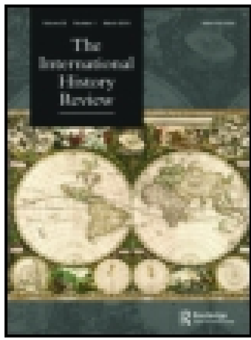

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'The Blue-Eyed Boys': The Heath Government, Anglo-American Relations, and the Bombing of North Vietnam in 1972

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ABSTRACT

Many accounts of Anglo-American relations during the early 1970s stress the tensions with Washington that marked the premiership of Edward Heath, as Britain moved to become a member of the European Economic Community, with particular attention given to the Year of Europe dispute during 1973. Over the issue of the American war in Vietnam, however, Heath's Conservative Government stood out from other West European states in offering a grateful Nixon administration wholehearted support, even in the face of domestic political criticism, when American air power was used during 1972 with an intensity and scope not seen before. Although prepared to offer firm diplomatic backing for American actions, British officials were still keen to avoid any direct involvement, repudiating the kind of role they had played in the settlement of the French Indochina War in 1954. By early 1973 the Nixon administration, influenced by Heath's recent public support over Vietnam, looked upon the British Government as a firm ally, a context which helps in understanding the disappointment experienced over the subsequent Year of Europe dispute.

KEYWORDS
Heath; Vietnam War; Nixon; Kissinger; Anglo-American relations

On 18 December 1972, frustrated by the stalemate that had been reached in the negotiations being conducted which were intended to bring the fighting in Vietnam to an end and provide for the final withdrawal of all American forces from the country, the US administration led by President Richard M. Nixon unleashed a new and intensive bombing campaign against targets in and around the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong. Nixon intended the bombing to compel the North Vietnamese leadership to make a new set of concessions, to signal that the United States would not shirk the adoption of strong military action to achieve its goal of preserving a viable non-Communist regime in South Vietnam, and to show President Nguyen Van Thieu, the South Vietnamese leader, that the Americans were prepared to use overpowering military force to uphold any peace settlement that might eventually be reached.[1] Flying thousands of sorties, over the course of eleven days American aircraft engaged in the so-called *Linebacker II* raids, including large B-52 bombers, attacked bridges, fuel storage and supply dumps, electrical power stations, railway infrastructure, radio stations, airfields and surface-to-air missile sites. The inevitable civilian casualties that resulted, including over 2,000 killed in the residential areas of Hanoi

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and the destruction of the Bach Mai hospital (where 300 patients were being treated), generated a torrent of domestic US and international criticism of the Nixon administration's Vietnam policies, which were said to resemble 'war by tantrum'.[2] The Swedish Prime Minister, Olaf Palme, compared the bombing to some of the worst Nazi atrocities seen in the Second World War.[3] Condemnation of the bombing of urban areas came from the Italian, Belgian, Dutch, Danish, Finnish and Norwegian governments, while the French made known their disapproval.[4] Street demonstrations were held in Amsterdam, Copenhagen, London, Rome, and Zurich.[5] According to Henry Kissinger, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, the criticisms over the bombing of North Vietnam in December 1972 that had come from European governments which relied for their security on the United States made a 'devastating impression' on Nixon, while Kissinger himself complained of the Europeans that they 'argue about making our [nuclear] deterrent credible in Europe, but then are the most vicious and least understanding critics of our comparable actions in Indochina'.[6]

Standing apart from this pattern of European condemnation, however, was the backing for American actions that came from the Conservative Government in Britain led by Edward Heath. The supportive stance of Heath and his senior ministers, which was consistent with their previous attitude during 1972 when US air power had been used to signal the US government's unwillingness to allow South Vietnam to collapse, was offered despite an outpouring of critical comment and opinion in parliament and the press with the bombings portrayed in some quarters as crimes against humanity.[7] British diplomats were conscious that the Heath Government's position was very much appreciated by a Nixon administration that had felt itself under siege over the bombings. In mid-January 1973, Lord Cromer, the British Ambassador in Washington, wrote to Sir Denis Greenhill, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), describing the 'intensity of rage' felt by the White House against those countries which had criticized the administration's Vietnam policies, with the 'greatest wrath' reserved for America's European allies. While Britain's identification with the Western European position on trade and monetary matters was the cause of some disquiet on the part of Nixon and Kissinger when they considered transatlantic relations, British support for US Vietnam policy meant that Britain currently stood out 'as being [the] blue-eyed boys'.[8]

The dominant view once held of Anglo-American relations during the period when the Heath Government held office between 1970 and 1974 was that they were marked by overriding discord. This was typically seen to be a result of the Prime Minister's own aversion to cultivating any notion of a 'special relationship' with Washington – a link, suggesting an exclusive and privileged connection, which might impede his overriding foreign policy objective of joining the European Economic Community (EEC). Once in the EEC, after January 1973 Heath, it was said, continued to show that he was prepared to prioritize ties to his new European partners over those with the Americans. 'For a brief moment in the early 1970s', Kissinger later wrote, 'Britain seemed to decide to put an end to the special relationship in order to prove itself a "good European" in the year that it entered the European Community. The attempt was short-lived'.[9] Indeed, during the summer of 1973, when the Nixon administration launched its so-called Year of Europe initiative, Heath decided to eschew the customary habits of several previous post-war British governments by consulting with the other members of the EEC first over how to respond, before engaging in a collective (rather than bilateral) dialogue with the Americans.[10] The resulting acrimony was compounded by the events of the subsequent Arab-Israeli War in October 1973 when the British refused to cooperate with the US over action in the United Nations, and made clear that they wanted to play no part in the US effort to re-supply Israel, while Washington offered no consultation over its decision to declare a worldwide nuclear alert for its forces at the height of the crisis.[11]

More recent scholarship has ascribed greater responsibility for strained relations to the particular approach adopted by Nixon and Kissinger to the conduct of foreign policy, where consultation was replaced by secretive and dramatic moves from the White House which took British officials (and sometimes the State Department), by surprise.[12] Calling it 'exaggerated and

misleading', Andrew Scott has made a strong case that Kissinger's retrospective account needs to be corrected, and that Heath's Europeanism did not mean he did not value transatlantic relations – in fact, Heath saw EEC membership as key to revitalizing the British economy and ensuring the UK could continue to perform the role of a power with global interests, as the Americans themselves desired.[13] In the view of some, it was Kissinger who mishandled the Year of Europe episode in 1973 through lack of prior consultation, and then trying to force the Europeans to respond to American proposals which appeared to want to tie concessions over trade with security.[14] British officials also felt annoyance over previous episodes which indicated that the Nixon administration was oblivious to the interests and opinions of its main Western ally. There was irritation that the White House did not share its thinking about US moves toward rapprochement with China in 1971-72, private criticism of Washington's tilt toward Pakistan in the South Asia crisis of 1971, and unhappiness at the unilateral US announcements in August 1971 over the end to convertibility of the dollar, a change which transformed the functioning of the global financial system.[15] It was also clearly the case that the UK's relatively insipid economic performance during this period did not auger well for relations with Washington. One FCO official noted in September 1970 that, 'The important reality is that although the US relationship remains of the very first importance for us, the UK has been overtaken in economic power and in value as an ally to the US by Germany and Japan … so long as our relative economic decline continues, the US will continue to attach steadily more importance to their relations with other allies and rivals'.[16]

There is also a body of work which reflects a more balanced picture, where the Year of Europe dispute does not overshadow other more positive aspects to Anglo-American relations in this period. Alex Spelling has brought out areas where cooperation remained close, while Thomas Robb, though arguing that Nixon and Kissinger operated 'coercive' forms of diplomacy against the British government during 1973, also pictures the years between 1970 and 1972 as 'hardly ones of unmitigated antagonism' where there was a 'remarkable amount of cooperation'.[17] In many areas, ties and understandings were strong across the period, and a common approach to several regional issues underscored the habits of consultation and dialogue underpinning the diplomatic relationship. The 'subterranean' features of Anglo-American relations remained remarkably close, especially in the crucial intelligence and nuclear/defence fields, where liaison between officials, military staffs and technical experts was frequent and intimate.[18] By the early 1970s, US officials had assumed the habitual practice of discussing their perspectives on many global issues and problems with their British counterparts, often informed by the sharing of intelligence assessments and findings. Kissinger himself was often favourably disposed toward Britain – at least until the Year of Europe events of 1973 – and he enjoyed particularly warm relations with John Freeman, the British Ambassador in Washington from March 1969 to March 1971, and then with Cromer, Freeman's replacement.[19] During Kissinger's frequent visits to London, moreover, he took part in a series of wide-ranging meetings with the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Burke Trend – referred to as 'seminars' by Trend – where they discussed the global problems confronting the West. Kissinger clearly held Trend's enormous experience, analytical skills and expertise in very high regard.[20]

Nixon, for his part, had been genuinely pleased at Heath's unexpected general election victory in June 1970 and looked forward to a close partnership with the new Conservative Government, seeing it as a more a natural ally for a Republican administration.[21] While there were obvious differences in emphasis over some regional policies, there seemed good scope for building strong relations in the 1970s. When entering Downing Street, Heath had set his sights on another bid to enter the European Community as the best way to mitigate the trends of economic decline and the erosion of British diplomatic influence that many had charted over the previous decade.[22] But the fact that the new Government's overriding priorities now lay in a European direction did not mean that Heath was 'anti-American' in any fundamental sense: it was, rather, that in the modernizing vision he had for Britain, sentimental transatlantic attachments, or those with the Commonwealth, would no longer exercise any commanding hold over policy.[23]

Heath certainly desired no acknowledgement of any 'special relationship' with Nixon, being conscious that this could arouse French suspicions if they saw transatlantic ties between London and Washington as being too close. That said, this did not mean he was oblivious to the basic British interest in maintaining good relations with Washington – the nuclear and intelligence ties with the Americans were, after all, considered indispensable – or feel inhibited in giving strong support to the US administration when Anglo-American views aligned.[24] Indeed, Heath and his officials were very conscious that Soviet power and influence seemed to be expanding, rather than receding, in the early 1970s, especially in the Middle East and Indian Ocean areas, and the Prime Minister still saw Britain as playing an important global role in trying to shore up friendly governments or regions threatened with instability – and in this task, close cooperation with the Americans would be essential.[25] Similarly, when it came to South East Asia, there was an appreciation that an outright American defeat would have adverse regional implications, undermine US credibility, and perhaps accelerate isolationist trends in American public opinion. For all these reasons, Heath's Government sympathized with the US approach to the war, including 'Vietnamization', the gradual withdrawal of American forces, and a negotiated settlement which would preserve a non-Communist state in South Vietnam. Offering support to Nixon over Vietnam not only reinforced other aspects of the relationship, but chimed with British concerns over the effects of a complete US rout in South East Asia – where Britain retained important interests in Singapore and Malaysia – and demonstrated to the Americans that Britain was still a power whose perspectives lay beyond Europe.[26]

As well as examining British reactions to the intensified bombing campaign against North Vietnam launched by the Nixon administration in 1972, this article also argues that the strength of official British support, and its contrast with the attitudes of the other West European states, had repercussions for the later breakdown in relations that was seen over the Year of Europe episode. One reason for the deep disillusionment that set in during 1973, it can be argued, was that Nixon and Kissinger had come to expect close bilateral contacts with the British Government, and that Heath would fall into line with American plans and proposals for how they wanted to take forward the Year of Europe initiative. When Heath proved unwilling to coordinate his approach with Washington, the 'blue-eyed boys' soon became recast by Nixon and Kissinger as the villains of the piece, who were betraying the previous patterns of Anglo-American cooperation – and it was in this emotionally-charged atmosphere that Kissinger was to order an unprecedented cut-off in intelligence sharing with the UK in August 1973.[27]

I

While in Opposition during the late 1960s, Heath and other leading Conservatives had been vocal supporters of American policy in Vietnam.[28] Six months after becoming party leader, Heath made a brief visit to South Vietnam in January 1966, where he met US officials and Nguyen Van Thieu, the Army general who would later serve as South Vietnamese President.[29] He came away from the trip believing that the United States would prevail, and was critical of the government for not demonstrating more whole-hearted support for the US war effort. Heath was always, however, careful to express his opposition to any dispatch of British troops, arguing (in similar fashion to Labour ministers during this period) that British resources were already fully stretched meeting the UK's ongoing commitments to the defence of Malaysia and Singapore which were then engaged in the confrontation with Indonesia.[30]

At the end of June 1966, having previously given general diplomatic support to US policy over Vietnam, the Labour Government issued a statement dissociating itself from the Johnson administration's decision to extend the bombing of North Vietnam to include fuel storage facilities located close to the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong.[31] The Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, had always maintained that the Government would oppose the bombing of centres of population in North Vietnam, and he also faced significant pressure to condemn American actions from

backbench MPs within his own party opposed to the entire US war effort. In a foretaste of his attitude in 1972, Heath responded to Wilson's statement of dissociation with a strong defence of American actions, arguing that the US authorities were best equipped to decide what military measures were required, and that the Government's position of offering both ostensible general support for US policy and also specific criticisms was 'untenable'.[32] In the subsequent debate in the House of Commons, Heath made a distinction between the fuel storage facilities which were the target of the US air strikes and the populated urban areas to which they were adjacent, and defended the American actions as not directed against the civilian population of North Vietnam. Before a negotiated settlement to the conflict could be reached, Heath maintained, the North Vietnamese had to be convinced by military means that they could not win. Developing his argument, he felt that one of the key hopes entertained by both the North Vietnamese and their Chinese supporters was that as the war progressed the United States would lose the backing of its allies, which was why he saw the Government's action as so damaging.[33] In February 1968, following the launch of the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam, Heath had addressed the Young Conservatives annual conference in Harrogate and again offered an unequivocal expression of support for the US war effort. The North Vietnamese must not be allowed to overrun South Vietnam he warned, and it was simply not possible to contemplate the defeat of the US at the hands of Communist forces which would then leave the remainder of South East Asia vulnerable to Communist subversion and takeover.[34]

During this period, the Labour Government's decisions of 1967/68 to withdraw the British military presence from East of Suez were also attracting particularly strong opposition from the Conservatives, who saw the move, even with the Indonesian confrontation having come to an end in the summer of 1966, as a threat to stability in South East Asia and reneging on the obligations that still existed to Malaysia and Singapore.[35] During the heated debates in the House of Commons that followed the final announcement of an accelerated timetable for withdrawal in January 1968, so that all British forces would leave South East Asia by the end of 1971, Iain MacLeod, the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, felt that a precipitate pullback was a mistake, and argued that its impact on the war in Vietnam should not be underestimated, asking 'Is it not dangerous to leave a vacuum on the southern flank and might it not encourage continuance of a war which everyone wants to see ended?'[36] Heath, in turn, took Wilson to task for the East of Suez decisions, which he claimed had 'ratted' on British commitments to Singapore and in the Persian Gulf, and vowed to reverse them when the Conservatives returned to office.[37]

By the time of Heath's arrival as Prime Minister in June 1970, the Nixon administration was already proceeding with a steady reduction of US ground forces in Vietnam. In November 1969, as part of the process of Vietnamization, Nixon had announced that efforts to move the burden of the ground war to the South Vietnamese themselves would be intensified and the following month declared that another 50,000 US troops would leave by April 1970, bringing the total figure withdrawn to over 115,000, down from a peak figure of 550,000 in June 1969.[38] In February 1970, moreover, Kissinger had begun secret talks in Paris with Le Duc Tho, the principal North Vietnamese negotiator, that were to become the crucial conduit by which Washington and Hanoi eventually arrived at an understanding of how they might end the war.[39] Given these trends in the war, in Britain Vietnam was moving out of the constant public gaze and the dramatic headlines witnessed during the late 1960s; instead attention tended to be focused on the domestic problems of the economy, the debate over joining the European Community, and, after the civil rights marches of the summer of 1969, the deployment of British troops in Northern Ireland. Gradual reductions in ground forces did not, however, mean that the Nixon administration had any intention of relaxing the military pressure on Hanoi, as the controversial incursion by US troops into Cambodia of April-May 1970, followed by the heavy bombing of the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos, served to illustrate.

The first meetings between the new Prime Minister and Nixon at Chequers in October 1970 had allowed the latter to outline what he saw as the success of the Cambodian operation and

pacification efforts in the South Vietnamese countryside. It remained essential in Nixon's eyes for the US to avoid anything resembling a 'defeat' in South East Asia, as this could lead to a resurgence of isolationism at home. Heath could not have agreed more, affirming that withdrawal had to be accomplished 'in good order', otherwise the Soviet Union's attitude was likely to 'harden' if they saw the United States 'losing' in South East Asia.[40] The Chequers meeting was also an occasion where Heath outlined the Government's plans to retain a British military presence in South East Asia through a new five-power defence agreement to include Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. For Nixon, the Government's decision to 'reinstate' Britain's role East of Suez had been welcomed: 'it was the political and diplomatic aspect of this presence which mattered more than its military content'. The US wanted the UK to participate East of Suez, he told Heath, 'so that we are not the only non-Asian power present there'. Heath in turn avowed that Labour's policy in South East Asia had been 'reversed' and that the new five-power defence arrangements promised to contribute to regional stability.[41]

Work on the five-power arrangements had actually begun under the previous Labour Government in 1968, but the Conservatives planned to bolster the size of the UK commitment.[42] In the event, however, the final British contribution to the new defence arrangements was very small. On land there would be an infantry battalion (which alongside Australian and New Zealand contingents formed 28 Infantry Brigade, stationed on the northern part of Singapore island), a troop of engineers, an artillery battery, and an air defence platoon. Four Nimrod maritime reconnaissance aircraft and a flight of Whirlwind helicopters would be the extent of the air commitment, and naval forces would number six frigates or destroyers and a submarine. This all represented the deployment of only about 4,500 service personnel (costing between £5-10 million per annum), while Labour's plans to close the large base complex at Singapore were to proceed.[43]

Nevertheless, Heath evidently felt that the new defence arrangements would help to restore Britain's tarnished image in Washington as a reliable Western partner with a global outlook. In September 1970 Heath had told his ministerial colleagues of his concerns that the Labour Government's policies might have caused the Americans to conclude that Britain's status in the world had declined, and 'that they need not in consequence pay so much attention as previously to our interests or our counsel'. But it was felt that the decision to retain a military presence in South East Asia

> might do something to redress the balance: but too much reliance should not be placed on this, since the military effort we intended to maintain in the Far East would be far smaller than that which had been deployed before the rundown began. At the same time, it should be recognised that we had valuable assets in that there was no alternative candidate for the position which we occupied vis-à-vis the United States and no other power whose modes of thought were so close to their own or with whom they found it so easy to work.

It was hoped that a military presence in South East Asia would 'enable us to exert more effective influence on American policies in the area'.[44] The five-power defence arrangements were finally concluded at a conference held at Marlborough House in London in April 1971; they provided merely that its members would 'consult' together if there was an externally-organized armed attack, or threat of such attack, against Malaysia and Singapore. This replaced the previous Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement which had contained a far stronger commitment on the part of Britain to act to defend the federation which it had helped to create. Heath had told the delegates attending the conference that Britain would not play a major part in the arrangements, but it would still be a 'worthwhile, practical defence contribution and a real demonstration of our continuing commitment and interest'.[45]

The new arrangements quietly came into effect on 1 November 1971, but many commentators thought that the British contingent would be unlikely to remain beyond the mid-1970s, by when Malaysia's own defence forces would have been built up.[46] The Government's token commitment to South East Asia defence was a clear sign that Britain's direct interests in the region

were seen as marginal by the early 1970s, and were best upheld by commercial ties, and the 'soft power' means of cultural diplomacy and education exchanges. Nevertheless, the decision to retain a presence, however slender, was appreciated in Washington and taken as a sign of Heath's broader vision. At their Bermuda meeting in December 1971, Nixon had let Heath know of his conviction that 'Britain is the only European country with a world view', and that this was a key reason that the US administration hoped that Britain's bid to enter the European Community would succeed; the Americans wanted the British to stay in Singapore, he had continued, 'because we don't want to be the only non-Asian country there [in South East Asia]'.[47] Heath had been similarly fulsome, telling Nixon: 'Some people think that we are pursuing policies that are designed to show we are "Europeans." But our relations haven't changed. The real purposes of the Soviets haven't changed. The Western world has little to be complacent about. We must find a common basis'.[48]

II

It was no surprise, considering his past pronouncements on the subject, as well as the state of the war itself, that in July 1970 Heath had confirmed to the House of Commons that his Government had no intention of dispatching troops or becoming directly involved in the Vietnam conflict.[49] At the same time, the Government was staunch in its backing for the Nixon administration's overall approach and its negotiating positions throughout its time in office. As one of the original co-chairs of the Geneva Conference, which had brought the French war in Indochina to end through a set of agreements reached in July 1954, Britain, along with the Soviet Union, held ambiguous responsibilities to oversee implementation of the Geneva accords over such matters as the ceasefires in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and the withdrawal of foreign forces.[50] To that end the UK received and published the annual reports generated by an International Commission of Supervision and Control, consisting of representatives from India, Canada and Poland, which had been formed under the accords to monitor adherence to its provisions.[51] Since 1954, British governments had always been careful to maintain that as Co-Chairman they held no special or exclusive role regarding the maintenance of the accords (which were subject to numerous violations). At the same time, British officials recognized the co-chairmanship could still perform a useful function in communicating messages between the parties represented at Geneva, and therefore, in theory, exercise some mediating role in Indochina, and even try to work toward a reconvening of another great power conference (as occurred over the conflict in Laos in 1961).

During the Labour Governments of 1964-70, Wilson had used Britain's position as Co-Chairman to launch various Vietnam peace initiatives, even though these had incurred Washington's displeasure.[52] No such unwelcome interventions, however, were to be seen during Heath's premiership. British officials were convinced that the wisest course was to remain disengaged, while keeping carefully and quietly in step with the Americans. The small four-person British Advisory Mission to the South Vietnamese government, led by Sir Robert Thompson, the British counter-insurgency expert, had been withdrawn many years before, in March 1965, when the US escalation of the war had entered a new phase, and nothing had taken its place since then.[53] Thompson did return to Vietnam several times from October 1969 onwards, at the personal behest of Nixon, who wanted an independent appraisal of the war in the South, but he was not operating in an 'official' capacity during these trips, but as a private individual on a RAND Corporation contract. His upbeat assessments of progress with Vietnamization helped to bolster Nixon's confidence in US strategy, but by 1971-72 the counter-insurgency aspects of the war were no longer so prominent – instead the character of the war was to become increasingly 'conventional' in nature, as main force units of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA), equipped with tanks, heavy weapons and artillery, entered the fighting.[54]

Despite its propensity to maintain a low profile, the Heath Government's attitude to the Vietnam War was thrown into the spotlight during 1972 as the negotiations to end the war entered a final phase and Washington turned to US air power in order to frustrate North Vietnam's efforts to bring about a total military collapse of the US-backed regime, led by President Thieu, in Saigon. Even though the US administration had anticipated that some intensification of military pressure by the North was likely during an American election year, the scale of the Easter Offensive launched by Hanoi on 30 March 1972 caught many US officials by surprise.[55] Rapid advances by five NVA divisions, spearheaded by tanks and artillery, into the northern-most provinces in South Vietnam of Quang Tri and Thua Thien, supported by moves in the Central Highlands and further to the south, prompted concerns that overall South Vietnamese resistance would quickly crumble.[56] With US ground forces remaining in the South by now numbering only 69,000, the Nixon administration quickly chose to intensify US air attacks against the NVA and its supply lines in an effort to blunt the offensive. On 16 April, following specific authorization from Nixon, strikes by B-52 heavy bombers were carried out against fuel storage facilities near Haiphong, North Vietnam's second city and most important port.[57] Soon after, Navy and Air Force fighter-bombers also began to attack similar targets near Hanoi in a manner not seen since 1968.[58]

In the House of Commons British ministers charged the North Vietnamese with engaging in a 'fragrant invasion of South Vietnam', and described the use of American air power as 'understandable', given that Hanoi had ignored Nixon's earlier warnings.[59] Two days after the B-52 strikes began, Cromer saw Kissinger where the latter expressed his gratitude for the public support. The North Vietnamese attack had been expected, Kissinger explained, but its direction, timing and scale had not. American air strikes north of the demilitarized zone along the 17th parallel and around Hanoi were intended to destroy supplies and military equipment and their effect on the combat areas further south would probably not be felt for several weeks. [60] Two days later, the US Secretary of State, William Rogers, was telling Cromer that Nixon was 'ecstatic' with the British statements in Parliament, and that they represented a marked contrast with the disapproving attitudes being displayed by other US allies.[61]

By the end of April 1972, although a complete and immediate rout in South Vietnam had been avoided, the situation showed little signs of improvement as the North Vietnamese offensive continued to push forward. On 2 May Quang Tri City fell to the NVA, and it seemed that two other provincial capitals, Kontum in the Central Highlands and Binh Long to the north of Saigon, would soon also be threatened.[62] Concerned that a heavy blow against the North would not be possible if he delayed action until after his summit meeting with Brezhnev due at the end of the month, or until the presidential primary season began in June, Nixon resolved to take drastic action. A harbinger of what was to come was given on 4 May, when Rogers was in London for talks with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home. In understated fashion, Douglas-Home told the US Secretary of State that 'the international reaction which could be expected if the Americans were obliged to flatten cities might be disagreeable if the President were in Moscow'. Having pointed out the difficulties of hitting military targets located close to urban areas, Rogers reminded his British audience that, 'Although renewal of bombing on a large scale would cause international outrage … at home President Nixon's domestic rating had gone up since bombing had begun again'.[63] That same day in Washington, Nixon told his senior advisers that he had decided to move ahead with an extended air campaign against North Vietnam – dubbed *Linebacker* – which including widespread attacks on its transport infrastructure. Five days later, in an operation never attempted before, and despite the danger that Soviet shipping might suffer damage, Haiphong harbor was mined as the first step in the campaign.[64]

Following the announcement from the White House about these measures , the Labour Party's international committee issued an emergency resolution expressing its concern, while Labour MPs (including Wilson) pushed the Government to dissociate itself from US actions, in

the same manner as in June 1966.[65] Facing calls in the House of Commons to make representations in Washington over the dangers of further escalation as a result of the mining, Douglas-Home rebuffed criticism of American actions in Vietnam. In what was called 'an offensive different in nature from anything that has happened in recent years', Hanoi was again charged with launching an 'invasion across international frontiers [i.e. into South Vietnam from Laos and Cambodia] … [and] across the demarcation line which was laid down by the 1954 agreement' as well as criticized for its failure to take-up American offers to negotiate without preconditions. 'Which course would be worse', the Foreign Secretary asked rhetorically, 'the whole of Vietnam being over-run by the Communists, or American intervention?[66] After the initial parliamentary exchanges on 8 May, Nixon wrote to Douglas-Home to express his 'deep appreciation' for his 'sturdy support at this difficult time' which was a 'source of strength and satisfaction to me'.[67] Cromer reported that the administration's regard for the British position was 'immense': 'The Americans feel that they have very few friends in the world so that the staunchness shown by [Britain] means a great deal at this time'.[68]

There were nevertheless complaints on the British side about how late they had been told of the intensification of American air action. As a result, Douglas-Home had had to reveal to the Commons that London had been informed rather than consulted about the new pattern of bombing. In fact, with Nixon due to give an address announcing his decision on national television at 9 pm on 8 May, Kissinger had given Cromer a copy of a letter from Nixon to Heath at 7.15 pm, which explained the decision to mine the port at Haiphong. After making reference to the fact that recent developments in Vietnam had been 'extremely discouraging', with the renewal of offensive action by North Vietnamese forces and the loss of Quang Tri, and there being no sign of any diplomatic movement, the President's letter said he had decided to 'deprive Hanoi of the means of continuing its aggression. The objective of these actions is not the defeat of North Vietnam but the end of the conflict so that political processes can function and the people of South Vietnam can determine their own future'. British support had been 'deeply valued' in Washington since the start of the Easter Offensive, and Nixon knew he could count on it continuing over the new measures being taken.[69] Hastily dispatching a telegram to London with Nixon's message, Cromer was then summoned to the State Department, along with all other NATO ambassadors, for an 8.30 pm briefing on the current position in Vietnam when it was known the President would soon be making his broadcast. 'We were told by the State Department', Cromer sourly reported to Sir Denis Greenhill, 'as much as Spain and Greece, which compares with your complaint that we were told as much as the Spaniards and Irish about the Peking visit [of February 1972]. The whole arrangements seemed to be carried out with the maximum discourtesy and the maximum inconvenience … '[70]

There was obvious unease in some British quarters about the dangers of escalation created by recent events. *The Times* warned on 10 May that the 'blockade by sea and air of North Vietnam, imposed with almost immediate effect, means an extension of the war which could be as fateful as when American troops moved north across the demarcation line in the Korean War'.[71] The launch of the Easter Offensive also prompted calls for a reconvening of the Geneva Conference on Indochina in order to provide a forum where a political settlement might be pursued. Although they were sceptical about any attempt to use the moribund 'machinery' of the co-chairmanship, British officials were nevertheless concerned over the recent intensification of the war. On three occasions therefore — 7 April, 20 April and 10 May – the British proposed to the Soviet Union that they work to reconvene the Geneva Conference. Though these overtures were all turned down, with the Russians maintaining this procedure was not practicable, discussions on the British side showed that the proposals were never serious. James Cable, the head of the FCO Planning Staff, and who in 1954 had served on the British delegation at Geneva (and would later, when in retirement, write one of the best accounts of the Conference), never felt that the Russians would agree to re-launch any such initiative. On 11 May, following the final British *demarche*, Cable wrote:

> For nearly 15 years the pattern has been that Geneva Conferences are proposed by the side which hopes to recoup at the Conference Table what it is losing on the battlefield. In the early/middle-60s, North Vietnam and the Soviet Union wanted a Geneva Conference and we acquiesced in American opposition to such a move. Since then, the situation has been reversed and the Soviet Union have supported the refusal of North Vietnam. I would expect this to be maintained because the North Vietnamese believe, with some justification, that in 1956 [when nationwide elections failed to materialize] they were cheated of the victory conceded to them by the Geneva Conference of 1954. They will not want to repeat that experience, and the Soviet Union are unlikely to concede a trick to China by putting Hanoi under sufficient pressure to change their minds now.

The only way this situation might alter, Cable conjectured, was if the Soviet Union believed a dangerous confrontation with the United States was looming due to the absence of a settlement.

Cable noted, moreover, that operating as Co-Chairman of the 1954 Conference had meant that Britain had had to play the role of impartial mediator between the parties rather than displaying solidarity with the United States, often opposing America schemes for intervention. One result was a 'lasting impairment' to the relations between Anthony Eden and John Foster Dulles, Cable believing that the heavy price for this was paid two years later during the Suez crisis, the nadir of post-war British diplomacy. Vietnam was now a far more sensitive issue in the United States than it had been in 1954, and the question had to be asked whether Britain could play a constructive role at a future conference without giving offence to Nixon, or indeed his Democratic rivals for the presidency, and whether the advantages Britain could hope to gain from such diplomatic efforts could off-set the potential damage to Anglo-American relations. 'If circumstances permit us to adopt a low posture and to take a back seat in the resolution of this particularly difficult and dangerous problem', Cable concluded, 'I think this would be greatly to our national advantage. We have much to lose by deep involvement and, as far as I can see, little to gain'.[72]

To Douglas-Home the whole discussion about whether it was in Britain's interests to reconvene a conference was largely academic. It was highly unlikely, he felt, that the Russians and Chinese would be willing to attend the same conference bearing in mind current Sino-Soviet tensions. On one minute, Douglas-Home scrawled the note: 'I think Geneva shall be said to be impracticable and I don't think that the Russians want to sit with the Chinese. But [suggesting] it has the advantages, a) that the machinery is there, and b) Russian refusal puts them in the wrong'.[73] The head of the FCO's South East Asia Department, William Squire, considered, nevertheless, that at least proposing a conference conveyed the basic British interest in reaching a peaceful settlement, and had the 'distinct propaganda advantage' of making the Soviet Union refuse a step aimed at conciliation. Calling for a reconvening of Geneva, moreover, helped to retain public support for British policy, 'though we must be careful not to overdo it'. Participation in 'one more international conference', Squire mused, might in fact still be required for the wider Anglo-American relationship, and so constitute 'our last service to the Americans in the Vietnam context'.[74]

The chances of a diplomatic settlement to the war through bilateral contacts between the United States and North Vietnam were in any case set to increase during the summer of 1972. The Easter Offensive had manifestly failed to bring about a collapse of South Vietnam, and US bombing was taking a heavy toll on North Vietnamese forces and lines of supply, while the expansion of air attacks north of the demilitarized zone were causing serious damage to the North's industrial and transport infrastructure (painstakingly rebuilt following the initial suspension of US bombing in 1968).[75] In retrospect, it is possible to see that the North Vietnamese position was much more precarious than was appreciated by many at the time. On the diplomatic front, both the Soviet Union and China had shown during May 1972 that they valued their evolving relations with Washington more than standing alongside North Vietnam: despite condemnatory words, the Russians had gone ahead with the Brezhnev-Nixon Moscow summit meeting, where several important agreements underpinning détente were concluded, and Beijing had

limited its actions to a formal protest against the American escalation of the air war against the North.

III

In mid-July 1972, in a tacit admission of their predicament, the North Vietnamese agreed to resume private negotiations aimed at ending the war. When Kissinger saw Trend for one of their periodic meetings in London on 14 September 1972, the former confessed that he was not optimistic about the next phase of talks as the North Vietnamese continued to insist on President Thieu's removal as the prior condition for a settlement and hinted that Nixon might expand the scope of the bombing after the US presidential elections in November.[76] Kissinger presented his latest ten point plan outlining the basis for a settlement to Le Duc Tho in Paris on 15 September, and a week later, in a further sign of the closeness of Anglo-American ties at the highest level, he also passed a copy of the proposals to Cromer in Washington. They had been accompanied by Kissinger's warning that they should be treated with particular sensitivity, as their contents were still unknown to the US Secretary of State, William Rogers (in a reflection of the inter-bureaucratic tensions that pervaded the administration). [77] To FCO observers, these latest US proposals, involving, *inter alia*, the convening of new presidential elections in South Vietnam (to be organized and supervised by a tripartite committee of national reconciliation) within five months of the final withdrawal of the US military presence; no requirement that the large numbers of NVA units south of the demilitarized zone should be withdrawn after the introduction of a ceasefire; and a prohibition on the introduction of reinforcements into the South (as opposed to replacement of existing units), seemed as far as Nixon could go at that time. But they might also fail because of Hanoi's uncertainty over whether the Communists felt they had enough popular support in the South to carry elections, or because Thieu saw no reason to make such heavy concessions in view of the North's failure to achieve a decisive victory in the Easter Offensive.[78] Heath was happy to offer full support to the latest US negotiating position.[79]

The draft peace agreement that finally emerged in mid-October from the subsequent talks between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho included amongst its provisions joint military commissions to the parties to the war to ensure its military provisions were implemented, a new International Commission on Control and Surveillance, and a 13-member International Conference, with the UK listed as a participant, which was supposed to 'ratify' the accords within thirty days of their signing. Some members of the FCO's South East Asia Department still thought that Britain should consider playing a role analogous to their post-1954 Co-Chairmanship if required, but the Foreign Secretary's desire for a 'low profile' checked any greater interest. As one official put it,

> we have few resources of any kind to commit to an active policy in Indo-China. The period immediately following a settlement, when its provisions are being implemented, is likely to be confused and bloody, at least in Vietnam. The role of international umpire in such a case will be unrewarding. It would not be in our interests to accept responsibility for situations we have no power to influence – even to help our friends.

The consensus within the department was therefore to avoid involvement as far as possible, and to favour the use of UN machinery for the kind of roles previously reserved for the Co-Chairmen.[80] That said, it was recognised that a direct appeal for the UK to participate in a settlement as part of the 'Geneva process' would be difficult to refuse, not least as Britain had played no active part in the fighting.[81] Further opposition, however, came from James Cable, who complained 'we are being asked to give our blessing to agreements we had no hand in negotiating and perhaps to assume commitments which would almost certainly be ill-defined and might well prove equally enduring and embarrassing'. The only compensation for this would be the 'dubious privilege of a fleeting appearance at the top table'.[82] Douglas-Home found himself in agreement with Cable, explaining in one telegram to Washington that, 'our interest is minimum involvement at minimum cost'.[83]

Any discussion of an international conference to accompany a final settlement remained moot, however, as Thieu refused to accept to the draft settlement agreed by the Americans and North Vietnamese. Returning to Paris in November, after Nixon's landslide re-election, Kissinger had been compelled to re-open negotiations, but he found the North Vietnamese unwilling to make further concessions, and in fact making new demands of their own (perhaps because Hanoi hoped that with the election over Nixon would be in a better position to place increased pressure on Saigon to settle, or that the new Congress would simply remove all funding for continuing the war). At his final round of talks with Le Duc Tho in early December, Kissinger warned of unforeseeable consequences if the North Vietnamese position did not change.[84]Frustrated by the failure to reach a final settlement, the Nixon administration launched its *Linebacker II* air offensive on 18 December, Kissinger boasting before the first series of air strikes that they were 'going to break every window in Hanoi'.[85] Apart from raids led by fighter-bomber aircraft, over 700 B-52 sorties were to drop about 40,000 tons of bombs on North Vietnam over the days which followed. As civilian casualties mounted and condemnation of American action gathered pace, it became increasingly difficult for the Heath Government to continue with the low profile it would have preferred to have adopted. News coverage from North Vietnam, with reporters giving eye witness accounts of the death and destruction on the ground, provoked widespread outrage in Britain, and for virtually the first time the Government experienced serious domestic discomfort due to its support for American policy as both the Labour and Liberal parties condemned the bombing. The day after the initiation of the air attacks, Wilson asked Heath in the House of Commons whether he would issue a statement, in collaboration with the new Labour Government in Australia led by Gough Whitlam, which dissociated Britain from the bombing, and made reference to his own statement of dissociation in June 1966. The Prime Minister, however, demurred.[86]

Over the next few days, the sustained nature of the *Linebacker II* raids gave the press an extended opportunity to excoriate American policy. Writing in *The Times*, the US correspondent Anthony Lewis made the basic point that it was Thieu's rejection of the peace terms negotiated between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho in October that explained the resumption of bombing. 'Whatever the cause', Lewis wrote, 'American means in Vietnam have long since passed the moral and rational boundary… . Is there no one in Britain, beyond a handful of protestors, who will understand that? Is there no one in the Government, or public life who will speak out about an ally's savagery? Or is it all to be ignored as a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom you know nothing?'[87] In *The Guardian*, Peter Jenkins described 'terror bombing' which was pictured as 'something far worse than the destruction of Coventry or Dresden in the Second World War', and operations which 'bordered upon crimes against humanity'.[88] Under an editorial heading 'Britain's shameful silence', the same newspaper parodied Heath's own phraseology by saying that the 'natural relationship' with the United States was leading to 'unnatural practices'. The issue was now one of 'national reputation and conscience', where Britain appeared to be 'sitting on its hands without any policy at all. By this behaviour, Britain will win for itself only contempt, for we appear to be approving by default a murderous and misguided policy'.[89] Similarly, *The Times* editorialized that all the political and moral arguments ran against American actions while the practical effects of the bombing were also placed in doubt: 'The bombing in Britain during the last war stiffened the resolution of the people and spurred them to fight on, as is well remembered. There is little indication that it will have any more telling effect in Vietnam. This is particularly true in view of the global sense of horror which has greeted the fresh bombing initiative in the North, and of which the North are well aware. They may suddenly feel that the world is on their side'.[90]

The Labour MP and former Chancellor of the Exchequer Roy Jenkins pressed Heath to modify the Government's stance in a letter he sent to the Prime Minister on 20 December, and which was made public several days later. In this Jenkins complained that it was 'difficult to understand the absence of any protest' at the renewed bombing. Jenkins described it as 'one of the most

cold-blooded actions in recent history', and that while there was some brutality in every war, 'normally nations have the excuse that they are fighting either for survival or, however misplaced the aim, for victory'. Nixon, however, was doing neither, and had simply 'unleashed a wave of terror, using the massive resources of the most advanced technological country against a small but stubborn part of the backward world, and he has done it in order to try to secure slightly better terms for withdrawal than those he indicated he was prepared to accept before his re-election'. It was 'brutality on a vast scale used in a mistaken attempt to prop up United States prestige' and it was now incumbent on America's allies to point out how destructive was this policy not only in human terms, but also of wider US aims in the world. Jenkins called on Heath to 'speak out firmly' when he next saw Nixon in Washington.[91] The Prime Minister was not moved, however. Rebuffing Jenkins, he published a reply at the end of December which noted how ineffective had been the Labour Government's previous dissociation from US actions in Vietnam, welcomed the Nixon's administration's recent announcement that negotiations were to resume (*Linebacker II* had been halted on 29 December), and expressed confidence in the American approach.[92]

Heath may have been the only European leader to offer unreserved backing for the so-called Christmas bombing but behind the scenes there was deeper official concern about the complete lack of any public or private attempt to justify its actions from the US administration. The Prime Minister had discussed the position with Trend and Greenhill on 27 December, saying that criticism of the bombing was 'likely to increase unless the Administration could give some convincing public explanation of the reasons underlying this policy'. Heath did not favour any discussion of Vietnam with representatives of the European Community as 'such an initiative, if it came to the ears of the Americans, would case offence and thus be counter-productive'. However, an alternative course would be for him to send a personal message to Nixon explaining that 'while he was prepared to go along with American policy, it would be increasingly criticized in Europe unless the background to it could be more convincingly explained'. In the event, it was decided that Cromer should approach Kissinger in order to make broadly the same point.[93] As Greenhill explained to the ambassador, 'the problem here is that all of us are in the dark as to the precise circumstances which have prompted the President to adopt the present drastic tactics. Where have the negotiations gone wrong and what is the assessment of the North Vietnamese purpose?' In speaking to Kissinger, Cromer should, 'suggest tactfully that his friends are due some further explanation if their sympathy and understanding is to be maintained … the American people must be equally mystified and surely the time has come when the President must justify publicly what he is doing'. There had already been calls for a meeting of the enlarged Community membership of nine (as the EEC was to become on 1 January 1973) to discuss the situation, which Britain had been successfully resisting, and such moves were likely to recur: 'the President must value European support and he cannot expect us to be helpful unless we have a fuller knowledge about what has been going on'.[94] Over the telephone from Palm Springs, Kissinger asked Cromer if the British could avoid any public statements for a few more days when all would be clearer, saying he had been remiss in not keeping the ambassador properly informed and that a full briefing would be given when he returned to Washington (the bombing was in fact brought to a halt the same day as Kissinger's message was despatched).[95]

Although Cromer himself was sympathetic to Nixon and Kissinger's position over the bombing, the FCO remained anxious that they had still received no information about what was occurring in the negotiations. On 6 January 1973, for example, Cromer again called Kissinger to explain that Britain's 'helpful' stance was 'becoming progressively more difficult to maintain in [view of] our complete ignorance of the US line'.[96] One of Kissinger's key assistants, Alexander Haig, delivered the subsequent briefing for the ambassador, informing him that

> … if the North Vietnamese remained intransigent, then [Nixon] would be ready to resume the bombing. If this became necessary, the President might have to change his tactics. His objective would become a purely military solution. He might decide to withdraw all US ground forces from South Vietnam, and negotiate a

> deal which would involve cessation of bombing in return for release of American POWs. It would be very hard for Congress to attack such a tactic. And the Americans believed that Thieu was now strong enough on the ground in South Vietnam to hold the position there. The North Vietnamese would not accept such a deal immediately, but the Americans would bomb them until they did.[97]

Cromer himself recognized that if the Americans resumed bombing, the domestic and international pressures on the British government to condemn American actions would become even greater, but he urged the Foreign Secretary that the line adopted thus far should be held. With Nixon feeling so 'isolated and lonely … any abandonment of the position hitherto held by HMG would be taken very badly by him and would, at this time, be very detrimental to Anglo-American relations'.[98]

Downing Street continued to maintain its firm defence of US policy. Interviewed by the *New York Times* foreign correspondent Cyrus L. Sulzberger on 10 January, Heath said he thought that if the bombing brought about success at the negotiating table then it would be looked at in a different way: 'I can't forget that people were saying the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong would start World War III – and it didn't'. He also understood how Americans might take the attitude, 'Why should we help out Europe if they hit us so hard on Asia?'[99] There could now be greater confidence in the American position as two days before this interview talks between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho had resumed, with Hanoi showing more eagerness to reach agreement. Trend had seen a tired and distracted Kissinger at the British Embassy in Washington on 16 January 1973 for talks intended to prepare the detailed agenda for a planned visit by the Prime Minister at the end of the month. Their exchanges revealed a shared concern for how Britain's membership of the EEC, which had officially begun at the start of January, would affect the transatlantic ties that had so recently held firm over Vietnam. Some of the seeds were already being planted here which would mark later US disillusionment with the British position over the Year of Europe initiative. Would it be possible, Kissinger had asked, to have discussions 'on the old basis of easy informality and mutual trust?' The Cabinet Secretary was suitably reassuring that there was no reason for this to change, as long as the Americans made what Trend called the 'mental adjustment' which acknowledged that Britain's behaviour would necessarily be affected by a new set of relationships with her partners in Europe. Referring to criticism of the recent US bombing of North Vietnam, Kissinger repeatedly stressed how angry the President was with all the European allies, with the exception of Britain: 'We alone emerged from this episode with credit; we alone are good; everybody else is bad'. 'We will have difficulty with maintaining civil relations with the Europeans who turned against us', Kissinger warned, 'But certainly not the British at all'. The point was repeated several times, but Trend warned Heath in his report of the conversation that 'this sharp differentiation of ourselves from our partners in the EEC has obvious implications in terms of our own relations with both the United States and the rest of the Nine'.[100]

By the time that Heath arrived in Washington on 1 February 1973, the Paris Peace accords providing for a ceasefire in Vietnam and the final withdrawal of all US forces had been signed. There was the expectation in some quarters that with Vietnam now removed as the predominating concern of Washington, many of the neglected issues in transatlantic relations could be addressed, not least as the official entry of Britain into the EEC suggested that a new basis for dialogue would need to be established. Moreover, Heath's steadfast support for the Nixon administration's Vietnam policies, and above all, its renewed resort to bombing in December 1972, had won the British many plaudits at the White House. As one *Times* report put it, 'Just when Mr Heath's "natural" Anglo-American relationship appears secondary to full membership in Europe, some Americans are seeing merits in the old "special relationship"'.[101] Kissinger's advice to Nixon on the eve of the visit was that Heath's position was still 'delicate … in terms of how far he can go in acting as the bridge between the EC and the US. We cannot expect the UK to assume the role of US advocate in the councils of the EC, lest the old suspicions of the "Trojan Horse" be revived'. But Kissinger also argued that Heath held an understanding of American

'global responsibilities' and would be ready to 'undertake some behind-the-scenes lobbying for the US position … '[102] This was to prove a badly mistaken assumption in the months to come.

Nixon used the occasion of Heath's visit to express once again his appreciation of British support over Vietnam, saying that 'he would not forget it'. According to the US record of the talks, Nixon had noted that the British had 'stuck with us' even though they had been 'under tremendous pressure':, "What you did, did not go unnoticed, and what others did, did not go unnoticed either. It is hard to understand when allies turn on you"'. Heath added that he felt that the mining of Haiphong harbour 'had been decisive, and that the whole episode showed that the judgment of critics was always wrong'. When asked how the United States would react if the settlement turned sour, Nixon avoided a direct answer and instead claimed that though the North Vietnamese were probably still confident that the South could be taken over, they did not believe this was possible in the immediate future 'otherwise they would never have concluded the agreement'. The North Vietnamese had been driven to a settlement by 'sheer exhaustion' and it would take them 'at least two years to recover their strength' and this was 'perhaps some indication of the period for which the settlement might last'. Kissinger also predicted that with the process of recovery and rehabilitation on both sides 'it would be late 1974 or early 1975 before any new military offensive could be launched by Hanoi'.[103]

A coda to British involvement in the Vietnam diplomacy of this period was the issue of an international conference to ratify the Paris accords. British officials saw the task of such a conference as being to transfer any monitoring of enforcement of the agreement over to the UN, which would then have to create new machinery to investigate infringements (as opposed to the short-term arrangements in the accords for the four-nation International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS), which oversaw implementation of the military ceasefire in the South). Above all, as we have seen, Britain wanted to wind-up its residual responsibilities as Co-Chairman of the 1954 Geneva Conference. Therefore, during Heath's February visit to Washington, he used the opportunity to pour cold water on any idea to revive something like the Geneva Conference machinery, saying 'the British experience showed that supervision by the Geneva Co-Chairmen was unworkable' and that it would be better to put reports of infringements of the agreement in the hands of the UN Secretary General, a view with which Kissinger concurred.[104] In the event, a twelve party international conference which was hurriedly convened in Paris at the end of the month merely went through the motions of 'acknowledging' and expressing support for the Paris Peace Agreement (the UN Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, was excluded from any clear role in monitoring enforcement, the North Vietnamese maintaining their long-held position that the UN had no 'competence' to deal with the conflict).[105] With an anodyne agreement reached at the international conference, the diplomatic device of the Co-Chairmanship finally expired, a development with which British officials were more than happy.[106]

IV

The Heath Government's support for US policy in toward Vietnam undoubtedly served some of the wider needs of the Anglo-American relationship, but Britain also backed Nixon's approach because an outright Communist victory was viewed as inimical to Western interests as a whole in South East Asia in the early 1970s. The security and stability of Malaysia and Singapore were still seen as important objectives of British policy, and even though Britain itself had limited means to fulfil this goal, its negotiation of the five-power defence agreement showed its continuing concern with the region. Development of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) which had been formed in 1967 was considered an encouraging trend for the future, but the spread of Vietnamese Communist power and influence across the whole of Indochina could put at risk the stability and potential economic vitality of the region. An outright American

defeat in Vietnam could also, it was feared, undermine US credibility and generate an isolationist backlash within the United States itself. To this extent, London and Washington were in accord during the early 1970s. Heath was willing to incur the domestic political criticism that came with his stance over the Christmas bombing of Hanoi in December 1972 because, like Nixon and Kissinger, he and his senior ministers believed that such blunt measures were the only way to coerce the leaders of North Vietnam into making the concessions required for a settlement.

British diplomatic support for US Vietnam policy was not, however, matched by commensurate practical assistance. Robert Thompson's advice was solicited by Nixon as a private individual, but the days of an officially-sponsored BRIAM had long since passed. British officials were convinced that the wisest course was to remain disengaged, and were particularly averse to any suggestion that they might act in the future in a role analogous to the responsibilities they had adopted in and after 1954 as Co-Chairman with the Soviet Union of the Geneva Conference on Indochina. Although the Labour Government's plan for a complete drawdown of strength in South East Asia was repudiated, a sharp reduction of the forces deployed in Singapore and Malaysia was still accomplished during the early 1970s.

Nevertheless, despite the absence of material support the Nixon administration was effusively grateful for the diplomatic backing that came from London over Vietnam. It mattered to Nixon that he could point to a Western European Government that was sympathetic to his predicament. As Nixon told Kissinger following the Prime Minister's February 1973 visit, Heath was the 'only solid [friend in Europe] we've got', Kissinger affirming 'we have a superb relationship with Heath'.[107]

In paradoxical fashion, Britain's approach to the Vietnam War as presented here had several negative effects for the way Anglo-American relations were to unfold during the final year of the Heath Government. The fact that the Prime Minister and British officials still made references to the East of Suez role after 1970, and continued to take an interest in South East Asia, helped to persuade US officials that when Britain entered the European Economic Community at the start of 1973 it would play the part of an 'outward-looking' power, ready to use its global outlook and position to direct European attentions away from local concerns toward adopting deeper and more responsible roles in Asia and the Middle East. Just a few days after Britain joined the Community, Heath delivered a speech where he outlined his vision of a unified European foreign policy, working in partnership with the United States, and playing a larger role in world affairs.[108] Nixon and Kissinger often remarked on the wider perspective on global issues and problems that was held by Heath and other senior British officials compared to their European counterparts.

Indeed, turning the gaze of the EEC in a global direction was one of the underlying goals of Kissinger's Year of Europe initiative. Hence when Kissinger delivered his ill-fated Year of Europe speech, to an annual Associated Press gathering of prominent publishers, newspaper editors and media executives at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on 23 April 1973, as well as calling for a new sense of positive purpose in transatlantic relations, he made mention of the fact that on the diplomatic front, the United States had 'global interests and responsibilities', and 'our European allies have regional interests', which though not always in conflict 'in the new era neither are they automatically identical'. Maintaining Western unity, Kissinger told his audience, meant such problems would have to be addressed: 'The Atlantic nations must find a solution for the management of their diversity, to serve the common objectives which underlie their unity. We can no longer afford to pursue national or regional self-interest without a unifying framework'.[109] The reference to Europe's regional as opposed to America's global interests, however, was seized upon by critical commentators who saw Kissinger as engaged in a condescending put-down. To Michel Jobert, the French Foreign Minister, Kissinger complained in May 1973: 'The idea that we are trying to reduce Europe to a regional role – nothing would please us more than for Europe to play a global role. It was our experience that Europe didn't want to. If it did, we would more than welcome it. You know from your experience and the British too, whenever

we were asked whether you would remain engaged anywhere – you in the Middle East, the British in Singapore and other areas – we always encouraged you'.[110]

The close alignment of Anglo-American views when it came to South East Asia helped to raise expectations in Washington that Britain would continue to articulate a 'transatlantic voice' on global security issues from within the European Community. If not quite the 'trojan horse' represented by some critics, Britain might at least be able to mediate between Europe and America when differences arose. The Year of Europe imbroglio was to demonstrate the fallacy of such expectations. Rather than provide a conduit for Washington's concepts of transatlantic unity in the months after April 1973, or discuss in private bilateral channels how Kissinger's notion of a new 'Atlantic Charter' might be put across in European councils, Heath was clear that Britain's membership meant that some of the diplomatic procedures of Anglo-American consultation would have to be revised so that trust could be built with Britain's new European partners through multilateral discussions and diplomacy.

When asked by Cyrus Sulzberger in January 1973 if Britain would have to reduce its 'special relationship' with the US now that it was a member of the Community, Heath struck a different note. He queried whether there really was such a relationship. He saw Anglo-American relations as underpinned by common ties of history, language and legal heritage, and saw no reason why these should weaken. But at the same time, this should not preclude Britain from maintaining close ties with other states and regions, the Prime Minister saying: 'I don't need to discuss this with Nixon. He used the phrase "special relations" in [December] 1970 when he received me in the White House. But I used the phrase "natural relations." I think that is closer to the real fact'.[111] During 1972, moves toward closer European political cooperation within the European Community had begun to gather momentum, a development which Heath had welcomed.[112] The Prime Minister, as well as the FCO, had a strong belief that only by joining and providing leadership to the Community could a significant British voice in world affairs be preserved. Developing European political unity offered the prospect of Europe operating as a coherent and highly influential actor on the global stage, but not necessarily in unison with the United States. At the EC's October 1972 Paris summit, the six current and three prospective member states had acknowledged their 'growing world responsibilities', and maintained that Europe should 'affirm its personality … and establish its position in world affairs as a distinct entity', while envisaging intensified consultations between EC foreign ministers to bring this about.[113] Animated by this vision, Heath was to take his European loyalties seriously during the course of 1973 by refusing to engage in bilateral discussions with Washington before arriving at a common position with his new partners in the EC. It was this departure from the post-war norm of Anglo-American relations that had so enraged Kissinger, claiming to British officials in July that disputes over how to handle his Year of Europe initiative had created an 'adversary relationship', and that, if it continued, the US would deal in future with the UK as they did 'with Luxembourg'.[114] Having so recently experienced Britain's steadfast support over Vietnam, when all the other European allies had been critical spectators, Nixon and Kissinger were shocked and surprised by the apparent *volte-face* they had witnessed in 1973; it was this sense of disillusionment with the former 'blue-eyed boys' which helped to condition the vehement criticism of British behaviour over the Year of Europe that came from the White House, and the sharpest deterioration in Anglo-American relations witnessed since the Suez crisis.

Notes

1. Key studies on the so-called Christmas bombings and this stage of the Vietnam peace negotiations include Mark Clodfelter, *The Limits of Air Power: The American Bombing of North Vietnam* (New York, 1989), 177–202; Jeffrey Kimball, *Nixon's Vietnam War* (Lawrence, 1998), 358–67; Larry Berman, *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger and Betrayal in Vietnam* (New York, 2001), 207–20; Pierre Asselin, *A Bitter Peace: Washington, Hanoi, and the Making of the Paris Agreement* (Chapel Hill, 2002), 127–51; Ang Cheng Guan, *Ending the Vietnam*

War: The Vietnamese Communists' Perspective (Abingdon, 2004), 113–22; Lien-Hang T. Nguyen, *Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, 2012), 294–8; and Robert K. Brigham, *Reckless: Henry Kissinger and the Tragedy of Vietnam* (New York, 2018), 231–8.

2. James Reston, 'Power Without Pity', *New York Times*, 27 December 1972; and David Rosenbaum, 'Efficacy of the Bombing of North Vietnam', *New York Times*, 26 December 1972. For a first-hand account of the destruction of Bach Mai hospital, see 'What the American bombing is doing to Hanoi civilians', *The Times*, 30 December 1972.
3. See Fredrik Logevall, 'The Swedish-American Conflict over Vietnam', *Diplomatic History*, 17, 3, summer 1993, 441–2.
4. Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (New York, 1979), 1453–4; see 'World protests increase against US bomb raids', *The Guardian*, 30 December 1972; 'Europeans Protesting', *New York Times*, 30 December 1972.
5. See 'Europe Reacts to Bombing with Increasing Protests', *New York Times*, 24 December 1972.
6. Minutes of Senior Review Group Meeting, 31 January 1973, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1969-1976, Volume XLI: Western Europe; NATO, 1969-1972* (Washington, 2012), 374.
7. See, for example, Richard Crossman's stinging column, 'Time to shout down the noise of American bombs', *The Times*, 27 December 1972.
8. Cromer letter to Greenhill, 17 January 1973, PREM 15/1976, The National Archives (TNA); all subsequent documentary references are to files from the TNA unless otherwise indicated.
9. Henry Kissinger, 'Reflections on a Partnership: British and American Attitudes to Postwar Foreign Policy', *International Affairs*, 58, 4 (1982), 577.
10. For Anglo-American relations during the Nixon-Heath period, as well as the Year of Europe in particular, see Keith Hamilton, 'Britain, France, and America's Year of Europe, 1973', *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* 17, 4, 2006, 871–95; Niklas H. Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74* (Basingstoke, 2009); Daniel Mockli, 'Asserting Europe's Distinct Identity: The EC Nine and Kissinger's Year of Europe', in Matthias Schulz and Thomas A. Schwartz (eds), *The Strained Alliance: U.S.-European Relations from Nixon to Carter* (New York, 2010), 195–220; Alastair Noble, 'Kissinger's Year of Europe: Britain's Year of Choice', in *Strained Alliance*, 221–35. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (London, 1982), 143.
11. Ibid, 707–9, and Geraint Hughes, 'Britain, the Transatlantic alliance, and the Arab-Israeli War of 1973', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 10, 2, 2008, 3–40. For a valuable corrective, see Alex Spelling, '"Recrimination and Reconciliation": Anglo-American Relations and the Yom Kippur War', *Cold War History*, 13, 4, 2013, 485–506.
12. See, for example, Hugh Overton letter to Cromer, 3 January 1972, FCO 82/182; and Douglas-Home letter to Cromer, 17 April 1972, FCO 73/138.
13. See Andrew Scott, *Allies* Apart*: Heath, Nixon and the Anglo-American Special Relationship* (Basingstoke, 2011), 38–41, 199–204.
14. See for example, Catherine Hynes, *The Year That Never Was: Heath, the Nixon Administration and the Year of Europe* (Dublin, 2009); Thomas Robb, 'Henry Kissinger, Great Britain and the "Year of Europe": The "Tangled Skein"', *Contemporary British History*, 24, 3 (2010), 297–318. For a different perspective, which stresses some of the genuine causes of Kissinger's frustration with British policy, see Matthew Jones, '"A Man in a Hurry": Henry Kissinger, Transatlantic Relations, and the British Origins of the Year of Europe Dispute', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 24, 1 (2013), 77–99.
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16. W. R. Tomkyns minute, 'President Nixon's Visit to Chequers on 3 October: Background Brief', 22 September 1970, FCO 7/1839.
17. Alex Spelling, 'Edward Heath and Anglo-American Relations 1970-1974: A Reappraisal', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 20, 4 (2009), 638–58, in particular 639–43, 647–8; Thomas Robb, *A Strained Partnership? UK-US Relations in the Era of Détente, 1969-77* (Manchester, 2013), 2–4.
18. For a revealing summary of these aspects of the relationship, see Douglas-Home minute for Heath, PM/70/106, 18 September 1970, and attached annex, DEFE 13/890.
19. See John W. Young, 'John Freeman, 1969-71', and Alex Spelling, 'Lord Cromer, 1971-74', in Michael F. Hopkins, Saul Kelly and John W. Young (eds), *The Washington Embassy: British Ambassadors to the United States, 1939-77* (London, 2009), 169–88, 189–208.
20. See Kissinger, *White House Years*, 92–3. For the establishment of the first of these Kissinger-Trend 'seminars', see Trend minute for Heath, 'Dr Kissinger's Visit', A09903, 23 June 1971, PREM 15/1272.
21. Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 602; Joseph Alsop, 'Nixon Joy at Heath Victory', *The Times*, 23 June 1970.
22. See John W. Young, 'The Heath Government and British Entry into the European Community', in Stuart Ball and Anthony Seldon (eds), *The Heath Government, 1970-1974: A Reappraisal* (London, 1996), 259–84.

23. See, for example, John Campbell, *Edward Heath: A Biography* (London, 1993), 336; and also Edward Heath, 'Realism in British Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, 48, 1 (October 1969), 47–8.
24. See Christopher Hill and Christopher Lord, 'The foreign policy of the Heath government', in Ball and Seldon, *Heath Government*, 305–6; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 140–1.
25. See, for example, the warnings issued by the Defence Secretary, when explaining the UK's force posture, 'Speech by Lord Carrington, 24 February 1971', in D. C. Watt and James Mayall (eds), *Current British Foreign Policy: Documents, Statements, Speeches: 1971* (London, 1973), 143–6.
26. See, for example, Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship*, 164–5.
27. See Jones, 'A Man in a Hurry', 83–5; and for the intelligence cut-off, see Robb, *Strained Partnership*, 86–9.
28. For British policy toward the Vietnam War under the Macmillan Government, see Peter Busch, *All the Way with JFK? Britain, the US and the Vietnam War* (Oxford, 2003).
29. See 'Mr Heath in Saigon', *The Times*, 10 January 1966; 'Mr Heath Talks to Saigon Prisoners', *The Times*, 11 January 1966; and Edward Heath, *The Course of My Life* (London, 1998), 278–9.
30. See 'Labour replies on Vietnam', *The Times*, 28 March 1966.
31. For this episode see Wallace J. Thies, *When Governments Collide: Coercion and Diplomacy in the Vietnam Conflict, 1964-1968* (Berkeley, 1980), 130–35; Sylvia Ellis, *Britain, America, and the Vietnam War* (Westport, CT, 2004), 160-79; and John W. Young, 'Britain and "LBJ's War", 1964-68', *Cold War History*, 2, 3 (2002), 74. For domestic opposition, see also Craig Wilson, 'Rhetoric, Reality and Dissent: The Vietnam Policy of the British Labour Government, 1964-1970', *Social Science Journal*, 23, 1 (1986), 17–31.
32. Hansard, HC Deb, 29 June 1966, volume 730, col 1797.
33. Hansard, HC Deb, 7 July 1966, volume 731, cols 699, 702–4.
34. 'Mr Heath Says "Support US"', *The Guardian*, 12 February 1968.
35. See Matthew Jones, 'A Decision Delayed: Britain's Withdrawal from South East Asia Reconsidered, 1961-1968', *English Historical Review*, CXVII, 472 (2002), 569–95; P. L. Pham, *Ending "East of Suez": The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore, 1964-1968* (Oxford, 2010).
36. Hansard, HC Deb, 17 January 1968, volume 756, col 1820.
37. Hansard, HC Deb, 24 January 1968, volume 757, col 430.
38. See Kissinger, *White House Years*, 476–83; Kimball, *Nixon's Vietnam War*, 173–83.
39. Ibid, 186–7; Kissinger, *White House Years*, 436–48; Brigham, *Reckless*, 95–8; see also Asselin, *A Bitter Peace*, 1–30.
40. Record of a Meeting between the Prime Minister and President Nixon at Chequers on Saturday 3rd October 1970 at 11.45am, PREM 15/714.
41. Ibid; and memorandum of conversation, 3 October 1970, *FRUS, 1969-1976, XLI*, 985–6.
42. For a contemporary view, see Phillip Darby, 'Beyond East of Suez', *International Affairs,* 46, 4 (1970), 659–60. More background on the defence arrangements can be found in in Kin Wah Chin, *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore: The Transformation of a Security System* (Cambridge, 1983), 171–7; and Andrea Benvenuti and Moreen Dee, 'The Five Power Defence Arrangements and the Reappraisal of the British and Australian policy interests in Southeast Asia, 1970-75', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 41, 1 (2010), 101–23.
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45. Henry Stanhope, 'Council set up for defence of Malaysia and Singapore', *The Times*, 16 April 1971.
46. Henry Stanhope, 'Three nation Anzuk force takes over defence of the Far East', *The Times*, 2 November 1971.
47. Kissinger memorandum, President's Private Meeting with British Prime Minister Edward Heath, 20 December 1971, CK2349647906, US Declassified Documents online.
48. Kissinger memorandum, President's Private Meeting with British Prime Minister Edward Heath, 21 December 1971, Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), document ID 1679086456.
49. Hansard, HC Deb, 16 July 1970, volume 803, col 1725.
50. See James Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954* (London, 1986).
51. A very useful official account of the organic evolution of the British role of Co-Chairman after 1954 is given in Cmnd 2834, *Documents Relating to British Involvement in the Indo-China Conflict, 1945-1965* (London, 1965), paragraphs 44–73.
52. See, for example, John Dumbrell and Sylvia Ellis, 'British involvement in Vietnam Peace Initiatives, 1966-67', *Diplomatic History*, 27, 1 (2003), 113–49.
53. See Ian F. W. Beckett, 'Robert Thompson and the British Advisory Mission to South Vietnam, 1961-1965', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 8, 3 (1997), 41–63; Peter Busch, 'Killing the "Vietcong": The British Advisory Mission and the Strategic Hamlet Programme', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 25, 1 (2002), 135–62.
54. See David Fitzgerald, 'Sir Robert Thompson, Strategic Patience and Nixon's War in Vietnam', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 37, 6-7 (2014), 998–1026. Thompson himself came to appreciate that his counter-insurgency approaches were not applicable to the war as it was being experienced in 1972; see ibid, 1020.

55. For the origins of the offensive see Nguyen, *Hanoi's War*, 231–4.
56. Standard accounts include Ngo Quang Truong, *The Easter Offensive* (Washington, 1979), and Gerald Turley, *The Easter Offensive, Vietnam, 1972* (Novato, CA, 1985).
57. See Clodfelter, *Limits of Air Power*, 151–5.
58. See Stephen P. Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Easter Offensive* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 119–31. Randolph's book is the leading account of the air war against the North in 1972 and the political and diplomatic calculations that influenced Nixon's response to the Easter Offensive.
59. Hansard, HC Deb, 17 April 1972, volume 835, col 17W.
60. Washington telegram No 1347 to FCO, 18 April 1972, PREM 15/1281.
61. Washington telegram No 1382 to FCO, 20 April 1972, FCO 82/188.
62. Nguyen, *Hanoi's War*, 244–5.
63. Record of a conversation held at 10 Downing Street between the Prime Minister and the U.S. Secretary of State at 4pm, 4 May 1972, FCO 82/189.
64. See Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons*, 154–63.
65. 'Labour warning resisted', *The Guardian*, 10 May 1972.
66. Hansard, HC Deb, 8 May 1972, volume 836, cols 905–7.
67. Nixon to Douglas-Home, 10 May 1972, FCO 82/184.
68. Cromer to Douglas-Home, 11 May 1972, PREM 15/1719.
69. Nixon letter to Heath, 8 May 1972, PREM 15/1281.
70. Cromer letter to Sir Denis Greenhill, 9 May 1972, ibid. See also Greenhill letter to Cromer, 16 May 1972, FCO 15/1693. And see Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons*, 164–79, for Nixon's decisions over the start of *Linebacker*.
71. 'A Substitute for Defeat', *The Times*, 10 May 1972.
72. Cable minute, 'Geneva Conference on Vietnam', 11 May 1972, FCO 15/1600; and for Eden, Dulles and Indochina see, in general, Kevin Ruane and Matthew Jones, *Anthony Eden, Anglo-American Relations and the 1954 Indochina Crisis* (London, 2019).
73. Douglas-Home note on Graham minute, 12 May 1972, FCO 15/1600. The Chinese were also adamantly opposed: Record of a conversation between the Chinese ambassador and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, 26 July 1972, FCO 15/1600.
74. Squire letter to Richards, 12 June 1972, FCO 15/1600.
75. See Clodfelter, *Limits of Air Power*, 166–70; Randoph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons*, 320; Asselin, *Bitter Peace*, 52–3, 55.
76. Trend minute, 'Record of Discussions with Dr Kissinger on Thursday 14th September 1972', A02516, PREM 15/1273.
77. Washington telegram No 2787 to FCO, 22 September 1972, FCO 15/1696. For these proposals and the negotiating position with the North Vietnamese, see also Kissinger, *White House Years*, 1333–4, 1341–3; Asselin, *Bitter Peace*, 69–71.
78. Grattan letter to Bridges, 25 September 1972, FCO 15/1696.
79. Bridges letter to Grattan, 26 September 1972, ibid.
80. Squire minute, 19 October 1972, FCO 15/1681.
81. Wilford minute, 20 October 1972, ibid.
82. Cable minute for Squire, 'Vietnam Settlement: International Involvement', 10 November 1972, FCO 15/1682.
83. FCO telegram (from Douglas-Home) No 2417 to Washington, 24 November 1972, ibid.
84. See Brigham, *Reckless*, 228–31.
85. Transcript of Nixon-Kissinger telephone conversation, 17 December 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976,* Vol *IX: Vietnam, October 1972-January 1973* (Washington, 2010), 718.
86. Hansard, HC Deb, 19 December 1972, vol 848, cols 1116–7.
87. Anthony Lewis, 'Widening cracks in Dr Kissinger's façade', *The Times,* 20 December 1972.
88. Peter Jenkins, 'Nixon's Rain of Terror', *The Guardian*, 22 December 1972.
89. 'Britain's shameful silence', *The Guardian*, 30 December 1972; see also 'World protests increase against US bomb raids', *The Guardian*, 30 December 1972.
90. 'Beyond Military Analysis', *The Times*, 28 December 1972. For a first-hand account of the bombing from the British consulate in Hanoi which made parallels with the spirit of cockneys in the Blitz, see T. J. Everard letter to Squire, 22 December 1972, FCO 15/1723.
91. Jenkins letter to Heath, 20 December 1972, in FCO 15/1719; and 'Jenkins Calls for Heath Protest Against Bombing', *Daily Telegraph*, 29 December 1972. And see 'Mr Heath Asked by Labour Leaders to Condemn US Bombing', *The Times*, 29 December 1972.
92. 'Mr Heath Rebuffs Call for Condemnation of US', *The Times*, 1 January 1973.
93. Christopher Roberts minute for Lord Bridges, 29 December 1972, PREM 15/1281.
94. Text of telegram from Greenhill to Cromer, 28 December 1972, contained in Roberts to Chequers (for Heath), Message No 1, 29 December 1972, ibid.

95. Text of Cromer to Greenhill, 29 December 1972, in ibid.
96. Washington (from Cromer) to FCO (for Greenhill), No 81, 6 January 1973, PREM 15/1996.
97. Washington (from Cromer) to FCO (for Greenhill), No 93, 8 January 1973, ibid.
98. Cromer letter to Douglas-Home, 10 January 1973, ibid.
99. Diary entry for 10 January 1973, Cyrus L. Sulzberger, *Postscript with a Chinese Accent: Memoirs and Diaries, 1972-1973* (New York, 1974), 172.
100. Trend minute for Heath, A03270, 17 January 1973; 'Record of discussion at the British Embassy, Washington DC on Tuesday 16 January 1973', PREM 15/1976; memorandum of conversation, 16 January 1973, DNSA, document ID 1679087095.
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102. Kissinger memorandum for Nixon, 31 January 1973, NSC Files, VIP Visits, box 942, Nixon papers, Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library.
103. Record of a discussion at the White House between Nixon, Kissinger, Heath and Trend, 1 February 1973, PREM 15/1996. For the US record see Kissinger memorandum for the President's File, Meeting with Heath and Trend, 1 February 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume E-15, Part 2: Documents on Western Europe, 1973-1976* (Washington, 2014), 707. See also Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 137.
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106. See editorial note, *FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume X: Vietnam, January 1973 – July 1975* (Washington, 2011), 140–41.
107. Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 3 February 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976, Vol. E-15, Part 2*, 23–4.
108. See 'Mr Heath claims balance of power role for Europe', *The Times*, 3 January 1973.
109. Kissinger address, 23 April 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976, Vol. XXXVIII, Part 1: Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1973-1976* (Washington, 2012), 27.
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111. Sulzberger, *Postscript*, 173.
112. See Daniel Mockli, *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity* (London, 2009).
113. See ibid, 78–80.
114. See Jones, 'A Man in a Hurry', 83–6.

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