. 29	Earl (afterwards Marquess) Curzon of Kedleston
1922	Oct. 23	Andrew Bonar Law			
1923	May 22	Stanley Baldwin	1924	Jan. 23	J. R. MacDonald
1924	Jan. 22	James Ramsay MacDonald		Nov. 7	Austen Chamberlain (afterwards Sir Austen Chamberlain)
	Nov. 4	Stanley Baldwin	1929	Jun. 8	Arthur Henderson
1929	Jun. 8	James Ramsay MacDonald	1931	Aug. 26	Marquess of Reading
1931	Aug. 25	James Ramsay MacDonald		Nov. 9	Sir John Simon
1935	Jun. 7	Stanley Baldwin	1935	Jun. 7	Sir Samuel Hoare
	Nov. 22	Stanley Baldwin	1937	Dec. 22	Anthony Eden
1937	May 28	Neville Chamberlain		Mar. 1	Viscount Halifax
1939	Sep. 3	Neville Chamberlain	1940	Dec. 23	Anthony Eden
1940	May 11	Winston Spencer Churchill			





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