

Edward Heath, his vision for Europe, his Government and Henry Kissinger's Year of Europe.

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Abstract

Edward Heath's political career and ideologies were dominated from an early age on by Europe and later a possible British entry into the European Community. When he became Prime Minister he therefore did everything he could to accomplish British entry into the EC and succeeded. 1973 was the year in which Britain formally joined the EC, but it was also the year chosen by Henry Kissinger as the year in which America diverted a lot of their focus to the European continent to reinforce and reinvigorate the old Atlantic Alliance between the two continents. To accomplish this, the Americans started an initiative which they named the Year of Europe. This initiative would fail spectacularly; not only was the preparation that went into it from the American side insufficient, but Europeans were found to be largely uninterested in the initiative as well. Rather, they were busy with British entry into the EC and the redefinition of their new enlarged community. This left Heath in a pivotal position with regards to both intra-European and Atlantic relations, the latter because of the historically good relations between Britain and the Americans they were seen as their first liaison between America and Europe. This thesis will show that because Edward Heath had such a preference for a strong Europe and thus chose to give less attention to the relationship with the Americans the initiative would accomplish much less than it would have if there had been a more traditional Atlanticist Prime-Minister. In doing so this thesis will not only give an overview of the Year of Europe initiative from a British point of view, but also will reflect on the large role a small number of individuals can play in the formation of policy that would affect so many.

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Introduction

1973: the Year of Europe. An American initiative that was intended to reinvigorate, redefine and maybe even reboot the Atlantic Alliance. The Alliance had been weakening since its heyday, the period immediately following the Second World War. In that period the powers in America and Western Europe were so closely intertwined due to the newly formed NATO and American economic support for the Europeans through the Marshall plan that at that time there was no question they would ever become rivals. But times had changed since then; Europe had grown in many respects, most importantly economically and politically, and they were now starting to rival America.

Therefore the Year of Europe was launched, a brainchild of the one person that eclipsed Richard Nixon on the platform of foreign policy during 1973, Henry Alfred Kissinger. It was supposed to lead to a new Atlantic Charter that would tie the Atlantic Community together again, for years to come. The fact that this initiative failed to deliver any of its promises so spectacularly, and the spectacular manner in which it failed – with much bickering between the Europeans and the Americans –, makes this a very interesting topic for research. Why did the initiative fail in this way?

Structure

The American perspective, however, is only part of the topic for this thesis. Because there has been sufficient research into the American perspective on this initiative, not in the least because of Kissinger's own very extensive autobiography, I've chosen a different approach, one that has been coming in vogue in the last two years and is therefore very interesting to research: the British perspective on this initiative, and the way their 'special relationship' was of importance for their view. To narrow down my approach, I've chosen to focus mainly on the British Prime-Minister during the biggest part of the Year of Europe, Edward Heath. I chose this approach because although the bigger English perspective has been thoroughly discussed in Catherine Hynes' analysis of the Year of

Europe¹, it's still interesting to see how personal relationships affected the grander scale of international politics. For example, Douglas-Home, Secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in Heath's Cabinet, had a more positive view of the Anglo-American relations than his Prime-Minister, while being less interested in Europe and Britain's entry into the EEC. Therefore, as Niklas Rossbach puts it: "It probably suited Home that European integration was Heath's domain."² This indicates that, had it been the other way around, with Home being Prime Minister and Heath being Foreign Secretary, the international relations would have been laid out in a completely different manner during this period. Therefore, research into Heath's own ideas and his personal impact on the way this initiative was handled is not only justified, but also very much of interest to historians of international relations, especially since Heath's ideas differed greatly from his predecessors. His orientation was aimed more at Europe, and saw the Anglo-American relationship as a "natural" relationship, rather than a "special" one. But meanwhile, he did become the one European leader that managed to build up a friendly relationship with Nixon, and although it was a somewhat uneven balance, Nixon had "enormous admiration" for Heath, while Heath was, of all British political leaders "the most indifferent to the American connection." "He preferred a leading position in Europe to an honorary advisory role," as Kissinger would later describe Heath's role.³

To research this particular topic, this thesis will pay attention to multiple subjects, that all are equally important in answering the main question that is behind it. That question is "What role did Heath personally play during the Year of Europe?" In other words, in what way did Heath personally affect the Atlantic relations? To answer that question attention will have to be devoted to both Heath and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, where focus on Douglas-Home specifically could provide new insights. During Heath's term in office, the Prime Minister handled more of foreign policy than his predecessors, especially on subjects regarding Europe. The Year of Europe proposal

¹ Catherine Hynes, *The Year That Never Was: Heath, the Nixon Administration and the Year of Europe* (Dublin 2009).

² Niklas H. Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74* (Houndmills 2009), p. 25.

³ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston, Toronto 1982), pp. 140-144.

will also have to be discussed, and attention has to be paid to Kissinger's intentions for the initiative. This last topic will be the starting point of this thesis; the first chapter will discuss the start by the Americans, the launch of the initiative by Henry Kissinger on April 23, 1973. This is an important part, because the origins of the initiative are, in my view, of big significance, if only to answer the question why the proposals caused so much upheaval in Europe and why the response was the way it was. Did Kissinger - by accident or on purpose - play down Europe's role in the world so much that it caused the French President Georges Pompidou to rebut this initiative by announcing publicly that "in Europe, every year is the Year of Europe"⁴?

As this thesis will focus on Heath's own ideas and the way those influenced British foreign policy, an introduction of Heath's background will be in order as well. Also the make of his Cabinet and of course a short background of Douglas-Home, who would be one of the major foreign policy makers for the British during this period, will also be discussed. The following chapters will combine the previously discussed topics; they will focus on the British response towards the Year of Europe, both immediately following the announcement by Kissinger, but also in the course of 1973. I have chosen for a division between the responses and the way it was handled before the Yom Kippur war and the handling during and after this war and the following energy crisis. This was done because this war came at a point where for the first time both parties seemed to make progress on the initiative; however, because of the outbreak of the war, and the difference in ideas between the Americans and the British, this progress never amounted to anything substantial.

Even though Heath left office before the signing of the Ottawa declaration, which was what the Year of Europe in the end achieved, I've chosen to discuss the period between Heath leaving office and the actual signing in a short epilogue, because even though he had left office, he was still the one who had set the plans in motion, and for the following cabinet the time was too short to actually influence those plans. Interesting to note is that the declaration by this time had turned into

⁴ Jussi Hanhimäki, *The flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (Oxford 2004), p. 277.

a NATO document, and there was nothing European about the Year of Europe declaration anymore, which can be seen as yet another illustration of the spectacular failure of the Year of Europe.

Context

Both of the world-leaders that play the most important roles in this thesis, Nixon and Heath, were very much interested in foreign policy, probably more so than any of their predecessors since the Second World War. Nixon especially had extensive foreign policy experience. He had been Vice President under Eisenhower, had been a member of both the Senate and the House of Representatives before that, and afterwards had travelled a lot as a private citizen. This led to “his exposure to the world and to foreign leaders [being] near the top among the political figures of his time and among twentieth-century candidates for the presidency.”⁵ His foreign policy experience was most likely one of the most important reasons for him being elected, since the late 60s were a period of international upheaval, and the United States was caught in the Vietnam war, a war that at that period of time still remained inconclusive. Since the Tet-offensive polls in America had even started to show that a majority of Americans now believed that it had been a mistake for the United States to get so deeply involved in Indochina. His previous interest in foreign policy has most likely also been one of the decision points of the election in a less obvious manner than before; years after he had left office, the full story of how Nixon had led a covert operation to persuade the leader of the North-Vietnamese not to enter into peace talks with President Johnson, an act that William Bundy calls “the very act that may have tipped the election result in Nixon’s favor.” After being elected, he reinforced his image as a foreign policy President in his inaugural address. He even went as far as calling it a sacred commitment: “I have taken an oath today in the presence of God and my countrymen to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. To that oath I now add this

⁵ William P. Bundy, *A tangled web: the making of foreign policy in the Nixon presidency* (London 1998), p. 4.

sacred commitment: I shall consecrate my office, my energies, and all the wisdom I can summon, to the cause of peace among nations.”⁶

This was a commitment Nixon wished to uphold all throughout his presidency, as he restated in his annual report to Congress on foreign policy: “One of my basic goals is to build a new consensus of support in the Congress and among the American people for a responsible foreign policy for the 1970's.”⁷ However, foreign policy is a very wide and vague subject. Obviously there were other pressing matters on the foreign policy front: the war in Vietnam, or the new policy of détente towards the Soviet Union to name just two. The question arises where this left Western Europe. Very soon in his presidency, he made clear that Western Europe was not one of his main priorities: it only came in fifth on his list, trailing behind “East-West relations, policies toward the Soviet Union and China, and Eastern Europe,” and even in this fifth place it was only where “NATO is affected and where major countries (Britain, Germany and France) are affected.”⁸ However, by 1973, the stage had changed. Nixon, together with Henry Kissinger, had achieved major results, especially in the previous year. There had been a major breakthrough in the relations with China; “significant agreements” had been made with the Soviet leaders and in January 1973 Vietnamisation had bore its first fruits with the Agreement between the North Vietnamese and the Americans.⁹ This gave Nixon and his administration the chance to refocus their efforts, and to give more attention to Western Europe. He seemed to be misremembering his own priorities, formulated just over 3 years prior, since at this juncture he claims: for no aspect of U.S. foreign policy commands greater attention and care than our relations with Western Europe.”¹⁰ Here we also find a statement of intent for the Year of Europe, even though he later would have very little to do with it, mainly because of domestic concerns, namely Watergate, which diverted his attention elsewhere. “I have referred to 1973 as the

⁶ Richard Milhous Nixon, “First Inaugural address, Monday, January 20, 1969”, *Inaugural addresses of the presidents of the United States: from George Washington 1789 to George Bush 1989* (Washington 1989), on: <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/P/rn37/speeches/nixon1.htm> (consulted on April 12th, 2011).

⁷ Richard Nixon, *US Foreign Policy for the 1970's: SHAPING A DURABLE PEACE*, May 3rd, 1973, p. 2.

⁸ Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945* (Oxford 2003), p. 176.

⁹ Nixon, *Shaping a durable peace*, p. 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 42.

year of Europe, not because we regarded Europe as less important in the past or because we expect to overcome the problems of the Atlantic Community in any single year. This will be a year of Europe because changes in the international environment, and particularly in Europe, pose new problems and new opportunities.”¹¹ This, however, was the official reasoning behind the Year of Europe. What not must be forgotten was that this was also a period of détente, a time in which America had to get all wood behind the same arrow; they had to make sure their European allies backed them in negotiations, and most of all, would not try and develop a relationship with the USSR on their own.

This gives us some insight in the American reasoning behind the initiative. Nixon saw himself as a President who devoted more than usual attention to foreign affairs, because he thought time demanded this of him. After turning towards more urgent matters elsewhere on the planet, he turned towards more abstract concepts, such as the redefinition of the Atlantic relations, which by this moment, had stooped to an all-time low. This is where Nixon and Kissinger’s year of Europe comes into play.

Relevance

When writing history, it is of course important to choose a topic wisely. A topic is regarded as important when it bears any relevance to either today’s world or to further the field of history itself. Seeing as my topic is one that has occurred in recent history, and is very much in vogue at the moment, it is easy to claim that it exists to shine a light on a topic that has featured in the already published works, but has not as well been lit out as other parts, such as the French perspective on the Year of Europe, or Kissinger’s thoughts on transatlantic relations.

Of course, biographies of Heath have been written, and he himself has published an autobiography. And in recent years, the interest for the Year of Europe has been bigger than ever before. However, none of these works have set out to combine the two. I feel that the impact of Heath on the Year of Europe in his biographies has been overshadowed by other domestic and

¹¹ Ibid.

international issues, while his backgrounds and ideology rarely plays a role in works that focus on the Year of Europe. For example, Daniel Möckli in his otherwise excellent article on the Year of Europe from an international perspective, talks about the unique constellation of personalities leading Europe, where he mentions “British Prime Minister Edward Heath was an ardent supporter of a European Foreign Policy”¹², but never do the background and circumstances that led to Heath becoming a supporter of a European Foreign Policy play any role. And this is true for all other works I’ve encountered during my research for this thesis.¹³ This thesis will try and address this problem: it will look at the roots of Heath’s ideas and look at how they developed and how they would later influence him in his decisionmaking during the Year of Europe.

Source Material

The material for this research will have to come from multiple sources. To get backgrounds on Heath, and for a lesser extent Henry Kissinger, both their autobiographies and biographies written by others will be consulted. However, these ordinarily don’t give a lot of insight into their policies affecting the Year of Europe, because most of their biographies are over 10 years old. And in that period, as stated before, the interest for the Year of Europe was at a low. Kissinger’s autobiography, written in the 80s, however, does pay a lot of attention the initiative, which illustrates the way this subject had fallen off the radar after that time and has only just resurfaced. So, to complement these sources, my research will also draw from the more recent books and articles published on the Edward Heath’s foreign policy. Since his time in office has not been a long one, these books are a good and concise source on the foreign policy conducted by the Heath government.

¹² Daniel Möckli, ‘Asserting Europe’s Distinct Identity: The EC Nine and Kissinger’s Year of Europe’ in: Matthias Schulz and Thomas A. Schwartz (eds.), *The Strained Alliance: U.S.-European Relations From Nixon To Carter* (New York 2010), pp.195-220, there p.196.

¹³ See for example Catherine Hynes’ earlier quoted work or Alistair Noble, ‘Kissinger’s Year of Europe, Britain’s Year of Choice’, in: Matthias Schulz and Thomas A. Schwartz (eds.), *The Strained Alliance: U.S.-European Relations From Nixon To Carter* (New York 2010), pp.221-235.

Naturally, the most extensive research will be done in primary source material. This will have to come from multiple sources. For the American part of the initiative, and their reasoning, material will have to come from the Disclosed Documents and National Security Archives located at the Roosevelt Centre¹⁴. Also the University of California's American Presidency project will provide sources, relating to both Nixon and Kissinger¹⁵. For the British perspective, sources will come from Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon's excellent collection of Document on British Foreign Policy Overseas. This collection, which has been issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth office, provides researchers with electronic versions of the documents issued by the government in a certain period, of which Series III, Volume IV – *The Year of Europe: America, Europe and the Energy Crisis 1972-1974* – is obviously the most important one for this thesis.

Combining these sources in an all-encompassing picture of the period is not an easy task, especially when realizing this is a thesis mainly focusing on a person, and therefore actions might not be as rational as when one studies, say, a government or group of people. However, it is important that this period be studied in depth and the major players in this period get the attention they deserve, especially on topics that might not have been so interesting for researchers to spend time on. The relationship between the United States and Great Britain has been very important for both countries during the twentieth century and continues to be so until this day. A period in which this relationship might have been at a low is therefore worthy of our interest and deserves to be researched.

¹⁴ All sources that sources that came from either of these archives (Disclosed Documents, National Security Archives) will have come from the library at the Roosevelt Centre, unless stated otherwise.

¹⁵ American Presidency Project, located on <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>.

Chapter 1: *The making of Edward Heath*

John Campbell starts his biography of Edward Heath with the sentence “Geography, class and family made Ted Heath what he is”¹⁶, an opinion that most his biographers share. Edward Heath was not born into your average tory family, and his childhood was not what you would expect of the leader of the Conservative Party halfway through the twentieth century. This chapter will paint a picture of Edward Heath’s life until 1973, to show how his ideas on the relation between Britain and the continent were formed, how he got to be the proponent of British integration in Europe. If Edward Heath has made one lasting impression in history, it probably is his pro-Europe stance, which lasted throughout his political career, and only seems to have grown stronger. Therefore, it is relevant for this chapter to start research into his political ideas and especially his vision for British future from the start of his life, because his view on Europe was not formed overnight, and there are a lot of factors influencing this pro-European integration view he later got so famous for.

Childhood, Oxford and the War (1916-1946)

Growing up in Kent, Heath was a part of a socially mobile family, where his dad went from being a carpenter to employing several people as a builder. This social advancement is something of pride for Heath; several of his biographers mention his plan to sue the Oxford student magazine *Isis* for describing his father as ‘a jobbing builder’. Heath never denied this, only corrected the matter by mentioning that it was the *Sunday Express* which had used the phrase.¹⁷ This social movement was what started the conservative element in Heath’s life, due to his father’s influence.¹⁸ Heath first got into politics during his term at Oxford, where he joined the Oxford Union and also joined all three

¹⁶ John Campbell, *Edward Heath: A Biography* (London 1993), p. 3.

¹⁷ Ibid, p.18; Philip Ziegler, *Edward Heath: The Authorized Biography* (London 2010), p.3; Andrew Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen* (London 1972), p. 13. Interesting to note is that this last source attributes the quote to yet another paper, *the Daily Express*.

¹⁸ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. 6.

(Conservative, Labour, and Liberal) political societies, which was “quite normal” for a student at that time.¹⁹ He joined just “to see what they were up to”²⁰ and to hear their main speakers, because by then he had already decided that “a moderate form of Conservatism offered the best foundation for a free society” even though he “deplored the snobbishness of many Conservatives, as well as the envy and hatred of the party which were the consequence of it.”²¹

Heath took a little longer than usual to make his maiden speech for the Union, later claiming “he had no desire whatever to make a speech just for the sake of doing so.”²² When he eventually did give his maiden speech it was received as “extremely forcible and able,” but it did not establish him as a major speaker straight away.²³ It was not until a motion by the then chairman of Labour, Hugh Dalton, was defeated in the house, much to the convention that visiting celebrities carried the day. Heath’s speech against the motion was largely credited with the defeat.²⁴ This oration was a main factor in his election to secretary of the Union, only two weeks later. But of course, for a man with his ambitions, the ultimate goal was becoming President of the Union, and it was his interest in foreign politics that would eventually lead to his election. In the summer of 1937 Heath travelled to Nazi Germany. And he even attended, arranged through the German embassy in London, the famed Nuremberg rally and afterwards met both Himmler and Goebbels, an obviously extraordinary experience for a student²⁵. One summer later, while he still was at Oxford, Heath took another trip to the continent, where he again experienced fascism first-hand. He was invited as President of the University Conservative Associations to experience the Spanish civil war in Catalonia, where he met with several government dignitaries, including the Spanish Prime Minister, Juan Negrin. After returning to Britain, nearly getting shot down on leaving Madrid, he was already “convinced that the

¹⁹ Edward Heath, *The Course of My Life: My Autobiography* (London 1998), p. 29.

²⁰ Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen*, pp. 29-31.

²¹ Heath, *The Course of My Life*, p. 29.

²² *Ibid*, p. 30

²³ Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 26.

²⁴ *Ibid*; Campbell, *Edward Heath*, pp. 27-28.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

Spanish civil war was merely the preamble to a greater European war.”²⁶ Having experienced this, Heath finally lost his confidence in Chamberlain’s National Government, especially after it had closed the Munich Pact, which permitted Germany to annex Sudetenland. Opposing the National Government during the Presidential Debates in the Union is the position that most people regard as having won him the Presidency. The next summer, 1939, was the last one of Heath’s long journeys to the Continent for a while. He travelled with a half-Jewish friend to Warsaw, where they left just before the Germans invaded. Heath got back to the United Kingdom via Paris, returning on the 1st of September, the same day that Hitler invaded Poland, two days before the British declared war on the Germans.²⁷

After the declaration of war, Heath immediately went to the University Recruitment Board in Oxford and got allocated to the Royal Artillery, but was also told that he wouldn’t be required for several months. This allowed him to take yet another tour abroad: a tour of American universities on a debating excursion. Before this tour the Foreign Office had warned him to stay off the subject of the war, as not to offend the neutrality of the Americans, but he soon found out that it was all the Americans wanted to talk about. On one of these occasions he presented a view on the future of Europe after the war that seemed to foreshadow his later positions on Europe: “the best hope was a federal Europe, a ‘United States of Europe... in which states will have to give up some of their national rights ... There seems to be a better view for the future if we lean towards a federalism that can be secured either by joining with a small national group and/or big group, because this seems to be the most fool proof sort of thing you can get’”²⁸. And even though many aspects of American life appealed to him, this visit would not make the same kind of mark on his life as his visits to Europe did, and neither would it “diminish the primary commitment he instinctively felt to Europe.”²⁹ In his own memoirs, Heath appears to have nothing but fond memories from his trip to the United States.

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 32-33; Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, pp. 30-31.

²⁷ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, pp. 38-39; Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen*, pp. 40-41.

²⁸ As quoted in Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 40.

²⁹ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. 41.

New York, especially, seems to have made a good impression on him; it was “quite irresistible to a young man such as myself”³⁰. John Campbell even goes as far as thinking that “the memory of his visit may possibly have helped counteract the latent anti-Americanism to which in later life he was increasingly prone.”³¹ He did however gain some insight in American policies that would later influence his own government style. Socialism combined with government control would become “national socialism and political control too often follows.” Deficit spending, like the American New Deal, might be risky but at least “would offer the possibility of a fruitful advance.”³²

After returning, Heath at last made it into the army. He was made a 2nd Lieutenant in the 335 Battery, but was promoted within one year into the Commanding Officer’s Adjutant, and got promoted to the rank of Captain. His tour of duty took him through France, the Netherlands, Belgium and into Germany, tying Heath even closer to the European continent. Returning home in 1946, he had to figure out his future. Studying to take the bar, as he had initially planned, was not really an option anymore, since he had already turned 30. And so he came to work in the civil service, while at the same time trying to get elected to the House of Commons.³³

Starting a life in politics

Heath won his first seat in the 1950 General Election in the constituency of Bexley. Situated in Kent, but not in a rural area and conveniently located on the route from London to the house of his parents, this was seen by Heath as a nearly perfect seat. And even though he only won it with a majority of 133, it was the seat he’d remain loyal to his entire political career, even when he became leader of the Conservative party and much safer seats were offered to him.³⁴

³⁰ Heath, *The Course of My Life*, p. 74.

³¹ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. 42.

³² Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 41.

³³ Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen*, pp. 47-57.

³⁴ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, pp. 62-70.

During his first summer recess Heath again travelled to the continent. He journeyed to Western Germany, where he met with several members of the Bundestag. He found them “buzzing with excitement about what was already being called the ‘Schuman Plan’.” This arrangement, which in many respects can be seen as the plan that started the process of European integration which would lead to the eventual European Union, called for a supranational authority that oversaw the steel and coal industries in France and Germany, and any other Western European country which would want to join. Reflecting back on this he would later write the following about the European question in Europe: “the *raison d’être* of the European Union is political, to integrate Germany into Europe.”³⁵ The impressions these meetings made on him and the tempo in which the country was being rebuilt left him staggered. Through these meetings his link to the continent and his support of European integration only grew stronger. It therefore is not strange that he chose this topic, the Schuman plan and its implications, for his maiden speech in parliament.³⁶ Even though the current Labour government had refused to join in the talks on the Schuman plan, Heath implored them “to go into the Schuman plan to develop Europe and to co-ordinate it in the way suggested.”³⁷ And even though at this moment “he knew he was swimming against the tide, Heath never ceased to press the European cause when any opportunity arose.”³⁸

However, it was not his stance on Europe, but the liberal aspect of his political views with which he made an impression within the party. He grew up in a family of humble means, and was a big supporter of the One Nation³⁹ ideal that rose up during this period. The attention this gained Heath was one of the main reasons that led to him being invited to become one of the Tory Whips. The invitation posed a difficult decision for him: being one of the Whips would make him one of the

³⁵ Heath, *The Course of My Life*, p. 144.

³⁶ *Ibid.*; Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 68.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³⁹ The One Nation Group is, as Philip Ziegler puts it, “the banner under which assembled a band of young or youngish Tory members, who were disturbed by the reactionary policies of some of their leaders and were resolved to push the party into the modern age” (*Edward Heath*, p. 71). In the end this boils down to the wish that they as a Conservative party would be able to unite the nation and even include the working classes due to social reforms. This in contrast to the common vision where the Conservatives were the rich-mans party.

more important members of the party, boosting him ahead of the Tories of his generation, but the Whips office was also one that rarely offered any real promotions, it was not common for a Whip to get promoted to a ministerial position. However, he took up the position, and it proved to be a good decision. Due to this work he gained valuable insights on his colleagues in the parliament, and he enjoyed it as well. And after the 1954 elections, which the Tories won, the post of Chief Whip became vacant. As the new Prime Minister Anthony Eden would later tell Heath's biographer: "Ted Heath took over as Chief Whip; by what seemed a natural process."⁴⁰

Member of the Cabinet

Even though the Chief Whip was not a formal member of the Cabinet, during Heath's period in office the post became more and more regarded as one. Anthony Eden regarded him in such a manner that he had Heath present at Cabinet meetings⁴¹. And Heath did not see this as a special reward, "Heath was present at almost every meeting and increasingly behaved as if he belonged there as of right."⁴² This was a precedent that Prime Ministers from then on have followed.

One of the most important events that occurred during his period as Chief Whip was the Suez crisis, starting with the sudden Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal nine months after Heath started in his new function. During this crisis, Heath played a huge role in getting the government through the calamity; "Had it not been for the quiet skill with which Edward Heath and his colleagues in the Whip's office handled the parliamentary party throughout the crisis, the situation might well become desperate" Lord Chancellor Kilmuir would later express his view on the situation.⁴³ He managed to get the party into line on the vital vote on retreat from the Canal, and by doing so made sure the Government or the Pound Sterling did not get threatened. The Economist summarized the way Heath handled the crisis as follows: "Mr Heath will have surely earned a niche in the Tory

⁴⁰ As quoted in Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 87.

⁴¹ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. 91.

⁴² Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 96.

⁴³ As quoted in Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. 94.

pantheon as the man who gave the party a second chance.”⁴⁴ The crisis did however cause Prime Minister Eden to resign, and his successor was Heath’s favourite, Harold Macmillan. “Working with him gave great pleasure as well as broadening one’s life” was just one of the warm descriptions of Macmillan Heath would later write in his autobiography.⁴⁵ And Macmillan felt affectionately about Heath as well, something which greatly influenced Heath’s sway in the party. “Heath is probably the most influential man around the Prime Minister today” an unidentified minister said in 1958.⁴⁶ This authority led to Heath becoming more and more of a key-player in the party, and it came as no surprise that Heath after the 1959 got a post as Minister of Labour, “it was only right... that he should step into independent ministerial command.”⁴⁷

First EC negotiations.

However, his stay at Labour was only short-lived. Only nine months after taking up the office, he was asked by Macmillan to become the second man at the Foreign Office, after Lord Home. This did mean Heath would no longer have his own department, but it also had its benefits. He now was Lord Privy Seal, and the relations with Europe fell also under his responsibilities. This appointment led Heath to find “his life’s cause.”⁴⁸ Although Heath had taken an interest in British relations with the continent before, it was this appointment that really tied the two together. This post would eventually put him in charge of the discussions on Britain’s negotiations with the EC⁴⁹ on a possible entry. The reasoning Macmillan had for putting Heath in charge of this has remained unclear until this day. John Campbell claims in his biography of Heath that it was in the end this job that spurred

⁴⁴ As quoted in *Ibid*, p. 97.

⁴⁵ Heath, *Course of My Life*, p.182.

⁴⁶ Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 106.

⁴⁷ As quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁴⁸ Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen*, p. 112.

⁴⁹ Even though it is sometimes referred to as the EEC, the British application was actually to the EC, which meant all three of the European Communities (EEC, EURATOM, ECSC). Confusion nowadays arises due to the renaming of the EEC into EC after the EU had been established in 1993. But in the period of time this thesis is concerned with, the EEC and EC still had different meanings.

Heath's vision on Europe, as an "extraneous implant, formed by Macmillan's disposition of offices in 1960."⁵⁰ However, I concur with Philip Ziegler's vision that even before this, Heath was "well known to be well-disposed towards Europe and critical of the Labour Government's failure to move towards the Common Market." He might not have been the "Europhile" he became later in his life, but as this chapter until now has shown; he already had a close link to the continent, he was very much aware that Britain's future would lie with the continent. But the moment he was put in charge of the discussions "what he had always felt would be a most desirable step forward became for him the Holy Grail."⁵¹

However, the relation between Britain and the EC was a difficult one, and the negotiations would prove to be very difficult. Heath had not only to mind the British interests, but also that of the entire Commonwealth because a British entry into the EC would cause "Commonwealth exports to Britain suffer"⁵². Also there was the issue of the on-going American Presidential elections. The British feared that if Nixon had been elected back then, instead of Kennedy, there would have been a focus on France within the American government, instead of the pro-British approach of Kennedy. Ironically enough Nixon was of course the President who later would attempt to re-strengthen the American-British relations, only to find Heath as Prime Minister more interested in France (and the rest of Western Europe). But Macmillan had made the decision to apply for membership, and Heath would try his best to successfully round of the negotiations. As he would later write: "Well aware that the United Kingdom, shorn of its Empire and old dependencies, could no longer enjoy its former role as a world superpower... we might continue to play an influential world role through wholehearted participation in Europe."⁵³ The rival economic bloc that Britain had formed and had come into existence only months before these negotiations began, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), was regarded "as a weak organisation and one, moreover, whose progress would

⁵⁰ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. 114.

⁵¹ Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 117.

⁵² Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen*, p. 148.

⁵³ Heath, *The Course of My Life*, p. 204.

always be inhibited by its weakest members.”⁵⁴ The EC, however, was turning out to be a strong bloc in the world, one that Heath thought might play an international role of importance in the future. In contrast to many of his countrymen, Heath saw the British Empire as a thing of the past, and to be able to play a real role of importance again, he felt they had to join the EC. And the British thought they had a good chance of joining; enquiries made by embassies in the Six⁵⁵ led them to believe that they wished the British to join. Heath himself met with the Italian and French governments, and even though British membership would pose problems for new initiatives like the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), they seemed positive.

These preambles took more than a year, and it wasn't until October 10th, 1961 that the negotiations formally began. Immediately structural problems arose: Britain's negotiations were being held with representatives of all six countries, and not with the EC Commission. This led to difficulties for British negotiators, because the Six had to first formulate their common position, and after that they were “naturally reluctant to reopen matters which had been agreed in order to accommodate Britain.”⁵⁶ And negotiations were sluggish, and drawn out to long talks where apparently everything that the Commonwealth could import was subject to debate in the EC. From kangaroo meat to banana's, everything was subject to debate, and more importantly, every time Heath made an offer, the Six had to withdraw to agree on a response.⁵⁷ This slow progress was playing right into the hand of the French, who were apparently not as keen on the idea of British membership as they had seen to Heath at first. And eventually, it was the French, by the hand of their President, who killed the British application to the EC. He vetoed the British entry and therefore ended the entire application process in one go. This happened on January 14th, 1962, a day which

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ The Six is a term used to describe the six original members which had founded the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and had formed that into the EC by signing the Treaty of Rome. These six countries were: (Western-) Germany, France, Italy and the countries of the Benelux.

⁵⁶ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. 122.

⁵⁷ Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 123.

would be “one of the worst days in [Heath’s] life.”⁵⁸ However, Heath insisted “Britain should maintain its constructive engagement with, and influence in, Europe despite de Gaulle’s veto.”⁵⁹ The way Heath kept his composure after such a setback was impressive, after all “his career seemed ruined too.”⁶⁰ Since the five other countries in the EC had actually been constructive towards British entry, Heath felt that maintaining a relation with them while at the same time trying to convince de Gaulle to drop his veto would eventually lead Britain into the EC. De Gaulle in 1965 would tell Heath “If you become Prime Minister, you will be the man who will lead Britain into the European Community.”⁶¹ This was a prediction which would become true nearly a decade later.

During the next Cabinet reshuffle, which would make Alec Douglas-Home Prime Minister, Heath obtained yet another post; he now became Secretary of State for Industry, Trade and Regional Development. His stay at this department was not long though, the Conservatives lost their majority during the next elections and Heath was now just another member of the House of Commons, albeit one that (shortly) held the post of Shadow Chancellor.⁶² But these elections also spelled the end for Douglas-Home’s leadership of the Conservative party, and in the leadership elections that followed Heath became leader of the Conservative party.

From leader of the Tories to leader of the Country.

Heath’s period as leader of the Opposition seems to have contributed very little to his views on Europe. As he needed to improve his image with the British public, he focussed on domestic affairs. But since his direct opponent in the Commons, Prime-Minister Harold Wilson, outshone him on nearly every occasion, his biggest publicity boosts came from activities outside Parliament, such as

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 130.

⁵⁹ Heath, *Course of My Life*, p. 237.

⁶⁰ George Wilkes, *Britain’s Failure to Enter the European Community 1961-1963: The Enlargement negotiations and Crises in European, Atlantic and Commonwealth Relations* (London 1997), p. 249.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 240.

⁶² The Shadow Cabinet in British politics is the senior group of opposition spokesmen who form an alternative to Her Majesty’s Government. The Shadow Chancellor is (usually) the opposition’s spokesperson on economic affairs.

winning the Sydney to Hobart Ocean Sailing race.⁶³ However, during his period in the opposition French President de Gaulle – who had vetoed a British application for an EC membership again in 1967 - resigned in 1969, which made a British entry into the EC a very real possibility again. His successor, Georges Pompidou, was better disposed towards the idea of a British entry, but also felt that this had more chance of succeeding during a period of Tory leadership. And even though he knew the British public and many of the Tory MP's were against British membership, Heath felt Britain belonged in the EC and in the future, eventually in a unified Europe. "Whilst the European countries concerned were moving on from the nation state because in their view it was inadequate to meet modern requirements, the British were still thinking in terms of the power which they had previously exercised and which they believed still belonged to them."⁶⁴ And this was exactly what he would set out to accomplish during his time as Prime Minister. In the next elections the Tories would gain the majority again – against all predictions – and Heath became the first real pro-European integration Prime Minister Britain would have.

Prime-Minister Heath and his Cabinet

After taking over 10 Downing Street on June 19th, 1970, Heath's first concern was that of creating a Cabinet. Especially the position of Foreign Secretary would be an important one, bearing in mind Heath's vision on the future of Britain. The rest of his appointments were either predictable appointments of senior party-members or promotions of those that had been loyal to him. This disposition of his towards providing opportunity for "loyal 'meritocrats'" was shown by the way he excluded those able men who had crossed him in some way or another.⁶⁵ Former Prime Minister Home, the man who Heath had replaced as leader of the Conservative party, had also remained loyal to his successor and was appointed as Foreign Secretary. Their views might have differed on crucial

⁶³ Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, pp. 161-189.

⁶⁴ As quoted in Niklas H. Roszbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-1974*, p. 19.

⁶⁵ Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen*, p. 211

issues such as the relations between Europe and America, but “Heath counted on Home’s loyalty to surpass any doubts.”⁶⁶ And indeed, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) under Home was very compatible with Heath’s ideas. Heath and the FCO both followed the line of thought set out by President Kennedy in the 60s: the relationship between Europe and America should be a strong one, but “a union in Europe was ‘still the first order of business for the Europeans.’” American support for British entry in the EC was necessary to allow for smooth access. If anything, the difference was that the FCO focussed mainly on the entry into the office, while Heath also prepared for the time following this.⁶⁷

However, things had changed since 1963. In 1963 Britain was still very competitive compared to the EC, but in 1970 there was a pervasive fear of decline, since the EC countries seemed to be in a phase of economic growth, while the UK lagged behind. This led to what Niklas Rossbach calls a “now-or-never approach,” they felt Britain had to join the EC before the differences between them and the EC countries grew too big.⁶⁸ So Britain had to make work of its application, and Heath was the man at the right time and place to do it. As often has been said, the key to British entry into the EC would lie with the French. Therefore most negotiations were undertaken with Pompidou, but also with the French Secretary-General, Michel Jobert, whom Heath met on his first rounds of negotiations in 1963 and who had been sympathetic towards British entry. He would support British entry from inside the Elysée and assured Pompidou that Heath was a reliable man.⁶⁹ But not only the Six had to be convinced, Heath also had to convince the House of Commons that accession was in the best interest of Britain and the British people. This was probably harder for Heath than convincing Pompidou. Pompidou and Heath met, in private, with only two translators present, on the 21st and 22nd of May, 1971, and during these meetings Heath managed to convince Pompidou of his reasoning

⁶⁶ Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon*, p. 25.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 27.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 29.

⁶⁹ Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 274.

for joining, that Britain actually wanted to become “European,” and did not want “to enter the Community only so as to destroy it or to divert it from its objectives.”⁷⁰

In 1971, the debate finally kicked off on the floor of the House, where no one could be sure about the final vote. There was a group of Labour MP’s who were very pro-Europe, “they strongly believed that Britain belonged in Europe and were not prepared to jeopardise their country’s future for the sake of partisan advantage.”⁷¹ But on the other hand the Conservative party also contained a bunch of hardened Eurosceptics, MP’s who strongly believed Britain was better off outside of the EC. This led to a somewhat confusion situation, where even the Whips of both parties could not predict the outcome of the final vote. Predictions became even harder when Heath decided to give the Tory MP’s a free-vote, instead of his earlier comments about “the government using its majority in the Commons to carry [the vote] through”⁷². And during the debates in October, the longest debate since the war, Chancellor of the Exchequer Anthony Barber announced the government would resign would the vote not pass, which increased tensions even more. Heath himself gave the closing speech in the debate where he stated this was probably the last chance Britain would have for many years to join “an United Europe.” He pointed out that China would become within the foreseeable future the third superpower in the world, and Britain needed Europe, because “the strength of this country alone is not enough to ensure a sensible or satisfactory outcome to the monetary and trading discussions.” And the prospect of joining was “the opportunity of joining the Community and of influencing one of the major economic Powers.” which he thought the EC would become. These were the major points in his speech, one that outlined his own vision for Europe and British future.⁷³ In the end the vote was won by the government by a 112 majority, even though only 1/3rd of the British population had declared to be in favour of the entry, and half were opposed. Heath’s free vote

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 282.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.284.

⁷² Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen*, p. 225.

⁷³ United Kingdom Parliamentary Hansard, ‘Debate on the European Communities’, *Commons Sitting of 28 October 1971*, Series 5: Vol. 823 (HC Deb 28 October 1971 vol 823 cc2076-217).

strategy had worked.⁷⁴ Congratulations came in from most of European countries, with Pompidou hailing it as “a personal success for you [Heath] and a success for Europe.” This is moment is what Heath later regarded as “his greatest success as Prime Minister.” This is what he saw as the start of the creation of “one world at peace.”⁷⁵

During this period Heath was also seen to be growing closer and fonder towards the Europeans while the Anglo-American relations seemed to cool. Especially towards the French Heath was more than courteous, agreeing to French terms on the cost of the Concorde and planning a state visit of Queen Elizabeth to France in 1972. At the same time the relations with Washington cooled, due to big differences between the British and Americans on the Indo-Pakistani conflict at the end of 1971. The British sided with the Indians, and the Americans - under the influence of Kissinger - did not directly side with the Pakistanis but did act very anti-Indian. Besides this, there was also the question of dollar-devaluations, but reasoning for these will be addressed in the next chapter. For now it will suffice to say that because of Heath’s new close relations to the French, their responses to the American actions were very much alike. As one senior French official was quoted “it would not really have made much difference which of them spoke first.”⁷⁶

These close relations with the continent were established firmly on January 22nd, 1972, when Heath flew into Brussels to sign the Treaty of Accession. This was not final however; the treaty still had to pass the House of Commons. For it to pass the House it would take a long floor fight: it wasn’t until the 13th of July after 173 hours of debate that the third reading finally passed. And according to his contemporaries, there was no way it ever would have happened without Edward Heath’s persistence, it was an achievement which could largely - if not completely - be attributed to him. As one of his Cabinet ministers, Jim Prior, would later write “No one other than Ted would have taken Britain into Europe.”⁷⁷ And there was work to be done for Europe. One of the main objectives Heath

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 225-226.

⁷⁵ Heath, *Course of my Life*, pp. 380-381.

⁷⁶ As quoted in: Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen*, p. 228.

⁷⁷ As quoted in: Ziegler, *Heath*, p. 290.

would have in the next years was the establishment of a regional policy for the EC, with the goal to reinvigorate old industrial areas in the same way the CAP supported European farmers. Even though this was met with protests by the French, the rest of the nine⁷⁸ either supported Heath on this policy or kept quiet. One other big issue that was widely discussed during this period was further economic cooperation, something which would finally culminate in a European Monetary Union (EMU). The Bank of England supported such a plan, releasing a statement saying that the EMU would allow Europe “to stand up to the economic might of the United States and thus command for itself a more powerful voice in world affairs.”⁷⁹ This was obviously right up Heath’s ally, since his vision of a strong united Europe would demand such drastic measures. But he realised the country was not really ready for such drastic measures, and therefore said as little as possible about it, even after Nixon’s dollar devaluations. He did however promise “total support for Franco-German efforts to stabilise European currencies.” As Pompidou would tell Brandt, “Britain was eager to express opinions about Europe’s future, but left the detailed issues of economic integration to France and Germany.”⁸⁰ So when Britain formally joined on January 1st, 1973, Heath had not yet been able to make a big mark on Europe, but did send a clear signal about his intentions towards both Europe and the rest of the world, signalling that Europe would come first.

Conclusion: Heath and Europe

Having seen Heath’s life up until the Year of Europe, there seem to be multiple reasons for Heath’s more than average interest in the continent, which could all be seen as influences in his policy making and his foreign policy strategy. From his college years onwards, he seems to have expressed a lot of interest in Europe, making several journeys to the continent. His vision of a united Europe also seems to be rooted in this period, a time in which he experienced the rise of fascism first-hand in

⁷⁸ The EC-9 were the nine members of the enlarged EC, incorporating the old six and Britain, but also Ireland and Denmark, who joined at the same time as Britain.

⁷⁹ Ziegler, *Heath*, p. 295.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 296.

both Germany and Spain. His experiences during the Second World War only seem to have reinforced his thoughts on the subject. These thoughts made him a strong supporter of a closer Europe, one so integrated and so closely interdependent that there never could be war again. His maiden speech in the House of Commons, showing him to be a strong supporter of the Schumann plan, can be seen as his first political act in support of this vision.

Besides the prevention of a new World War, European integration was for Heath a way to make sure Europe would play a role of importance on the world stage again. And Heath saw that this was the time for Britain to join Europe. Immediately after World War 2 Britain still saw itself as a superpower in its own right, they had a big Commonwealth and a very tight relationship with the United States. But by now these two pillars of British foreign policy were dissolving. The Commonwealth had developed into an association of independent countries, but had never developed into an effective economic or political bloc. The link with the United States, as will be shown in later chapters, had been weakened over many issues in the past decade or so. Therefore, Heath saw entry into Europe as the most likely way for Britain to play a role on the world stage once more. A politically integrated Europe, in which Britain played a large role, was the way to go. I do not think this should be regarded as an anti-American policy, but more as a pro-European policy. This did mean the British had to refocus their foreign policy objectives, and had to devote less attention to the Americans. This did not go unnoticed in the United States, and with Nixon being a great supporter of Heath, this was not something the Americans wished to happen. The way the British as well as the rest of the Europeans were less dependent on the Americans in a global context was a movement which especially Henry Kissinger hoped to counter. Kissinger still saw the world divided into 2 spheres, and if Europe moved away from the American sphere, there was only one way they could go: towards the USSR. To counter this, he would launch an initiative known as the Year of Europe, which will be discussed in the next chapter, together with a more in depth look at his (Kissinger's) exact reasoning behind it.

Chapter 2: *American Concerns, the April 23rd speech and the start of the Year of Europe Initiative.*

At the start of 1973, the alliance between the Europeans and the Americans was much weaker than it once had been. The ties between the continents had diminished a lot since the period during World War 2, the time in which the original Atlantic Charter was drafted. This charter, which set out the goals for the Allies after the Second World War, had probably run its course. The old empires had dissolved and a new economic order had taken place in the world. But this new economic order worried the Americans, and especially Henry Kissinger. He felt the old relationship between the United States and Europe needed to be solidified, preferably with a new charter, one that echoed the old Atlantic Charter. But things had changed since World War 2: America was no longer the world superpower and felt its hegemony deteriorating. Europe on the other hand was on the rise, both economically and politically. This bothered the United States, since they felt that the relationship between the two continents, one that had been so strong, was on the decline, and they were afraid of the consequences this would have on a global scale. What if Europe decided to form bi-lateral relations with the USSR, because of, for example, the German question, without the United States playing a role? This could mean the United States would lose its entire grip on the continent, or so at least Kissinger thought. This is why he was convinced of the need of reinforcing the old Atlantic Relationship, as a way for the United States to prevent losing its grip on the European continent. This chapter will look in depth at the American concerns and the way Kissinger started his attempt to refortify the Atlantic Relationship with the Year of Europe.

Henry Alfred Kissinger

The principal architect of the Year of Europe initiative was not Richard Nixon himself, but his National Security Advisor, Henry Alfred Kissinger. The idea might have come from Nixon, but he became more and more preoccupied with other concerns, both international and domestic. The most striking

example of this is of course was the Watergate scandal that came into full view during 1973. This led to Kissinger having to take over more and more of Nixon's foreign policy responsibilities, especially since he got appointed to the post of Secretary of State in September 1973. From then on he would hold both the posts of National Security Advisor as that of Secretary of State, two positions that combined to give him unprecedented influence on the foreign policy front. Nixon's domestic problems surrounding the Watergate scandal were so severe that for the Washington Post, "Everything, including the Year of Europe and all foreign policy, was secondary to Nixon's 'revealing the whole truth'." This was written in the Washington Post of April 26th, 1973; only 3 days after Kissinger made the official announcement of the Year of Europe initiative and the coming attempts to restore transatlantic relations.⁸¹ Therefore this chapter will focus on Kissinger for most of the ideas, even though Nixon was the actual first proponent of America re-establishing relations with its European allies.

Why a year of Europe?

This re-establishing of relations with European allies is what Seyom Brown sees as one of the most important reasons behind the Year of Europe. He thinks Kissinger called for the Year to renew the "disintegrating 'Atlantic Community'" by calling for what was then still termed the new Atlantic Charter.⁸² Because 1973 was seen, by some contemporaries, as the year in which the security community, that had been the foundation for transatlantic relations since the Second World War, was fragmenting. The security community was the big umbrella under which all common efforts on military terrain were shared. This obviously included NATO, but also the handling of the USSR threat in Europe, which was dealt with by the United States mainly. Also the nuclear deterrent was a part of this security community, one that without a doubt of massive importance in this period of détente. The security community was threatened by the growth of yet another community, the

⁸¹ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 102.

⁸² Seyom Brown, *The Crises of Power* (New York 1979), pp. 117-118.

European Economic Community (EEC). The countries involved in the EEC were of course not the same as those involved in the NATO, which had been the embodiment of the Atlantic security community, and those strains were getting bigger in 1973, when three countries joined the original EEC of six members, including the United Kingdom under Heath. And these strains “were prominently exposed and crucially affecting relations between the United States and Europe.” Kissinger hoped the Year of Europe, and its new Atlantic Charter, would lead to a time in which, as Seyom Brown puts it: “the NATO nations would bond together [in times of profound challenge] to protect Western civilization.”

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Others, such as Richard Thornton, argue that military concerns were at the heart of Kissinger’s plans. The balance between east and west had shifted, the world had changed from being military dominated by the United States to a bi-polar world, where military power was in balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. One might even argue that the balance actually favoured the Soviets, since their nuclear capabilities now exceeded that of the United States.⁸⁴ This actually put the Americans for quite a challenge, and especially Kissinger. He was a big proponent of the bi-polar world – some have even called his world vision “manically bipolar”⁸⁵ – and felt it was important to keep “the present world going as long as possible.”⁸⁶ Therefore Europe should not become a third power bloc, and redefine the entire balance Kissinger had put his trust in. This balance, however, did lead to the United States having to redefine their strategies and military scenarios. The previously adopted plan of massive retaliation, where any hostile military action undertaken by the Soviets towards the United States or any of their allies would lead to the United States striking back with all they had, was regarded as obsolete in a world the United States no longer solely dominated. It was now regarded as “simply inviting mutual suicide.” They now switched

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Richard C. Thornton, *The Nixon-Kissinger Years: Reshaping America’s Foreign Policy* (New York 1989), pp. 222-224.

⁸⁵ Maro Del Pero, *The Eccentric Realist: Henry Kissinger and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, London 2006), p 59 & p. 81.

⁸⁶ As quoted in *ibid*, p. 81.

to a new strategy of flexible response, with different levels of retaliation; no longer would a military response be either all or nothing.⁸⁷ This policy did require more effort from their European allies who were above all required to support these policies economically. As Kissinger put it himself, in his speech announcing the Year of Europe initiative: “[the United States expect] from each ally a fair share of the common effort for the common defences.”⁸⁸ As a part of these common efforts, American troops were still stationed on European ground, which Europeans feared would be withdrawn by the Americans because of domestic issues. These domestic issues surrounding the troop-placement in Europe were especially about the cost. And seeing as this happened during a period in which the United States congress felt its power had been ‘neutralised’⁸⁹ by the Presidency on military terrain during the Vietnam War, Congressmen seemed to take every opportunity to take power back on this front. This in the end would lead to the War Powers Resolution⁹⁰, as well as plans being drafted with regards to troop withdrawal from Europe. When this would happen, it could lead to what Jussi Hanhimäki calls a “European nightmare scenario: what if the Soviet Union decided to launch a limited conventional attack in some part of Europe because it could rely on the American reluctance not to respond with nuclear weapons?”⁹¹ The way American domestic issues had an effect on the issue of troop presence in Europe becomes clear from a memo by Helmut Sonnenfeldt, a senior staff member of the National Security Council, to Henry Kissinger in regard to the coming meeting Kissinger would have with Gaston Thorn, the Luxembourgian Foreign Minister: “He understands that we are not linking our troop presence with economic problems but that politically they are in fact connected in term of public and congressional attitudes. You should stress this point

⁸⁷ Leopold Nuti, “The origins of the 1979 Dual track decision – a survey”, in Leopold Nuti (ed.), *The Crises of Detente in Europe. From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985* (London 2009), pp. 57-71, there p. 61.

⁸⁸ The April 23th speech has been published as: Henry A. Kissinger, “The Year of Europe (Adress to the Associated Press Annual Luncheon, New York, April 23, 1973) in: Henry A. Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy* (New York 1977), pp. 99-113.

⁸⁹ Sen. Jacob K. Javits, *War powers. : Hearings, Ninety-third Congress, first session*, KF27 .F6483 1973, p. 2.

⁹⁰ The War Powers Resolution is a American federal law which requires the President to give notice to Congress 48 hours before sending Armed Forces into action as well as limiting these actions to a maximum of 60 days without Congressional approval.

⁹¹ Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, p. 275.

[emphasis in the original].”⁹² In this meeting, Kissinger himself raised an issue that could be seen as one of the key topics surrounding the launch of the Year of Europe initiative. The initiative was a way of raising the Atlantic Alliance to a more philosophical and abstract concept. In the years since the Second World War, the Alliance had been watered down to a more technical relationship, one that meant that, for Nixon, the Alliance now was “more a matter of the head than of the heart.”⁹³ And that was something that had to change. Instead of dabbling about petty disputes on the economic front, “what we have to do and what the President wants to do is relate security, politics and economics,” since the “economist doesn’t understand the real issues” and “the President cannot be expected to conduct soy bean negotiations.”⁹⁴ But, these economic issues were not as petty as Kissinger tried to make them out to be. Economically, the EEC started to rival the United States, and the members of the EEC at this point strongly seemed to favour a movement towards economic unity in Western Europe and this led to both trade and monetary interests being at stake for the Americans. There had been “a sense of rivalry in international monetary relations” and in trade “the European nations seemed to be moving toward “a closed trading system embracing the European Community and a growing number of other nations in Europe, the Mediterranean and Africa... at the expense of the United States and other nations which are excluded.””⁹⁵ This movement towards economic unity came at a bad time for the Americans. Their economy had been in relative decline for several years, and they even had to repeal the Bretton Woods system (in which dollars held a fixed value versus gold) and devalue the dollar twice. In 1973, the dollar was worth 17.9% less than it had been in December 1971, which lowered prices for American exports. The hope was that these devaluations would entice Europeans to import more from the United States, something the Americans felt was being prevented due to the somewhat mercantilist system the EEC was creating

⁹² Helmut Sonnenfeldt, *Memorandum for Mr. Kissinger*, February 21st, 1973, National Security Council files. Declassified on March 30th, 2005, no. 2149.

⁹³ Henry Kissinger to Gaston Thorn, *Memorandum of Conversation*, February 21st, 1973, National Security Council files, p. 2. Declassified on March 30th, 2005, no. 2148.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p.3.

⁹⁵ Thornton, *The Nixon-Kissinger Years*, p. 223.

for its members. The first devaluation had not been effective – even raising the United States trade deficit to \$6.8 billion dollars – and the Americans wanted to make sure the second would be effective.⁹⁶

But one of the most important points has not been yet been raised. Europe was of course a pivotal axis in the East/West divides that still split the world at this time. Security measures were one of the concerns surrounding this, but there was also the diplomatic front. Growing political confidence and regained economic strength in Western Europe had the Americans worried that the Europeans might strengthen the diplomatic ties between them and the Soviets. And this would be a problem, seeing as the United States had “no trouble dealing bilaterally with Russia,” but the European nations would not be strong enough to “deal bilaterally [with the Soviets] without having the Russians pick them off one by one.”⁹⁷ A National Intelligence Estimate from October 1972 addressed this as follows: “The Soviet leaders hope that - while maintaining their position in the East - they can wean West Europeans away from their close relations with the United States” which “would clear the way for the USSR’s emergence as the dominant power on the continent as a whole.”⁹⁸ An example of this new relationship and the American doubts it raised is the issue of West-German-Ostpolitik after Chancellor Willy Brandt came to power and the Americans feared Germany would be driven to some sort of reunification in the end.⁹⁹

All these issues were driving the United States and the Western Europeans further and further apart. The Americans tried to stop the Europeans from forming a third power bloc in a world

⁹⁶ Time Magazine, *MONEY: The Winners and Losers from Devaluation*, February 26th, 1973, consulted on: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,910593-1,00.html> (April 19th, 2011).

⁹⁷ David N. Parker, *Cabinet Meeting*, June 6th, 1973, National Security Files, p. 2. Declassified on: December 30th, 2002, no. 1760.

⁹⁸ National Intelligence Estimate, *The USSR and the Changing Scene in Europe*, October 26th, 1972, p. 1. Declassified by the CIA Historical Review Program on: January 31st, 1994, accessible on: http://www.foia.ucia.gov/docs/DOC_0000275225/DOC_0000275225.pdf.

⁹⁹ The scope of the German issue is completely outside the scope of this thesis - except for the way it affected Western European – American relations - but there is a plethora of material available on this subject. For a discussion of Ostpolitik see for example: Helga Haftendorn, ‘German Ostpolitik in a Multilateral Setting’ in: Helga Haftendorn, Georges-Henri Soutou, Stephen F. Szabo and Samuel F. Wells, Jr. (Eds.), *The Strategic Triangle: France, Germany, and the United States in the Shaping of the New Europe* (Baltimore 2007), pp. 209-227.

they preferred to be bi-polar, and a stronger relationship between the Europeans and the Soviets was something that had to be stopped at all costs. Even though the Americans claimed they supported European integration, in reality it was not in their interests. As Nixon wrote to Kissinger early in 1973: “The way the Europeans are talking today, European integration will not be in our interest, certainly not from a political viewpoint or from an economic viewpoint.” His memo ended with the warning that: “What matters now is what we do and we must act effectively and soon or we will create in Europe, a Frankenstein monster, which could prove to be highly detrimental to our interests in the years ahead.”¹⁰⁰ This is why they tried to reform the Atlantic Alliance with a new Atlantic Charter, one that would take care of all previously discussed matters – diplomatic, economic, military, etc. – and reform the Alliance that in reality only existed within NATO at that moment.

The April 23rd speech

The usual starting point for the Year of Europe initiative is the previously mentioned speech by Kissinger. On April 23rd Kissinger gave a speech at the annual meeting of the editors of the Associated Press in the Waldorf-Astoria hotel. This speech was the first official mention of the Year of Europe, and can basically be seen as the start of its failure as well. The speech was patronising, and was not well received in Europe. It is telling that in his own autobiography Kissinger starts his description of the speech with excusing himself. “In four years in the Administration as national security adviser, I had never given a formal speech on a substantive topic. The address on the “Year of Europe” was my first.”¹⁰¹ So he was not used to giving speeches, and as Alistair Horne puts it “indeed, under another administration it was the kind of speech that might have been expected from a secretary of state.”¹⁰² But one might expect that his staff would vet a speech of this calibre before it would be given, and it was the language, not the deliverance of the speech that irked most of the Europeans.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Nixon (here as: The President), *Memorandum for Dr. Henry A. Kissinger* (draft), March 10th, 1973, National Security Council files, pp. 1-2. Declassified on: September 9th, 2002, no. 0443.

¹⁰¹ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 152.

¹⁰² Alistair Horne, *Kissinger: 1973, the Crucial Year* (New York 2009), p. 108.

Indeed, the language could be seen as controversial at points and just outright strange at others. For example, in a speech concerning an initiative named the “Year of Europe,” one would not expect Japan to be included. Yet the speech calls “for comprehensive trade negotiations with Europe as well as with Japan.”¹⁰³ Kissinger himself seems to have realised the irony of this ten years later as well: “It is a tribute to the bureaucratic momentum that the joke of naming an initiative including Japan the “Year of Europe” apparently struck no one.” Only because of the fact the Japanese had no intention of joining the initiative it “did not enter the catalogue of “Nixon shocks”.”¹⁰⁴

But the worst part, according to the Europeans, was a small sentence, which set the tone of the entire speech. It talked about diplomatic relations and basically made the Europeans out for a minor power, at a point in time where European confidence was at a high. “Diplomacy is the subject of frequent consultations but is essentially being conducted by traditional nation-states. The United States has global interests and responsibilities. Our European partners have regional interests.”¹⁰⁵ And this was for most Europeans, as Alistair Horne calls it: “this was the voice of nanny speaking”¹⁰⁶. And the Europeans found this to be “preposterous.”¹⁰⁷ This shows from their reactions: George Pompidou, the French President, remarked that in France, “every year was the year of Europe.” German Chancellor Willy Brandt saw the emergence of a pattern; he thought Kissinger “wanted to ensure that there was a distinction between Europe’s independent regional responsibility and its international co-responsibility.” And lastly Heath wrote, years later, in his memoirs: “for Kissinger to announce a Year of Europe was like for me to stand on Trafalgar Square and announce that we were embarking on a year to save America!”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Henry A. Kissinger, “The Year of Europe (Adress to the Associated Press Annual Luncheon, New York, April 23, 1973) in: Henry A. Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy* (New York 1977), pp. 99-113, there p. 107.

¹⁰⁴ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁵ Kissinger, “The Year of Europe”, p. 107.

¹⁰⁶ Horne, *Kissinger*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁷ Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, p. 277.

¹⁰⁸ Edward Heath, *The Course of My Life: My Autobiography* (London 1998), p. 493.

A rocky start?

Concluding this chapter we can say that not only did the initiative have so much different reasoning behind it, that it is hard to understand how Kissinger anticipated all of this to be incorporated into one final document at the end of the year. The way he started it was also not well thought out. His speech was, after all, not only badly written and somewhat insulting towards the Europeans; it was also Kissinger himself who thought of this speech too lightly. As the next chapter will show, the Europeans were angry with Kissinger for not consulting them enough on a subject that apparently was so important to the entire Atlantic world. He himself has claimed that he did consult them and had send them drafts, but the main European criticism boiled down to the fact that these drafts were too little too late. He seemed to have missed the importance of European integration for the Europeans, and apparently had too little insight in European mind-set to understand why they felt insulted. How this played out for the rest of the initiative and the way Heath and the British handled such an initiative, which, for them, seemed to come out of nowhere will be shown in the next chapters.

Chapter 3: *The Start of the Year of Europe, from a British perspective.*

This chapter will take a look at the way the British reacted to the American initiative, and how they responded. There will be a close focus on both Heath's and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's way of handling this 'sudden' American initiative, and why it proved to be so problematic to formulate a response to the American plan. Lots of the difficulties were caused by the French, and therefore some attention will have to be devoted to them as well, to provide for a complete picture. This chapter will focus on the first few months of the initiative, the period leading to a time that could be seen as an all-time low in the trans-Atlantic relationships in this period, the next one will start at that point in time, and see how attempts were made to restore the relations.

Before April 23

The Americans, wanting to use the – in their eyes still – special relationship, had offered to work together with the British on the Year of Europe initiative even before the initiative had been launched by Kissinger's speech. At a meeting at Camp David, President Nixon told Prime Minister Heath: "We must try to recreate the wartime habit of getting together for really intimate and deep discussions in a relaxed atmosphere—discussions which range over the whole field of the problems, political, military and economic, which we faced together."¹⁰⁹ But even though Heath agreed that a new impulse was needed in the Atlantic relations, he did not want to start a new initiative unless it could be discussed and handled by European institutions, and not by bilateral discussions between America and separate European nations. Henry Kissinger would later write: "He wanted Europe *as a unit* [emphasis in original] to formulate answers to our queries; he was determined to avoid any whiff of Anglo-American collusion." Kissinger even went as far as to state: "Heath's attitude was partly obscured because his Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, and his colleagues ... did their

¹⁰⁹ As quoted in: Thomas Robb, 'Henry Kissinger, Great Britain and the 'Year of Europe': The 'Tangled Skein', *Contemporary British History*, 24: 3 (2010), 297 — 318, there p. 299.

efficient best to hide their Prime-Minister's foot-dragging."¹¹⁰ Apparently the staff of the FCO and Secretary Douglas-Home himself had given the Americans the impression that the British would be willing to cooperate on a bilateral level. Whether this had been a misunderstanding or if the FCO had been less loyal towards Heath than generally thought, "British policy, as articulated to the United States, ran contrary to the Prime Minister's wishes."¹¹¹ Officially, however, the FCO complimented the Prime Minister of his handling of the question: "If I may say so, with all respect, I thought that the Prime Minister was wise to handle this aspect of our relationship in the way that he did. He made it clear that, whilst we would continue in the future as in the past to take account of American views in deciding our own contribution to the foreign relations of the Community, we would, none the less, be bound by such policies as the Community decided upon."¹¹² Heath in his memoirs does not mention the substance of the meetings themselves at all; his recollection of this meeting seems to contain more memories of the surroundings of Camp David than the meetings themselves. Apparently he considers –and probably considered - these meetings of less importance than the Americans do.¹¹³ It might be noted that even though some historians claim that for the Americans the Year of Europe at this stage was nothing more than a "cynical public relations ploy"¹¹⁴, that this quickly changed, and that Europe became an explicit priority within weeks.

Heath also writes in his memoirs that it was an affront by Kissinger to start of the Year of Europe, without even notifying the British. He seems to have forgotten that the British had been notified, by Kissinger himself, in a meeting with the British Cabinet Secretary Burke Trend.¹¹⁵ Not only

¹¹⁰ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p.143.

¹¹¹ Robb, 'The 'tangled' Skein', p. 300.

¹¹² AMU 3/548/8, 'Comments on the Official Visit to Washington of the Prime Minister', 22 February 1973, *Documents on British Foreign Policy Overseas, Series III, Volume IV, The Year of Europe: America, Europe and the Energy Crisis 1972-1974* (Hereafter DBFPO).

¹¹³ Heath, *Course of my Life*, p. 492.

¹¹⁴ Hynes, *The Year That Never Was*, p. 100.

¹¹⁵ CAB 164/1233, 'Record of meeting: Trend/Kissinger', 19 April 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

had the British been notified, the French, Italians and Western Germans were all supposedly informed about the language of the speech as well.¹¹⁶

British reactions to the speech.

Usually, the one quote that is used to illustrate Heath's reaction to the Year of Europe initiative is the previously quoted remark about standing amongst the lions at Trafalgar square and announcing a year to save America. Even though this is from his memoirs and was thus written years later, it is still seen by many as the one quote that exemplifies Heath's – and in some way, Europe's- response to Kissinger's year of Europe. In the same passage Heath mentions his enquiring of Kissinger on their next meeting "whether he really thought it was the responsibility of the Americans to organise a Year of Europe."¹¹⁷ But there had to be an official reply. The first official response by the British government came from Douglas-Home, in a speech given on April 27th, in which he responded to Kissinger's initiative in very general and broad terms "welcoming the confirmation that the United States Government would keep its security commitments to the allies." But he also lessened American expectations by saying that "it is a mistake to ascribe too much uniformity to these problems or to hope to solve them in a single negotiation."¹¹⁸ Here one of the crucial differences between American expectations and European wishes for the Year of Europe already shows: the Europeans saw the Atlantic Alliance first and foremost as one of security, while the Americans now tried linking it to other issues as well. In a minute by Secretary Trend to Heath written days after that, he reinforced the "dangers of making explicit responses," while they had to "respond... in as positive and constructive a manner as possible while safeguarding [their] own interests to the maximum extent." He foresaw problems between Kissinger's plan – which called for "some kind of high-level

¹¹⁶ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, pp. 147-150.

¹¹⁷ Heath, *Course of My Life*, p. 493,

¹¹⁸ CAB 164/1233, 'Extract from a speech made by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary at Dunblane on 27th April 1973', 27 April 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

steering committee - and already existing institutions, not only the EC, but also NATO, GATT etc.”¹¹⁹ Prime Minister Heath would later respond to this, agreeing with this notion of a response that would not pass beyond generalities, and wanted the briefs for Kissinger’s visit early in May to be drawn “on the basis of this approach.”¹²⁰

This seemed to be against Kissinger’s wishes, who apparently wanted to ‘fix’ the Atlantic Relationship himself, and therefore wanted it done in a very quick manner. The cause of this rush, even if Watergate hadn’t forced Nixon to resign, was that at this point there was only 3 years left of his second term in office. Kissinger had a kind of urgency to start the plans, an urgency which the Europeans, trying to fix their own institutions before even attempting to realise new ones, lacked.

And due to the vague wording in Kissinger’s speech, the British weren’t that sure what Kissinger actually intended for the initiative. Because his speech referenced a new ‘Atlantic Charter’ the British did research into the old one, and realised that the previous charter was so vaguely worded, that for a new Atlantic Charter it “should not be too difficult to produce a new form of words.” In a memo from a member of the Western Organisations Department, Crispin Tickell, they even went as far as to wonder if Kissinger himself actually knew what the Atlantic Charter originally entailed, and if he was aware that the Soviet Union was a signatory of this Charter. This memo might have crossed the Prime Ministers eyes - it was copied to his private secretary - but no matter what, it’s an interesting insight in the early responses within the British government to Kissinger’s initiative.¹²¹ The question of the reply remained tricky, since Heath felt that the response should come from the EC, but even then the question remained: which part of the EC? The Commission didn’t seem to have the political weight to deal with a question of this importance, but probably should be included in the process, and then would have to cooperate with the Council of Ministers. There was little precedent for this; normally both the Council and the Commission had their own

¹¹⁹ Douglas-Home papers, ‘Minute: Trend to Heath’, 2 May 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹²⁰ CAB 164/1233, ‘Letter: Bridges to Norbury’, 3 May 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹²¹ MWE 3/304/1, ‘Minute: Tickell to Wiggin’, 4 May 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

capacities. And here the French were dragging their heels: even though the Council of Ministers would meet on the 14th and 15th of May, they refused to form a common position amongst the Nine, before President Pompidou had met with Prime Minister Heath a week later and with President Nixon at the end of the month. In a memo written early in May, the British even wondered whether the French would be willing to discuss EC/United States negotiations or even have talks at the Council of Ministers meeting after that, on June 5th. And this was upsetting the British, who found that “to fail to produce a collective and constructive response after six weeks would surely have a bad effect in the United States.”¹²² This same memo also includes certain procedural ‘tricks’ the British might have to employ to get past French objections against the inclusion of the Commission in the process. This does show the stance the British had on these negotiations; they wanted the EC to be included on every level, and make sure there was no chance of anyone suspecting closer relations between America and Great Britain than that there were between Britain and the continent.

Trying to create a common response

Before Heath met with Pompidou, Kissinger had met Jobert in Paris, where Kissinger proposed a four-power steering group, which “would keep things on the rails until President Nixon’s visit to Europe.”¹²³ This was included in the preparation papers Heath got for his meeting with President Pompidou, in which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office tried to convince Heath that getting the French on board for a reinvigorated Atlantic Alliance would be the right thing to do. But Heath’s opinion differed from the one that his Foreign and Commonwealth Office held and he mentioned to Pompidou what unfortunate timing Kissinger’s speech had, and also how he felt that the Americans attempts to discuss policies in new ‘steering-groups’, even though there were appropriate forums for these topics – defence in NATO, trade in GATT etc. -, was at times “a dangerous approach.”¹²⁴ So the

¹²² MWE 3/304/1, ‘Minute: Robinson to J O Wright’, 7 May 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹²³ PREM 15/1554, ‘Paris tel 691’, 18 May 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹²⁴ Hynes, *The Year That Never Was*, p. 125.

French were not cooperating or in any way forthcoming on creating a common response, and Kissinger was growing “increasingly perplexed” by the lack of response.¹²⁵

But there were of course other powers in Europe. The fourth of the four powers in the high-level meetings proposed by Kissinger were the Western Germans led by Chancellor Willy Brandt. In a meeting with Brandt Heath again followed the same line he had taken with the French, he emphasised the need for a strong relationship between the United States and Europe, but also didn't consider Kissinger's approach to politics, where everything needed to be considered together, the right path to go on. His behaviour and speech is described by Catherine Hynes as “such as calculated mix of praise and criticism seemed guaranteed to provoke maximum confusion and misunderstanding.” Apparently Heath considered a slow, well thought out response to be better than a fast one, even if this could offend the Americans. It's also plausible that the way he refuses to play a leading role in the creation of a common European response was yet another way of him trying to ensure that they were 'good' Europeans and were not just pawns of the Americans. But later it would show that the British would have to play this role in the process, since the French were not cooperative in the least, and the Germans seemed to be fine with a position on the side-line, while focussing on other issues such as Brandt's Ostpolitik. The other powers were of such minor importance in these discussions that they were just expected to go along with whatever the big four came up with.

Meetings in Reykjavik

At the end of May, the long waited talks between Pompidou and Nixon would take place, at a summit in Reykjavik. Neither of these men was really in the right mind set at that time. Nixon was obviously preoccupied by the Watergate affair, and Pompidou was fighting a losing battle against cancer, his leukaemia had just entered the final stages. Before these meetings, no one really knew

¹²⁵ PREM 15/1555, 'Extract from record of conversation: Heath/Pompidou', DBFPO:III:IV; CAB 134/3625, 'Extract from minute of the Cabinet European Unit, EEU(73) 12th mtg', 23 May 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

what the French position on the negotiations would be. Just a week before the summit on a political directors meeting in the EEC, the United States/EEC relations were discussed. After this dinner, the British delegate reported back that the dinner was “unsatisfactory,” since the French delegate Puaux had the “most restrictive brief imaginable,” his instructions were “the purest Gaullism” and even Puaux himself was surprised by them. This obviously did not bode well for the things the French would say during the Reykjavik summit.¹²⁶ Heath had informed the Americans about the French perspective and their earlier meeting, and as before, Heath’s stance was vague and did not commit to anything, the closest he got to forming a view on the French position was “you will find him [Pompidou] genuinely anxious for a constructive outcome but reluctant to be pinned down just yet on any precise forum.”¹²⁷ This was angering the Americans since Heath apparently refused to give them a more comprehensive account of what had been discussed. This vagueness makes clear that Heath planned on taking the back seat on these meetings, and let the French make up their minds about the initiative first, if not outright run the entire meetings. And this was exactly how it appeared to the Americans as well, Kissinger describes Heath’s stance as “the pose of a painted bystander at an incipient family quarrel.”¹²⁸

At first, the meetings seemed to be making progress and were to the liking of the Americans. On June 4th Douglas-Home summarised the American feelings on the initiative as follows: “the meetings between Presidents Nixon and Pompidou were successful and marked throughout by a spirit of cooperation and friendship.”¹²⁹ And indeed, after some minor hiccups, the French, or at least President Pompidou, and the Americans seemed to agree on the way in which the Year of Europe initiative should be carried out: through a working group which contained representatives of the big four, Germany, Britain, France and the United States. This was the same plan that Kissinger had proposed to Jobert earlier that month. But it now also included multi-lateral discussion in NATO and

¹²⁶ MWE 3/304/1, ‘UKREP Brussels tel 2780’, 25 May 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹²⁷ PREM 15/1554, ‘Tel 1149 to Washington’, 29 May 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹²⁸ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 171.

¹²⁹ MWE 3/304/1, ‘Tel 52 to Luxembourg’, 4 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

in other already established forums, even when it was seen as a part of the Year of Europe. However, after the meetings concluded the French were adamant they never agreed to such plans. Kissinger in his biography suggests that it is Jobert who talked Pompidou out of the plan after the meeting, and the French now suggested they would only agree to bi-lateral talks between the United States and each of the three European powers separately, and that no high level group would or could be established. These bi-lateral discussions, according to the French, would only discuss the possibility of a joint “Declaration of principles” – which was the new name of the Atlantic Declaration, because the old name had stirred up some problems in Germany since that was of course the one country the original Atlantic Charter was aimed at - and actual discussion on the economy, trade and military issues would have to be discussed within their appropriate already existing forums. Both parties tried their best to convince the British that their account of the meetings was the right one, both in quite blunt terms. The Americans called remarks made by the French in their press briefings “nonsense”¹³⁰, the French made it clear there had been no “meeting of the minds”¹³¹. The Americans did ask the British to take the lead on drafting a declaration, an issue that the British then skilfully avoided by asking the Americans how they thought the French would respond to such action. They still stood by their position that it should be organised by Europe, not a single country.¹³²

From quasi blackmail...

It was getting clearer and clearer that the one threat Kissinger kept repeating in these negotiations, the threat that Congress would call back troops from Europe unless negotiations for a new Atlantic Charter got underway and the interest for Europe was renewed in the United States, was getting emptier and emptier. Kissinger himself warned the British for this “quasi blackmail” that would spell “the beginning of the end of the Alliance,” but the British got their own analysis of internal United

¹³⁰ CAB 164/1233, ‘Record of meeting: Trend/Kissinger’, 4 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹³¹ Hynes, *The Year that Never Was*, p. 130.

¹³² CAB 164/1233, ‘Record of meeting: Trend/Kissinger’, 4 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

States politics that said there had been “little visible activity.”¹³³ Congress, however, did get annoyed by the Administration’s lack of progress, which is why the Americans seemed to schedule so many “meetings, visits, charters...” to keep congressional encroachment at bay.¹³⁴

During this period, Heath got increasingly annoyed with the lack of progress as well, and was wondering whether or not to let the initiative be, since most issues were already being discussed in other forums. The plan he came up with was that there would have to be multiple declarations, all of them covering one of the areas that together would offer ‘insuperable problems’.¹³⁵ The French had apparently agreed to produce a draft declaration¹³⁶, and the Americans were preparing a draft version as well. Later on, the French would deny that they had agreed to the drafting of any text.¹³⁷ The Americans did get to work with the draft though, and on the 14th of June, the British ambassador in Washington received – in secret- the list of proposed headings for the declaration draft. “It would be prudent,” he would write, “not to volunteer to Secretary Rodgers or to the United States Embassy in London that we have received this text. Nor of course should we discuss it with our European partners.”¹³⁸ However, Kissinger himself subsequently sent a message saying that he would have no problems with the British discussing these headings with the French.¹³⁹ This American draft still contained headings for both “Security and defense” and for “economic relationships.”¹⁴⁰

Nevertheless, Heath still had misgivings about the entire initiative. The way Kissinger had handled the announcement was rude, and based on a world vision that no longer existed. For monetary, economic and trade matters, Europe was now united in the EC, which meant that the

¹³³ MWE 3/304/1, ‘Minute: J O Wright to Greenhill’, 7 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV; Hynes, *The Year that Never Was*, . 130.

¹³⁴ Douglas-Home papers, ‘Washington tel 1821’, 11 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹³⁵ MWE 3/304/1, ‘Minute: Douglas-Home to Heath’, 18 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹³⁶ CAB 164/1233, ‘Washington tel 1816’, 10 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹³⁷ Keith Hamilton, ‘Britain, France and America’s Year of Europe’, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 17(2006), pp. 871-895, there: p. 880.

¹³⁸ CAB 164/1233, ‘Washington tel 1859’, 14 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹³⁹ CAB 164/1234, ‘Minute: Trend to Heath’, 19 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁴⁰ CAB 164/1233, ‘Washington tel 1860’, 14 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

Kennedy concept of the “twin pillars”¹⁴¹ was a reality. The only thing the old Atlantic Alliance still consisted of was for security matters, the one thing that had not been integrated into the EC. And this was where Heath’s plan of two declarations came in. One had to be formed in the EC and would cover areas the EC also incorporated; the other would come from NATO. This would prevent the problems that would arise from negotiating say economic and security interests in the same forum, where EC countries might have to “put their interests at the disposition of non-Community Europeans such as Iceland and Greece.”¹⁴² This attitude was also the stance Heath took during a Cabinet meeting he chaired on the 20th of June, a meeting that mainly revolved around the Year of Europe initiative and how to handle it. In this meeting Heath suggested that the main difficulties in the initiative lied with the Americans, who “were finding it difficult to adjust themselves to their loss of pre-eminence in military, economic and monetary affairs.” The Europeans, on their part, had found the timing of and the way the announcement of the initiative was made unacceptable, especially the lack of consultation from the Americans. The fact that it was started just a few months after the EC enlargement did not make the possibility of a unified response or approach any easier. The meeting ended with a conclusion by the Prime Minister, in which he reaffirmed his belief that a single declaration would turn out to be impossible, and that one draft would have to come from NATO, and the other should come from the Nine. This latter declaration might prove to be difficult to outline due to the French continually dragging their heels, but in discussion during the meeting it was suggested that a tougher line with the French might prove in the British interest, and might be welcomed by the rest of the nine.¹⁴³

However, in a meeting with Jobert early in July, the Frenchman remarked that he was not sure whether the French “wanted a document or documents.” He observed that there might not be a need for a European paper to be drafted; Europe just had to answer to the American paper. The

¹⁴¹ Kennedy’s twin pillar (or dumbbell) idea was the idea of a partnership between Europe and America, in which both sides were seen as equal. One could easily claim that at this point in time this was the case for every area except the military one.

¹⁴² AMU 3/507/1, ‘Letter: R T Armstrong to Acland’, 19 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁴³ CAB 130/671, ‘Cabinet Minutes, GEN 161(73) 3rd mtg’, 20 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

discussion seemed to be undertaken in a friendly matter, there was just a massive gap between the way the French and the British approached the principle of a declaration. The French wanted to keep the powers of the EC in very distinct separate spheres, where the Commission should not be included in discussions undertaken by the Council of Ministers. Jobert was ready to meet with the Council of Ministers as much as they needed during the summer, but he was not ready to discuss them with the Commission. Even though meeting in Brussels would be much more convenient, Jobert's instructions were "only to attend such a meeting if it was held in the capital of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers."¹⁴⁴ The proposed hard-line with the French was not taken in this meeting, and neither Heath nor Douglas-Home managed to get Jobert to concede anything. However, the French government themselves had reached the conclusion that the European Institutions should be involved as well, if only as a test. In a memo quoted by Marloes C. Beers they agree to let the political institutions of the EC take part in the negotiations to "test the intention of our partners to take common positions that are truly European." This illustrates the French position well: they did not mind the American efforts for a renewed Atlantic Alliance, but their first and foremost objective was that the response from the European side would be united, especially on Community matters. This was also why they were so adamant that the declaration would be split into two or more declarations, so that there would be a declaration that could come directly from the Community, without having to deal with, for example, security issues, which was not a Community matter.¹⁴⁵

Negotiations seemed to have reached a halt, little to no real progress was achieved, and the parties could barely figure out what format the response would be in. As Kissinger would later describe it, the Year of Europe was turning into a "wrestling match."¹⁴⁶ But there was no way the Europeans would be able to just ignore the initiative, without deeply offending the Americans.

¹⁴⁴ MWE 3/304/1, 'Record of conversation: Jobert, Heath and Douglas-Home at 10 Downing Street', 2 July 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁴⁵ Marloes C. Beers, 'European Unity and the Transatlantic Gulf in 1973', in: Giles Scott-Smith and Valerie Aubourg (eds.), *Atlantic, Euratlantic, or Europe-America: The Atlantic Community and the European Idea from Kennedy to Nixon* (Paris 2011), pp. 486-505, there pp. 492-493.

¹⁴⁶ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 174.

Therefore when Heath messaged Nixon early in July, he tried to strike a positive tone: the initiative, according to Heath, would “reinforce [their] cohesion and common strength.”¹⁴⁷ This was an obvious echoing of Nixon’s own words when he informed Heath on the results of his (Nixon’s) talks with Brezhnev, where he asserted that the handling of the East-West issue should be mostly undertaken from a common position amongst the Western allies. There “should be no illusion in Moscow that a competition for Soviet favours is developing amongst Western countries.”¹⁴⁸

Around that same date¹⁴⁹, Kissinger, anxious to move things along, mailed copies of the two American draft declarations to both the Germans and the British. The French had already received theirs a few days before that, which in turn piqued the British, who felt “discriminated against.”¹⁵⁰ And besides this, the British were not impressed by the language of the drafts in any way. The wording in both drafts – one written by the American State department, one written by Kissinger’s own NSC – was seen as “clumsy and inelegant”; the NSC draft was also regarded as just outright “bad.” Neither one offered any advantage for the British, but the NSC one in particular was seen as hurtful for the British interests. Both still tried to contain the entire declaration in one draft and not in two, as Heath had intended.¹⁵¹

... to an all-time low.

Both Kissinger and the British hoped that the next meeting of the nine Foreign Ministers, on July 23rd, would end this impasse. The British had continued writing their draft in the meanwhile, and hoped to put it forward during this meeting. But progress was still slow and very little, if anything was achieved. Heath later tried to give a positive spin to the whole ordeal in a message to Nixon by

¹⁴⁷ AMU 18/1, ‘Tel 1392 to Washington’, 5 July 1973 (message originally sent 3 July 1973), DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁴⁸ AMU 18/1, ‘Washington tel 1322’, 25 June 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁴⁹ Kissinger in his memoirs claims the drafts had been sent to the British on July 8th, however from British sources it’s clear that they already had them on July 2nd, when one member of the British government passed them on to another. See Catherine Hynes, *The Year that Never Was*, p. 148.

¹⁵⁰ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 187.

¹⁵¹ CAB 164/1233, ‘Letter: Greenhill to Trend’, 6 July 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

blaming the lack of progress on the brevity of the meeting, “but some progress was made and I think you can be reasonably confident that we shall be able to give you further good news after the next ministerial meeting on 10/11 September.” This would, of course, be nearly half a year after the original announcement by Kissinger. The only thing the Nine managed to agree on was that they would be ready to receive Nixon if he would come to Europe in the autumn. Heath in this message again emphasises the need for more than one declaration, but also stresses that the French have been playing out the smaller countries against the British, who had not kept their allies up to date on their bi-lateral talks with the Americans. He seemed to be referencing to the two draft declarations the British had received from the Americans, two draft declarations which he himself had received as well, even before the British had. The nine ministers now had decided that all information obtained bi-laterally with the United States would be shared amongst all of them, to “harmonise their reactions.”¹⁵²

The tone in which this was written, and the obvious lack of progress which Heath seemed to try and sugar-coat, elicited an “unusually cool”¹⁵³ response from Nixon. Nixon found the debates “disturbing,” the way the French exploited the bi-lateral meetings “puzzling,” especially since they were the first ones to suggest bi-lateral talks and he was now openly wondering if his planned visit to Europe would not have a “highly negative effect.” Also “it [was] hard to understand the refusal of our allies to discuss the substance of our mutual relationships after three months of strenuous efforts on our part to elicit their views,” which referenced the new British policy of trying to form a response amongst the Nine without keeping the Americans informed.¹⁵⁴ Kissinger was angry about this as well, which he expressed in a meeting a week later: “It was a new development in United States relations with Britain. Never before had there been a failure at the beginning of a major negotiation to keep each other informed of their thinking.” He even went as far as to declare the “Year of Europe over,” because he doubted a group “which could not agree on procedure, could possibly agree on a

¹⁵² AMU 18/1, ‘Tel 1548 to Washington’, 26 July 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁵³ Hynes, *The Year that Never Was*, p. 159.

¹⁵⁴ RS 2/3, ‘Tel 1567 to Washington’, 27 July 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

declaration which would have to be co-ordinated with NATO and fully worked out before 15 November.” Later on in the discussions, Kissinger summed up the big differences between the European point of view and the American: for Kissinger, the Atlantic Alliance and its place in the world took precedence over everything: “A declaration of Atlantic Unity should have preceded work on the political unity of the Nine. The Nine have reversed the order.”¹⁵⁵

For Heath this all-time low came at the worst possible moment. Early in August, he was in a conference with the heads of the Commonwealth nations, which diverted his attention away from the troubles in the Atlantic relationship. He still found time to message Nixon voicing his concerns that “we may allow misunderstandings to grow to a point where we lose sight of what is I believe our common objective: that of reaffirming the purposes and vitality of the Atlantic relationship.”¹⁵⁶ On the same day Heath also messaged Chancellor Brandt and President Pompidou, in which he stated that even though Kissinger’s plan had started off with an uninformed approach and inadequate preparation, he (Kissinger) would still blame the Europeans if the visit of President Nixon got cancelled because of a lack of European response to the Year of Europe. Therefore Heath suggested that the three of them would meet informally, to “examine what action Europe should now take.” This might lead to dissatisfaction amongst the other six members of the Nine, but to them it should be made clear that “such a meeting was not to take final decisions but to exchange views prior to the meeting of the Nine.”¹⁵⁷ Brandt agreed with this position, but only if the French would as well.¹⁵⁸ Pompidou replied evasively, claiming he was not sure that a meeting of the three principal European powers would be interpreted well.¹⁵⁹

Conclusion

¹⁵⁵ RS 2/3, ‘Record of meeting: Kissinger/Trend’, 30 July 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁵⁶ MWE 3/304/1, ‘Ottawa tel 27 to Washington’, 3 August 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁵⁷ MWE 3/304/1, ‘Ottawa tel 3 to Paris’, 3 August 1973, DBFPO:III:IV; MWE 3/304/1, ‘Ottawa tel 4 to Paris’, 3 August 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁵⁸ MWE 3/304/1, ‘Tel 531 to Ottawa’, 8 August 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁵⁹ MWE 3/304/1, ‘Paris tel 4 to Ottawa’, 8 August 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

At this point in time, it seems that the Year of Europe had reached an all-time low. Spirits on both sides of the Atlantic were glum, and there were very few people who believed that the initiative could still achieve the things Henry Kissinger had set out to do from the beginning. There were many misgivings about the entire ordeal on both sides; the Europeans feeling offended by the Americans because to them Kissinger seems to have surprised them with his plans. Most of all they were offended by his lack of consultations, which led to a uniformed and a not very thoroughly prepared initiative. Here there is a little difference of opinion between both parties as well. The Americans felt they had done enough to prepare the Europeans for the initiative, giving them draft versions of the speech before it was given. But the Europeans felt that for such a big initiative more should have been done. They should've been consulted before the speech was given, they should've been asked for their opinion. The Americans, on the other hand, were getting angrier by the day with the lack of progress the Europeans were making in the drafting of a response, and by now they were openly wondering if the Europeans were not doing it on purpose and if the Europeans actually even wanted a renewed and reinvigorated Atlantic relationship.

The British seemed to have been caught in the middle of all this, as they had usually been closer to the Americans than to the continent, but by now were redefining these relationships. Within the British government, there were different views as well. Heath was terrified of appearing too close to the Americans, which is why he did barely anything without consulting the French at first. Later on, when he started to realise that the French would continue their reluctance to participate unless everyone gave in to their semi-Gaullist demands, he became more pro-active and tried to salvage the initiative. Even though the French were at times outright hostile towards the initiative and seemed to lack any aspirations to work with the Americans on it, Heath did try and make the most of the initiative. Although he did not agree with Kissinger's world vision, he did seem to concur with the idea that Europe was still dependent on America for its defence and he therefore did not want to lose their support. He tried to steer the initiative away from Community matters, or at least wanted that separate from the defence part, especially since the countries of NATO - , in

which France had a much smaller role - could handle that. His own Foreign and Commonwealth office had been trying to work with the Americans since the beginning, since Alec Douglas-Home was much more eager to join them and that shows in the difference in tone with which both men talked to the Americans. Heath was much more standoffish and tried to demonstrate to the outside world that the British were good Europeans, while the language of Douglas-Home fits in with the old tradition of the "special relationship." The next chapter will show what happened with the initiative from this low point in trans-Atlantic relationships, and how Heath managed to please both the Europeans and the Americans, if he actually managed that.

Chapter 4: *Did the year of Europe recover from its lowpoint?*

Kissinger becomes Secretary of State

The later it was during the year, the more trouble the developments in the Watergate scandal got Nixon into. The only person in his administration that seemed relatively unscathed by the entire ordeal was Henry Kissinger. Kissinger's support for the President became of growing importance, which eventually would lead to him getting a more public and prestigious function, that of Secretary of State. Nixon did not want to give this function to Kissinger, but as Nixon would later recall: "Henry wanted State, felt he deserved it, and let me know that he would resign if he didn't get it."¹⁶⁰

Starting in August

While Heath was away in Ottawa, Douglas-Home ordered the FCO to draft a document which related "the identity of the Nine vis a vis the United States." This document shows the fundamental differences in the ideas the Nine and the Americans had for the declarations. The Americans looked for concrete plans in the widest possible scope; they wanted the Year of Europe to bring forth a big Agreement, of the grand scale and importance of the old Atlantic Charter. "The Americans regard the Year of Europe as a year which should not end without a transatlantic agreement at least as dramatic and substantial as those the Americans have already secured with China and the Soviet Union." The Nine, on the other hand, envisioned the Year to be the start of "a long process" in trans-Atlantic negotiations.¹⁶¹

After returning to London, Heath tried to convince Nixon that the next meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Nine would provide ample progress towards an actual declaration, so that Nixon would be able to come to Europe, without it looking like he was going to a hostile

¹⁶⁰ As quoted in: Hynes, *The Year That Never Was*, p. 174.

¹⁶¹ MWE 3/304/1, 'FCO paper', Undated (written before August 15th), DBFPO:III:IV.

environment, as Nixon now feared. Instead it would look like a tour of his greatest allies. But Nixon's latest message had disturbed Heath, and he had grown uneasy by the American position which seemed to be outright antagonistic by now. There was no question of the two countries becoming "adversaries" but Nixon needed to understand that "Europe was struggling to achieve a new identity" and that this was a "slow business." The second Copenhagen meeting on 10-11 September, however, "may prove to be a new point of departure from which discussions on the relations between the United States and Europe will be given fresh impetus and carried forward with greater purpose and conviction."¹⁶² Nixon replied very briefly and also very distant, it looked like he didn't fully believe anything would happen, so it looked like he would wait until he could review the outcome of the meeting in Copenhagen before committing to anything.¹⁶³

Heath had good reason to believe that the Copenhagen meeting would deliver on its promises though. Late in August he had had a meeting with Jobert, during which the Frenchman gave his support for the British draft declaration. There had been Italian remarks that the draft should've gone further to meet the American wishes, but the French felt it went far enough. There were some doubts about the German position though, and both Jobert and Heath agreed that it was of vital importance that the Germans were locked "into the European Community and the developing European entity." Also because of some worries by other governments, such as the previously mentioned Italian comments, as well as apprehension by the Dutch, the draft would be presented as a British draft instead of a European one.¹⁶⁴ But to Heath it seemed they were moving in the right direction and this meeting seemed to confirm his ideas. A sceptic might think that the way the French did not want to put their own name under the draft was a way in which they could later publicly deny knowledge of it, attack the draft and so win even more time, but Heath did not seem to think this was the case. Heath's position was later reinforced by comments from Jobert in which he claimed there would be an eighty per cent chance that the next Copenhagen meeting would deliver a

¹⁶² AMU 18/1, 'Letter: Bridges to Alexander', 4 September 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁶³ AMU 18/1, 'Nixon tel to Heath', 9 September 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁶⁴ MWE 3/304/1, 'Tel 640 to Paris', 27 August 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

common Community position.¹⁶⁵ The doubts about the German position were quickly dissolved as well, since after French pressure on the German Secretary of State he suggested to his government “that West Germany no longer expose itself to the controversies over European-United States relations, but let the French and British have their way.” This made way for smoother internal negotiations, with the one big power in Europe that was the most supportive of the close link between Europe and the United States having taken itself out of the equation.¹⁶⁶

And indeed, the meeting of the Foreign Ministers in September did prove to be fruitful and constructive. Douglas-Home messaged Heath immediately after, saying that the meeting had been “very satisfactory,” and that even the Commission President, François-Xavier Ortoli, had been included in the meeting, with French consent. Ortoli had understandably been a bit sore about the short notice and previous exclusions, but Douglas-Home thought that there was ground for future community participation in the negotiations.¹⁶⁷ The meeting decided that a draft would have to be completed next week, on the 17th of September. This draft would include paragraphs on community matters written by the permanent representatives in Brussels, which seems to be a step forward in community participation as well. Of course the permanent representatives are in Brussels to defend their respective national interests, but they were full-time European officials, which seemed to be a step towards a more European draft, compared to the purely national-interest based negotiations in the Council of Ministers. This meeting also decided that a paper dealing with the European identity would have to be written before Nixon’s visit. All in all it seems that this was the first actually constructive meeting the Europeans had had on the topic, even though the Danish chair Andersen was “his usual inept, if genial, self.”¹⁶⁸

The Americans on the other hand, were still much upset at the way these negotiations were being dealt with. When asked their reaction to the Copenhagen meetings, Kenneth Rush, the acting

¹⁶⁵ AMU 3/507/1, ‘Paris tel 1149’, 4 September 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁶⁶ Möckli, “Asserting Europe’s Distinct Identity”, pp. 206-207

¹⁶⁷ AMU 3/507/1, ‘Copenhagen tel 335’, 11 September 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁶⁸ AMU 3/507/1, ‘Copenhagen tel 339’, 11 September 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

secretary of state – this was days before Kissinger’s official initiation -, responded quite harshly. He resented the way the Europeans now acted as a bloc, Nixon had intended for the meetings to be “a series of bilateral discussions with old friends,” but the Europeans were now ganging up on them and putting forward a paper without consultations with the Americans. The British retorted that it would “be wholly unreasonable on the part of the Americans to expect to be in on the deliberations of a club of which they were not members.” But this meeting did make the British realise they were not just “dealing with Kissinger tantrums” but that there was a bigger misunderstanding in American politics of European plans and aims.¹⁶⁹ And days later Kissinger himself restated the American misapprehensions with the European reaction: they had troubles understanding what the common position would be about, what actual power the President of the Commission for example had, and why they could no longer hold discussions with their closest allies. Discussions through NATO had been fruitful but the Americans said the wire with the Community “just went dead.”¹⁷⁰

The next day, Andersen presented Kissinger with the European draft declaration. The meeting only contributed to American pains about the entire process, since Andersen was in no way authorized to conduct negotiations on his own; he was only allowed to take note of American comments and then take them back to the Nine.¹⁷¹ In their amended version of the draft, which was submitted to the Europeans only a couple of days later, the Americans emphasised the “mutually interdependent relations” in all key areas with which the Declaration would be concerned, such as economy but most importantly security and the relation to the USSR. All in all the American amended declaration was of a much wider scope than the European version. To illustrate the differences, the American version was over 30% longer than the European draft and seemed to change much European language that could be seen as vague (things as “they attach importance”) to much stronger and clearer language (“they agree to”). Overall the American language seemed to be

¹⁶⁹ AMU 3/507/1, ‘Washington tel 2920’, 19 September 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁷⁰ AMU 3/548/15, ‘Draft record of conversation: Douglas-Home/Kissinger, New York’, 24 september 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁷¹ AMU 3/507/1, ‘UKMIS New York tel 961’, 25 September 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

much more binding, with clear agreements on key areas, instead of the European draft which was much more theoretical.¹⁷² In their own notes on the amendments, the Americans recorded that they want to make the partnership between the Nine and the United States explicit, instead of the European idea of “equilibrium.” They really wanted to drive home their idea of a mutually interdependent relationship between the United States and Europe, in “all spheres.”¹⁷³ This last point especially would be hard to get into the final text: it was not thought the French would ever agree to such wording. Formal partnership with the Americans would, according to them, detract from European independence. Much discussion would have to go into the text before a final version could be agreed on.¹⁷⁴ This discussion was planned to take place in New York in a meeting of representatives of the Nine with the United States, on October 18th and 19th.

However, by now the question was already arising of when the declaration could be signed and by whom. The Americans wanted a NATO summit, but the French did not agree on a meeting of heads of government. Kissinger responded that it would be an affront for Nixon to meet with foreign ministers, who were below his level. A solution was found by the British government: what if they delayed the Nixon visit to April, when the 25th anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty would be celebrated. This also fell neatly in the Year of Europe, if they took the April 23rd speech as a starting point. This was also suggested by Heath to Brandt in a meeting early in October. But just days later, things changed. All preparation would be negated by events in the Middle-East, which completely altered Kissinger’s schedule and therefore the negotiations on the declarations.

The Yom-Kippur War

The Middle-East had long before the Year of Europe been an area on which the Americans and Europeans disagreed, and it was this area “which provoked the most serious falling out between the

¹⁷² MWE 3/304/6, ‘UKMIS New York tel 1019’, 29 September 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁷³ MWE 3/304/6, ‘UKMIS New York tel 1020’, 29 September 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁷⁴ AMU 3/507/1, ‘Tel 1196 to UKREP Brussels’, 3 October 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

United States and Europe.”¹⁷⁵ The Americans had already been on the Israeli side, while the Europeans, including Heath, took a more balanced approach and saw that both parties were in the wrong. Early in 1973, when tensions were on the rise in the Middle East, Heath received complaints from the Board of Deputies of the British Jews that he and his government were taking the Arab side. He would deny this but he also claimed that Israel was losing public sympathy by acting the way it did.¹⁷⁶

When the war broke out, it came as a surprise to most of the world. Most European countries were, in contrast to the Americans, not directly involved. The Americans had such close relations with the Israelis that there was no doubt of their support, but this was dangerous terrain since American involvement in the conflict might get the Soviets involved as well. Therefore the Americans had to discuss, privately, with the Soviets what would happen. This was of course an affront to their NATO partners, further souring relations. The European partners were not helping to sustain the United States-European relationship either. Not only did the Heath government refuse to put forward a cease-fire resolution in the UN security council¹⁷⁷, they, just as most of the other European NATO-members, refused the United States the use of its air bases and airspace. These problems and differences in expectations led to major difficulties in the Anglo-American relationship. Not only did the American-Israeli relationship eclipse that of the old ‘special’-relationship, but also because for Kissinger – who basically ran the show on the foreign policy front by now – this entire period had been a question of loyalty. However, the Americans and British realised that they both still needed each other. The British were still the Americans’ closest ally in Europe and for the British the threat of the Cold War still loomed over the world too much to let the relationship degrade even further. The United States did consider ‘punishing’ the British for their behaviour, but they in the end decided that there was too big a risk for them to be seen as overreacting. This was also the analysis

¹⁷⁵ Ziegler, *Heath*, p. 382.

¹⁷⁶ As quoted in: Ziegler, *Heath*, p. 383.

¹⁷⁷ NFW 2/29, ‘Minute: Gore-Booth to Parsons’, 13 October 1973, DBFPO:III:IV; NFW 10/9, ‘Washington tel 3201’, 13 October 1973.

by the British government at the end of the entire ordeal, after a cease-fire had been reached on the 25th and the war ended on the 28th of October.¹⁷⁸ After this, both parties seemed to realise that their relationship was in their national interests, and that it was vital that ties would not be severed any further. Therefore both took up the Year of Europe initiative again and tried salvaging what was left of it, and really worked hard on getting the declaration sorted.

Picking up where they left off

As Douglas-Home stated in a progress report on the Year of Europe written during the Yom-Kippur war: "Anglo-American relations remain a high priority for British diplomacy." But while the relations on Community Subjects were now handled by the Community, other things such as political cooperation were still the subject of bi-lateral discussions, re-enforced by collective action. He did recognize however, that a point would come where this would be reversed, when political cooperation would above all be a Community matter, but "no-one can say when that time will come."¹⁷⁹ However, it was recognized that a common position on defence was starting to emerge, something which would put strains on the Atlantic relations from time to time. But in contrast to Heath's actions before, Home wanted to keep bilateral lines open with the Americans, even though this might embarrass the European partners. This yet again illustrates the differences in positions between Heath and Home, whereas Heath tried his best to keep the relationship with the Europeans at its strongest, Home wanted to keep the Americans as their closest partners.¹⁸⁰ Home also tried to defuse the situation of mutual distrust and growing anger between Heath and Kissinger by reminding Heath that Kissinger was used to conducting diplomacy with adversaries, and not with friends. That is why his diplomacy seemed to be so full of high-level, high profile meetings, and why he did not know very well how to approach his allies. Home assumed that this would change in the near future, and

¹⁷⁸ Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship*, pp. 194-197.

¹⁷⁹ AMU 3/507/1, 'Guidance tel 159', 15 October 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁸⁰ AMU 3/507/1, 'Guidance tel 160', 15 October 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

even if not, the British should draw lessons from the past, they might just be stuck with Kissinger for the next three years.¹⁸¹

Something else that still continued was the planned negotiations of the political directors of the Nine and representatives of the United States. Preparation had been disturbed by the events in the Middle East obviously, as Kissinger's planned visits to Europe had not been able to take place, but they still decided that the meeting would take place. The location had been moved however, from New York to Copenhagen. During this meeting, the Americans were very forthcoming, they gave up their old bundling of the issues, "with regret and without recrimination," and did not press too hard for words like interdependence and partnership in the declarations. Because of this the meeting could be considered a success, at least from the perspective of the Nine.¹⁸²

But hardly any actual progress was made. The French refused to take a stand on anything, including the question on the possibility of a meeting of Nixon and the other heads of state, claiming they were waiting for the drafts to be finished before committing to anything. The fact that this meeting was supposed to happen in Paris only added to problems. Relations between the Americans and British remained sour as well, because both Heath and Kissinger did not talk with much restraint. At the start of November Kissinger remarked to the Vice President of the European Commission, Christopher Soames that "the enlarged community was 'less than the sum of its parts'" and that for the Americans it was now or never, the tendency towards isolationism in the United States was growing. Later on he's been quoted as saying "I don't care what happens to NATO, I'm so disgusted." Heath, on the other hand, gave a speech in the same period in which he put forward a completely different world vision than Kissinger's: "Washington and Moscow had to realise that Peking, Tokyo, Cairo and Tel Aviv, as well as Western Europe, were 'vitally important' too." He naturally did not know that this would be his last major foreign policy speech as Prime Minister, but

¹⁸¹ MWE 3/304/1, 'Minute: Douglas-Home to Heath', 17 October 1973, DBFPO:III:IV; RS 2/3, 'Minute: Cable to Acland', 21 September 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁸² MWE 3/304/6, 'Copenhagen tel 417', 19 October 1973, DBFPO:III:IV; MWE 3/304/6, 'Copenhagen tel 418', 19 October 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

it did summarise his vision for the world in a very concise and clear manner: for Heath, the world no longer consisted of two superpowers with two blocs formed around them, but had transformed into a multipolar world. This in combination with their membership of the EEC gave Britain the possibility to reassume a leading position in the world, one she “could no longer achieve on her own.”¹⁸³

On November 20th another Ministerial meeting was held in Copenhagen. As expected after such strong comments by Kissinger, there was no real drive to accomplish anything on the EEC draft, and no significant results were made. Douglas-Home, for example, was still infuriated with Kissinger about his comments on the British actions during the Yom-Kippur war, and was of opinion that things like the Atlantic Alliance were of less importance than say the Middle-East question. These views were reported to Kissinger in a meeting with the British Ambassador Cromer. Kissinger was still furious with the British during this meeting; he accused the British and French of trying to forge European Unity by distancing Europe from the United States, and reported that he was sad that “the special relationship was collapsing.” Entry of Britain into the EC should’ve raised the Community to the level of Britain; instead it lowered Britain’s level to that of the rest of the EC. He blamed the French for trying to build up Europe on an “anti-American basis” and the UK for allowing the French to do this. When Cromer suggested that they should put their differences aside and that the Year of Europe should reach a successful conclusion, Kissinger told him that for the Americans “the party was over.”¹⁸⁴ This criticism of the Nine was not something Douglas-Home agreed with, but he did feel that if they would add some water to the wine, that they might be able to salvage some of the relationship. “A fence mending exercise on the part of the Nine collectively could be advantageous.”¹⁸⁵ Later that month, in a meeting with some United States advisors, Kissinger would identify Heath as the main reason why the special relationship was faltering. He was “intellectually

¹⁸³ Hynes, *The Year That Never Was*, pp. 199-201; Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. 350,

¹⁸⁴ AMU 3/507/1, ‘Washington tel 3674’, 24 November 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁸⁵ MWE 3/304/1, ‘Tel 910 to Paris’, 27 November 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

committed to the United States,” but had no “emotional commitment.” “He was really more inclined towards the French.”¹⁸⁶

But while Douglas-Home still tried to save the relationship with America from cooling down even more, Heath was still furious with Kissinger’s remarks. He gave a speech where he restated his vision of two Europes, one that consisted of the NATO members and one distinctly different one consisting of the EC members. The United States had a role in the first one, but should stay out of the second one. He once again criticised the lack of consultation before the start of the year, and he was proud of the way the Europeans came together working on a paper that discussed the European identity. This he ascribed to himself and his government as a personal success.¹⁸⁷ This paper was the paper the Nine had agreed on writing during the July 23rd Ministerial meeting, which should have been of no concern to the Americans. But in a sensationalist piece published by the New York Times on November 29th the Nine were said to be “secretly drafting” a paper, which caused some concern for the British. If this would be the first the Americans heard of it, it would naturally be a cause for further displeasure. Especially since some parts of the paper could be seen as separating the Europeans from the rest of the alliance, referring to the common heritage of the Europeans, which seemed to be “exclusively European.”¹⁸⁸ In the same period Associated Press reported on the way British government officials had been offended by the way Kissinger conducted business and responded to it with “biting attacks on his style of democracy.”¹⁸⁹ Douglas-Home, again worried how this would affect Kissinger, immediately took action: he messaged Kissinger trying to convince him that there is no campaign against him, telling him not to make too much of the press reports.¹⁹⁰

But Kissinger did not find Douglas-Home or the FCO to be the source of the problems. In his opinion, there was one main culprit that had caused the difficulties in the relationship: Heath. This

¹⁸⁶ Hynes, *The Year That Never Was*, p. 206.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 208.

¹⁸⁸ MWE 3/304/8, ‘Washington tel 3734’, 30 November 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁸⁹ AMU 3/548/14, ‘Washington tel 3737’, 30 November 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁹⁰ Douglas-Home papers, ‘Tel 2405 to Washington’, 1 December 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

was supported by the American embassy in London who reported “the Foreign Office is not the source of the difficulty in attitude toward the United States, but that Heath is.” When he mentioned this during a meeting with British officials, they did not agree with his claim that Heath was doing this on purpose to distance himself from the United States. Heath had only wanted to position himself closer to the Europeans, since he saw a leading role for himself and the UK within Europe. He was still “hooked” on the idea of a ‘special-relationship’, and the British wondered if Nixon could not play a role in warming things up.¹⁹¹ This might have had an effect on Kissinger, seeing as the next day he gave a press-conference in which he spoke of the differences in NATO. He said that the differences were well-known, but “NATO remained the cornerstone of United States foreign policy... The United States would spare no efforts to inject new vitality, creativity and hope. He would not be approaching his visit in a mood of confrontation and acrimony.”¹⁹² However, Heath remained defiant. In a meeting with the Italian Prime Minister Mariano Rumor he claimed that Kissinger was schizophrenic, that he did not understand Europe and that his mind was riddled with theoretical concepts which led him astray in the real world, as had been highlighted during the Middle East crisis.¹⁹³

All in all, it looked like the year was going to end with no accomplishments whatsoever. Douglas-Home and the FCO tried to salvage what they could, but the combined pride and mutual misunderstanding of Kissinger on the one hand, and Heath and the French on the other meant that it was all looking very bad for the initiative. Even though Heath still saw the relationship with America as a vital one for British interests, the way Kissinger acted did seem to strike the wrong way and make him act defiant, whether it was on purpose or not. Meanwhile, the effects of the Middle-East crisis were still felt in Europe, oil embargoes were causing big problems all over Western Europe. In Britain, this led to a huge popularity drop for the Heath government, one that would prove to be too much to overcome for his government in the end. Heath’s image among the members of the Nine had taken a hit as well, since the discovery of North Sea oil had made his country not as dependent

¹⁹¹ Hynes, *The Year That Never Was*, p. 214.

¹⁹² NFW 2/29, ‘Washington tel 3811’, 6 December 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁹³ Hynes, *The Year That Never Was*, p. 215.

on imported oil as the others and was therefore not as supportive of Community action on an energy front, one that for Heath was still a national issue.¹⁹⁴ However, things took a turn for the worse for Heath when coal miners started striking in Britain, which led to Heath turning to the one last option he had left to decide whether he could still lead the country: asking that country for a mandate in a general election. These elections were scheduled for February 28th, 1974. The outcome was unexpected; there was a hung parliament which meant neither party had a majority. The Liberals would have to provide a majority for either government. Heath argued for a coalition with the Liberals in his own party, but could not even convince his own Cabinet of the proposed concessions. Therefore on the 4th of March, Heath conceded defeat and Harold Wilson would once more become Prime-Minister.

Conclusion

During this period we see Heath and the FCO coming closer together. The FCO was getting put off by Kissinger's 'hostile' form of diplomacy, which focussed on achieving treaties, meetings and/or summits, while Heath saw that the French in many respects were not holding up the initiative for – in his eyes - valid reasons, but tried to stall progress as much as possible because they wanted the initiative to fail, or at least for the end result to be as weak as possible. The French opposition hindered the initiative greatly, because at first Heath did not want to consent to anything without the French agreeing with him, but later, when he realised their efforts to stall were not driven by practical, but by political reasons, he seemed to care less about their opinion and started to work with the FCO on drafts for the, by now, several declarations.

This was used by the French as a way of slowing down progress even more; they called out the British on this in a meeting of the Nine, saying that they were working bi-laterally with the Americans, while it should be going through the Nine, seeing as it was a Community effort. That they themselves were also drafting declarations on their own was handily omitted by the French. This led

¹⁹⁴ SMG 12/598/1, 'Tel 1550 to UKREP Brussels', 17 December 1973, DBFPO:III:IV.

to the British having to put their own talks with the Americans on the backburner, which slowed down the initiative even more and set a lot of bad blood in America, especially with Kissinger. Obviously did the British not close of diplomatic relations entirely with the Americans, but they could and would not inform the Americans on negotiations taking place among the Nine any more, although the FCO staff on occasion did give up some details when pressed.

These distinctions between Heath and Douglas-Home became vaguer after the Middle-East crises, because now the FCO also started to wonder about Kissinger's way of conducting business. His open comments on the Nine and the British in particular were often derogatory and sometimes they were outright attacks on their way of dealing with his initiative. For Kissinger this had the main priority, and the Atlantic Alliance came above all, and since Nixon was occupier more and more by Watergate, Kissinger was the one running the show. However, the Europeans and especially Heath saw that their main priority should now lie with the emerging new European Community, as all the discussions on the European identity would show. And Heath's vision for Europe and the world meant that the Americans would just have to deal with them through the established frameworks of the EC, even if the chairman at that time was seen as weak and ineffective, as was the case with the Danish Foreign Minister chairing in this period.

The parties that have played the biggest roles in this thesis – Heath, the FCO, and Kissinger - can therefore all be said to have different objectives and goals in mind for the Year of Europe initiative. How and what these objectives were, and how their world vision affected these will be discussed in the final conclusion, but first this thesis will, in order to show a complete picture of the Year of Europe, shortly discuss the end result of the initiative in an epilogue, even though in that period Heath had already left office.

Epilogue: *The year of Europe after Heath*

After Heath had left office, the new British government immediately departed from the path he had chosen for Britain and returned the country back to its old partner, the United States. The Wilson government was outspoken Atlanticist and in favour of the special relationship that Heath had – in the opinion of the new Labour secretary – weakened by his deep and lasting commitment to Europe.

Work on the draft declarations continued, with the NATO declaration being the only one where actual progress was made. The Community one was still marred by controversy, with a draft presented by the European partners shot down by the Americans as being ‘unsatisfactory’, the United States calling it too much a “United States recognition of the European identity.”¹⁹⁵ Kissinger himself was so angry with the draft that he blew up while giving a speech to the wives of American senators, apparently unaware reporters were present. ““I would say that the biggest problem American foreign policy confronts,” he grumbled, “is not how to regulate competition with its enemies—we have a generation of experience with this, and with ups and downs we are going to handle it—but how to bring our friends to a realization that there are greater common interests than simply self-assertiveness”” wrote Time magazine later that month, reporting on remarks which had caused shock all over Europe. “French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert, who later in the week accompanied President Georges Pompidou on a state visit to the Soviet Union: “Kissinger does not understand Europe.” In Bonn, a ranking German official complained: “Now we have a cold war between America and Europe.” A Belgian official advised Europe to “try to behave, publicly at least, as if we did not hear Kissinger’s remarks”” is just a small selection of the reactions from Europe that were reported.¹⁹⁶ And while Kissinger and the Department of State tried their best to refute these comments and conciliate with their European partners, Nixon himself apparently had had enough as well, and during a press conference remarked that “the day of the one-way street is gone.”

¹⁹⁵ MWP 3/304/1, ‘Record of meeting: Callaghan/Sonnenfeldt’, 15 March 1974, DBFPO:III:IV.

¹⁹⁶ Time Magazine, ‘DIPLOMACY: An Alliance in Need of D’, 25 March 1974, cited from: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,942822,00.html>.

Europeans had to be as forthcoming to the Americans, as the Americans – in his view - had been to them. “Both sides of the Atlantic had to determine ‘either to go along together on all fronts or to go separately’.”¹⁹⁷ These two events, in combination with the already growing distrust between both parties would lead to the end of the Declaration of Principles, the one that was supposed to cement relations between the EC and the United States for years to come. Nixon’s grand tour of Europe was wiped from his itinerary and consultation with the United States was decided by the Nine to be, from that moment on, on a case by case basis.

The one thing that was still left to be discussed was the NATO declaration, which both parties wanted to get done before the 25th anniversary of the Treaty, as to give the celebrations an extra impulse. And just before this anniversary on the 26th of June, on June 19th, they actually managed to finish the declaration. Largely based on a French draft, it also included a provision for a consultation mechanism between the Europeans and the Americans. But if this was more than just a hollow shell, was to be seen. Although both the Americans and Europeans were satisfied with this draft, its wording and language is vague. The Consultation mechanism referred to earlier is nothing more than this sentence “The Allies are convinced that the fulfilment of their common aims requires the maintenance of close consultation, cooperation and mutual trust,” and does not seem to carry a whole lot of weight. The French influence on the draft is also very noticeable, while there are references to the significant and irreplaceable role the American and Canadian forces have in the defence of Europe, the role of the Europeans is stressed to a much larger extent, and also their own nuclear capabilities are presented as a major deterrent. There is even a reference to the European Community and its present move towards more unity, which “should in due course have a beneficial effect on the contribution to the common defence of the Alliance of those of them who belong to it.” One is only left to wonder what Kissinger and Nixon really felt about such language being included in the only declaration that the Year of Europe would produce. Beyond these things, the declaration

¹⁹⁷ Hynes, *The Year That Never Was*, p. 230.

basically is a renewed statement of the objectives of the NATO, so many of the paragraphs are about “reaffirming,” “rededicating” and “recalling” the objectives in the first NATO declaration.¹⁹⁸

And the celebrations that took place were not as festive as one would’ve expected. When the heads of government came together to sign the Treaty in Brussels, the shadow of Watergate was looming over Nixon so much that “the European statesmen behaved as though the ‘cancer on the Presidency was a cancer on the person’.”¹⁹⁹ But at least Nixon was still in office; he was the only one of the leaders of the ‘big Four’ who still was. Heath’s loss of the election has been covered, but also Brandt had to leave office suddenly. One of his aides was found to be a Soviet spy, something that led to such a big scandal that he had no other option than to resign. And on April 2nd, Pompidou had died of the disease he had been fighting all through the year. Interesting to note here is that all the new heads of Government were more Atlanticists than their predecessors. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was a “mainstay of close Atlantic ties,” who wanted to separate himself from the path Brandt had chosen for Germany, he moved from Brandt’s Ostpolitik to a more Atlanticist vision of the world. Prime Minister d’Estaing was less pro-America than Schmidt or Wilson, but he was however willing to take steps to improve his countries relationship with the United States. “Giscard’s presidency transformed [the Franco-American relationship] to a close approximation of genuine partnership.”²⁰⁰

So what did it the declaration in the end deliver for Kissinger and the Americans? One could say very little, especially not when comparing it with the pre-1973 situation. The entire thing was a reaffirmation of the Atlantic Relationship, and did not give the relationship the impulse that would’ve taken it to the next level. But it did signify to the rest of the world, that even though there had been a period of uncertainty – the entire year of ’73 – the allies had finally come together and the transatlantic relations were at least on the same level as they had been previously, if not higher. The

¹⁹⁸ NATO, ‘Declaration on Atlantic Relations issued by the North Atlantic Council (“The Ottawa Declaration”)’, *NATO Basic Texts*, 19 June 1974, cited from: <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b740619a.htm>.

¹⁹⁹ Hynes, *The Year That Never Was*, p. 232.

²⁰⁰ Kissinger, *Years of Renewal* (New York 1999), p. 621.

new leaders in Europe were much more pro-America, and thus much more committed to an Atlantic relationship instead of just a European one. And for Kissinger, this came at just the right time, since shortly after the signing of the new declaration the summit between Nixon and Brezhnev took place, in which the Americans surely felt stronger being backed by the new declaration.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Hahnhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*, pp. 351-352.

Conclusion

At the start of this thesis, the question was posed as to what Heath's role in the Year of Europe was. Over the course of this thesis, I have painted a clear picture of not only his role, but also the deeper reasoning behind his actions. From the start of his political career at the Oxford Debating Union to his time as Prime Minister, the position of Britain in Europe and thus foreign policy has played a huge role in shaping his world views. These views were pretty rigid; he has had during his career a single objective that stood head and shoulders above any others he might have had. This objective, or dream even, was for Britain to regain the role that it once played in the world. Realising that this could not be done in the way Britain had previously gained its immense power - due to the loss of its empire - he now saw Europe and its emerging European Community as a way to make this dream a reality. And when Britain had entered the European Community in 1973, he tried to manoeuvre Britain into such a position that it would be able to play a leading role in the Community and through it in the world. To get Britain in this position, he first needed to gain the trust of the other Community members, especially France. He needed to prove to France that Britain's allegiance now lay with the Community, and not with the Americans, with whom Britain had endured a 'special' relationship for so long. Even his use of vocabulary, such as the emphasis on Britain's 'natural' relationship with the Americans, points to this. Therefore, Kissinger's initiative came at the worst possible time for Heath, especially since it seemed to have caught him off guard. In this conclusion, a quick recap will be given of the events during the year and how Heath's handling of the events fits in with this aforementioned theory of his objectives, and his 'master plan' for the recovery of Britain's status as a world power. This is of interest in the way that it shows that one man's ideas can have such a big impact on the world, especially because the world of foreign policy is a world that seems to consist of much more back channel politics than domestic issues. This thesis will refrain from taking a position in such a heated debate, but in the conclusion it will however provide ample information to fuel the debate. But one could argue against such an opaque way of dealing with such

matters, especially on such important matters. Others will state that because there is so much at stake and public opinion is so much influenced by domestic matters that their opinion on these kinds of issues would be too clouded with these domestic concerns that transparency is not always a good thing.

Heath and Europe

Heath's interest in Europe was already established well before his political career. Some might even go back to his elderly home, which was located close to the British coast from where - on a clear day - one could see France, to see the root of this interest, but that would probably be stretching it. His interest in Europe most likely stems from his experiences as a student, when he travelled through Europe, and also experienced the rise of fascism first hand. These experiences with fascism were obviously strengthened by his wartime experiences, when he returned to the continent. His wish for a strong and closely intertwined Europe surely has some basis in these experiences. He had seen with his own eyes what could happen if Europeans actively opposed each other; it was something that had to be prevented at all costs. A strong European Community would be a way to prevent this and this surely has been a major influence on Heath's thinking. But obviously, this Community would not necessarily have to be European. The Atlantic Community could be an excellent deterrent as well, probably in the same manner the European one could be. But yet Heath was a much bigger supporter of the European Community than the Atlantic one. This is because of the previously stated vision Heath had for Britain, and the way he saw the world. His desire was for Britain to play a leading role in the world again, something that could happen through the European Community, but in the Atlantic Community, which was so obviously dominated by the Americans, there was a much slimmer chance of this happening.

In Heath's world vision the era of the bipolar world was over. The world had transformed into a multi-polar world, the power had been spread over much more areas of the world than just the western and eastern blocs. Europe, Japan, the Middle East were now starting to challenge the

two old superpowers, at least economically. The world of international relations, on the other hand, was still dominated by the old idea of the two superpowers balancing each other out, while the rest of the world belonged to either of their camps. This was the vision Kissinger almost manically subscribed to, which led to the major differences between the two of them.

Kissinger, Douglas-Home and the Year of Europe

In this we see that even on a fundamental level, Heath and Kissinger had different visions for the world. For Kissinger's two-power ideology it was of vital importance that the Western, or Atlantic, Alliance would remain firmly together, to keep the balance of power intact. Heath, on the other hand, thought that the time of the superpowers was over when he came to office, and therefore concentrated on Europe, which would be one of the new 'poles' in his multi-polar world. The effect was that while Heath still saw America as a valuable ally, especially on the security and defence front, in other areas he saw closer links between Britain and the continent, while the Americans still saw Britain as their closest ally within Europe on all fronts. These problems had never really surfaced until the Year of Europe, because the Americans had been focussing their foreign policy efforts on other areas, and also, which might even be of more importance, Kissinger did not yet wield the same amount of power that he slowly assumed during 1973. The loss of face caused by the Watergate scandal for nearly the entire Nixon administration had caused him, as one of the few that remained relatively unscathed by the entire ordeal, to come into way more power than any of his predecessors. In many respects he would prove to be a capable handler of foreign policy, his achievements are well documented. But there is also the clear failure of the Year of Europe, the complaints from allied leaders that his diplomacy was more suited for adversaries and his, by his own admission, lousy preparation for the Year of Europe. Kissinger obviously took the scale of his own initiative too lightly and also thought the relationship between the Europeans and Americans to be very comparable to that of immediately after the Second World War, while it obviously was not. He expected the Europeans to jump into line straight away and that they together could revive the

Atlantic Alliance to what it once had been. He seemed to be completely overlooking the fact that Europe and especially the European Community was going through a vital phase in the creating of her own identity, and that for the first time since the war, they felt secure enough to stand on their own legs. This newfound confidence combined with Kissinger's manner of dealing with the Europeans, which bordered on arrogance, was not helpful for the entire initiative.

For this entire year, Britain seems to have taken a sort of position in the middle. Heath was obviously oriented on the Europeans, but the pro-American stance of the FCO, and especially its secretary Alec Douglas-Home, acted as a kind of counterbalance. Douglas-Home was much more ingrained in the old ways of British politics, he saw the relationship with the United States as vital and tried his hardest to keep the old 'special' relationship the way it was. These men were two of the most important players on the British foreign policy front in this period. Together with the British ambassador in Washington, they were responsible for handling the Year of Europe initiative, as well as the role Britain took on in the European Community. And since Heath was in the end the man in charge, emphasis would lay on the EC instead of America. This was the way in which he as Prime Minister could make British foreign policy – at least officially – take such a drastic shift in comparison with the years before he became Prime Minister. This is one of the biggest impacts he would have as an individual. Of course, Douglas-Home still continued very close relations with the Americans, and the FCO continued to negotiate with the Americans on various issues throughout the year, but in the end his allegiance would have to lie with his Prime Minister and not with his own objectives. Douglas-Home would have to go to the ministerial meetings in the EC and would have to negotiate with the others in the Nine on the handling of the Year of Europe initiative. And when through French pressures the bi-lateral consultations with the Americans had to be put on the backburner, he had no choice but to comply with these new rules.

Heath in 1973

However, Heath could obviously not let the relationship with the Americans go completely to waste. He realised that their support was of importance, and that their troop presence in Western Europe was still a major deterrent for Soviet aspirations for Europe. You would therefore never hear Heath be as vocal about American military presence in Europe or about NATO as the French were, even though it's very easy to claim that Heath had the same feeling about the position of Britain in the world as the almost Gaullist vision for France Pompidou and Jobert had. They all had a certain kind of pride and wanted to restore their countries to the status they had had for so long, that of great powers, and all saw the EC as the way to do this. Heath therefore above all wanted to prove that the British belonged in Europe, especially to the French, who still saw the British as pawns of the Americans, even though that feeling had subsided at least a little since the absolute depths in twentieth century Franco-British relations during the reign of de Gaulle and the time of the Nassau agreements.²⁰² Appeasing the French was not a task that was as easy as it sounded. They were quite dismissive of the entire initiative and dragged their heels at nearly every occasion provided to them. Whether they were actually opposed to the renewing of the Atlantic relations, or whether they just saw this as an opportunity to test the British and their European partners' support of the European cause is doubtful. The memo that Beers quotes suggests the second, but this did not get written until half-way through the year. More likely is that they were as baffled by the sudden American initiative as the rest of their European partners, the British included.

Heath's role during the Year of Europe in essence boiled down to two things: convincing the French and especially Jobert that he was very committed to the European Community, while at the

²⁰² De Gaulle (Prime minister of France between 1959 and 1962) had always seen British entry as a Trojan Horse for the Americanization of the EC. The Nassau agreements between the British and the Americans, under which Polaris nuclear missiles were supplied to the British by the Americans in October 1962 only deepened this resentment towards the British de Gaulle had. Note from the French Permanent Delegation to NATO (Paris, 26 December 1962). For an example of the French reasoning and questioning of these agreements see: Ministère des Affaires étrangères, 'Note de la Délégation permanente de la France auprès de l'O.T.A.N.', Commission de Publication des DDF (Ed.). Documents diplomatiques français, Book II: 1962, 1er juillet-31 décembre (Paris 1999), pp. 588-590, consulted on: http://www.ena.lu/note_french_permanent_delegation_nato_paris_26_december_1962-2-7602.

same time convincing the Americans and especially Kissinger that he was still committed to the Atlantic Alliance, that he was willing to work with the Americans on redefining the Atlantic relationship. It seems that normally he would have had no problem with convincing either party that this was the case, but because both things had to be done at the same time he got stuck in a near impossible situation. Both ideals were seen to be diametrically opposed to each other, and while they were both important issues for Heath, he could not handle both at the same time. He had to choose, and he decided that at this time, the Europeans were more important. It is easy to blame Kissinger's speech and bad preparation for this, and while this surely was of importance in the decision making process, the pre-existing preference Heath had for a close link between England and the continent was the bigger factor. He left the Year of Europe initiative and the dealings with the Americans to his FCO, while he focussed on the Europeans, which was, at least for him, priority number one. This choice led to a troublesome period in the American-European relations, especially after the French had objected to any kind of high-level steering group and had also objected to British bi-lateral talks with the Americans. Even though very little progress was made on the declaration before these events, after them it got even slower. Europe first had to find out how they would deal with the Americans before they could start to figure out what they were going to say. Tensions rose on both sides of the Atlantic, Kissinger's 'hostile' form of diplomacy not being very helpful either, and just when things looked like they could not get any worse, the Middle-East crisis broke out. And after that, relations did not fully recover until next year, after the leaders of the three bigger European countries had left office, and had been replaced by pro-Atlanticist leaders.

From this thesis you can easily draw the conclusion that had Heath not been such a big supporter of European integration, had he followed the line most British Prime Ministers before and after him had taken, the one of the 'special' relationship with America, the initiative would've ended in a completely different way. If he had taken a much stronger stance on the Atlantic Relationship and had supported Kissinger's initiative from the get-go, there is a big chance that this support within Europe would actually have led to a strong declaration and revival of the Atlantic Alliance. France

would've been alone within Europe in their opposition to the initiative, and more importantly, Kissinger would now have a staunch ally in Europe, who could've kept him up to date of negotiations and issues within Europe. Since the other nations in the Nine were either pre-occupied (Western – Germany) or not of much significance (the other six), the initiative boiled down to the response of the French and the British anyway. Had Heath supported the Americans, instead of trying to prove himself to the French, there is a big chance that the initiative would have actually gotten a footing in Europe, instead of the actual situation where it was basically kept out of Europe through French action and British in-action.

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