Establishing the Post-War International Order, 1944–1961

Teaching Pack

Introduction

The Second World War marked a turning point for global affairs. The sheer scale and destructive impact of that conflict compelled the victorious Allies (and in time the neutral and defeated countries too) to pursue a new world order which would allow peace, stability, and security to flourish. It was also designed to ensure a certain ideological framework—democratic, liberal, capitalist—emerged triumphant and would continue to dominate in the post-war age.

This endeavour spanned multiple areas—military, political, economic, cultural—and it gave rise to a huge number of new organisations. Some of these were vast and global, such as the United Nations, while others had a more specific focus, such as the International Monetary Fund, or a more limited geographic reach, such as the European Economic Community (EEC). Some also contributed directly to the new Cold War mentality, such as NATO, which was (accurately) perceived by many as an anti-Soviet alliance.

As the documents in this teaching pack show, Britain's varied relationships with these organisations can reveal much about how the country navigated its own changed position on the world stage following the war.

The activities contained within this teaching pack could easily take around **45–50 minutes**, though the exact duration will depend on reading time and the breadth and depth of accompanying discussion.

Learning Objectives

1. Investigate the origins of the new international order, as set out in the early days of the wartime Anglo-American alliance.

2. Explore the successes and limitations of the international organisations which emerged in the years following 1945.

3. Consider how Britain navigated global politics and diplomacy at a time of great change for both the country and the world at large.

Historical Background and Context

Throughout the modern age, major conflicts have often been followed by serious and concerted efforts to secure lasting peace. After the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, for instance, the Congress of Vienna sought to establish a framework whereby disputes between nations could be solved through diplomacy rather than force. This system, despite being informal and heavily dominated by a handful of "great powers", endured to some extent until the early years of the twentieth century. Then, after the First World War, the League of Nations was created to serve a similar purpose, albeit on somewhat more structured lines. Nevertheless, it too proved unsuccessful and failed to prevent the outbreak of another world war in 1939.

As populations around the world were slowly and often reluctantly mobilised for a new war, on an unprecedented scale, it became clear to their leaders that a vision for a brighter, more peaceful future needed to be articulated and, in due course, delivered. This was especially true for Britain, whose war effort relied very heavily on resources, labour, and fighting personnel drawn from its vast empire. A vision of a more just and equitable future for all peoples, not just those in Europe and North America, had to form part of Allied war aims.

When the war ended in 1945, diplomats, policymakers, and civil servants turned to this task with great energy. Never before had there been such a widespread appetite for peace and never before had such enormous resources (especially the economic might of the United States) been thrown into an endeavour of this kind. And yet, there were still major disagreements, competing priorities, and differing views as to what form this new international order should take.

Britain sought to use these new organisations to arrest its rapid post-war decline. The USA wanted to wield them as a tool to build post-war hegemony. The Soviet Union wanted to avoid that happening at all costs. Many continental European countries wanted to defend themselves not only from a possible German resurgence but also from American and Soviet interference. Given all this division, it is perhaps something of a miracle that so much was achieved in this period and that so many of those organisations and structures survive, in one form or another, to this day.

SOURCE ONE

Source Intro

In August 1941, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met US President Franklin D. Roosevelt aboard the USS *Augusta* in Placentia Bay, just off the coast of Newfoundland. While the USA was not yet directly involved in the Second World War, the two leaders discussed their hopes and goals for the post-war world, and issued a statement of common principles, known as the Atlantic Charter (or Declaration). This source is a report produced by the Foreign Research and Press Service—an independent body based at Balliol College, the University of Oxford, which advised the British government on foreign affairs—reflecting on the contents of the Atlantic Charter.

Source

"Note on the Atlantic Declaration", 3 September 1941.

CAB 117/58, images 20–28.

RR I/59/iii

September 3rd, 1941.

NOTE ON THE ATLANTIC DECLARATION

Preamble

"The President of the United States and
Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing
H.M. Government in the United Kingdom,
being met together, deem it right to make
known certain common principles in national
policies of their respective countries on
which they base their hopes for a better
future for the world."

The Declaration is in no sense a treaty. It is, as it
states, a declaration of "certain common principles in the
national policies of Britain and the United States". Mr.
Cordell Hull, in the formal statement which he issued shortly
after its publication, described it as "a statement of basic
principles and fundamental ideas and policies that are universal
in their practical application", which have been "heretofore
generally accepted by all civilised nations" until "certain
countries decided to launch a universal movement to destroy the
whole structure of civilised relations between nations". The
Prime Minister in his broadcast of the 24th August gave the follow-
ing account of it: "We had the idea when we met there, the
President and I, that without attempting to draw final and formal
peace aims or war aims, it was necessary to give all peoples, and
especially the oppressed and conquered peoples, a simple, rough
and ready war-time statement of the goal towards which the British
Commonwealth and the United States mean to make their way, and thus
make a way for others to march with them upon a road which will
certainly be painful and may be long". The Prime Minister also
said: "It is my duty to make sure, as I have made sure, that
anything I say or do in the exercise of my office is approved and
sustained by the whole British Commonwealth of Nations".

It is clear that a joint statement by the President of the
U.S.A. and the Prime Minister of Great Britain is an event of
high importance, and that it acquires a special solemnity from the

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dramatic circumstances of its issue, from its joint character, and because, by clear implication, it invites other countries to rely on its observance by the parties making it. On the other hand, the Declaration contains no definite promises. The two countries do not 'seek' (Art. 1), do not 'desire' (Art. 2), 'respect' and 'wish' (Art. 3), 'desire to bring about' (Art. 4), 'hope to see' (Art. 6), 'believe' (Art. 8). The nearest approaches to a commitment are the phrases 'will endeavour to further' in Art. 4 (regarding access to trade and raw materials), and 'will aid and encourage' in Art. 8 (regarding measures to lighten the burden of armaments).

<u>Article 1</u>

> "Their countries seek no aggrandisement,
> territorial or other."

Both countries undertake not to seek their own 'aggrandisement, territorial or other'. It would be inconsistent with this undertaking that the parties should use the power which the victory to which they look forward will place in their hands as a means of promoting their own selfish national interests. But to accept this power and to use it for other than purely selfish ends could not fairly be regarded as 'aggrandisement', for example, the establishment of a security system might entail the acquisition of bases outside the territory of either country. Non-territorial aggrandisement would presumably include political aggrandisement (e.g. the assumption of some sort of domination by the two parties jointly or by either of them), or economic aggrandisement (e.g. the acquisition of any form of exclusive economic influence or privileges).

<u>Article 2</u>

> "They desire to see no territorial
> changes that do not accord with the
> freely-expressed wishes of the peoples
> concerned."

(a) The practical effect evidently depends on the datum line from which 'territorial changes' are to be reckoned. The most probable, and the most satisfactory, interpretation seems to be

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that the territorial settlement after the last war is to be assumed as the state of things in which the parties desire to see no changes made that do not accord with self-determination. Any other interpretation would create great difficulties. For example, Britain, but not the United States, recognised the annexation of Austria, and of the Sudetenland, and for us therefore, but not for the United States, the restoration of Austrian independence, or the return of the Sudetenland, would constitute a territorial change in the present status. The Prime Minister has said however (9th November, 1940) that our victory will mean the liberation of Austria. The cases of the Baltic States, Eastern Poland and Bessarabia create obvious possible embarrassments.

(b) The negative wording of the Article is noticeable. We desire to see no changes that do not accord, etc.; we do not say that we desire to see changes that do accord etc. This seems to imply that we accept self-determination as a principle limiting to our future policy, but not necessarily as a positive policy that we desire to see carried into effect.

(c) A plebiscite is one way in which the wishes of the peoples concerned might be ascertained; but nothing in the Article excludes other possibilities.

(d) Who 'the peoples concerned' are is a difficult, but also an important question. Are they the inhabitants of the territory for which a change is proposed and no one else? That is what the words will certainly suggest to many people. But that would mean that the Article understands the principle of self-determination without qualification, and that in any proposed territorial change it is intended that the wishes of the inhabitants should have unconditional priority over every other interest, political, economic, or strategic, with which they may come into competition, for example, over the interests of the country as a whole of which the territory concerned is part, or

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the economic or strategic needs of neighbouring countries, or the interests of all nations in securing a settlement which is likely to be permanent. It is difficult to believe that considerations such as these were overlooked. But as conflicting expectations in regard to future terms of peace may be founded on the wording of the Article, this is a point on which it seems desirable that ambiguity should be removed.

Article 3

> "They respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live: and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them."

(a) This Article lays down the right of peoples to choose their own form of Government in the widest possible terms. In so doing it repudiates any intention of imposing democracy everywhere, and recognises on the contrary that different peoples may choose different forms of government. This presumably may be taken to cover certain forms of non-democratic government such as are found in Portugal, in different parts of South America, and in the U.S.S.R. From the reference in Article 6 to 'the final destruction of Nazi tyranny', it presumably is not intended to cover the Nazi form of government - whether on the ground that this is not a form of government 'chosen' by the German people, or on the ground that it is dangerous to its neighbours.

(b) The use of the term "sovereign rights" is ambiguous. To the continental European it is likely to imply the full restoration of the pre-war system of "sovereign" states. Perhaps, indeed, this is what is meant; it would not be inconsistent with, though it would not imply, the setting up of some form of international association by agreement, such as is envisaged by Mr. Sumner Welles, and is perhaps foreshadowed in Article 5 and 8 of this Declaration. On the other hand, if the term was chosen, as it may have been, by a draftsman who had in mind its

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use in American constitutional theory, it may be intended to mean something much less than this. American doctrine, as laid down by the Supreme Court, holds that the federal government and the government of each State are "separate and distinct sovereignties within their respective spheres", that is to say, that "sovereignty" is capable both of limitation and division. On this view the term "sovereign rights" in this Article would carry no implication, one way or the other, as to the future of international organisation, and would in fact be merely a synonym for the term "self-government" with which it is coupled.

Article 4

> "They will endeavour, with due respect
> for their existing obligations, to
> further enjoyment by all States, great
> or small, victor or vanquished, of access,
> on equal terms, to the trade and to the
> raw materials of the world which are
> needed for their economic prosperity."

The Prime Minister has amplified this Article in his broadcast. "Instead", he said, "of trying to ruin German trade by all kinds of additional trade barriers and hindrances, as was the mood of 1917, we have definitely adopted the view that it is not in the interests of the world and of our two countries that any large nation should be unprosperous or shut out from the means of making a decent living for itself and its people by its industry and enterprise."

(a) It is not easy to be sure what are the 'existing obligations' which are to be 'respected'. Most obligations relating to trade are made by treaties which are to endure only for a term of years; 'respect for existing obligations' is quite consistent with allowing the treaty to lapse when its term has run. Such treaties also can be modified, if all the parties agree, without any failure of 'respect'. If therefore the proviso refers to obligations under existing trade treaties it seems to be of slight importance. If, on the other hand, it is intended to make possible a renewal of such obligations even though they run counter to the

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'equal access' promised in this Article (e.g. Ottawa), the proviso is important, but for this the language would be inapt. It is possible however that the proviso has quite a different intention. We have made far-reaching promises to the countries overrun by Germany that their freedom shall be restored and so on. It may be that the promise to further equal access for all countries is intended to take effect only after these countries have been set on their feet again; that is to say, it is a state of things to which we look forward as our ultimate purpose, but not necessarily one which we intend to introduce as soon as the war is over.

(b) The 'access' must be needed for a state's 'economic prosperity'. It would therefore presumably be consistent with this Article that access should be refused if it were sought to use it to build up a reserve of war potential.

(c) Access 'on equal terms' is not necessarily 'free' access. This Article would not forbid restrictions being imposed on the import or export trade of a country in which raw materials are found, even a colonial area, provided they were non-discriminating.

Article 5

> "They desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing for all improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security."

(a) This Article could hardly be implemented without some form of organised international association.

(b) 'Social security' presumably includes security against unemployment. The term, however, is used in the U.S. and Britain respectively in two senses which, though not sharply diffentiated, are not quite the same. To an American, familiar with recent social security legislation in his country, it probably suggests first remedial measures, such as unemployment insurance. An Englishman, while not excluding such measures,

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would tend to think more broadly of preventive measures, designed, for example, to keep the trade cycle in check or to facilitate changes in employment in response to technical changes. If the Article recognises the necessity for international collaboration in that field, its fulfilment would involve an advance upon existing practice of great importance.

<u>Article 6</u>

> "After the final destruction of Nazi
> tyranny, they hope to see established
> a peace which will afford to all nations
> the means of dwelling in safety within
> their own boundaries, and which will
> afford assurance that all men in all lands
> may live out their lives in freedom from
> fear and want."

The Article describes the peace to which it looks forward "after the final destruction of Nazi tyranny", first, as it is to affect "all nations" (it is to afford them "the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries"), and then, with a more personal touch, as it is to affect "all men in all lands" (assurance that they may "live out their lives in freedom from fear and want"). The wording evidently refers to previous statements by the President of his "four freedoms"; e.g. in his broadcast of March 15th, 1941, he said: "freedom of speech and expression, freedom of every sort to Worship God in his own way, freedom from wrong, freedom from fear – they are the ultimate stakes". That no special significance attaches to the fact that the Article specifically mentions only two freedoms is clear from a passage in the Message with which the President sent the text of the Declaration to Congress: "It is unnecessary for me to point out that the declaration of principles includes of necessity the world need for freedom of religion and freedom of information. No society of the world organised under the announced principles could survive without these freedoms which are part of the whole freedom for which we strive."

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Article 7

> "Such a peace should enable all men to
> traverse the high seas and oceans
> without hindrance."

The peace which is envisaged is to enable all men to
traverse the high seas without hindrance.

This is a form of "freedom of the seas" which has not been
seriously disputed for nearly 300 years. It is something quite
remote from the "freedom of the seas" which the President described
on the 17th May as a "historic American policy", and for which he
said she had fought "two undeclared wars". Freedom of the seas
in time of war, about which alone modern controversies have raged,
does not appear in the Declaration.

The form in which this Article is expressed (in effect it
offers freedom for the individual to travel) is unusual in any
statement of the doctrine of freedom of the seas. Freedom to
travel by sea is not of great value without freedom to disembark
at one's chosen destination, but presumably it was not intended
to include this.

Article 8

> "They believe all of the nations of the
> world, for realistic as well as spiritual
> reasons, must come to the abandonment of
> the use of force.
>
> Since no future peace can be maintained if
> land, sea or air armaments continue to be
> employed by nations which threaten or may
> threaten aggression outside their frontiers,
> they believe that, pending the establishment
> of a wider and permanent system of general
> security, the disarmament of such nations is
> essential.
>
> They will likewise aid and encourage all
> other practicable measures which will
> lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing
> burden of armaments."

Pending the establishment of the "system of general security"
to which the Article looks forward, there is to be unilateral
disarmament of "nations which threaten or may threaten aggression".

The reference to nations 'which may threaten' aggression, i.e.
presumably in the future, may perhaps imply that what is

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contemplated is something more than the disarmament of the nations which have been aggressors in the present war or wars; it suggests some form of continuing security system.

The Declaration contains no specific reference to general disarmament, though this may be intended to form one item in the 'system of general security' ultimately to be established, involving as it is to do, the 'abandonment of the use of force'. . The only actual reference to lower general armaments is in the words of the last sentence of this Article, which imply that lower armaments are desirable for economic reasons.

But the clearest and most important point in the Article is that it envisages the unilateral disarmament of Germany and her associates during a period of unspecified duration.   The Prime Minister drove this point home in his broadcast, when he said, "We intend to take ample precautions to prevent its renewal (i.e. of the war) in any period we can foresee by effectively disarming the guilty nations while remaining suitably protected ourselves".

Foreign Research and Press Service,
Balliol College,
Oxford.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was the purpose of this joint declaration? What impact did it have on the course of the Second World War?

2. How realistic were the broad goals of the Atlantic Charter? What were some of the principal challenges Britain would face in delivering on those goals?

3. To what extent did the international order which emerged after 1945 adhere to the principles of the Atlantic Charter?

SOURCE TWO

Source Intro

When the United Nations was established in June 1945, it was, perhaps unsurprisingly, dominated by the five nations which had played the most substantial role in the defeat of the Axis powers. These were Britain, China, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States, and they became the five permanent members of the Security Council, positions they still hold today. The Security Council makes many of the UN's most important decisions, especially on questions of war and peace, and the UN Charter stipulates that unanimity must be reached for a resolution to pass. As this source shows, this could present serious issues as the five permanent members often have divergent perspectives and goals.

Source

"The Veto", January 1951.

FO 371/95660, images 14–19.

THE VETO

Voting procedure in the Security Council is laid down in Article 27 of the Charter (a copy of the text is an Annex 1). This text was proposed by President Roosevelt and agreed upon at Yalta. Its effect is as follows:-

(i) Except on matters of procedure the Security Council can come to no decision unless the five permanent members all give concurring votes. Gradually, however, a convention has grown up that a permanent member can abstain on a substantive decision without vetoing it. The Soviet Union originally acquiesced in this Convention but has recently ~~challenged~~ questioned it because of the decisions made to resist North Korean aggression while the Soviet was absent from the Council table.

(ii) When a "dispute" is being considered by the Security Council the parties to it must abstain from voting.

The Charter unfortunately lays down no criterion for determining whether a point on which disagreement arises is a "dispute" or a "situation". Should there be disagreement on this question, the Security Council would itself have to make the decision and on this all members of the Security Council, including a member directly concerned, would have the right to vote. As this would be, or could be voted to be, a matter of substance, the permanent members would have the right of veto.

As a result of suspicions widely felt among the minor powers about how the veto would in fact be used by the permanent members of the Security Council a questionnaire was addressed to

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the powers sponsoring the Yalta formula. The principal points
in the statement made at San Francisco on 7th June, 1945 in reply
to the questionnaire, were:-

(i) The procedural vote will govern all decisions under
Article 28 to 32 of the Charter. All other decisions
will require the concurring votes of the five permanent
members.

(ii) No one member of the Security Council can alone prevent
consideration and discussion by the Council of a dispute
or situation brought to its attention under Article 35
of the Charter.

(iii) "It will be unlikely that there will arise in the future
any matters of great importance on which a decision will
have to be made as to whether a procedural vote would
apply. Should, however, such a matter arise the decision
regarding the preliminary question as to whether or not
such a matter is procedural must be taken by a vote by
seven members of the Security Council including the
concurring votes of the permanent members."

Although this San Francisco statement by the Sponsoring
Powers was never formally adopted, the nations who voted for the
Charter at San Francisco did so in the full knowledge that this
would be the interpretative document if any doubtful points arose
about voting procedure in the Security Council.

II.   His Majesty's Government are in favour of retaining the
veto. It provides us with an effective safeguard against the risk
of being forced into an unacceptable situation. The granting of
the right of the veto in fact agrees roughly with the relative
positions of the five permanent members in the world, and is a
formal acknowledgement of the fact that a refusal by one of the
great powers to cooperate in enforcement action must gravely impede

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if it does not totally frustrate such action. Moreover it must be borne in mind that the grant of the right of the veto was the only way that the Soviet Union could be brought into the organisation and all members of the United Nations entered it with their eyes open to this fact.

III.   His Majesty's Government's view is, in brief, that the use of the veto is justified in matters vitally affecting the interests of the great powers. The Soviet Union has however repeatedly used her veto right in matters which could not conceivably be said to affect her own vital interests. She has used the veto to prevent even the preliminary investigations and the fact-finding necessary to deal with disputes or situations on the Security Council agenda. In 1946 she vetoed a resolution declaring that the mine-field in the Corfu Channel which severely damaged two British destroyers could not have been laid without the knowledge of the Albanian Government. She has vetoed the admission of Italy, Portugal, Eire, Ceylon, Trans-Jordan and other states to the United Nations. She has also vetoed purely procedural resolutions. In fact the Soviet Union has considered herself at liberty to use the veto to block any action of any kind of which she disapproves. She has used it 49 times up to the present. Her conduct has been in blatant contradiction of paragraph 8 of the sponsoring powers San Francisco statement which reads: "It is not to be assumed however that the permanent members any more than the non permanent members would use their veto powers wilfully to obstruct the operation of the Council."

IV.   Our general approval of the existence of the veto by no means implies our approval of the use of the veto in open disregard of the facts, of which the Soviet Union has given the examples described above. With a view to limiting the use of the veto to

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what we consider its proper field, the Secretary of State canvassed informally at the General Assembly in 1946 a set of suggestions the text of which are given at Annex 2. Agreement on any such proposals could not however be reached since the Russians reacted strongly against any suggestion for improvements in the Rules of Procedure, and even more so against the hint of amending the Charter. The result was that only an anodyne resolution was adopted in the General Assembly of that year.

A slightly different approach to the problem was contained in proposals put forward by the United States of America in the Interim Committee of 1948. The essence of the proposals were to list a large number of questions which, it was suggested should be regarded as procedural. Some items on this list were clearly procedural but others would not normally be so regarded. The essence of this approach was thus to give a much extended reinterpretation to the term "procedural".

These proposals were not aceptable to the Russians.

V. The most promising way of preventing further serious damage being done by the operations of the veto still, however, seems to lie in securing Soviet agreement to be guided by the "code of conduct" suggested by the Secretary of State or by the American reinterpretation of the word "procedural" although the Soviet Union has not in the past shown any readiness for an agreement of this kind.

VI. We have in fact reached something of an impasse. The views of the great powers appear irreconcilable and are, briefly, as follows:-

(i) The Soviet Union regards the veto as a major prop of its policy and a condition of its participation in the United Nations. The veto provisions cannot in any case be modified except by amending the Charter.

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Amendments to the Charter under Article 108 must be ratified by all the permanent members of the Security Council and the Soviet Union would certainly refuse to ratify any curtailment of her right of veto.

(ii) His Majesty's Government wishes to retain the veto but to limit its application to its proper sphere.   The Russians have hitherto refused to accept any limitations.

(iii) The Americans wish to retain the veto but in certain circumstances to circumvent it by referring matters to the General Assembly should the Security Council be frozen by Soviet abuse of it.   This principle is enshrined in the "Uniting for Peace" resolution adopted on 2nd November 1950.   This solution is however unacceptable to the Russians and ~~in a way~~ ^not altogether^ ^satisfactory^ ~~distasteful~~ to us since the predominance of small powers in the Assembly makes it only to easy for discussions to get out of hand.   We are nevertheless not opposed to the idea (and indeed voted for it) though we have reservations on the methods the Resolution also envisage.

The only real prospects of a solution seem to lie in the direction of a gentleman's agreement on the lines of the Secretary of State's suggestions of 1946 or the American suggestions in the Interim Committee.   The proposed talks between the Foreign Ministers of the four big powers will presumably only take place in a situation where a general lowering of tension and some kind of overall agreement with the Soviet Union are in sight.   In these

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circumstances it is perhaps possible that some
agreement on these lines about the use of the
veto could be reached.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did the Soviet Union rely so heavily on the veto in its role as a permanent member of the UN Security Council?

2. How did Britain and the United States view their role in the UN? How did they seek to use the UN to advance their own objectives?

3. What does this source reveal about the challenges involved in building a genuinely global diplomatic organisation after the Second World War?

SOURCE THREE

Source Intro

Following the Second World War, there was a concerted effort to advance the cause of European integration, in large part designed to avoid another war between Germany and France. Greater economic cooperation and co-dependence, it was hoped, would make war between the two "not only unthinkable but materially impossible". Other countries were keen to share in this wider prosperity and it soon gave rise to organisations such as the European Economic Community, comprising Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Italy, alongside France and (West) Germany. Britain was not a founding member—torn, as it was, between its European connections, its dwindling empire and Commonwealth, and its strong ties to the USA—but later sought to join. As shown in this source, in 1961, during the tenure of Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, it began preparing an application for membership of the EEC.

Source

"The United Kingdom and Europe—Draft Statement to be made by the Prime Minister", 5 July 1961.

MAF 379/138, images 20–23.

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THE UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE

Draft Statement to be made by the
Prime Minister

With permission, I wish to make a statement on the policy of
Her Majesty's Government towards the problem of relations with the
European Economic Community

2.   The Community has already achieved much. The rapprochement
between France and Germany is most heartening to all those who wish
to see the ancient feuds in Europe buried for ever. I have no doubt
that the Community will achieve much more. It may well become a
dominating influence in the world, comparable in political and
economic power with the United States and the Soviet bloc. It would
be most desirable that Europe should be able, in this way, to play
its full part in world affairs. It can best - perhaps only - do so
if it is united. Indeed, I would stress that a closely united
Europe is vital to the interests of the Free World

3.   There are important economic questions too. A Community com-
prising, as members or in association, the countries of free Europe,
could have a very rapidly expanding economy supplying, as eventually
it would, a single market of some 250 (?) million people. This
would be a stimulus to demand and would give the benefit - crucial
in the modern world - of economies of scale leading to efficiency
and competitive power   This rapidly expanding economy could in
turn lead to increased demand for the products of other parts of
the world and so help to expand world trade and inProve the prospects
of the less developed areas of the world.

4.   As the House knows, we have long sought - since 1957 - to
associate ourselves with this development in Europe   This was not
solely in our own interests, but for the wider reasons of policy
to which I have referred   It hasbecome plain, as a result of dis-
cussions, that for the United Kingdom anything short of full
membership of the Community is unlikely to be acceptable to the

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● other members; and might well not achieve the political (as distinct from the economic) objectives if it were

5. If we were to become members of the Community we should clearly have to accept its objectives and aims [in full], and be prepared to go forward with the Community in developing and achieving them. There are, however, as we have often said, three major interests which have to be reconciled with any move by the United Kingdom towards a new relationship with the European Economic Community - the interests of the Commonwealth, of our farmers, and of our partners in the European Free Trade Association.

6. It would be a tragic mistake to seek wider unity in Europe, in order to strengthen the solidarity of the free world, if it could only be done at the expense of weakening and disrupting the cohesion of the Commonwealth The Commonwealth is a great political force for stability in the world and I am sure that its value is fully appreciated by the member Governments of the Community The problem is how to reconcile the political need for wider unity in Europe and the objectives of the Community with the protection of the essential interests of the Commonwealth

7. As the House knows, Ministers have recently visited the other Commonwealth countries and discussed the problem with them. As a result of these discussions the other Commonwealth Governments understand the broad political and economic considerations which we have to take into account They have also told us of their essential interests. We have not, of course, asked them to commit themselves to any opinion on future relations between the United Kingdom and the European Economic Community, and they have naturally reserved their positions until they know how far their interests could be protected

8. Secondly, there are the interests of United Kingdom agriculture. One of the most important objectives of the E.E.C.

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is a common agricultural policy and this would involve basic
changes in our present system of agricultural support and in
our food import policy. Such change may be necessary in any
event, whether we move into Europe or not, because of the
growing pressures from abroad on the free market for food in
this country. However that may be, we have an obligation to
safeguard the standard of living of our farmers and we intend
to honour that obligation

9. Then there is the European Free Trade Association My
right honourable Friend, the Lord Privy Seal, has just returned
from a meeting of the E.F.T.A. Ministerial Council at which it
was agreed - and this has since been confirmedby the Governments
concerned - that if the United Kingdom decided to make a move
towards full membership of the Community, Denmark, Norway and
Portugal would take parallel action. At the same time the
three neutral countries - Sweden, Switzerland and Austria, who
could not for political reasons contemplate full membership -
would ask for negotiations to discover what other form of
association could be negotiated with the Six to protect their
essential economic interests.

10. Having taken into account all these complex - and indeed
conflicting - considerations, we have come to the conclusion
that if satisfactory arrangements can be made with regard to
the interests I have mentioned and subject of course to full
discussion with the Six as to their intentions indeveloping
some of the provisions of the Treaty or Rome, we should be
prepared to accede to that Treaty We do not think that
without entering into formal negotiations with the Six it
will be possible to find out whether satisfactory arrangements
can be made to meet the problems I have mentioned. We have
therefore decided to offer to enter into formal negotiations
with the Six inorder to establish the terms and conditions upon
which it would be open to the United Kingdom to become a

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member of the Community. Her Majesty's Government have accordingly today addressed a letter to the President of the Council of Ministers of the E.E.C. stating that they "wish to enter into negotiations with the Member Governments of the European Economic Community in order to establish the terms and conditions on which it would be open to the United Kingdom to become a member of the Community in accordance with Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome "

11   I will not read the whole letter /copies are available in the Vote Office 7, but I will read the last paragraph. It is as follows:-

"Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom desire
to open negotiations with the Member Governments of the
Community as soon as convenient. They would for their
part enter upon such negotiations in a spirit of under-
standing and with a firm determination to bring them to a
successful conclusion, and they feel sure that the Member
Governments of the Community will adopt a similar
attitude. In their view the successful conclusion of
such negotiations would constitute an historic step
towards that closer union among the European peoples which
is the common aim of the United Kingdom Government and of
the Member Governments of the Community and which would make
a signal contribution to the security and well-being of
the free world."

12   I must emphasise that Her Majesty's Government have not at this stage decided to join the Community. Such a decision could only be taken at the end of the negotiations in consulta-tion with the Commonwealth and our E.F.T.A. partners, and after taking into account our own domestic interests and, of course the views of this House.

Questions for Discussion

1. What strengths and advantages of the European Economic Community did Prime Minister Harold Macmillan set out in his speech to Parliament?

2. What were the challenges Britain would likely face in joining the EEC, and how did Macmillan propose to overcome them?

3. Does this source help to explain Britain's troubled relationship with integrated Europe, culminating in the Brexit referendum of 2016?

Questions for General Discussion

The following questions are designed to prompt a wider discussion on the events, issues, and themes highlighted in the sources.

1. To what extent did the nascent Cold War shape the international order which emerged after 1945 and, similarly, how far did that order influence the course of the Cold War?

2. How accurate is it to describe the post-war international order as "new"? Was it in fact merely a reinvention or reworking of older ideas?

3. In 1962, American statesman Dean Acheson claimed that "Great Britain had lost an empire, but not yet found a role". To what extent do the documents here support that assertion?

4. How fair is it to describe post-war European integration as a success?

5. To what extent has the international order created after the Second World War survived unchanged to the present day?

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