Kosygin Week: How the circumstances around Kosygin Week led to its collapse.

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Introduction

> "You will realise what a hell of a situation I am in for my last day of talks with Kosygin."
> --Harold Wilson, February 12, 1967.[1]

Harold Wilson, Prime Minister of United Kingdom (U.K.) between 1964 and 1970 and again between 1974 and 1976, wrote this in a telegram to Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States (U.S.), in the early hours of February 12, 1967. Wilson had been in talks with Premier of the Soviet Union Alexei Kosygin for the entire preceding week. Negotiating an end to the ongoing Vietnam War was their main concern and just hours before Wilson messaged the president, he had been in a far better mood. "David Bruce, one of the most respected and experienced diplomats in the world and one who, as the President had told me, enjoyed his highest confidence, far and above that accorded to a most senior ambassador, then delivered himself of a judgement: 'Prime Minister,' he said, 'I think you've made it. This is going to be the biggest diplomatic coup of this century.'"[2]

Bruce, U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom, was premature. That day, Wilson and Kosygin had reached an agreement that Wilson thought was going to bring about a negotiated end to the fighting in Vietnam. Wilson had been talking for the U.S. and Kosygin was representing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). The two countries had been in conflict since the Geneva Conference of 1954, that had split up Vietnam in two. North Vietnam was under a communistic regime led by Ho Chi Minh. Opposing it was South Vietnam, a capitalistic country supported by the U.S. Although the support of the Americans started small, by 1967 the fighting had greatly escalated, resulting in American troops in Vietnam and extensive bombing campaigns by U.S. aircraft. The war had become a controversial point for the U.S, both in the domestic scene and on the global stage, as the numerically and technologically superior American troops were unable to defeat the guerrilla forces fighting against them.

Third parties launched numerous peace efforts to bring an end to the fighting. Talks between Wilson and Kosygin in London in February 1967 was another of these attempts. During the first days of Kosygin Week, the two came to an agreement that seemed acceptable

[1] Telegram From Prime Minister Wilson to President Johnson, February 12, 1967, Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS), 1964-1968, Volume V, Vietnam, 1967, eds Kent Sieg (Washington, DC, 2002), doc 64.
[2] Harold Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964-1970: a personal record* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson: Joseph 1971) 356.

to all parties involved in the fighting. At the last possible moment, the U.S. wanted to change the agreement, leading to the quote at the beginning. This change destroyed any chance of the talks succeeding, squashing any hope of establishing peace in Vietnam.

In this thesis I examine multiple aspects of Kosygin Week talks. I analyse how the circumstances of Kosygin Week resulted in its collapse. For this, I first examine who took initiative for the talks. This is followed by an examination of why American policy changed during Kosygin Week and, finally, I examine how the Americans saw the talks between Wilson and Kosygin.

This research is relevant because the historiography surrounding the subject is unclear. Questions regarding the talks have been given conflicting or vague answers. The question of who took initiative for the talks has been given inconsistent answers, with different scholars providing different answers. The circumstances around the Americans changing their policy is also unclear, as scholars agree on one reason the Americans changed their policy, but add other claims to this as well, such as a difference in semantics or because of the president's turbulent personality. Historians explicitly writing about how the Americans viewed the talks, only report that they were negative about the talks, but do not provide details how this expressed itself during Kosygin Week. This thesis aims to clear up these inconsistencies and more by analysing primary sources regarding the Wilson-Kosygin talks and revealing the answers.

In order to research this topic, this thesis has been divided in several parts. In the first chapter, I focus on the historiography on the Wilson-Kosygin talks. The existing literature is discussed along with the differing conclusions that other researchers have reached. These researchers used different sources than the ones I use, explaining why they came to different conclusions. In the second chapter, I examine previous peace efforts and British policy on Vietnam, to see what themes ran through previous attempts. From this examination, it becomes clear that the U.S. was forced to entertain third party peace attempts and that British and Soviet shared the same goal but had separate ways of achieving them. This is useful information to have, as it is then possible in the third chapter to see if those themes are the same or different during Kosygin Week.

In the third and last chapter of this thesis, I use primary sources to argue that both the British and the Soviets wanted to use Kosygin Week to discuss an end to the fighting in Vietnam. The Americans changed their policy because of DRV troop movements to South Vietnam, although Johnson's personality may have played a role as well, and the U.S. had a pessimistic view of the talks but kept this to themselves. These circumstances led to the collapse of the talks.

Methodological, I use two different archives to examine the circumstances of Kosygin Week. The first one is the archives from the Office of the Historian of the United States Department of State. This Office of the Historian publishes systematically organized sets of documents regarding foreign policy for every presidential administration in series called the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS). These documents consist of memorandums, telegrams, notes, records and many more. Johnson's documents are organized in 35 volumes, but this thesis uses only one volume: Volume V, Vietnam, 1967. All of these documents were available to see online.

The other archive that I use is The British National Archives (TNA) in Kew, London. They organize their documents by the department that created the records. In my research I use records from two departments: the Records of the Prime Minister's Office (PREM) and the Foreign Office (FO). PREM is further organized by prime minister; Wilson's first term is PREM 13. FO is subdivided by Foreign Secretary; George Brown, the Foreign Secretary during Kosygin Week, is FO 800. After these subdivisions, they records are further divided by subject. The documents from the TNA were not available online. Viewing these necessitated a week-long trip to the archives in London.

To examine all these documents, I use a qualitative analysis based on a close reading of the primary sources. I use these documents to establish how the circumstances surrounding Kosygin Week led to the collapse of the talks.

There are some limitations to this research. From Americans sources, only online documents from the FRUS were available. Although the FRUS are comprehensive, it was not possible to travel to their physical archives and examine the documents there. Nor was it possible to examine other American sources. Another limitation is that Soviet and Vietnamese sources were not used in this research because of the language barrier and because of the geo-political and global health situation at the time of writing this thesis. However, a combination of sources from the FRUS and the TNA is enough to examine the circumstances around Kosygin Week.

Chapter 1. The historiography

> "We don't give a goddamn about Wilson."
> --Walt W. Rostow[3]

In this first chapter, I examine the historiography of Kosygin Week. Although the talks between Wilson and Kosygin have been discussed in several works, writers give conflicting and unclear answers on certain aspects of the talks. I use the literature in this chapter to examine these differing answers. In this part I argue that accounts differ on who took the initiative for the talks, why the Americans changed their policy and how the Americans saw the talks. There are multiple accounts as to who took the initiative for the Wilson-Kosygin talks. Some state it was the Soviets, while others state the Americans. A third account states it was the British, as Wilson wanted to bolster his image. All writers point to increased North Vietnamese troop movement as to why the U.S. changed their policy. Some writers have added to this, giving reasons such as a difference between U.S. English and U.K. English, a lack of permission of the British to negotiate or Johnson's style of leadership and a fight with Robert Kennedy. What the Americans thought of the talks is another ambiguous point. Scholars that write about how the Americans viewed the talks are negative, but do not offer much detail on how this presented itself during the talks.

1.1 Who took initiative?

The first major division between writers has to do with who took initiative for the talks. According to the first hand account of Dean Rusk's, Johnson Secretary of State, the Americans had pressed Wilson to bring up Vietnam with Kosygin, as they were hoping that the Soviets could influence the DRV.[4] Another account comes from Alastair Parker, who writes that Wilson sought out the role of the peacemaker, who could negotiate between the U.S. and the DRV or between the Americans and the Soviets, who could then restrain their allies. Parker claims that Wilson wanted to do this prominently, so that he could unite the Labour Party and secure a majority of British voters.[5] When Kosygin came to London in February 1967, Wilson thought his apotheosis was at hand, as Parker writes. With this, Parker implies that Wilson took the

[3] Alastair Parker, 'International Aspects of the Vietnam War', in: Peter Lowe ed., *The Vietnam war* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press 1998) 196–218, there 207.
[4] Dean Rusk, *As I saw it*. Daniel S. Papp ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company 1990) 469.
[5] Parker, 'International Aspects of the Vietnam War', 204.

initiative to discuss Vietnam while the Soviet premier visited him, as a means to increase his standing in England. Parker does not cite what he bases this on, but, interestingly, does cite the memoirs of Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet Ambassador to the United States. According to Dobrynin, Hanoi had secretly requested that the Soviet Union use Wilson to urge the U.S. into negotiating with North Vietnam. The Soviets wanted the same thing and the Johnson administration wanted to use Kosygin influence in Hanoi.[6] Parker thus makes the same point as Rusk, that the Americans wanted to use Kosygin's clout in Hanoi, but adds that Hanoi and the Soviet Union wanted to make use of the talks to use Wilson to influence Johnson.

Ilya V. Gaiduk supports the latter, also basing himself on Dobrynin's memoirs, but verifying this with Russian archival documents. Kosygin wanted to negotiate as the Vietnam War took Soviet resources away from economic reforms at home.[7] Another account comes from Rhiannon Vickers who, basing herself on Wilson's memoirs, writes that Wilson took the initiative by suggesting to Kosygin during his visit that they might be able to act as intermediaries. She differs from Rusk, Parker and Gaiduk, by stating that there was no evidence that the DRV was interest in negotiating and that the U.S. had little interest in talks as well.[8]

There are major differences in accounts on who took initiative for the talks, with the U.S, Wilson, the Soviet Union and North Vietnam all being credited by at least one historian with using Kosygin Week to negotiate the Vietnam War. At the same time, it is argued that the U.S., the Soviet Union and North Vietnam did not want to negotiate. None of these writers have used documents from the FRUS or from the British National Archives, which are used in my own research. My results reveal that Wilson and the Soviet Union wanted to negotiate, but that there is no evidence that the Americans or the North Vietnamese wanted to.

1.2 Why did the American policy change?

The second division within the historiography is why the Americans changed their policy. According to Rusk's account of Kosygin Week, Chester Cooper, an American official present during the talks, had made a draft of a Phase A, Phase B proposal for Kosygin. In this proposal the U.S. "would stop bombing (Phase A) as soon as we are assured that infiltration from North

[6] Ibid., 206.
[7] Ilya V. Gaiduk, 'Peacemaking or Troubleshooting? The Soviet Role in Peace Initiatives during the Vietnam War', in: Lloyd C. Gardner and Ted Gittinger ed., *Search for Peace in Vietnam, 1964-1968* 8. Foreign Relations and the Presidency Series (College Station: Texas A&M University Press 2004) 260–277, there 271–272.
[8] Rhiannon Vickers, 'Harold Wilson, the British Labour Party, and the War in Vietnam', *Journal of cold war studies* 10 (2008) 41–70, there 67–68.

Vietnam will stop (Phase B)." When Cooper sent this to Washington, he did not get a response. Taking silence for approval, Cooper and Wilson presented this Phase A, Phase B proposal to Kosygin. Rusk did not know why they did not sent a response to Cooper, but does not blame Cooper for his actions. When Johnson learned that the proposal had already been sent to Kosygin, he became upset as he feared that Wilson would be unable to accurately reflect his views. While Kosygin was in London, Johnson sent a letter to Ho offering that the U.S. would stop the bombing when infiltration into South Vietnam "has stopped." The Americans later sent a new proposal to London for Kosygin, also containing the phrase "has stopped", making it known that that was their policy. The Americans had effectively switched around the formula to Phase B, Phase A. According to Rusk, the failure of a previous bombing halt in 1966 to bring about negotiations was to blame for Johnson's switch in policy. During the Wilson-Kosygin talks, the U.S. had received intelligence reports showing DRV troops ready to infiltrate South Vietnam. Johnson was afraid these troops would take advantage of the bombing halt and therefore changed the formula.[9]

Wilson's biographer Ben Pimlott brings semantics into the argument. He writes that the Americans did not consider that they had changed the formula and that they had been clear all along. The Americans had asked for 'assured stoppage' of infiltration. They blamed a difference in US English and British English. In US English 'assured stoppage' means stoppage has taken place. In British English 'assured stoppage' means that stoppage has been promised. Pimlott brings up Benjamin Read, executive secretary to Rusk, who blamed unclear language for the mix-up. Although Cooper and David Bruce were present in London with Wilson, they had made the draft 'with midnight oil and without the presence of a lawyer, and the tense slipped.' Even if the mix-up can be attributed to a semantic slip-up, Pimlott argues, the intelligence of increased DRV troop movement was the deciding factor for Johnson to change the formula.[10]

Another account comes from Vickers, who bases herself on an interview William Bundy, Johnson's Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, had with the Lyndon B. Johnson Library, and writes that the change in formula indicates that the American position had "hardened significantly" in early February. Wilson had not been informed of Johnson's letter to Ho or the policy change, she claims. Wilson was accused by the Americans of acting without their permission. Vickers argues, based on Johnsons' memoirs, that Wilson

[9] Rusk, *As I saw it*, 469–470.
[10] Ben Pimlott, *Harold Wilson* (London: HarperCollins 1992) 462–463.

made a mistake by acting without the American's agreement, though the Americans shared some of the blame.[11]

Kevin Boyle argues that the Americans changed their policy because of a stunning breakdown of presidential leadership. According to Boyle, Johnson suppressed debate within his administration, thereby undermining the effectiveness of his foreign policy team. Boyle writes that Johnson had a complex personality and the frustration of the war brought out the worst of it. Johnson was irrational and repressive towards opponents. This siege mentality also had effect on Johnson's administration. Aides knew they had to be completely loyal and even minor criticism of the war could make on a suspect. At the beginning of Johnson's presidency, there was no dissent as everyone supported escalation in the war. By the latter half of the 1966, more and more officials saw the war as a disaster in the making. They were all afraid of speaking their minds, however, and expressed their concerns privately. Boyle bases this on Johnson's biographer Robert Dallek. This apprehension of telling Johnson any news that deviated from his policy, could have played a role during the breakdown in communications during Kosygin Week.[12]

A fight with Robert Kennedy was also a cause of the policy change, Boyle claims. The younger brother of John F. Kennedy, he had served as Attorney General under both his brother and Johnson and was now a Senator. Kennedy had been on a trip of European capitals and had met with a French official who had told him of North Vietnamese peace overtures. Although Kennedy thought little of it, newspapers reported on it in the same week as the Wilson-Kosygin talks. Johnson and Kennedy did not get along and the president was furious, believing that even if negotiations started on his terms, then Kennedy would get the credit. When Kennedy arrived at the White House and suggested that Johnson stopped the bombing, Johnson made clear that he would never do that. According to Boyle, Johnson sent Wilson the message with the new proposal containing Phase B, Phase A only hours after his fight with Kennedy while he was still seething. Boyle argues that this fight could be part of the reason Johnson changed his policy.[13]

There are multiple accounts as to why the talks broke down. All historians point towards increased troop movements in North Vietnam as to why Johnson changed the formula. Multiple other reasons have been added to this. One argument was that the Americans were always clear

[11] Vickers, 'Harold Wilson, the British Labour Party, and the War in Vietnam', 67–68.
[12] Kevin Boyle, 'The Price of Peace: Vietnam, the Pound, and the Crisis of the American Empire', *Diplomatic history* 27 (2003) 37–72, there 48.
[13] Ibid., 61.

in their intentions, but a difference in British and American English had obscured this. Another argument was made that the British acted without American permission during the talks. Johnson's leadership style and his fight with Robert Kennedy may have also played a role in why the Johnson changed the formula. Most of these account originate from memoires or biographies. Although Pimlott and Vickers also use primary sources, they do not use primary sources from the FRUS or TNA, as I do. As will become clear in the third chapter, the increased troop movements was the main reason for why the talks broke down. Nothing from the documents from the FRUS or TNA sources indicate the semantic difference in 'has stopped' or 'assured stoppage' was responsible. The argument that the British did not have authorization is not true, as the British were cleared by the Americans to negotiate. Finally, evidence from the documents do reveal that Johnson's personality affected Kosygin Week, support Boyle's claim, but it does not support the notion that a fight with Robert Kennedy influenced the change in policy.

1.3 How did the Americans see the talks?

Scholars that explicitly write about how the Americans saw the talks, all mention that the Americans had a pessimistic view of the talks. Parker is negative about how the American saw the talks. He argues that Wilson did not know what he was talking about and naively thought that talks could end the war. Quoting Johnson's memoirs, "that the British government's general approach to the war and to finding a peaceful solution would have been considerably different if a brigade of Her Majesty's Forces had been stationed just north of the demilitarized zone in Vietnam", Parker states that something could be said for it. He further quotes Rostow, Johnson's National Security Advisor, writing that 'we don't give a goddamn about Wilson.' According to Parker, Rostow found Wilson a nuisance and a irrelevance, while he and Johnson were worried about DRV troops infiltrating South Vietnam. Parker received this information from Wilson and Cooper's memoirs.[14]

Vickers shares Parker pessimism about how the Americans saw the talks. She claims that the Americans were uninterested in the talks and had no need for middlemen. Vickers quotes Cooper's book to claim that the Americans believed Wilson was using the discussions

[14] Parker, 'International Aspects of the Vietnam War', 207.

to boost his prestige, and that they didn't want Wilson to take credit for bringing Hanoi to the table.[15]

Boyle writes that, just before Kosygin arrived in London, Rostow gave Johnson the idea of writing directly to Ho. Because he had little faith in intermediaries and was dismissive of the British, Rostow insisted on dealing directly with the North Vietnamese. Johnson would have to make a peace offer directly to Ho. Boyle writes that Johnson was only vaguely aware of what was happening in London and that only Johnson, Rostow and Rusk were aware of the letter to Ho. Cooper and the British did not know of it. This is based on documents from the National Security Files.[16]

These are the negative accounts on how the Americans saw the talks. There are other accounts on Kosygin Week, but these do not explicitly mention that the Americans wanted the talks to succeed. These other accounts are more neutral. One figure repeatedly mentioned in these negative accounts is Walt Rostow, who was dismiss of the British. Another account is that the Americans believed that Wilson was using the talks to bolster his own image. The pessimistic view the Americans had is present in the primary sources my own research uses, those of Walt Rostow especially. The idea that the Americans had that Wilson used the talks to increase his personal standing, is not the present in the documents though.

1.4 The divisions

From this chapter it becomes clear that there are divisions in the historiography regarding Kosygin Week. These division centre around three points. The first one is who took initiative for the talks. From the reading it becomes clear that every actor in Kosygin Week (the U.S, Soviet Union, North Vietnam and Wilson) has been judged of taking initiative for the talks. The second point of division is on why the Americans changed the formula. The likelihood of DRV infiltration into South Vietnam has been consistently pointed at the reason why Johnson reversed the A, B formula, but other aspects have been added to this. A difference in semantics between U.S. and U.K. English could have played a role in why the talks broke down. The British have also been accused of acting without American permission in the talks. Finally, Johnson's personality may have played a role in why the talks broke down. His underlings were afraid to criticize him and this may have caused the communications mix-up. A fight with

[15] Vickers, 'Harold Wilson, the British Labour Party, and the War in Vietnam', 68.
[16] Boyle, 'The Price of Peace', 57.

Robert Kennedy may have caused Johnson to reverse the formula. The final point of division is on how the Americans viewed the talks. Most of the accounts of Kosygin Week are neutral, but there are negative standouts. According to these accounts, the Americans, but especially Walt Rostow, were dismissive of the British and they did not want to use intermediaries. None of the literature in this chapter have used the sources that I use in my research. Although Boyle uses sources from the FRUS and the British National Archives, I use different documents than the ones he uses. With the research I do, I hope to clear up the conflicting and unclear answers that have been given in existing scholarship.

Chapter 2. Previous peace attempts

In this chapter I examine some previous attempts at negotiations between (intermediaries of) the U.S. and North Vietnam. This chapter shows there are themes present in these previous attempts that are also present during Kosygin Week. One of these themes is the use of intermediaries during negotiations, which the U.S. was reluctant to use. A second theme is that the Soviet Union did not want to publicly appear to engage in talks to end the war in Vietnam, but did so in a covert manner. A final theme is how the British supported the U.S. but wanted to use diplomacy to end the war. They made multiple attempts to involve the Soviets in their peace efforts.

2.1 Direct vs. intermediary

A recurring theme during attempts to end the Vietnam War is the use of intermediaries during negotiations. Herring writes that Johnson was sceptical of the use of intermediaries, calling it 'Nobel Prize fever.' However, as Herring makes clear, ignoring these attempts was bad from a public relations perspective. But, if Johnson made use of these attempts or if he made his own attempt to negotiate, then he ran other risks. He could raise false hopes, send the wrong signal to the DRV, or weaken South Vietnam.[17]

Because of this situation, Johnson was caught in a trap. Every attempt at negotiation, whether direct or through intermediaries, had its risks. Despite this, the Johnson administration did attempt to use negotiations to end the war. Soon after escalating the Vietnam War in early 1965, the Johnson administration publicly called on North Vietnam to negotiate. In a speech at John Hopkins university, Johnson told spectators that the U.S. was willing to negotiate without conditions and offered the DRV a billion-dollar economic development plan. This was followed by a bombing pause. During this pause, the U.S. approached North Vietnam and told them that, in return for a decrease in attacks on South Vietnam, they would reduce their bombing campaigns. Herring writes that although Johnson sincerely wanted to end the war in Vietnam, his attempts at negotiations were designed to deflect from the recent escalation.[18] During Kosygin Week, Johnson made another attempt to directly negotiate with Hanoi, but like in 1965, this attempt would fail.

[17] George Cyril Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: a different kind of war*. An administrative history of the Johnson presidency series; [11] 863446027 (1st ed.; Austin: University of Texas Press 1994) 89.
[18] George Cyril Herring, *America's longest war: the United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (Boston: McGraw-Hill Education 2014) 165.

Despite Johnson's reluctance to use intermediaries, he could not ignore them, and there were multiple attempts by third parties to end the war in Vietnam. Starting in 1964, Secretary-General of the United Nations U Thant made several attempts to bring the Vietnam War to an end. In his first attempt, in August 1964, Thant met with Johnson, Dean Rusk and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson and proposed talks between American and DRV officials on neutral grounds. Although the Americans were not required to approve the plan, Johnson and Rusk did not veto the plan. Thant was motivated by this and continued his attempt. The following month, after Thant had secured Ho's blessing of the plan, the U.S. delayed the plan, as Johnson was too busy with the upcoming presidential election. Thant continued his attempt in January 1965 and secured neutral grounds in Burma. This time, Rusk blocked the plan. The Secretary of State did not trust Thant or the North Vietnamese and was convinced that the DRV was not ready to negotiate.[19] This reluctance of the U.S. to negotiate using intermediaries is a theme present in alle peace attempts, including Kosygin Week. Furthermore, the U.S. did not believe that North Vietnam wanted to negotiate. This thinking would also be present during the Wilson-Kosygin talks.

A later attempt by U Thant would show the Johnson administration why it was they could not afford to ignore peace attempts by third parties. After his attempt in January 1965, Thant continued his efforts and came up with a new plan. In a meeting with Stevenson, Thant suggested a seven-nation conference to negotiate an end to the war. This plan failed before Johnson even had the time to consider it. Thants plan was printed in the papers and when he was questioned about it, the Secretary-General told the press that he had been attempting to negotiate an end to the war for some time. In turn, the Johnson administration initially denied this, but later on, Rusk admitted that there had been talks with Thant to negotiate an end to the war, but, as Rusk made clear, the DRV was not willing to talk. According to Herring, this set up a pattern harmful to the U.S. North Vietnam seemed ready to negotiate, but the U.S. did not. The Johnson administration seemed to stand in the way of peace in Vietnam.[20] This attempt by Thant had damaged the Johnson administrations public image. Whether or not North Vietnam wanted to talk, the U.S. would be seen as warmongers. Because of this, the U.S. could not stop any third party peace overture, as this would only reinforce this public image. This explains why the U.S. did not stop Wilson-Kosygin talks and other peace overtures.

[19] Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam*, 91.
[20] Ibid., 92–93.

2.2 The Soviets

The role of the Soviet Union in negotiations to end the Vietnam War may be a less talked about theme, it is a theme important to this research. During Kosygin Week, the Soviet Union wanted to negotiate for North Vietnam. According to R.B. Smith, it is possible that the Soviet Union already participated in a peace overture before Kosygin Week. Shortly after Johnson ordered a bombing pause in May 1965, Rusk wanted the Soviets to deliver a message to North Vietnam. This message would inform the DRV of the upcoming pause and that a permanent pause could only happen if the DRV would stop its attacks against the south. The U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union was ordered to bring this message to the North Vietnamese embassy in Moscow, but the DRV officials there refused to see him. Rusk called in Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin to transmit the message, but later received word that the Soviet Union refused to function as an intermediary for American diplomatic communications with North Vietnam.[21]

It is interesting to see that the U.S. wanted to use the Soviet Union to deliver a message to North Vietnam, despite their objections to the use of intermediaries. It could be that because the Soviets only had to deliver a message, the Americans did not consider them as intermediaries. The Soviet rebuke of being an intermediary is interesting to see, because secretly they did appear to make an effort to end the war in Vietnam. This becomes clear from what happened with Pierre Sallinger.

Sallinger, former White House Press Secretary for John F. Kennedy, was visiting Moscow and had dinner with M. Sagatelyan, from the Soviet news agency TASS. Sagatelyan had come up with a proposal to end the fighting in Vietnam, which he thought the Americans would accept. Although Salinger was no longer working for the U.S. government, he immediately reported the proposals to Rusk. Smith proposes that this may have influenced Johnson to order a bombing pause. That Rusk was told that the Soviet Union would not function as an intermediary, was only a ruse and the Soviet government was actively trying to persuade the U.S. to negotiate an end to the war.[22] That the Soviet Union publicly refused to be an intermediary for the U.S, but secretly did want the Americans to negotiate, falls in line with would happen during Kosygin Week. Kosygin did not want to appear eager to negotiate an end to the war, but in fact did want to.

[21] R. B. Smith, *An international history of the Vietnam War. Vol. 3: The making of a limited war, 1965-66.* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1991) 124.
[22] Ibid., 124–125.

Ilya V. Gaiduk supports Smith's claim, writing that Moscow was forced to be involved in efforts to stop the war. Like every country, Moscow realized that the Vietnam War posed a global threat. North Vietnam was, according to Gaiduk, also interested in peace efforts. They had never rejected negotiations, as long as they were peaceful. This, in turn, encouraged the Soviet Union to continue their efforts. Finally, Moscow felt threatened by Chinese influence in North Vietnam, and hoped to retain their own influence by being involved in peace efforts. However, as Gaiduk, makes clear, all Soviets efforts were done in a covert manner. The Soviets had their own strategy for the peace efforts. The most important was trying to convince the U.S. and the DRV to establish direct diplomacy. If that failed, the Soviet Union would encourage other countries to initiate peace efforts.[23] That the Soviet Union preferred to operate their peace efforts in a covert manner, shows up in the way they operated during Kosygin Week. That they wanted other countries to act as peacemakers, is also evident from the talks, as the United Kingdom could then act in this role.

2.3 The British

British attitude towards the Vietnam War is the final theme. Unlike the Soviet Union, The British made their peace efforts overtly. Although they supported the U.S. in their fight against communism, they preferred to use diplomacy. The British were present at the origin of the Vietnam War in 1954. Then Prime Minister Winston Churchill did not support American proposals for military intervention in French Indochina. Instead, the British co-chaired the Geneva peace conference with the Soviets. The result of this conference was that Vietnam would be temporarily split in two countries until national elections. The Americans refused to support this measure and recognized South Vietnam as an independent country. North Vietnam responded by supporting communist forces in the south, starting the Vietnam War.[24]

According to Geraint Hughes, Wilson had a certain vision of East-West relations, which influenced his policy towards Vietnam. Wilson was in favour of détente and wanted to improve Anglo-Soviet relations. He had experience dealing with the Soviets as he had visited the Soviet Union twice before becoming prime minister. But, according to Hughes, the Soviets resisted Wilson's push for stronger Anglo-Soviets relations, as British support for the American actions

[23] Ilya V. Gaiduk, 'Peacemaking or Troubleshooting? The Soviet Role in Peace Initiatives during the Vietnam War', in: Lloyd C. Gardner and Ted Gittinger ed., *Search for Peace in Vietnam, 1964-1968* 8. Foreign Relations and the Presidency Series (College Station: Texas A&M University Press 2004) 260–277, there 265–266.
[24] Geraint Hughes, 'A 'missed opportunity' for peace? Harold Wilson, British diplomacy, and the sunflower initiative to end the Vietnam war, February 1967', *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 14 (2003) 106–130, there 108.

in Vietnam stood in the way. To overcome this, Hughes writes, Wilson attempted to revive the Geneva conference co-chairmanship. He tried to use it to promote peace in Vietnam and believed the U.K. could serve as an intermediary between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Although Johnson gave the public the façade that he supported Wilson's policy in Vietnam, in private he resented it, as they felt that Wilson did not filly support the president's policy in Vietnam.[25] Wilson's views on Anglo-Soviet and Anglo-American relations explains why he thought he could serve as an intermediary during Kosygin Week. The Americans not appreciating the British, is something that would remain during Kosygin Week.

Because of Wilson's view on Anglo-Soviet relations, Wilson attempted to involve them on multiple occasions in Vietnam peace efforts, but this did not work out. When Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko visited London in March 1965, Wilson proposed reconvening the Geneva Conference. Gromyko refused and told him that the U.S. was the aggressor and that peace in Vietnam had to begin with an American withdrawal.[26]

This attempt seems like a precursor to Kosygin Week, with talks in London between Wilson and a Soviet official regarding negotiations about Vietnam. In this instance, however, the Soviet official refused to discuss it, unlike the talks between Wilson and Kosygin.

Wilson did not give up on his attempts to involve the Soviets. During the summer of 1966, Wilson continued his attempts to involve the Soviets. Elements of these attempts would return during Kosygin Week. According to John Dumbrell and Sylvia Ellis, the prime minister told Washington in July that Kosygin had shown a willingness to become involved in ending the fighting in Vietnam. According to Wilson, Kosygin feared Chinese intervention in the conflict and wanted to prevent a showdown between the U.S. and China. In September, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations revealed the Phase A, Phase B formula to the world, which Wilson embraced. In November, the Americans allowed the British Foreign Secretary to present the formula to the Soviets.[27] Wilson's claim about Kosygin would return during the Wilson-Kosygin talks, in which Wilson made the same claim. Evidence also points that the claim is true. The Phase A, Phase B formula would be central during the talks, and the phrasing of it would play in a role in the collapse of the talks. The British presenting the formula to the Soviets in November would play also play a role during Kosygin Week. Although the Soviets rebuffed

[25] Ibid., 110–111.
[26] John Dumbrell and Sylvia Ellis, 'British Involvement in Vietnam Peace Initiatives, 1966–1967 Marigolds, Sunflowers, and 'Kosygin Week'', *Diplomatic History* 27 (2003) 113–149, there 120.
[27] Ibid., 122–123.

them in November, the British later learned that the Americans were simultaneously negotiating through a Polish channel.

This Polish channel, codenamed Marigold, would result in American presence in London during Kosygin Week. Throughout the summer of 1966, Polish diplomat Januscz Lewandowski made several trips between Hanoi and Saigon. This resulted in a draft to end the war. Johnson had his usual disdain for intermediaries, but, as discussed before, could not stop the peace effort for public relations reasons. Marigold eventually failed. Herring writes that like many other plans, it was unclear if North Vietnam was committed but they did agree to talks in Warsaw. Several days before the scheduled talks could begin, American bombardments resumed near Hanoi for the first time in five months. Johnson, not having faith in Marigold, did not cancel the bombings. Several weeks later, more bombings ended any hopes of talks. Although Johnson's advisor urged him to stop bombing near Hanoi, Johnson refused. Stopping the bombings had not been a condition for the talks. To Hanoi, the bombings put an end to Marigold.[28] The Soviets knew about Marigold, but the British did not. The details of this, will be revealed in the next chapter.

2.4 The themes

In this chapter, I examined previous attempts at negotiations to end the fighting in Vietnam. From these attempts it becomes clear that certain themes also played a role during Kosygin Week. The first theme is the use of intermediaries. The U.S. attempted to negotiate directly with North Vietnam, but this failed. Third parties were used as intermediaries, although the U.S. was reluctant to use them. The U.S. could not stop them, however, as they could not afford to be perceived as standing in the way of peace. This explains why they did not attempt to prevent Kosygin Week from happening. The Soviets are another theme. The Soviets preferred to covertly attempt to play a role in ending the war. Encouraging other countries to function as peacemaker, as during Kosygin Week, was part of their strategy too. The final theme is the British attitude towards the war. Although the British supported the American fight against communism, they preferred to use diplomacy. Wilson's views on Anglo-Soviet relations meant he attempted to involve the Soviets in his efforts to end the Vietnam War. During Kosygin Week, he would attempt this again. The Americans did not appreciate Wilson's policy towards Vietnam, which would be present during the Wilson-Kosygin talks.

[28] Herring, *America's longest war*, 211–213.

Chapter 3. The research

"The US will order a cessation of bombing of North Viet-Nam as soon as they are assured that infiltration from North Viet-Nam to South Viet-Nam has stopped".[29]

This sentence was part of the proposal made to the Soviet Union by the U.S. through Prime Minister Harold Wilson during Kosygin Week. The past tense of 'has stopped' squashed the chance of a cease-fire in the Vietnam War and caused a low point in Anglo-American relations. An attempt to end the ongoing Vietnam War became a central part of during Kosygin Week. In the first chapter I examined the historiography surrounding Kosygin Week. In this chapter I use primary sources from the FRUS and the British National Archives to fill in the gaps in the historiography and examine how the circumstance of Kosygin Week led to the collapse of the talks. I first examine who took the initiative for the talks. After this, I examine why the Americans changed their policy. Lastly, I examine how the Americans looked at the talks. First, I argue that both the British and the Soviets wanted to make use of the talks to end the Vietnam War. Second, I argue that the threat of DRV troop movements resulted in a change in American policy, but that Johnson's personality may have also played a role in the policy change. Finally, I argue that the Johnson administration was mostly negative of the talks but kept this from the British. All of these circumstances resulted in the collapse of the talks.

3. 1 The initiative

In February 1966, the foundations of Kosygin Week were laid. During a visit to the Soviet Union, Wilson invited Kosygin to visit Britain and the premier accepted. The following November, Kosygin suggested visiting in February, which was accepted by the British.[30]

During Cooper's brief to Wilson and George Brown, Foreign Secretary, Wilson already told Cooper that he found the timing of the visit conspicuous. From the way Kosygin had managed the timing and length of the visit, the prime minister felt reasonably confident that the Soviet government related this to the possibility of a truce. It was therefore essential not to do anything that could endanger the talks, like a resumption of bombings.[31]

[29] Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, February 11, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 56.
[30] Unnamed, Records of the Prime Minister's Office (hereafter cited as PREM) 13/1840, The National Archives of the UK (hereafter cited as TNA), Kew, England.
[31] Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and Mr. Chester Cooper in the Prime Minister's room in the House of Commons at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 18, 1967, PREM 13/1917, TNA.

That Kosygin wanted to time his visit to London with Tet, suggests that he, like the British wanted to use the opportunity to discuss a truce. Wilson was happy to accommodate him.

At the beginning of the talks with Kosygin, when the two were discussing the agenda, Wilson made clear that he wanted to talk about Vietnam at an early stage 'because of the dangerous situation and the dangerous possibilities which could arise from it.' The prime minister felt that it was particularly urgent because the truce period for Tet was about to begin. As both sides most likely had a lot to say about this question which could be useful, they should prioritize it. Kosygin responded that he was very interested to hear what the British had to say.[32] This also shows in the records of the first formal meeting between Wilson and Kosygin during the talks, After officially welcoming Kosygin and his party to the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street, the prime minister asked Kosygin if he would be agreeable to opening with an exchange on Vietnam. Kosygin had no objection and Wilson began to share his views on Vietnam.[33]

In his memoires, Wilson noted that he was under the impression that Kosygin was prepared to change his previous policy of refusing to get involved in getting the Americans and the Vietnamese to the conference table. His visit coincided with Tet, Vietnamese New Year, which in previous years had been a time of cease-fire. It would be easier to extend this cease-fire, than to establish a new one at a different time.[34]

Wilson wanted to begin the talks with Vietnam and Kosygin agreed. Wilson was under the impression that Kosygin wanted to get involved in ending the war. This, combined with Kosygin's timing, shows that both the British and the Soviets wanted to make use of Kosygin Week to discuss an end to the Vietnam War. As I have mentioned in the first chapter, the existing scholarship is unclear on who took initiative for the talks as the U.S, the Soviet Union, North Vietnam, and Wilson had all been stated as having done so. My research supports the literature that states that Wilson and the Soviet Union took initiative, but it goes against any literature that claims that the U.S. took initiative for the talks. Although Parker claimed that Wilson wanted to be a peacemaker for his personal standing, there is nothing from the documents that suggest that this is the case. These findings also go against Rusk's first-hand account. Rusk claimed that the Johnson administration pressed Wilson to conduct talks with Kosygin about Vietnam. The sources from the TNA show that they had nothing to do with this.

[32] Record of conversation between the Prime Minister and Mr. Kosygin at 3.30 p.m. on Monday, February 6, 1967, PREM 13/1715, TNA.
[33] Record of first formal meeting held at 10 Downing Street at 4.30 p.m. on Monday, 6 February, 1967, PREM 13/1840, TNA.
[34] Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964-1970*, 345.

My research does not support or undermines any claims from scholars that North Vietnam took initiative. The documents do not contain evidence to make a claim about this.

These findings all fall in line with the themes established in the previous chapter. The Americans were reluctant to use any intermediaries in negotiations, which explains why they did not take any initiative for the talks between Wilson and Kosygin. The way the Soviets wanted to use the talks to negotiate about Vietnam, is part of the strategy the Soviets had established. They wanted to negotiate in a covert manner. The way Kosygin planned his visit to coincide with Tet, is evidence of this. Letting other countries be peacemakers, like Britain could be during Kosygin Week, was also a part of Soviet strategy. The British strategy is much of the same as previous attempts. The Soviets were again made part of their attempt, but unlike previous times, the Soviets were much willing to talk. This could be explained by Kosygin's turn as described by Wilson.

3.2 The policy change

On February 6, Rostow reported on the first day of talks between Wilson and Kosygin to Johnson. The president was informed that Wilson had been pressing Kosygin for a firm commitment that they would negotiate if the Americans would stop bombing. Kosygin later said he called Hanoi and got that commitment. Wilson wanted to know from Johnson on what language to proceed and if the Americans could furnish a draft. Did the Americans have something concrete in mind in the president's press conference in which he stated that he is prepared to stop "for almost any reciprocal action"? If the Americans wanted Wilson to be tough, he would be tough. From the talks, it was clear that Kosygin had said that the Russians were ready to underwrite Hanoi's commitment to talk if the Americans would stop bombing. Rostow added his own reaction to the message stating that "This is obviously a pressure play which we should take seriously but not react to with excessive haste. Also, if we are going to enter into counter-drafting, we ought to get the draft Wilson is talking about." The White House responded the next day by stating that they would inform the DRV that: "if they will agree to an assured stoppage of infiltration into South Viet Nam, we will stop the bombing of North Viet Nam and stop further augmentation of U.S. forces in South Viet Nam." Johnson wanted Wilson

to support this position in his talks with Kosygin. This same message was sent to Bruce and Cooper and which Cooper read to Brown.[35]

On the same day that Johnson sent his message to Wilson, he made use of the contact with the DRV embassy in Moscow to send a letter to Ho. In this letter Johnson made note of the public statements made by DRV officials suggesting that Ho was prepared to negotiate with the U.S. if the Americans would unconditionally stop the bombings and military actions against the DRV. Johnson stated that if he would do this, then there would immediately be worldwide speculation that discussions were under way, which would impair the privacy and secrecy of those discussions. The president also stated that he was concerned that the DRV would use the moment to improve its military position. Nevertheless, Johnson was prepared to go further. He was prepared to "order a cessation of bombing against your country and the stopping of further augmentation of US forces in South Viet-Nam as soon as I am assured that infiltration into South Viet-Nam by land and by sea has stopped." This way, both sides could start negotiations. If Ho would accept this, Johnson saw no reason why it could not take effect at the end of Tet. In the text that was sent with it to the American embassy in Moscow, Johnson stated that this proposal resulted from the talks between Wilson and Kosygin. Kosygin had pressed hard to Wilson that the DRV was really prepared to negotiate if the Americans would stop the bombing. The Americans had conveyed to the British the essence of this proposal to Ho and that they were sending it to Ho through appropriate channels. The British were assured that the message to Ho was identical in terms of substance to the language used by Johnson in his letter to Wilson on February 7.[36]

This is the first sign that Americans were not fully informing the British of what they were doing. Johnson states that his proposal to Ho came from the talks between Wilson and Kosygin, but this is false. In his message to Wilson, Johnson states the U.S. would stop bombing "if they (DRV) will agree to an assured stoppage of infiltration into South Viet Nam…" In the letter to Ho, Johnson had stated that he would stop the bombing "as soon as I am assured that infiltration into South Viet-Nam by land and by sea has stopped." This difference in formula would cause the entire talks to break down several days later.

[35] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk, February 6, 1967, FRUS, vol. V, doc. 39.
[36] Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union, February 7, 1967, FRUS, vol. V, doc. 40.

That evening, Cooper sent a message to the White House about the second day of talks between Wilson and Kosygin. Wilson had laid out to Kosygin how the A-B formula would work:

"The United States are willing to stop the build-up of their forces in the South if they are assured that the movement of North Vietnamese forces from the North to the South will stop at the same time. Essentially therefore the two stages are kept apart. But because the United States Government know that the second stage will follow, they will therefore be able first to stop the bombing, even if there is a short period between the first stage and the actions to be taken by both sides in the second stage. There would be balanced concessions in the second stage; the first stage would be carried out by the United States alone; but the United States would only carry out the first stage because they would know that the second stage would follow within a short period of time."

Kosygin had shown considerable interest in this and was given the text in writing. Cooper was asked if the U.S. would send a similar message to Hanoi. Cooper replied that he did not know but said the implication of the president's communication to Wilson was that such a message would be sent. The British were hoping that if there would be questions as to the differences in the formulation of Phase A, Phase B between the London version and the Hanoi version, Hanoi would be told that the British test was authoritative in substance. When Rostow saw Cooper's message he sent it Johnson together with his own text. He told the president that they had a problem, but that they could still fix it. Rostow stated that the British took the proposal from the previous night and put it in A-B form, or first a bombing halt and then simultaneous stopping of infiltration and troop movements. This was not how they had stated it the previous night or to Hanoi that day. Rostow noted that the reason of this mix-up was that they had given Wilson and Brown the A-B formula and told them to discuss it with Moscow. Rostow had talked with Rusk and Rusk was confident that if the DRV accepted the A-B formula, they could work it out to protect their interest if there would be a short time-gap between A and B and hard on verification. Rostow doubted whether Hanoi would accept anything, but stated that if they accepted anything, it would be A-B rather than the tougher formula sent to Hanoi.[37]

Not knowing of the letter Johnson had sent to Ho, Wilson had continued his talks with Kosygin based on the message Johnson had sent him. Kosygin had accepted this A-B formula

[37] Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson, February 7, 1967, FRUS, vol. V, doc. 41.

and said he would transmit it to Hanoi. When Rostow heard of this, he assumed he could mend the situation, but he showed hesitation in believing that Hanoi would accept any proposal.

It took the U.S. three days to respond to London and when they did, they completely changed the situation. On February 10, Rostow sent a telegram to Cooper and Bruce, saying: "A The United States will order a cessation of bombing of North Vietnam as soon as they are assured that infiltration from North Vietnam to South Vietnam has stopped. This assurance can be communicated in secret if North Vietnam so wishes." "B Within a few days (with a period to be agreed with the two sides before the bombing stops) the United States will stop further augmenting their force in South Vietnam. The cessation of bombing of North Vietnam is an action which will be immediately apparent. This requires that the stoppage of infiltration become public very quickly thereafter. If Hanoi is unwilling to announce the stoppage of infiltration, the United States must do so at the time it stops augmentation of U.S. forces. In that case, Hanoi must not deny it." There were comments for Wilson attached to the telegram. He had to be clear that the stoppage of augmentation meant that the U.S. could still rotate their troops and their continued supply. Augmentation meant no net increase. Stoppage of infiltration meant that men and arms could not cross the border. The phrasing of the first part was done to prevent the sudden movement of troops during the time between A and B.[38]

Within those three days it took the U.S. to respond, they reversed the formula. Only after they had been assured that the DRV had stopped infiltrating the south, would they stop bombing. With this change in policy, the Americans had completely shifted the talks. Although it first seemed the talks would actually result in something, by changing the formula around, the Americans had made the talks impossible to resolve.

Oblivious to the message sent to him, Cooper messaged the State Department with the results from the talks between Wilson and Kosygin. Kosygin had shown considerable interest in the Phase A, Phase B formula and had committed himself to send it to Hanoi. He wanted an agreed upon text as soon as possible. Cooper suggested this text would include: "The US will stop the bombing as soon as it has been assured that infiltration by the North will stop and this assurance can be given privately." Followed by "Within a few days to be agreed upon by the parties, the US will stop augmenting its forces in the South and North Viet Nam will stop infiltration."[39]

[38] Telegram From the President's Special Assistant (Rostow) to the Ambassador to the United Kingdom (Bruce) and Chester Cooper of the National Security Council Staff, February 10, 1967, FRUS, vol. V, doc. 51.
[39] Notes of Telephone Conversation Between the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Read) and Chester Cooper of the National Security Council Staff, Undated, FRUS, vol. V, doc. 53.

The reversal of the A-B Formula did not go unnoticed in London as Cooper and Bruce phoned the State Department. Cooper told Benjamin H. Read, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State and Executive Secretary of the Department, that the British analysis was focusing sharply on the past tense in point A "the US will order a cessation of bombing of North Viet-Nam as soon as they are assured that infiltration from North Viet-Nam to South Viet-Nam has stopped." The British had noticed that this conflicted with a previous message stating "we are prepared to order a cessation of all bombing of North Viet-Nam, the moment we are assured—privately or otherwise—that this step will be answered promptly by a corresponding and appropriate de-escalation on the other side." Cooper and Bruce were having difficulty rationalizing the change with the British and would appreciate any argumentation the Americans could provide. They thought that Wilson might cable Johnson later but had urged him not to do so.[40]

In the afternoon Bruce and Cooper received a telegram from the Department of State regarding the tense of "has stopped." The British were pointing at apparent inconsistency between this position and the future tense employed in a previous message. Bruce and Cooper had to tell the British that the Americans were facing possible troop movements to the south. They could not be moved just before the DRV agreed to the formula. The Americans were recognizing that the previous message was in future tense, but that that formulation related to a different proposal, i.e., bombing cessation alone on the American side, not bombing cessation plus troop augmentation. The British should be made aware that the message conveyed to Hanoi was also in the same tense ("has stopped"). The Americans had not been clear in this in their previous message. In the preceding 24 hours, the Americans received information that the Soviets were aware of the contents of this message, presumably through their Hanoi contacts. The change in tense in the final draft given to Kosygin did not come as a surprise to the Soviets or Hanoi and could not have impaired British credibility. Lastly, the Americans made clear that their position remained firm because of the troops north of the border.[41]

In this message, the Americans argue that although the formulation was different, it related to a different proposal and that formulation in the letter to Ho, was the correct one. They also argue that possible troop movements ensured that they would not change their policy.

Cooper made note of the evening of February 11. He and Bruce had given the British the message that the bombing pause would continue during Kosygin's visit and the explanation

[40] Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, February 11, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 56.
[41] Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, February 11, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 60.

of the change in tense. Wilson said he "could only conclude that Washington did not know what it was doing from one day to the next, or that Washington knew what it was doing but did not wish to keep the British informed, or that Washington was consciously trying to lead him up the garden path by tightening its negotiations posture while letting the British proceed on the basis of an assumption that Washington was in fact ready to reach a settlement." Wilson felt that he had been made a fool of by Washington and that his credibility was badly damaged. Cooper was not absolutely certain, but he recalled Wilson saying he was 'betrayed' by Washington. The prime minister would blame the U.S. because of its shifting position if he could not come to an agreement with the Kosygin the following day. He might do this publicly. He felt that he would have to take a more independent position in regard to Vietnam. The next day, he would peddle the original Phase A, Phase B formula and would try to get the Americans to agree to it as well.[42]

After Wilson had sent two telegrams to Johnson expressing his views of the situation, Johnson responded. In his telegram, the president told Wilson that he did not believe that the matter hanged on the tense of verbs. The president again made clear that he could not stop the bombing while North Vietnamese troops could cross the border before their promise would take hold. He did accept the British view that the American statement on February 7 was different from the message on February 10 or in the message to Hanoi. They had asked on February 7 for an "assured stoppage" of infiltration. In the British version of A, then B this had been transmuted to an assurance that infiltration "will stop." This was to the Americans a different matter.[43]

Johnson points to the DRV troop movements as to why he can not begin negotiations. In his view, the difference in tense did not matter, although he does acknowledge that there was a difference. He chalks this up to a difference in English in the U.S. and English in the U.K, but this did not matter.

Wilson did agree with the point of the danger of DRV troops crossing the border in the interval between A and B, but he would try to have a new agreement contain a time-table between A and B of only a few hours as to try and save the situation.[44]

The next day Wilson decided that he would put this view as the British view and try to sell it to Kosygin and the Americans. It would be the British government's definite proposal to end the war. He sent this to Johnson and to alleviate his fear that between the cessation of the

[42] Memorandum for the Record, February 11, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 63.
[43] Telegram From President Johnson to Prime Minister Wilson, February 12, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 66.
[44] Telegram From Prime Minister Wilson to President Johnson, February 12, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 67.

bombing and the stopping of the infiltration there would only be a few hours, to prevent the DRV from sending entire battalions through. To ensure that there would be no breakdown in communications, Cooper was given a room in Chequers, where Wilson and Kosygin where meeting for the final time. Cooper had a direct line to Bruce and the White House. In Washington, Johnson was meeting with his National Security Council. After Kosygin arrived, Wilson told him the situation. He told him of the new draft and that it was sent to Washington and that there was a direct line to the Americans, so that a speedy consultation was possible. The Tet truce was only in operation for a few more hours. Wilson then spent hours trying to delay Kosygin from leaving but was eventually unsuccessful. Only five minutes after Kosygin had left, did the Americans respond. Johnson wanted a shorter timetable. A telegram with the new proposal was on its way. In this telegram, Johnson lauded Wilson for his attempt to bring about peace. The new proposal included that if Wilson could get a North Vietnamese assurance that the infiltration would stop by the following morning then, he could promise an assurance from the U.S. that they would not resume their bombardment. The American build up in the south would stop in a few days. Then they could move to a neutral spot to start negotiations to bring about peace. Wilson found it unrealistic, as the timetable was too short. Even if Kosygin could get the message to message to Moscow and then to Hanoi, there was not enough time for the DRV to decide and respond. Wilson went to Kosygin's hotel with the proposal. He was as negative as Wilson. Even after Wilson managed to get a further extension from Johnson by a few hours, it had not been enough. They had failed. Although the message had arrived in Hanoi, an answer never came, and the American resumed their bombing. Wilson blamed the Americans, stating that their decision had been 'decisive and disastrous'. Wilson quotes Cooper's book, in which Cooper wrote that the American government mishandled the situation. Finally, Wilson compares the entire situation with a Greek tragedy, stating that February 1967 was the re-enactment, in their time, of the Sibylline books.[45] With the Americans changing the phrasing of a bombing truce, they had squandered a possible end to the fighting in Vietnam.

The matter of the policy change echoed through after Kosygin Week had come to an end. Paul Gore-Booth, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was called on by William Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, on March 21. Bundy mentioned that, in case it was not recorded, that he had told Brown, something the British did not know at that time. It was that the message that Johnson had sent to Hanoi was consistent with the message that the Americans had sent to London on Friday. If that was the

[45] Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964-1970*, 360–366.

case, as Gore-Booth replied, why did it take the Americans three days to recognize that the message Cooper had sent on Tuesday was not consistent with the letter sent to Hanoi? This was what had caused breakdown. Bundy admitted this and said that this was one of those things that just happened in a situation in a government like that of the U.S, where people were working in haste and at high tension. Simply, they had made a mistake and there was no change of policy. Gore-Booth believed this to be correct and was rather terrified of it.[46]

This conversation provides evidence that the Americans were fully aware that the message Cooper had sent on Tuesday was not consistent with what Johnson had sent to Ho. It took the Americans three days to recognize this, because officials were working in haste and at high tension.

On March 23, 1967, Wilson received a message from Patrick Gordon Walker, Minister without Portfolio, about the difference between the president's message to Ho and the proposal made to Kosygin. The message said that the charitable explanation of the difference is that either the Americans did not realise that there was any difference until someone in Washington pointed it out i.e., simply loose drafting or that Johnson had been pressured between the two messages and that is why he sent Ho a tougher message. But, as it was noted, if that was the case, why had the British not been told of it until Friday the tenth? The uncharitable explanation, as written in the message, was that the hawks prevailed, but did not tell the British until the tenth. Because of this message, it was suggested that Patrick Dean, the British ambassador in the U.S, should meet with Johnson. [47]

This message to Wilson also blames carelessness for the difference in formula. Another option was that hawks had managed to pressure Johnson.

Wilson apparently wanted an answer and Dean had that meeting with Johnson. Gordon Walker reported on this meeting to Wilson on April 12. Gordon Walker made several conclusions from this meeting. There had been a fairly substantial change in American policy at the beginning of Kosygin Week and the British had not been told of this. Neither were Cooper or David Bruce, but it was unclear if this was deliberate or due to inefficiency. Gordon Walker would not accept that Cooper was two-faced and therefore could not believe that Cooper would have drafted the text for Kosygin if he had known that Washington had changed its policy. Gordon Walker stated that from Dean's meeting with the president, it is clear that Johnson and

[46] VIET-NAM: KOSYGIN VISIT, 22 March, 1967, FO 800/985, TNA.
[47] President Johnson's exchange with President Ho, PREM 13/1919, TNA.

Rostow were at fault, but that they would never admit it. Wilson was advised to let the matter rest until he could speak personally with Johnson.[48]

In the report written by Dean, it becomes clear why Gordon Walker made this conclusion. Before his meeting, Dean was warned by Rusk, Rostow and Cooper that Johnson had not been easy to handle during Kosygin Week. After Dean made clear that Wilson was grateful for all the American help and that he valued the special relationship, Johnson replied he valued the relation as well. He did not want to go into the past, but he wanted to make clear that he did not believe there was a breakdown in communication. Johnson had personally devoted many hours to providing Wilson with information. The difficulty with Kosygin had arisen when Wilson had sent Johnson a message while the president was busy drafting a message to Wilson. This was followed by expressing his regret and agreeing that it should never happen again. Rostow, on invitation from the president, added that if there would be any comparable situation in the future, there should only be communications directly between the president and the prime minister. Johnson said that he thought this had caused the trouble on this occasion, but Rostow replied that there had been other links in the chain which had caused the misunderstanding. Shortly after Kosygin had arrived in London, they had received intelligence that DRV troops were mobilizing to cross the border. This ensured that Phase A, Phase B was no longer tolerable. This, plus the indirect line of communications, had caused the misunderstanding, according to Rostow. [49]

Dean then added his own thoughts, in which he states that he had been warned that going too much in details would provoke a strong reaction in Johnson. That Rostow had complained about Cooper, showed that apparently there had been misunderstanding in London about Cooper's ability to agree on behalf of the president. Even though Cooper had done nothing wrong, the Americans intended to never send a special representative from the president to London again. That Rostow had remarked that American policy had changed because of the troop movements in North Vietnam and that Johnson had not denied it, showed to Dean that it was an admission that there had been a change and that the Americans were at fault for not informing Wilson about it.[50]

Wilson agreed with the conclusions that Dean drew and that it should not be pushed further.[51]

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[48] Unnamed, PREM 13/2458, TNA.
[49] Vietnam and Kosygin's Visit, PREM 13/2458, TNA.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Unnamed, Fo 800-985, TNA.

From this meeting it becomes clear that the Americans had hidden facts from the British during Kosygin Week. There had been change in policy, causing the reversal of the formula. This change had resulted in the Americans ruining a chance of peace in Vietnam. It had been caused by intelligence reports stating that the DRV were moving to the south. From the literature discussed in the first chapter, this was already clear, but this has now been confirmed by sources from the FRUS and the National Archives. Other literature had also used sources from the FRUS and the TNA, but my research uses other documents from those archives. However, there were scholars that added to this explanation of the policy change, as I discussed in the first chapter. One notion was that the British had acted without American authorization. My research undermines this claim, as it becomes clear from the documents that the British had been cleared to negotiate with Kosygin by the Americans. American officials were even present during Kosygin Week. Only in the aftermath did Rostow make clear to the British that Cooper had not been fully authorized. This can bee seen as a way to save face by the Americans. Pimlott brought up that semantics played in role in why the policy changed, writing that both sides misunderstood each other. My research goes against this. Although the difference in American and British English is discussed, it becomes clear that this was not important. The difference did not play a decisive role in the policy change. Boyle wrote that Johnson's 'under siege' mentality could have played a role. Although there is no evidence to support this during Kosygin Week, Dean was warned by multiple American officials that the president had not been easy to work with during the talks. The documents examined in this chapter thus support Boyle's claims. Finally, it was argued that a fight with Robert Kennedy may have influenced Johnson to change his policy. Although Johnson famously did not get along with Kennedy, there is no evidence to support this, but there is not evidence against it either.

The theme of direct vs. indirect negotiations plays a massive role in this part. In the previous chapter it became clear that the U.S. preferred the use of direct negotiations, as they were dismissive of intermediaries. During Kosygin Week, an attempt at negotiations with intermediaries, they even made an attempt with direct negotiations. This is also part of the Americans not appreciating the British, as they disagreed with British use of diplomacy in the fight against communism. The U.S. was forced to use intermediaries during peace attempts, as they could not be seen ignoring these. If they did this, the Americans would have been seen as warmongers, hurting their public standing. This is why, despite the Americans not appreciating the British and being dismissive of intermediaries, did not stop the British from negotiating during Kosygin Week.

3.3 The Americans

Preparations for Kosygin Week began the preceding month. On January 10, 1967, Rusk was informed by American Ambassador to the U.K. David Bruce that Wilson had expressed concerns to him regarding the use of Britain as an intermediary in efforts to end the Vietnam War. The British were dissatisfied after an event the previous November, in which Foreign Secretary George Brown offered the Soviets a two-stage proposal for ending the fighting and opening negotiations. This was done in agreement with the Americans, but they had not told the British that this same proposal was already offered through the Poles in Marigold. On January 12, Wilson sent a message to Johnson expressing his dissatisfaction. Brown was offended that the U.S. had not told him of the Polish channel. Furthermore, Wilson had grave reservations about Kosygin's upcoming visit to Britain. Because of this, Johnson approved Rusk's request that Cooper would be sent over to brief Brown and that Bruce would brief Wilson on the Polish efforts. Of this. Walt Rostow wrote to the president: "I do not believe that we owe it to the British to keep them fully informed on every move in this game when 500,000 U.S. men are under arms and the British fighting contribution is zero," "Nevertheless, keeping the British tolerably happy is part of the job." William Bundy apologized to British Ambassador Patrick Dean, stating that they were not sure if the proposal would have reached the top through the Polish channel, while they were sure that Brown would get through. Bundy added that the U.S. "recognized absolute obligation never to put British in false position and hence to provide them with all information they needed for any contacts they had". This included the meeting between Wilson and Kosygin. When Cooper and Bruce met Brown and Wilson, Cooper observed that the British seemed satisfied with the explanation. Rostow, however, opposed sharing with Wilson any information about a direct channel that might open before Kosygin arrived.[52]

Rostow's comments here shows his contempt for the British. He felt that since British lives were not at risk, they did not have to keep them fully informed and that keeping the British happy was a chore. That Rostow did not want to inform the British if a new channel of communications would open, only adds to this. When dealing directly with the British, however, American officials were helpful.

[52] Editorial Note, FRUS, vol. V, doc. 15.

The letter[53] that Johnson sent to Ho is proof that the president did not have trust in the talks between Wilson and Kosygin. By attempting to negotiate directly with the DRV, Johnson bypassed the British. He also told them that his message to Ho was identical to the proposal to Kosygin, but this is false. Whether Johnson lied to the British or was genuinely under the impression that the message was the same, is unknown.

In the morning of February 11, Rostow had a phone conversation with Johnson and the talks between Kosygin and Wilson came up. Johnson asked Rostow if he thought Wilson and Kosygin would develop anything. Rostow replied that there was a 15-20% chance that something would emerge in the next weeks or months. Johnson agreed with him, but he meant between then and Sunday night. Rostow was far more pessimistic about that, 5%. Johnson said that "I'd just as soon not have a damn bit of connection to London, and the better—the easier the better, because the first thing you'll have, Bobby will have arranged the thing in London. I wouldn't be a bit surprised to see that leak tomorrow—that he worked this all out with Wilson."[54]

This phone call shows that the Americans were pessimistic about Kosygin Week, with Johnson commenting that he would rather not have any connection to London. The Bobby he refers to, is Senator Robert Kennedy, who was anti-war and who Johnson famously disliked.

After Cooper and Bruce called Read on February 11, Read apparently informed Rostow of this conversation as Rostow called Johnson after. He told the president of the trouble in London with "has stopped" versus "will stop." Rostow had pointed out to Read that the deal they were talking about was different from any they had ever talked before. It involved as part of the package the cutting down of augmentation. So, it was in diplomatic terms a new situation. Rostow also pointed out that they could not be put in a position of negotiation about this language with intermediaries. Rostow told Johnson that Rusk and McNamara were convinced that Cooper, Bruce, The British and the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister were playing around with the tense of our language. When Johnson asked for recommendations, Rostow answered that the president should not change one letter of what they had said until they were directly dealing directly with Hanoi. Johnson agreed with this.[55]

[53] Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union, February 7, 1967, FRUS, vol. V, doc. 40.
[54] Telephone Conversation Between President Johnson and the President's Special Assistant (Rostow), February 11, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 55
[55] Telephone Conversation Between President Johnson and the President's Special Assistant (Rostow), February 11, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 57

Rostow again shows his disdain of the talks in London, as he tells Johnson that the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense were accusing everyone in London of changing the American proposal. There is no evidence that Rusk and McNamara made this claim, so it can be argued that Rostow made false claims as well to discredit the British. He argues that the administration did nothing wrong as they were talking about a new proposal. Rostow also shows his distaste of using intermediaries and urges the president to stick to his guns.

Unlike Rostow, Rusk had some sympathy for the British, as becomes clear from a memorandum that the Secretary of State sent to Johnson on the same day Rostow had told the president not to change anything about the new proposal. After the British had received word the Americans had changed the formula, they requested that the Americans would at least refrain from bombing until Kosygin had left London to have some chance at reviving the talks. Bruce had called Rusk, as he had had a meeting with Wilson. During this meeting, the British had expressed concerns about American silence on their formulation. It had been based on a previously approved message and the Americans had raised no objection to the idea, so the British assumed that they had had American support. The prime minister was urging the Americans not to resume operations against the DRV before the end of the talks. Bruce had added that should the Americans resume operations, it would mean the Soviets would refuse to talk. This would cause a break-up on the issue, which would be blamed on the Americans. Rusk reminded Johnson that they had decided to resume bombing because of overwhelming evidence of DRV movements to the south. Rusk believed Bruce to be correct in that resuming bombing, they would be blamed for breaking up a major chance of peace. There was also a chance that Hanoi would respond to Kosygin, which could lead to something serious. Lastly, Rusk believed that resuming the bombing would do significant harm to American relations with the British and the Soviets.

Rusk showed in the message that he was concerned about relations with the British, showing that he, unlike Rostow was more sympathetic to them. He was less pessimistic about the talks, as he still believed that the talks could lead to something, on the condition that the Americans would not resume their bombing. Rusk was also concerned about public approval, which is a theme that was present at previous peace attempts. However, Rusk's sympathy apparently had its limit, as he did not speak in favour of the British at any other time during Kosygin Week. Johnson was apparently compelled by Rusk's appeal, as the Secretary of State messaged the embassy in the U.K, stating they had accepted the recommendation not to conduct military actions. But it had to be absolutely clear to Wilson that the actions would resume when

Kosygin left. He could also not mention the resumption of the bombings to Kosygin. Without a firm word on infiltration, the Americans could not prolong suspension of the bombing.[56]

Rostow was not the only one who had a negative view of the British. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Earle G. Wheeler disagreed with the decision to suspend the bombing until Kosygin left London. He sent a memorandum to McNamara containing his views. Part of his concerns were about Britain. Wheeler felt that Wilson wanted importance and prestige in the British domestic political scene. The peace-making efforts were used to maintain power over his political opponents within and outside his party. Britain was no longer a first-class power. The place of Britain in the world was depending on its relationship with the U.S. If the British were able to end the war in Vietnam, they would continue to desire to be a world player. Furthermore, Wheeler believed that British and American objectives were not the same in the Vietnam War and that Wilson and his government would not suffer losses as a result from the troop movements to the south. Wheeler believed that there was a danger that the British and the Soviets were attempting to delay the continuation of the American offensive against the DRV. Such attempts should be rejected, according to Wheeler. He wanted his views to be made known to the president, which they were.[57]

Although Wheeler was another American official who had a negative view of the British, it appears he did not have the same influence as Rostow. Johnson only saw Wheeler's opinion, as indicated on the document, but did nothing with it. Not every American official dismissive of the British was listened to, it appears. Wheeler does claim that Wilson only made peace attempts for his own personal gain, but this was not a claim shared by every American.

After Johnson had changed the formula, Wilson sent him two telegrams. In his response to Wilson, Johnson told Wilson that the Soviets and Hanoi had already known of the Phase A, Phase B formulation for two months and they had shown no interest. They had continued their build-up and had used ceasefires to move their troops. Johnson lamented that it seemed that everyone wanted to negotiate with them, except for the DRV. Johnson ended the telegram by expressing his thanks to Wilson for his efforts and that those thanks would be made public.[58]

In this message to Wilson, Johnson makes clear for the first to the British that he was pessimistic about Kosygin Week. He argues that although everyone wants to negotiate with him, Hanoi does not. He does thank Wilson for his efforts.

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[56] Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, February 11, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 59.
[57] Memorandum From the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Wheeler) to Secretary of Defense McNamara, February 11, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 62.
[58] Telegram From President Johnson to Prime Minister Wilson, February 12, 1967, FRUS, vol V, doc. 66.

Even after the talks had ended, Kosygin Week was still discussed. In a document regarding Anglo-American Relations over Vietnam sent to Wilson on February 17, 1967, it was reported that Philip Kaiser, the American Charge d'Affaires, spoke to Gordon Walker, about Kosygin Week. During Prime Minister's Questions the week after Kosygin's visit, Wilson had told the House of Commons that there were moments during the talks when possible negotiations for a settlement 'could have been very near'. This had caused serious concerns in Washington. The Johnson administration did not believe it corresponded to the facts, as there had been no response from Hanoi whatsoever.[59]

This again shows that the Americans were pessimistic about the chances of Kosygin Week succeeding.

On 24 February Walt Rostow came to the U.K. to discuss Kosygin Week. The first meeting was between him and Brown. He said that the United States government, in particular President Johnson, was deeply grateful for all the British government had done and that this was not lightly said. Because Johnson had recognized the sincerity of the British efforts, and Wilson's deep conviction that these efforts had to be pushed to the utmost, the president had been prepared wholeheartedly to go along with the last-minute proposal to Kosygin in the night of 12 and 13 February. Nevertheless, Johnson consistently felt that Hanoi was not ready for peace, though he had been "enormously impressed" by British efforts and reports on Kosygin's attitude.[60]

Although Rostow makes clear how grateful Johnson was in this conversation between him and Brown, it again becomes clear that they did not saw Kosygin Week as succeeding.

After talking to Brown, Rostow had a meeting with Wilson. He told the prime minister that Johnson had asked him to convey a personal message of appreciation to the prime minister for the strenuous efforts he had made during Kosygin Week. Johnson had had the impression that Wilson had been locked in a virtually continuous struggle throughout the visit to achieve a settlement. The president's admiration and appreciation of this was very great. Wilson asked Rostow to thank Johnson for his message. He told Rostow that, to say the least, there seemed to have a been a significant failure in communication between Washington and London. Wilson and Brown had been greatly concerned at the apparent failure in Washington to brief London about the Polish connection in November. Because of this, Cooper had come over twice to brief the British and stayed throughout the visit. Despite his presence and that of Ambassador Bruce,

[59] Anglo-American Relations over Vietnam, PREM 13/1918, TNA.
[60] Record of conversation between the Foreign Secretary and Mr. Walt Rostow at No. 2 Carton Garden at 8.45 a.m. on Friday, 24 February 1967, PREM 13/1893, TNA.

Wilson and Brown still had to change their proposal to Kosygin, even when that proposal reflected the American position at that time. Rostow responded by thanking the prime minister for his frankness, but he was inclined to question what Wilson suggested. He told Wilson that Johnson was becoming increasingly sceptical of the possibilities of effective mediation. Despite serious efforts of multiple mediators, nothing serious had come from Hanoi. The best prospect for the future might lie with direct contact between Washington and Hanoi. Moreover, opinion in Washington was fairly firmly that mutual de-escalation was unlikely. If this was the case, Wilson commented, then he had been allowed to talk with Kosygin on a somewhat false premise, since every proposal hinged on around de-escalation and was done with the approval and encouragement of the Americans. Wilson found it difficult to see why he had not been told of this. According to Rostow, the Americans had been entirely sincere in basing their proposals on mutual de-escalation. But there had been no response, and they could only have concluded that Hanoi was not willing to accept. At the end of their talks, Rostow invited Wilson to visit the president in June, as the prime minister would already be in Canada. Wilson, who had been contemplating a visit to the U.S, graciously accepted. [61]

Wilson was still convinced that there was a failure in communications, even though Cooper had been sent over to prevent exactly that. Rostow reiterates his views. Intermediaries did not work and the chance of succeeding with Kosygin had been slim.

The last point of division in literature was how the Americans viewed the talks. The notable accounts were that the Americans did not have faith in the talks. From my research, it becomes clear how this showed during the talks. Before and during most of Kosygin Week, the Americans were pessimistic about the talks, since they did not believe North Vietnam would negotiate, but this was kept from the British. Walt Rostow in particular was dismissive of the British and did not like working with intermediaries. Only after Johnson had changed his policy did he come clean to the British. Rusk had some sympathy for the British, but this had its limits. Although the Americans thanked the British for all their work, this was most likely only do as a courtesy. This is in line with the themes established in previous peace efforts. The Americans could not ignore peace attempts by third parties, so were forced into Kosygin Week. They already did not appreciate British attempts at using diplomacy in the fight against communism, which explain why they did not prevent Wilson from discussing Vietnam with Kosygin and why they did kept information from the British and why they had a negative view of the talks.

[61] Record of conversation between the Prime Minister and Mr. Walt W. Rostow at No. 10, Downing Street at 5.30 p.m. on Friday, February 24, 1967, PREM 13/1893, TNA.

3.4 The circumstances

In this chapter I used sources from the FRUS and TNA to fill in the gaps in the existing historiography and to examine how the circumstances surrounding Kosygin Week led to the collapse of the talks. I first examined who took initiative for the talks. In this historiography, the U.S, the U.K, the DRV and the Soviet Union had all been credited by at least one scholar with initiating the talks. From my research, it becomes clear that Prime Minister Wilson wanted to use the talks to discuss Vietnam and was convinced that Kosygin wanted to bring an end to the Vietnam War as well. The Soviet premier had timed his visit with Tet when there would be a truce. As such, both the British and the Soviets took the initiative for the talks. All of this was in accordance with elements that had been established in previous peace efforts. Why the Americans changed their policy is the second thing I examined. From the historiography, it became clear that possible DRV troop movements to the south caused to the Americans to change the A,B formula. My research supports this idea in addition to the idea that Johnson's personality may have played a role in the change as well. Other claims from the historiography have either been disproven or can not be verified. The last thing I looked at was how the Americans viewed the talks. From all the documents, it becomes clear that the Americans had a negative view of the Wilson-Kosygin talks. They did not believe the DRV would negotiate. They were also forced into the situation and reluctantly used intermediaries. Rostow in particular disliked intermediaries and also disliked the British. Rusk was more sympathetic to them and was able to convince Johnson not to resume bombing as this could have damaged relations with the British. However, this was as far as this sympathy extended, as Rusk did not use his influence at any other opportunity during Kosygin Week. Not every official with a negative view of the British could influence the president, as was the case of general Wheeler. Despite their pessimistic views, the Americans never let the British know their opinion until late into Kosygin Week.

From this it becomes clear how that the circumstances led to the collapse of the talks. The Americans did not initiate the talks, had a dislike of intermediaries and did not appreciate the British using diplomacy. They also did not believe North Vietnam would respond. They changed the Phase A, Phase B formula because they were afraid DRV would take advantage of it and move troops across the border. These factors all to the collapse of the talks.

Conclusion

In this thesis I examined how the circumstances around Kosygin Week led to the collapse of the talks. To provide an answer to this, I researched who took initiative for the talks, why the Americans changed their policy during the talks and how the Americans views the talks. For background information, I examined the historiography surrounding Kosygin week, to see what has been written about this topic and I examined previous peace efforts, to see what themes were also present during Kosygin Week and if they differed from previous attempts.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I looked at the existing scholarship of Kosygin Week. These scholars did not use the same sources as I did. Although some used the same archives as I did, I used different documents which explains why I came to different conclusions. The divisions in the historiography centres around three points. The first point is who took initiative for the talks. The U.S, the U.K, the Soviet Union and North Vietnam have all been charged with having taken initiative for the talks. My research revealed that both the British and the Soviets took initiative for the talks. Wilson wanted to use the talks to bring about a diplomatic end to the war. This is in accordance with previous peace efforts in which he also attempted to use diplomacy. Using the Wilson-Kosygin talks to involve the Soviets is also part of this theme, as Wilson had a certain view of Anglo-Soviet relations. Wilson was convinced that Kosygin also wanted to negotiate an end to the Vietnam War and that the Soviet premier had timed his visit for the optimal chance to achieve this. This is part of another theme, namely that the Soviets did not overtly work towards peace but did so covertly. Using third parties like the British as peacemakers was part of this strategy. My research undermined the claim that the Americans took initiative for the talks. The claim that the North Vietnamese took initiative can not be supported nor dismissed, as there is no evidence for or against it. The Americans not taking initiative for the Wilson-Kosygin talks can be explained from their reluctance to use intermediaries. This was also present during previous peace attempts.

The second point of division in the historiography is why the Americans changed their policy. All of the scholars point to the likelihood of North Vietnamese infiltration into South Vietnam as the reason for why the Americans changed their policy. My research supports this. Scholars have added other reasons for this change in policy. One notion that my research also supports, is the claim that Johnson's 'under siege' may have played a role during Kosygin Week. There is evidence for this, as a British official was warned afterwards that Johnson was hard to handle during Kosygin Week. The same historian also made the claim that a fight between Johnson and Robert Kennedy may have influenced the change in formula, but there is

no evidence to support this. A difference in semantics also did not play a role. Wilson's biographer claims that the phrasing of 'has stopped' and 'assured stoppage' and a difference in their meaning in US English and British English played a role in the change. Although American officials blamed this, the difference did not play a significant role in the change. Another scholar writes that the British did not have permission from the Americans to conduct talks. My research goes against this, as it became clear from the documents that the Americans did authorize the British to talk with Kosygin.

The last point of division is how the Americans viewed the talks. All the literature that explicitly write on how the Americans viewed the talks, mention that the Americans had a pessimistic view of the talks. One American officials who is frequently mentioned as having a negative view, is Walt Rostow. The same became clear during my research. The Americans had a pessimistic view of the talks and did not believe the DRV would respond to the talks. But they did not inform the British of this, until they had changed the formula. The Americans were reluctant to use intermediaries. This falls in line with their dislike of British policy on Vietnam and American reluctance of intermediaries as established in previous peace attempts. But the U.S. could not stop the British from using Kosygin Week as peace talks, as this would have risked damaging their public standing. The Americans preferred direct negotiations and even attempted this during Kosygin Week, but this, like every other attempt, failed.

All of these circumstances around Kosygin Week led to the collapse of the talks. The Americans had not taken initiative for the talks and were pessimistic of its outcome. They did not appreciate British efforts in diplomacy and did not like using intermediaries. But they could not ignore it. Ignoring a third party peace effort would damage the U.S.' public standing. So they went along with but kept things from the British. After the U.S. received intelligence that the DRV would move its troops across the border, the Americans were forced to change their policy. The reversal of the A, B formula changed the situation. Although it had seemed at first that the talks would result in the end of fighting in Vietnam, the Americans change in policy ruined this chance. All of these circumstances led to the collapse of Kosygin Week.

This research has been done using documents from the FRUS and TNA. As mentioned in the first chapter, other scholars have also done research using these sources and one scholar used Russian documents. An idea for future research would be to use sources from all four archives, so American, British, Russian, and in addition, Vietnamese sources. This way, Kosygin Week, and possibly other attempts at negotiations for the Vietnam War, can be examined from the widest possible angles. Since this would involve three different languages, a multinational collaboration, similar to Kosygin Week, would be advisable.

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