

Order from Chaos when Chaos is the Order:
Revising Historical Narratives on Britain's Second World War Yugoslav Policy

L'ordre du chaos quand Chaos est l'Ordre:
Révision des récits historiques sur la politique Yougoslave Seconde Guerre mondiale en Grande-Bretagne

A Thesis Submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies
of the Royal Military College of Canada

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts – War Studies

April 2016

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To Jessica, my sounding board, my editor, my unofficial research assistant, my partner in crime, my friend, my love. Without your help and your limitless patience none of this would be possible. So you're the one to blame.

Abstract

During the Second World War British support to occupied Yugoslavia's resistance underwent an inexplicable and controversial about face that saw His Majesty's Government (HMG) pivot support from Draža Mihailović's Royalist Četniks to Josip Broz Tito's Communist Partisans. This about face in policy has fomented a lasting debate, still very much alive in the current historical literature. This thesis will explore various explanations for this apparent shift in British policy by examining the principal historiography in the light of more recently declassified records. By taking a view of HMG policy evolution that focuses on influence and context this thesis will examine the evolution of British Yugoslav policy. The intention is to fill gaps in the literature and illustrate that previous narratives have been problematic due to archival limitations and issues of approach. This examination provides a new narrative by which to frame HMG Policy in Yugoslavia that has yet to be considered and which provides very different and intriguing explanations.

Résumé

Pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, le soutien britannique à la résistance Yougoslavie occupée subi une volte-face inexplicable et controversée qui a vu le gouvernement de Sa Majesté (HMG) aider de pivot à partir de Draza Mihailovic royaliste tchetniks de partisans communistes de Josip Broz Tito. Cette volte-face dans la politique a déploré un débat durable, toujours bien vivant dans la littérature historique actuelle. Cette thèse explorera diverses explications à ce changement apparent dans la politique britannique en examinant l'historiographie principale à la lumière des dossiers plus récemment déclassifiés. En prenant une vue de l'évaluation de la politique HMG qui se concentre sur l'influence et le contexte de cette thèse examinera l'évolution derrière la politique yougoslave britannique. L'intention est de combler les lacunes dans la littérature et d'illustrer que les récits précédents ont été problématique en raison des limites de l'approche et des questions d'archivage. Cet examen fournit un nouveau récit par lequel pour encadrer la politique HMG en Yougoslavie qui doit encore être examiné et qui fournit des explications très différentes et intrigantes.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not be possible without the tremendous support and guidance of many individuals. Their assistance has allowed me to pursue a subject I am passionate about and feel is largely unrecognized and vitally important to Second World War studies. It is to these individuals a debt of gratitude is owed. This said, all errors and faults are my own and should not reflect upon the wonderfully supportive people who have assisted this project along the way.

To begin I would like to give special thanks to Dr. Michael Hennessy of the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) who acted as supervisor to this thesis. His informal approach and long conversations were invaluable. The ability to casually discuss ideas and gain guidance built confidence and initiative, it served to encourage me to take risks and to think and talk about things in new ways. It was by far the greatest experience within this writing process.

I would also like to thank both Dr. Nikolas Gardner and Dr. James Wood of RMC's War Studies department who both, in their own way, built the path that I have followed to this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Paul Driben, and Prof. Walid Chahal of Lakehead University who taught me how to think about issues from unfamiliar ground. Their continued support along with that of Dr. Bruce Strang of Brandon University have been the foundation upon which I have pursued my academic endeavours.

I would also like to thank the staff of RMC's Massey Library whose assistance in navigating the archives was tremendously helpful and encouraging. While on the subject I would also like to thank Alison Giles of Britain's Imperial War Museum for her efforts in assisting me in "deciphering a signature" Also I should thank Stewart Webb, editor of The Defence Report, for providing me with a late night sounding board and continued grounding during my more panicked moments.

Bruce Hyer, Member of Parliament for Thunder Bay-Superior North is also deserving of special mention. Mr. Hyer's unwavering faith in, and limitless support of, my abilities has served to free me of any hesitation concerning my ambitions. The unfettered window Mr. Hyer has provided me into the inner workings of the Canadian government has yielded invaluable lessons on how to approach and consider government processes. The value of these lessons is beyond articulating.

Thanks are owed to Dr. Ernie Epp and Dr. Neil Nelson whose friendship and unwavering commitment to heading my own cheering section has been an incredibly rewarding relationship. On a lighter note I should also acknowledge Rockstar Energy Drinks for fuelling my late night marathon writing sessions that produced some of my most inspired work, and for likely shaving several years off my life.

Special thanks is owed to Dr. Michael Greenwood, Dr. David Varey, Dr. Lubomyr Luciuk, and Maj. John Grodzinski of the Royal Military College for serving as the defence committee for my thesis. Their insights and guidance have been deeply appreciated.

Finally to my family, my fiancé Jessica, without her support I would be nowhere. To my Mother and Father whose financial investment in my education may yet yield one of the most costly and least read books in history is greatly appreciated.

Glossary

AVNOJ	– Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation
BLO	– British Liaison Officer
Brig.	– Brigadier General
BSC	– British Security Co-ordination
C-in-C	– Commander-in-Chief
Capt.	– Captain
CIGS	– Chief of the Imperial General Staff of HMG
Col.	– Colonel
COS	– Chiefs of Staff
CPC	– Canadian Communist Party
DMI	– Directorate of Military Intelligence
FO	– Foreign Office
Gen.	– General
GCCS	– Government Code and Cypher School
GHQME	– General Headquarters Middle East
GPM	– Government Politics Model
HMG	– His Majesty's (British) Government
HQ	– Headquarters
JCOS	– Joint Chiefs of Staff
JIC	– Joint Intelligence Committee
Lt.	– Lieutenant
MEW	– Ministry of Economic Warfare
Mjr.	– Major
MP	– Member of Parliament
OBM	– Organisational Behaviour Model
OSS	– United States' Office of Strategic Services
PM	– Prime Minister
PMO	– Prime Ministers Office
PWE	– Political Warfare Executive
RAM	– Rational Actor Model
RCMP	– Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RYG	– Royal Yugoslav Government
SAS	– Special Air Service
SIS	– Special Intelligence Service
SOE	– Special Operations Executive
USSR	– Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
W/T	– Wireless Transmitter
WO	– War Office

A note to the reader on spelling and format

Spelling of place names and individuals have been standardised to what the writer believes to be the most representative, as well as most recognizable form to the reader. As an example the place name “Yugoslavia” is itself often represented in British archival material as “Yugoslavia,” “Jugoslavia,” or “Yugo-slavia” interchangeably and without cause for note. This is of no consequence to the arguments contained within this thesis and therefore have been standardized including within direct quotations (unless otherwise stated – i.e. [sic]) for the reader’s ease.

The one exception to this standardization effort lies within the footnotes. For accuracy, references to primary documents have been rendered with titles for said documents exactly how they appear in their original form.

In the case of individuals the same holds true, wherein several slightly altered forms generally arise, with again, what seems to have been without cause for issue within His Majesty’s Government (HMG). Most often this concerns “hai - haj” and “Yu - Ju” sounds. Again, these have been standardised by what the author believes to be the most representative, as well as most recognizable form to the reader across all of this thesis’ content, including direct quotation, unless otherwise stated.

Code words for locations, individuals, missions, conference and operations are denoted by their representation in, as demonstrated *HERE*, smaller font upper case lettering.

All abbreviations and acronyms as listed in the Glossary are denoted in long form in their first appearance followed by the abbreviation/acronym and are from then on represented solely by their shorthand abbreviation/acronym. An example of this can be found in the preceding paragraph, which mentions His Majesty’s Government (HMG). These shorthand representations appear entirely in upper case without any modification such as that applied to code words. They are furthermore undivided by periods, for example SOE or HMG, not S.O.E. or H.M.G.

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The Past is a Foreign Country: They do Things Differently There.

- L.P. Hartly

Chapter 1

Introduction: Of Two Minds

I should like to pay the highest tribute for the most gallant fight put up
against impossible odds

- Admiral Sir John Tovey

During the Second World War British official support concerning Yugoslavia's resistance movement underwent a perplexing and controversial reversal. The clear pivot in British support from Draža Mihailović's Royalist Četniks to Josip Broz Tito's Communist Partisans ignited an enduring debate that still persists within the historical literature. This thesis will explore various explanations for this apparent shift in British policy by examining the principal historiography in the light of more recently declassified archival records. This re-examination aims at unraveling the decision process behind this policy upheaval. Understanding the decision processes behind the formulation of government wartime policy and how these policies are reconciled with pragmatic requirements on the ground is an incredibly complex process. Often in war, countries are forced to make quick decisions on the fly without all the facts or the luxury of measured consideration. Tracing backwards through historical research to try and unravel these decisions presents daunting complexity.

Historical research into British policy concerning Yugoslavia during the Second World War is a poorly understood subfield of Second World War historiography. What material there is reflects tremendous controversy over British government policies, (hereafter referred to as HMG policies) concerning support of Yugoslav resistance movements. The historiography takes specific aim at the highly divisive issue of HMG's shift in support from Mihailović's Četniks to Tito's Communist Partisans. The historiography has become divided over why this shift occurred.

Yugoslavia collapsed rapidly in the face of the April 1941 Axis invasion.¹ The occupation that followed incited large-scale resistance spearheaded by traditional networks of guerrilla bands known as Četniks.² The First British Liaison Officer (BLO) mission to Yugoslavia, with the aim of understanding and

¹ Fitzroy Maclean, *Eastern Approaches* (England: Penguin Books, 1949, 1991) 292; Ben Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans: German Armies and Partisan Warfare* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012) 76; Milan Deroc, *British Special Operations Explored: Yugoslavia in Turmoil, 1941-1945, and the British Response* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) 22-24; Michael Lees, *The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power, 1943-1944* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990) 71.

² Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 89; David Martin, *The Web of Disinformation: Churchill's Yugoslav Blunder* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990) 248; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 292.

coordinating this resistance, arrived in September 1941.³ It became immediately apparent that a rift had emerged within the Yugoslav resistance between Communist Partisans led by Tito and Mihailović's Royalist Četniks.⁴

Soviet entrance into the war on the side of the Allies in June 1941 meant greater strategic considerations, such as reducing Axis pressure on the Soviets, would cause HMG to become increasingly involved with Yugoslav resistance.⁵ These considerations would lead HMG to begin recruiting communist émigrés from Yugoslavia in early 1942 to send back into their homeland to coordinate with the resistance.⁶

Concerned with Axis reprisals against civilians, Mihailović adhered to a strategy of laying low and building networks and intelligence in preparation for an Allied landing in the region.⁷ Increasingly this strategy would come into conflict with HMG's evolving needs. Partisan activity would cause Whitehall to begin focusing on a policy of supporting both elements within the Yugoslav resistance. By spring of 1943 it was official British policy.⁸

³ David Stafford, *Camp X* (New York: Dodd, Mead & co., 1987) 169; Michael McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans: British Military Involvement in Wartime Yugoslavia 1941 – 1945* (Sussex, United Kingdom: The Navy and Military Press Ltd., 2007), 2-3, 31-2.

⁴ PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden]," 31 October 194, *The National Archives of the UK*. "Records of the Prime Minister's Office" PREM, London 2015. <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/details?Uri=C233>; F.W.D. Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) 130; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 31-2.

⁵ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke. Ed. Alex Danchev & Daniel Todman. *War Diaries 1939– 1945*. (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2003) 346; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 63-5, 200; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 47, 313-4, Heather Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans: the Special Operations Executive and Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003) x, 83, 252.

⁶ Stafford, *Camp X*, 170-1; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 132; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 41-2; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 62-3.

⁷ PREM 3-510-4 "Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean from COS" 7 November 1941; PREM 3-409-2 "The Prospects of Subversion" 21 April 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill" 23 October 1941; PREM 3-510-2 "Ministry of Economic Warfare: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941" 30 August; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 109.

⁸ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [J]Yovanovitch" 29 March 1943; CAB 80-69 "SOE Activities in 1943: Appreciation by SOE" 21 April 1943, 3-4, *The National Archives of the UK*. "The Cabinet Papers - Records of the Cabinet Office" CAB, London 2015. <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/browse/C44?v=h>; Allanbrooke, 346;

The course of the war radically changed in 1943 and Allied fortunes improved.⁹ HMG's needs evolved and what was required was to pin down as much Axis force in Yugoslavia as possible.¹⁰ With this in mind by the end of 1943 HMG had taken the decision to cancel their supply operations to Mihailović and pivot the entire weight of military support onto Tito's Partisans.¹¹

This thesis' examination into HMG's controversial shift from Mihailović to Tito aims to further the understanding of the processes by which HMG's wartime decisions were made and policy set which led to this shift in support. Re-examining the historiography through a review of recently available archival documents (the nature of which will be explored in the section on sources found later in this work) demonstrates that much of the divisions found in secondary sources, particularly those authored earlier than the late 1990s, have been rooted in either the heat of personal experiences or an incomplete understanding of the awareness of events and considerations held within the higher reaches of HMG. Perhaps most notable amongst the high levels of HMG is the level of understanding held by Prime Minister (PM) Winston Churchill, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke and the War Cabinet.

Historical inquiry into this decision has fomented the emergence of two distinct schools of historiography, Orthodox and Revisionist, the former defending HMG's move to abandon Mihailović's Četniks in favour of Tito's Partisans while the latter attacks it. These schools can largely be defined by their position with

Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 152, 186-7, 191; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 54

⁹ PREM 3-510-7 Richard Casey to Admiral Cunningham "Enclosing report" 1 June 1943; FO 371-37609 "Morton to Sargent" 8 June 1943, *The National Archives of the UK*. "Records Created or Inherited by the Foreign Office" FO, London 2015. <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/details?Uri=C130>; CAB 80-76 War Cabinet: Chiefs of Staff Committee "Supplies for Guerrilla Activities in the Balkans: Note by Lt.Gen. Ismay" 10 November 1943.

¹⁰ FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers" 761, 770-1 *University of Wisconsin Digital Collection - Foreign Relations of the United States* "Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers" FRUS Last accessed 30 April 2015

<http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/FRUS>; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 536; PREM 3-510-6 "Yugoslav PM's Message to General Mihailovic" 9 April 1943; CAB 80-69 "Draft Telegram from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav PM" May 1943; PREM 3-510-7 "Situation in Yugoslavia" 18 June 1943, 5.

¹¹ PREM 3-510-10 "From FO to Washington: Repeated to Mr. Stevenson, Cairo" 7 December 1943; PREM 3-510-10 "Stevenson to FO" 11 December 1943; WO 202/132A *The National Archives of the UK*. "Records Created or Inherited by the War Office, Armed Forces, Judge Advocate General, and Related Bodies" WO, London 2015. <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/details?Uri=C259>; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 120 - 2; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 76; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 25-6

regards to their preferred protagonist. In the literature review which follows, these schools of thought will be outlined with the goal of establishing key arguments that can be called into question by the availability of new primary and secondary material.

This thesis will re-examine HMG's decision process by deconstructing the debates contained within the historiography surrounding the series of decisions that led to this perceived policy shift. In doing so it will serve to cast new light on misconceptions or disputes which have prevailed in the place of a clear understanding of HMG's decision making process and the evolution of HMG's wartime Yugoslav policy. This will be done by viewing the Second World War through the lens promoted by individuals such as M.R.D. Foot¹² and Antony Beevor¹³ who propose that, contrary to convention, the Second World War was not a monumental monolithic battle between two opposing alliances but instead a mosaic of overlapping conflicts.¹⁴ With this in mind, and following the analytical lines articulated by such individuals as Graham Allison¹⁵, Hans Mouritzena¹⁶, and Anders Wivel,¹⁷ this thesis will re-examine the primary source material relied on in previous accounts in the light of the tremendous amount of archival material that has become available since the majority of these secondary narratives were first published.

As a starting point Graham Allison presents three conceptual frameworks by which one can approach and assess government policy in his book, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (1999).¹⁸ These models provide the foundation from which this thesis begins to approach assessments of primary material and the policies they reflect.

The Rational Actor Model (RAM), which "in its simplest form...links purpose and action" is based on the assumption that governments are the primary

¹² M.R.D. Foot was a British military historian with considerable knowledge of the SOE. He served as a British Army intelligence officer and special operations operative during the Second World War.

¹³ Antony Beevor. is a British military historian, educated at Winchester College and Sandhurst. He studied under the military historian John Keegan.

¹⁴ M.R.D. Foot, *S.O.E.: An Outline History of the Special Operations Executive 1940-46* (London: Bodley Head, 2014) 172 ; "Q&A with Antony Beevor – 21 June 2012," *CSPAN Video Library*, Accessed 30 November 2012. <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/Beev>

¹⁵ Graham Allison is a political scientist and professor at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

¹⁶ Hans Mouritzena is Senior Researcher, Foreign Policy at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) Copenhagen, Denmark.

¹⁷ Anders Wivel is a Professor of Political Science at the Centre for European Politics, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

¹⁸ Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. 2nd ed. (Reading Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999)

drivers of policy.¹⁹ In historical enquiry, RAM assumes with *post hoc ergo propter hoc* logic that a linear line can be drawn backwards from results through actions to intent. As Allison points out, however, “governmental action does not presuppose government intention.”²⁰ The reality is “a large number of factors that constitute a governmental game intervene between issues and resultants.”²¹

The Organization Behaviour Model (OBM) makes clear that “government is not an individual. It is a vast conglomerate of loosely allied organizations, each with a substantial life of its own.”²² This places limits on, and influence the implementation of, policy, altering outcomes.²³ Often this means there is no holistic approach to policy within government, but different parts of the government taking responsibility for different elements.

Allison’s third model, the Government Politics Model (GPM), argues that government policy can be understood not simply as organizational outputs but as a result of negotiation between these outputs. It acknowledges that governments are not necessarily unitary actors but that differences of interest and points of view exist within government and that government behaviour can therefore be understood as the outcome of “bargaining games.” These “bargaining games” form and deform intention and action and in doing so divorce result from intent.²⁴

When considering HMG’s inter- and intra- agency interactions one also has to be conscious of a phenomenon Allison refers to as “groupthink.”²⁵ Agencies of HMG operated, both internally and amongst negotiations between each other, with the underlying need to come to some form of agreement.²⁶ The point being that, decisions do not necessarily reflect a consensus of opinion or objective so much as they do a desire to come to terms with the situation and move forward.

Frameworks presented by Hans Mouritzen and Anders Wivel seek what Asle Toje²⁷ describes as “‘interesting’ rather than ‘full’ explanations.”²⁸ While delivering explanations on several levels Mouritzen and Wivel present various and even conflicting results without attempting to reconcile them in the aim of a greater truth.²⁹ Their stated goal, much like this thesis, is not to explain the

¹⁹ Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 49.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 306.

²¹ *Ibid*, 305.

²² *Ibid*, 143.

²³ *Ibid*, 176-80.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 255.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 283-4.

²⁶ *Ibid*.

²⁷ *Asle Toje is Research Director at the Norwegian Nobel Institute.*

²⁸ Flemming Splidsboel Hansen, “Of Salient Environments, Action Spaces and Weak States.” *International Politics Reviews* Vol. 2 (2014): 39; Asle Toje, “Foreign Policy Analysis 2.0: What we talk about when we talk about Foreign Policy” *International Politics Reviews* Vol. 2 (2014):38.

²⁹ Toje, “Foreign Policy Analysis 2.0,” 38.

situation to its closure. Instead, it is to “seek to identify where the most explanatory ‘dynamite’ is to be found and to explore the potential for combining insights from different explanatory levels.”³⁰

This is rooted in the *Annales* School of historiography, which as Georges Duby suggested, views history as needing to reject the sensational and possessing a reluctance to give a simple accounting of events.³¹ Instead, historical inquiry should avoid trying to pose and solve problems.³² An underlying message that will emerge from this thesis enquiry into the subject is that chaos can serve as an actor all its own in steering policy. Chaos being defined in this case as the shifting strategic circumstances, conflicting reports and points of view, and the role of expediency which interacted to drive HMG’s policy evolution.

One must be cautious about inferring intentions from results and keep at the forefront of examination that a great many factors intervene between intention and results. Chaos itself can serve as a driving force.³³ However, there is also a need to acknowledge an overarching institutional attempt at controlling this chaos, attempting to wield and direct its course.³⁴ These agencies and individuals were in essence trying to harness these forces. What one finds is there is an order to the chaos but often chaos is that order.

In unraveling HMG policy evolution and the forces that steered its course, this thesis will rely heavily upon the British National Archives’ WO (Records created or inherited by the War Office, Armed Forces, Judge Advocate General, and related bodies), CAB (Records of the Cabinet Office), FO (Records created or inherited by the Foreign Office) and PREM (Records of the Prime Minister's Office) collections. The CAB documents and PREM files in particular allow for a very clear reconstruction of what HMG knew, when HMG learnt of it, and most importantly how HMG viewed and discussed this information. Incorporating this new material and utilizing these new approaches will provide new insight into the details and context of HMG’s decision making process, filling in holes within the existing narrative, and demonstrate the extent to which existing views on the subject fall short. In doing so this thesis will make the case that a new line of inquiry predicated upon the foundations of a new school of thought and approach, articulated in these pages, into the question of HMG’s Yugoslav policy is required. The goal will be to advocate for the establishment of a new narrative wherein PREM, CAB and other archival collections representing the large body of high level policy debate occurring inside HMG, serve as the guide.

³⁰ Hans Mouritzen and Anders Wivel, “Contrasting Allison, Challenging Waltz: Geopolitics and the Study of Foreign Policy.” *International Politics Reviews* Vol. 2 (2014): 43-4.

³¹ Georges Duby, *Le dimanche de Bouvines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973).

³² *Ibid*, forward.

³³ Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 305.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 257.

There is a need at this point to issue a warning to the reader about the term “HMG” and how it is used. This thesis does not wish for it, nor the reader, to fall into the trap of RAM, thinking of HMG as a single homogenous body. When it is used the reader must realize this thesis is not referring to a single actor but instead is referring to HMG as a network of agencies, individuals and decision-making processes. Therefore, when the reader sees “HMG” the reader should keep in mind this term refers to the chaos that is the British governmental system. HMG is the *arena* in which British policy decisions are made as much as it is the decision maker.

This arena was built upon committees that operated within and between agencies and often overlapped. Agencies like the Foreign Office served to play a significant role in establishing and influencing HMG Yugoslav policy.³⁵ HMG intelligence network, including the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), Special Operations Executive (SOE), and the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), passed on assessments through the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) to the War Cabinet providing the information upon which HMG’s policy was based. The War Cabinet itself, comprised of such individuals as Churchill, Eden and agencies like the JIC, Political Warfare Executive (PWE), and the Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW) served as a further high committee of HMG policy.

By examining the primary sources from these agencies and individuals, with an eye to current historiographical debates, it is possible to reconcile some of the current divisions between historiographical schools. Furthermore, it is possible to cast new light on old debates which provide alternative explanations not yet considered that are cause to at least reconsider existing approaches to the subject. This thesis will demonstrate this by addressing several of the main points of contention within the historiography that emerge from the core approaches and themes of each school. As this thesis progresses through the next chapter’s literature review several of points of contention that have emerged within the historiography will be highlighted for further examination in the light of the new perspectives provided by recently released sources. Several specific arguments will be brought forward from this examination and explored more fully in the chapters that follow.

Considering these points of contention makes it possible to demonstrate that many of the issues raised, by Revisionist narratives in particular, can be called into question, simplified, or even rejected in the light of newly released material now available within the PREM and CAB files. This thesis’ approach will show that through a reconnaissance of this top level newly released material that crucial missing context and insight concerning high level policy discussions can be provided that challenges both Orthodox and Revisionist narratives. In pursuing this course this thesis will ‘revise the revisionism’ and dispel myth by working to reconcile competing narratives in the light of this new material.

³⁵ Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 269.

By incorporating newly available material and appreciating events from the contradictory perspectives of existing narratives this thesis will demonstrate that one can, for example, convincingly argue HMG's policy did not undergo a 'shift' in policy at all but, instead, held a loose internal consistency, when appreciated from a large enough contextual base. Specifically, one can argue that HMG's 'shift' in support from Mihailović to Tito may not represent the policy 'shift' in the sense it has been characterized as. Whereas both Orthodox and Revisionist narratives paint HMG as 'changing horses in mid-stream' as part of a larger about-face in both priorities and policy, one could instead argue it was the next evolutionary phase of the war for HMG, as well as Allied, policy. In this view HMG's pivot in supply from one group to another was consistent with a larger long-term policy, which held an internal consistency present throughout the course of the war. The idea that HMG's policy underwent a profound course change may be a fundamental misunderstanding of HMG's policy development.

In order to demonstrate the assertions of this thesis, it begins by identifying five key areas of focus or categories within the historiography. Each of these five areas hold several of the key points of contention and specific arguments that have emerged within this divided historiography that shape competing narratives. Although there are perhaps further areas that could be included or subdivided out of the five areas approached by this thesis, the bulk of debate within the historiography appears to fit rather well into this framework. Each of these areas of focus and the debate surrounding the points of contention within their respective arenas will be dealt with within a dedicated chapter.

Chapter 3, the first of these, will address HMG's actual aims and the strategic driving forces that lay behind British interest in the Balkans and chart these considerations as they evolved. In doing so it will reframe the foundation upon which debates concerning HMG's motivations is built. Chapter 4 will deal with the question of HMG's intelligence networks, their interactions, cooperation, and competition as well as the overall accuracy and extent of the intelligence picture created by these agencies. In examining HMG's intelligence networks and overall intelligence picture as well as how it was discussed, this chapter will seek to dispel misconceptions that have led to some of the more contentious points of disagreement within the historiography. Chapter 5 will address the nature of HMG's views of the Royal Yugoslav Government (RYG) and Mihailović as well as inversely, the RYG and Mihailović's view of HMG. This examination will serve to challenge some basic assumptions about this relationship and what HMG's withdrawal of support actually implied, upon which several arguments have been built. Chapter 6 will likewise look to HMG views of Tito, the Partisans and communist resistance movements inside Yugoslavia as well as inversely, Tito's views of HMG. Similar to the previous chapter, this will serve to challenge some basic assumptions about what support for these groups represented with regards to HMG's intentions in the regions. Finally Chapter 7 will step back to a more macro-level to examine the often-overlooked evolution of the greater Allied war effort

and the intrusion of Allied relationships upon HMG's policy. This will provide further context to the framework in which HMG's decisions were made and challenge basic assumptions upon which debates about HMG's motivations were based.

These chapters will serve to demonstrate that a new approach is needed that broadens current understandings of the situation by providing greater context. What currently exists is largely a divided historiography that is at times both partisan and limited in scope. Pursuing this thesis' goal will allow us to garner new lessons about the nature of policy evolution in HMG's wartime government and establish an approach and understanding that is holistic and complements the interpretations of Beevor and Foot as well as the complexities of British policy development.

Before this thesis can discuss these events with an eye to new interpretations what is next required in this examination is a discussion of these schools of thought and the basic characteristics of their approach and outlook. With an understanding of the foundation and basic tenets of each school so too must there be a discussion of the flagship works which represent these schools. This latter issue is important to understand not only in the context of their historiographical school's narrative but also in regards to the research of this thesis. Understanding not only the strengths and weaknesses of these works but in what their view is rooted will be key to unravelling the conflict that emerges between Orthodox and Revisionist narratives concerning key moments in the evolution of HMG's Yugoslav policy.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

History will be kind to me for I intend to write it.

- *Winston Churchill*

The Literature

The body of work on the subject of HMG's policy concerning occupied Yugoslavia is a convoluted historiography. There is a large body of indirect work on the subject but few works dealing specifically with the evolution of policy. That which does exist is a small, eclectic, and eccentric collection. This comes from Yugoslavia having mostly been treated as a sideshow of other Second World War research dealing with issues such as clandestine activities, Mediterranean strategy, the invasion of Italy, or the Eastern Front. Yugoslav research represents a crossroads, the edge of many maps.¹

Both direct and indirect materials on the subject are oftentimes overlapping and share similar suppositions. Those that address HMG's policy evolution directly can largely be characterized by their underlying support of one of two schools of thought on the subject, Orthodox and Revisionist. Beyond the preferred protagonists view, which define Orthodox and Revisionist schools, other common themes appear. One glaring example is the Revisionist accusation of Communist subversion within HMG's intelligence hierarchy, specifically within the Cairo Headquarters (HQ) of the SOE.²

This chapter will examine the material upon which both Orthodox and Revisionist narratives are built and explore the schools' view of events. To start at the beginning, the Orthodox historiography is dominated by and built upon a foundation of first- and second-hand accounts, speeches, and memoirs far more than archival material. In part, the absence of archival material for many years after the war left this material to serve as a substitute to primary documents. This chapter will begin by outlining these sources and provide background and context regarding their origin. Their continued value and shortcomings will be discussed for the dual reason of their place within existing historiography as well as their use to this thesis' investigation.

The Revisionist school is, likewise, supported largely by memoirs. However, it also relies on partial archival access to support claims against the

¹ Anthony Eden, *The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning* (London: Cassell & Company, 1965), 523-4.

² Roderick Bailey, "SOE in Albania: the 'conspiracy theory' reassessed," In *Special Operations Executive : a new instrument of war*, Ed. Mark Seaman (London: Routledge Press, 2006) 185-190; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 247-248; Stafford, *Camp X*, 177; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 51-2.

perceived conventional thinking. The school's combination of counter memoir based narratives and partial archival access has created a limited and sometimes biased view. Although it has served to raise legitimate issues concerning the Orthodox narrative it has also made assumptive leaps based on an incomplete picture that presents its own problems.

This chapter will examine how sources have been utilized to explore the nature of Orthodox and Revisionist schools of thought. Each school's flagship works will be identified and how these works approach their subject, utilize resources, such as memoirs and speeches, and frame events will be discussed. In doing so an understanding will be created of how events are framed within each school and what these works add to the understanding of HMG's Yugoslav policy as well as what limitations they possess. This will help us better understand their continued place and value within current and future examinations into the subject of HMG's Second World War Yugoslav policies. This will lead to a final section discussing works that have built upon the findings, successes, and failures of both Orthodox and Revisionist schools to emerge as a nascent Post-Revisionist movement. What the reader will be left with is an understanding of the problematic roots of the current understanding and the tangle of material and views that must be reconciled moving forward.

With the end of the war and the establishment of a Communist Yugoslavia there was tremendous pressure placed upon the historiography in the West. This pressure was born out of dissatisfaction with HMG's policies having lent support to the creation of a Communist Yugoslavia. This reality fomented a historiography that took aim at defending the wartime actions and policies of HMG despite its eventual results. These policy 'results' were being actively framed within the context of the emerging 'Cold War' and both Anglo-Soviet and Anglo-Yugoslav relations.³ These pressures fed a historiography that stagnated in its burden to tow the official line of HMG's justification and avoid the charged subjects within that could emerge from critical historical inquiry.

Within Western-produced historiography some of the most significant primary work to come out of Yugoslavia occurs in the form of memoirs and personal accounts of BLOs to Partisan and Četnik units.⁴ Some of these works were published shortly after the war's end while others would not emerge for decades. A great deal of what is known was at least guided by the memoirs of those who were there. However, the BLOs on both sides were deeply affected by the

³ See Stephen Clissold, *Whirlwind: an Account of Marshal Tito's Rise to Power* (London: Cresset Press, 1949); Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg, eds. *British Policy Towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece* (London: Macmillan Press, 1975); Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 463, 499.

⁴ See Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*; Jasper Rootham, *Miss Fire: The Chronicle of a British Mission to Mihailovich 1943-1944* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1946); Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*.

fortitude and comradeship of ‘their guerrillas.’⁵ Both groups were seen as freedom fighters struggling to overcome incredible hardships. This coloured BLO views, understandably so, but for the historian it is a dangerous trap.

These accounts put their own ‘side’ in a shining light while painting other resistance groups in bitter terms as adversaries and collaborators.⁶ Although they may provide an intimate and invaluable view of realities on the ground they are by no means the most reliable way of obtaining an understanding of HMG’s Yugoslav policy. These are bottom up views of HMG’s Yugoslav policy in action, with only a narrow window into events on the ground. They are useful when taken in this light but need to be regarded as such.

An excellent example of this kind of source is F.W.D. Deakin’s *The Embattled Mountain*. Deakin was a historian with a pre-war relationship with Churchill, which had developed when, as Oxford history don, he had assisted Churchill in writing *Marlborough: His Life and Times*.⁷ Deakin served throughout the war in various positions within HMG special operations and intelligence sections. For some time Deakin was SOE Cairo’s entire Yugoslav desk. On 28 May 1943 Capt. Deakin dropped by parachute as part of the TYPICAL mission under the command of General Headquarters Middle East (GHQME) into Tito’s HQ. Here he would serve for most of the remainder of the year as HMG’s ‘man on the spot’ and the first BLO assigned to Tito, assessing and reporting on Tito’s fighting qualities.⁸ Deakin’s account of events is somewhat unique due to the fact that, unlike most BLO memoirs, there is some level of insight into high policy due to his direct relationship to, and interactions with, Churchill and his work inside SOE Cairo. As a member of a mission to Tito his account of events supports an Orthodox view of a pro-Tito narrative.

It is necessary to introduce two other BLOs of central significance to Yugoslav historiography. There is little doubt that the memoirs of Fitzroy Maclean and Michael Lees, who represent Orthodox and Revisionist schools respectively, have had held a prominent role in the historiography serving as cornerstones to their respective school’s narratives.

⁵ PREM 3-510-7 “Selborne to Churchill” 28 June 1943; HANSARD 1803-2005 “War and International Situation” 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795 HANSARD UK Parliament Last accessed 29 April 2015. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-winston-churchill/>; See Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain* and Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, as examples.

⁶ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 115; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 15-4; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 2.

⁷ HANSARD “War and International Situation” 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 181.

⁸ CAB 66-46-50 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia “Correspondence Between Churchill and Tito - The PM to Marshal Tito 8 January 1944” 10 February 1944; Stafford, *Camp X*, 181-2; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 63, 73, 116; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 62-3; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 138.

Maclean has become a larger than life figure who led an exotic career, which included time as part of HMG's Diplomatic Service in Moscow during Stalin's purges. He had resigned from the Diplomatic Service to enter the military at the start of the war while simultaneously serving as an absentee Member of Parliament (MP).⁹ His Lawrence-esque exploits in Libya while part of the Special Air Service (SAS) early in the war had already made quite a name for Maclean in both British military and political circles. Maclean was selected by Churchill personally to head the expanded diplomatic mission to Tito's HQ which followed Deakin's TYPICAL mission.¹⁰

Michael Lees was regular military, well educated, and of minor aristocracy.¹¹ Unlike Maclean, Lees had managed to talk his way into Yugoslavia through a backdoor at SOE Cairo. He served in SOE as a BLO assigned to one of Mihailović's regional commanders.¹² Lee's efforts after the war and his eventual publication, *The Rape of Serbia*, are part amateur critical historical analysis – part memoir. It is a quasi-academic personal crusade against Orthodox literature and in many ways represents one of the defining works of the Revisionist movement.¹³ Likewise, Maclean's *Eastern Approaches* serves as a corner stone of Orthodox historiography.¹⁴

Of tremendous significance are the memoirs, correspondence, and official papers of the wartime leaders of HMG. Churchill's voluminous *The Second World War* is perhaps the most well-known and sourced of these works, having become an almost official history.¹⁵ Churchill's personal insight, when weighed with a mind to post-war considerations at play when *The Second World War* was authored, can provide interesting details about the evolution of HMG's Yugoslav policy from the perspective of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Churchill's *Second World War* does, however, need to be taken with caution. David Reynolds'¹⁶ book, *In Command of History*, dissects the writing and publication process of Churchill's memoirs and acts as a useful companion to the

⁹ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 84-5; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 181; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 194-5, 237; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 246; Frank McLynn, "Sir Fitzroy Maclean Bt: Obituary" *The Independent*, 19 June 1996, last accessed 30 April 2015. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/sir-fitzroy-maclean-bt-obituary-1337837.html>

¹⁰ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 77, 107-8, 114-5.

¹¹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 14.

¹² Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 164; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 14.

¹³ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 13-14.

¹⁴ See, Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*.

¹⁵ Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: A Six-Volume Set*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company)1953; Stafford, "Upstairs/Downstairs," 56.

¹⁶ David Reynolds is a Professor of International History and a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge. He was awarded Wolfson History Prize in 2004 for his work, *In Command of History*.

set.¹⁷ Reynolds points out that Churchill's work went through several drafts and its thrusts were, at times, controversial. The problems associated with Churchill's work were rooted in their early post-war date of publication, which meant they were coloured by post-war considerations.¹⁸

Churchill's *Second World War* reflects issues of agenda, bias, and simply the innocuous but central issue of perspective. One issue with Churchill's *Second World War* worth noting concerns the issue of classified intelligence, which directly impacts discussions of significant BLO missions. BLOs such as Capt. Deakin and Brig. Maclean have been the focus of scrutiny by Revisionists who view their role as closely linked to the issue of HMG's policy shift. This scrutiny focuses on the issue of Deakin and Maclean's role as BLOs to Tito's HQ in influencing Churchill and HMG policy through their relationships with the PM.¹⁹

How this relates to classified intelligence and flaws within Churchill's *Second World War* is this: a great deal of Churchill's decisions were based on information gleaned from intercepted German signals, deciphered as part of ULTRA.²⁰ After the war, at the time of Churchill's publishing, ULTRA remained classified. As such, the evidence that supported Churchill's decisions had to either be purged from his memoirs or credited to an alternate source. Much of Churchill's ULTRA intelligence concerning Yugoslavia and Tito was shifted onto the alternate sources of Maclean and Deakin, thus grossly distorting their role in HMG's policy considerations.²¹ This has also served to distort historiographical inquiry into HMG's intelligence picture by both Orthodox and Revisionist historians.

There is still no denying Churchill's value as a guide to the inner-workings of HMG's policy apparatus as well as his own post-war views of this process. It should also be apparent what Churchill's *Second World War* has meant for fostering distortions in both Orthodox and Revisionist historiography. One can recognize how the memoirs of the prime minister, aimed at justifying a shift in policy towards Tito, would go along way towards entrenching the pro-Tito Orthodox view.²²

¹⁷ See, Reynolds, *In Command of History*.

¹⁸ Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 234-5.

¹⁹ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxv, xxix 181; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 84-5; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 294; Stafford, *Camp X*, 169; CAB 66-46-50 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Correspondence Between Churchill and Tito: The PM to Marshal Tito 8 January 1944" 10 February 1944; HANSARD "War and International Situation" 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795.

²⁰ *The ultra designation was applied by HMG to the intelligence gleaned from the interception and deciphering program occurring at their Code and Cypher School (GC & CS) at Bletchley Park.*

²¹ Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 412-3; Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War."

²² Stafford, "Upstairs/Downstairs," 56; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953) 238; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 403.

There are also other memoirs with equal value to Churchill's to consider in the historiography. Two of the most significant are the *War Diaries* of CIGS Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke and the memoirs of Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon, who served in Churchill's war coalition as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. These two works hold tremendous insight both as stand-alones as well as in relationship to one another and to Churchill's *Second World War*. It is unfortunate to see that they are often left neglected within the historiography.

Alanbrooke offers insight into the inner workings of HMG, the debates and conflicts raging within and perhaps, most significantly, provides an intimate window into both military considerations and the tensions inherent within Allied relations. This view becomes significant when one begins to reconsider the narrative of HMG's Yugoslav policy evolution with an eye to the variety of pressures both internal and external influencing course. One example being the tremendous pressures placed upon HMG by their Soviet ally to open a second front in Europe, which would come to play a major role in reshaping HMG's early approach to questions concerning Yugoslav resistance.²³

Alanbrooke's *War Diaries* are especially enticing due to the combination of his regular interactions with Churchill, his relations with the Allies, and his role in voicing military considerations in developing HMG's policy. Reading Alanbrooke one develops an appreciation of the various perspectives, agendas, issues, considerations, and motives at play in HMG's policy development as well as their influence on the historiography.

Perhaps most interesting were his frequent disagreements with Churchill.²⁴ Alanbrooke paints a rather balanced opinion of Churchill, which is blunt, intimate and, at times, can swing from high praise of certain personality traits held by the PM to criticisms bordering on despair.²⁵ Alanbrooke's personal thoughts provide a compelling and frank assessment of a PM, who has been elevated and distorted by history to superhuman status, as a great leader but one with many faults like any human being. It is compelling to read Alanbrooke's musing on how history would treat Churchill; writing,

I wonder whether any historian of the future will ever be able to paint Winston in his true colours. It is a wonderful character – the most marvellous qualities and superhuman genius mixed with an astonishing lack of vision at times, and an impetuosity which if not guided must inevitably bring him into trouble again and again. Perhaps the most

²³ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries* 346; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 63-5, 200; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 79 – 80; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 47, 313-4; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 84-5.

²⁴ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 376, 410.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 401, 410, 450-1, 459, 493.

remarkable failing of his is that he can never see a whole strategical problem at once. His gaze always settles on some definite part of the canvas and the rest of the picture is lost. [*sic*]²⁶

Eden likewise held views that often conflicted with those of Churchill and were at times rooted in very different considerations. Whereas Alanbrooke was concerned primarily with military and alliance considerations, Eden's view as Foreign Secretary was more political and long-term in view. Eden is especially interesting to consider because he often acted as a moderating voice in debates concerning Yugoslavia.²⁷ Where Eden and Alanbrooke did meet was the diplomacy of navigating HMG's Allied relationships. Eden, like Alanbrooke, also often ran into disagreements on policy with Churchill.²⁸ There is a commanding body of personal correspondence contained within the PREM collection between the two demonstrating as much.²⁹

This serves to emphasize a key point; HMG was not a homogenous body. Instead it was an amalgamation of individuals, agencies, and committees constantly struggling to define and redefine their parameters in relation to one another as well as HMG's external relationships. Indeed, in regards to HMG's relationship with the RYG Heather Williams³⁰ writes,

The Yugoslavs constantly fell prey to their failure to grasp that the British were not a homogeneous entity with one clear-cut policy, but a collection of separate organizations and individuals who could be as confused as themselves. The conflicting signals in fact reflected the divisions and uncertainties in the various British bodies, not to mention the rivalries between and within them.³¹

²⁶ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 450-1.

²⁷ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942, 1; CAB 65-40-17 War Cabinet: Minutes, 2; PREM 3-510-10 "Eden to Churchill" 22 December 1943; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 431-2.

²⁸ PREM 3-511-1 "Eden to Churchill" 19 January 1944; CAB 65-40-19 "War Cabinet Minutes" 28 December 1943, 2; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951) 469-70; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433.

²⁹ PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill "Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943; PREM 3-510-10 "Eden to Churchill" 22 December 1943; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 431-2; PREM 3-511-1/2 "Eden-Churchill correspondence" January 1944; PREM 3-511-2 "Eden to Churchill at SEXTANT" 7 January 1944; PREM 3-511-7 "Eden to Churchill" 7 January 1944.

³⁰ Heather Williams is a specialist in Balkan and Eastern European history has served on the BBC World Service during the revolutions of 1989-90 and who has taught history at the University of Southampton and Portsmouth between 1990 and 2001.

³¹ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 97, 103-7; FO 898-157 "Pearson to Howard" 12 February 1943, "enclosing Bailey's review of the Partisans."

HMG's policy decisions were a result of many inputs and negotiations from various agencies, agendas, committees, and individuals. Churchill's greatest strength in this regard may be that he often allowed himself to be overruled by these forces.³² To gain an appreciation of the multitude of pressures that influenced HMG's policy evolution one simply need look to the minutes of any War Cabinet meeting contained within the CAB collection.³³ Even if one were to only rely on Hegel and Carlyle's 'Great Man History' in approaching the subject of Churchill, his wartime speeches would serve as an indicator of this fact.³⁴ More effective still are Churchill's addresses to the British Parliament located within the United Kingdom's HANSARD collection.³⁵ This far too undervalued resource provides insight into the domestic pressures and debates which influenced HMG's policies.

Beyond governing by committee, as HANSARD reminds us, any evaluation of HMG policy must acknowledge the significance of HMG fighting the Second World War as part of a greater alliance. To that end, Warren F. Kimball's three-volume collection *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence* is valuable in the insight it provides into how Churchill interacted within this greater alliance.³⁶ Along this same line of reasoning the Stalin-Churchill correspondence published by the Soviet Foreign Ministry provides similar insights.³⁷ The correspondence between Stalin and Churchill when judged in consideration with, and verified by, archival material, provides the same insight as that of the PM's correspondence with Roosevelt. By weighing these two dissimilar and unique relationships, insight is provided into what were often the conflicting priorities of HMG's two great allies. In understanding these relationships and their needs, one is able to gather understanding of the forces outside HMG working to pull British policy in various directions.

³² Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 267-8; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346, 401, 406, 410, 411.

³³ See *The National Archives of the UK*. "The Cabinet Papers: Records of the Cabinet Office" CAB.

³⁴ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. (New York: Fredrick A. Stokes & Brother, 1888) 2; G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*. Trans. J. Sibree. (New York: Dover, 1956) 30; HANSARD Foreign Affairs 24 May 1944 vol 400 cc762-829; HANSARD "War and International Situation" 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795; HANSARD "War Situation" 21 September 1943 vol 392 cc69-170.

³⁵ HANSARD, "Mr. Winston Churchill," <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-winston-churchill/>

³⁶ Warren F. Kimball, ed. *Churchill & Roosevelt: the complete correspondence* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1987).

³⁷ USSR Foreign Ministry Commission for the Publication of Diplomatic Documents. *Correspondence with Winston S. Churchill and Clement R. Attlee (July 1941-November 1945)*. Volume 1 of *Correspondence Between The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Presidents of the USA and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1957).

The individual is only one element in the negotiations that shaped HMG's policies. There are agencies, events, agendas, rivalries, conflicting considerations – significant to Yugoslav policy, military and political – which all play a role in influencing the course of policy.³⁸ In pursuing these systemic issues, material pertaining to the inner-workings of various agencies of HMG, which formed the nucleus of policy development, must be considered. The internal dynamics of these groups, their inter- and intra- departmental rivalries, present a whole range of insights and challenges that add depth in understanding HMG's assessment and decision making process. HMG's Yugoslav policy was influenced by many agencies, groups, individuals, and committees that require greater attention. The Chiefs of Staff (COS), Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), War Office and Foreign Office all held important roles that deserve more attention. Likely the most significant agency is the War Cabinet itself whose archival collection, the CAB files, this thesis relies heavily upon.

American archival sources such as the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) diplomatic papers also hold value. FRUS papers, especially those concerning the build-up to Allied conferences, provide a third-party perspective on HMG's ambitions, views, and claims concerning Yugoslav policy.³⁹ It also serves to remind us that although Yugoslavia was very much considered a British sphere within Allied policy, HMG was not solely in the driver's seat or single handedly shaping Yugoslav policy; Allied considerations were imposed.

The way secondary works have selected, viewed, interpreted, and presented their primary research holds tremendous implications for the researcher in understanding how the subject has been framed and discussed. Furthermore, it is at the very core of this thesis' purpose. Examination of this material is telling of not only HMG and Yugoslavia but also how the historiography understands and discusses HMG and Yugoslavia. The specific secondary resources utilized for researching this thesis are the works of both the Orthodox and Revisionist schools that this thesis feels to be most representative of the opposing narratives. A discussion of each school and their outlook can be accomplished through examining the secondary research that makes up the core of these narratives. Doing so also serves to effectively demonstrate their respective paradigms, their strengths and weaknesses, as well as value to this thesis.

³⁸ Christopher Hill, "The Particular and the General: The challenge for Foreign Policy Studies," *International Politics Reviews* Vol. 2 (2014): 32-4; Hans Mouritzena and Anders Wivel, "Contrasting Allison, Challenging Waltz: Geopolitics and the Study of Foreign Policy." *International Politics Reviews* Vol. 2 (2014): 44; Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 18, 143.

³⁹ FRUS *Foreign Relations of the United States* "Foreign relations of the United States diplomatic papers."

Orthodox

The ‘Orthodox’ school represents HMG’s official line, arguing the perceived ‘switch’ in support from Mihailović to Tito was correct, appropriate, and justified regardless of post-war implications.⁴⁰ For HMG the motivation for promoting a positive narrative wherein British support for Yugoslavia’s Communist Partisans was both correct and justified was a compelling one. There was a degree of embarrassment that developed over a feeling of having abandoned a loyal wartime ally in favour of duplicitous communist rabble, which had begun to creep in at war’s end.⁴¹ There was also a feeling that HMG may have been sold a bill of goods with regards to their new ally Tito.⁴² HMG’s relationship with Tito had become rocky after Tito’s stay on the island of Vis towards war’s end when Tito’s growing closeness to the Soviets became more pronounced.⁴³ This feeling was made acute by the difficulties concerning the Partisan capture and attempted annexation of Trieste at war’s end.⁴⁴

During the war the decision to support the Partisans as well as the decision to abandon Mihailović had been a difficult case to make for elements within HMG, to Britain’s domestic audience, and the elements within the greater wartime

⁴⁰ Mark Wheeler, “Review of *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies, 1941-1945*, by Walter R. Roberts.” *Historical Journal* 16, no. 4 (1973): 878-880; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, ix.

⁴¹ Winston S. Churchill, *Closing the Ring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951) 477-8; David Martin, *The Web of Disinformation: Churchill’s Yugoslav Blunder* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990) 196, 241.

⁴² PREM 3-513-6 “Churchill to Foreign Secretary” 11, 18 March 1945 *The National Archives of the UK*. “Records of the Prime Minister’s Office” PREM, London 2015 <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/details?Uri=C233>; PREM 3-513-6 “Churchill to Halifax (Ambassador to USA)” 18 April 1945; PREM 3-513-10 “Churchill memo to his Private Office” 16, 25 April 1945; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 334; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 230; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxix; E. L. Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1962) 356.

⁴³ PREM 3-513-8 “Churchill Requested Dossier on Tito” 14 June 1945; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 335-6; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 229; FO 371-44263 Churchill to Eden” 31 August 1944; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet “Memorandum sent by PM Churchill to Marshal Tito” Naples, 12 August 1944; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet “Minutes of conversations between Churchill and Tito” Naples, 12-13 August 1944; PREM 3-512-5 “Churchill to Foreign Secretary Eden” 31 August 1944.

⁴⁴ “Yugoslavia: The Resistance Movement” *Federal Research Division of the United States’ Library of Congress*, Last Accessed 30 April 2015 [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+yu0031\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+yu0031)); Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 554; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 27.

alliance.⁴⁵ The eventual impact this held for the Yugoslav King was not easy for many Britons to stomach, Churchill included.⁴⁶ This problem, already becoming apparent as the war drew to a close, became all the more acute in early post-war years. The new global dynamic of the Cold War imposed new considerations upon Britain's perspective of Yugoslavia's Second World War narrative. The need to avoid difficulties with Tito in the Balkans and secure British interests in Greece, as this thesis will discuss, made offending Tito far from desirable.⁴⁷

Britain's early post-war narrative was dealing with events that were unfinished and ongoing. These issues took on a different quality from moment to moment in the chaos of post-war settlements.⁴⁸ With the sensitivity of the situation and little in the way of government archival material available in the early post-war years, memoirs came to serve a central role in constructing this Orthodox narrative.⁴⁹ Their best selling books have largely become the foundation of the Orthodox narrative.⁵⁰

The phenomenon of BLO memoirs largely becoming the basis of the Orthodox narrative was no doubt influenced by the compatibility these versions of events had with the ongoing political relationship between HMG and newly formed Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the early post-war years of the emerging Cold War.⁵¹ However, another reason is simply default. In the early war years there was very little material available. This situation was certainly compounded by the sensitive nature of classified intelligence that, in part, influenced the formulation of their opinion.⁵² One point remains true: assessments of HMG's policy shift begin with the question of HMG's intelligence picture. Due to the perceived central position of the BLOs concerning the development of HMG's picture of events on the ground and later assessments of both Mihailović

⁴⁵ CAB 65-40-19 "War Cabinet Minutes" 28 December 1943, 2; PREM 3-511-1 "Eden to Churchill" 19 January 1944; PREM 3-511-12 "Col/ Bailey Memorandum on Policy towards Yugoslavia" (after 5 before 11) May 1944; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 317-8, 334.

⁴⁶ "HANSARD 1803-2005 – Mr. Winston Churchill: 1874 – 24 January 1965" *HANSARD UK Parliament* Last accessed 29 April 2015.

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-winston-churchill/> HANSARD "Foreign Affairs" 24 May 1944 vol 400 cc762-829; PREM 3-511-2 "Eden to Churchill" 1 January 1944; PREM 3-511-1 "Eden to Churchill" 19 January 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 163-4, 241.

⁴⁷ PREM 3-513-10 "Churchill memo to his Private Office" 16, 25 April 1945; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 238; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 253; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 317-8, 334.

⁴⁸ Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 463, 499.

⁴⁹ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxix.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 463, 499.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 412-3.

and Tito's forces, these individuals and their writings have played a major role in the question of intelligence and be the focal point of considerable scrutiny.⁵³

The take away from BLO accounts that underlay the Orthodox school's narrative is that Tito and the Partisans were the logical 'choice' for HMG.⁵⁴ The main assertion being that HMG was correct in assuming a choice between these groups was needed and that their choice was proper and correct. This was based in the assessment that Tito's Partisans were of greater military value or that they were the only organization of military value in Yugoslavia.⁵⁵ This was paired with the firm belief there was no reconciliation possible between these two resistance forces. Furthermore, the argument is made that the *de facto* post-war dominance of the Partisans had become a *fait accompli*.⁵⁶ Some go even further arguing that Mihailović was doing little to nothing and was suspected of very likely being a collaborator.⁵⁷

Questions of intelligence lay central to the issue of policy and have often led to an inquiry into SOE, more particularly SOE Cairo. Cairo is often viewed at the choke point for HMG's intelligence from the field.⁵⁸ Maclean's encounters with SOE Cairo, which paint the organization as rather dysfunctional, have, no doubt, served, in part, to feed this fascination and overrepresentation within the historiography.⁵⁹

David Stafford's⁶⁰ early work into HMG's clandestine operations focuses in large part upon the activities of the SOE. In his widely cited paper "Upstairs/Downstairs: British Foreign Policy and Special Operations in Europe 1940-45," published in *The Journal of European Studies*, Stafford paints a convoluted picture of HMG's intelligence gathering hierarchy.⁶¹ His description is of a policy apparatus divided wherein SOE was taking measures at odds with the Foreign Office and, at times, official policy.⁶² This is a vital point that remains true to understanding HMG's policy evolution; HMG was not of a single mind. Stafford goes further to suggest that SOE actions were, in part, intentionally motivated by

⁵³ PREM 3-511-2 "Churchill to Eden" 2 January 1944; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 97; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 125, 221-2; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 163-4.

⁵⁴ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 339, 401-2; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 71, 77, 88.

⁵⁵ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 339.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 462.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 401-2; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 71, 77.

⁵⁸ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 77; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 40-1; FO 371-37584 "Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic."

⁵⁹ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 84-7; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 105; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 203.

⁶⁰ *David Stafford is a noted historian of Churchill and British intelligence who has served since 2000 as projects director at the Centre for the Study of the Two World Wars.*

⁶¹ Stafford, "Upstairs/Downstairs," 55-61.

⁶² *Ibid*, 55.

high levels of HMG that did not necessarily want to know what SOE was up to, but wanted the results and were, therefore, happy to be left a little in the dark. This assertion, pure conjecture on the part of Stafford, is why, he concludes, Churchill was “less than generous” in his *Second World War* description of SOE’s importance to HMG.⁶³

Stafford’s work is significant for raising several points. This includes addressing the problematic importance that Churchill’s *Second World War* has taken on in becoming a sort of ‘official’ history. He has gone so far as to recognize the need to question its motives and overall narrative.⁶⁴ However, Stafford does so with regards to what he portrays as the central role SOE played in HMG’s intelligence picture. In doing so he serves to stoke the fire of clandestine operations missing from the Orthodox narrative that would unfortunately feed a growing obsession with SOE. In doing so Stafford served to cloud his underlying aim. That is, Stafford argued correctly, SOE Cairo was not a pro-Tito cog and that the eventual decision to shift support to Tito was one that came from growing intelligence and intense deliberation among multiple agencies within HMG.⁶⁵

Stafford’s work is impressive for bringing home several important points in a few short pages and expanding the scope of the Orthodox narrative. He alludes to the importance of Allied considerations in HMG formulating policy and the importance of considering HMG’s relationship with governments-in-exile in pursuing strategic policies.⁶⁶ Stafford was also keenly aware of the conflicting views within HMG’s policy debate. His work does, however, like the Orthodox narrative as a whole, suffer faults. Stafford built-up the SOE and failed to underscore the subservient role SOE was forced into.⁶⁷ He also advocated, incorrectly, that HMG played a major role in fomenting what was the largely popular homegrown Yugoslav *coup d’état*.⁶⁸ An issue clarified by Revisionists despite the school’s apparent anti-British fervor and duplicitous betrayal narrative.⁶⁹

Further focus within the historiography on HMG’s intelligence picture often zeros in on the accuracy of the picture held by HMG when making assessments concerning policy. The issue not only concerns how accurate the picture was, but over how appropriate HMG’s understanding of that picture was. On this note one

⁶³ Stafford, “Upstairs/Downstairs,” 56.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 59-60.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 59.

⁶⁷ PREM 3-510-7 “Note from Mjr. Morton to Mr. Martin” 10 June 1943.

⁶⁸ Stafford, “Upstairs/Downstairs,” 58; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 32; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 16-7; David Stafford, “SOE and British Involvement in the Belgrade *Coup d’État* of March 1941” *Slavic Review* 36, no.3 (1977): 419; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 161-2; PREM 3-409-2 - The Prospects of Subversion Summary – 21 April 1941.

⁶⁹ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 16-17; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 32.

finds within Orthodox literature that early support for Mihailović is explained as coming about essentially by default. The argument goes that HMG was in desperate need of good news, had little knowledge of what was happening in Yugoslavia, was eager to bring the fight to the Nazis, and supported Mihailović because he was the RYG man on the ground and the first to emerge.⁷⁰ This is an assertion that misunderstands HMG's early knowledge of Tito's Partisans.

This narrative essentially boils down to HMG picking the wrong horse because it was the only one HMG knew about or in a more generous light, picked the right horse at the time but as the race continued the right horse became one of another colour.⁷¹ This paves the way forward for a narrative of an eventual 'awakening' of HMG by a growing intelligence that suggested the British had been backing the wrong horse and a shift or 'switch' in policy towards Tito's Partisans was demanded.⁷² However, as will be demonstrated by this thesis, this would be an incorrect and simplified reading of events.

This narrative relies on the assertion that HMG knew little of what was happening within Yugoslavia until well after committing to a policy of support for Mihailović.⁷³ This is inaccurate, as this thesis will come to demonstrate, and it is misleading on the part of the Orthodox historiography that, like its Revisionist counterpart, has many faults. However, in the context of the time it was first asserted, before the full disclosure of the material available today, such as ULTRA, or even PREM and CAB papers for that matter, it is not entirely incomprehensible why this view came about.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Stafford, "Upstairs/Downstairs," 56; Max Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose: The World at War 1939-45* (London: Harper Press, 2011) 464; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 71-72; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 44-5; Mark Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia 1940-1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980) 63; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 37-38; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 177; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 78-79; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527; Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War."

⁷¹ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 5; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161-2; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 125; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 279-80; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60.

⁷² PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 120-2; FO 371-37616 "Foreign Office Memorandum" 22 November 1943; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942, 3; FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers," 584; CAB 80-69 "SOE Activities in 1943: Appreciation by SOE" 21 April 1943; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 412-3; Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, 466.

⁷³ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 5; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161-2; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 125; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 279-80.

⁷⁴ PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 16 June 1942; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943, 1; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and

Narratives presented by Orthodox historians of one shade or another such as, Simon Trew,⁷⁵ David Stafford, and Matteo J. Milazzo,⁷⁶ all in some way or another address the issue of HMG intelligence picture.⁷⁷ All present a narrative wherein HMG knew little early in the war and as their picture developed, awoke to the error of supporting Mihailović, at least solely supporting Mihailović, and suggest that this is what precipitated HMG's early feelers towards communists. In fact, as Stafford would later demonstrate in an about face on the subject in his book *Camp X*, HMG had encountered indications of communist potential as early as the first days of their first BLO mission (BULLSEYE) led by Capt. Hudson in September 1941.⁷⁸ It was this, Stafford argues, that had motivated HMG recruitment of communist subversives as SOE operatives.⁷⁹

Within Orthodox historiography there is distortion that persists over the development of HMG's picture of events in Yugoslavia.⁸⁰ These misconceptions have persisted in part due to the limited scope of most inquiry, which focuses on a single source of intelligence or a single agency within HMG's intelligence network.⁸¹ Another reason is a misunderstanding of the source material and ever-important context, which is in large part rooted within archival collections such as the PREM and CAB files. As this thesis will demonstrate, HMG's picture of events was, from the very outset, quite accurate and HMG was never 'in the dark' as is often suggested by those in the Orthodox camp.⁸² Furthermore, HMG's understanding and discussion of events was for more complex, subtle, diverse, and nuanced than generally considered.

Tito," 526-7; Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War"; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 5.

⁷⁵ Simon Trew is a British Historian at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst who specializes in *The Second World War in Europe, with special focus on the war in the Balkans, 1941-5*.

⁷⁶ Matteo J. Milazzo is a Yugoslav émigré historian, former Partisan and Yugoslav Communist Part apparatchik and author of *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance*.

⁷⁷ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60; Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance*, 92; Stafford, *Camp X*, 5; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 37-38.

⁷⁸ Stafford, *Camp X*, 169; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 2-3, 31-2.

⁷⁹ Stafford, *Camp X*, 169-172; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 6-7.

⁸⁰ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 25; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161-2; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 5; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 125; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 279-80.

⁸¹ See Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*.

⁸² PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 16 June 1942; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943, 1; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 526-7; Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War"; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 5; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 177; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 37-38.

Perhaps one reason for the continued misunderstanding comes from an issue that is only vaguely appreciated within the Orthodox literature and serves as a cornerstone of the Revisionist narrative, paradigms. Paradigms refer to the distinct views and motivations that underpinned the approach of Mihailović and HMG to the conflict inside occupied Yugoslavia. Milazzo is quite harsh in his assessments of the Četniks and argues Mihailović's forces were virtually non-existent. He paints them as collaborators but makes acknowledgement of the fact that Mihailović was operating from a very different paradigm than HMG and had very different ambitions, which serves to explain conflicting agendas.⁸³ Trew likewise acknowledges this phenomenon as leading, in part, to the division of purpose between Mihailović and British aims, and HMG's subsequent negative assessments of Mihailović.⁸⁴ Both do so, however, without fully appreciating the impact of paradigms on the colouring of Orthodox assessments of Mihailović and rely on simplistic interpretations of Mihailović's forces as simply holding no military value as opposed to holding little value to HMG's changing aims.⁸⁵

To be fair, these authors are not totally unaware of this fact; they simply fail to fully articulate it in their treatment to a satisfying end. Walter R. Roberts⁸⁶ demonstrates in *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, 1941-1945* a level of acknowledgement in the evolving Orthodox narrative that HMG assessments of Mihailović's forces as holding little-to-no value was based on their use to HMG.⁸⁷ So it was not to say that Mihailović had no force to speak of but that, due to the conflicting agendas that began to emerge, his forces began to be of less use to HMG.⁸⁸ This issue of paradigms is an important point often misused by Revisionist arguments, as this thesis will demonstrate.

⁸³ Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance*, 92-5.

⁸⁴ Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 41-44, 94-6; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 60; Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE*. 116-117; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92.

⁸⁵ Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 41-4, 94-6.

⁸⁶ Walter R. Roberts was born in Austria, educated in both Austria and the UK, and served in various positions within the US government as well as serving as Director of Diplomatic Studies at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies. He is the author of *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, 1941-1945*

⁸⁷ Wheeler, "Review of *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies*," 878-880.

⁸⁸ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92; PREM 3-510-6 "Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [J]Yovanovitch" 29 March 1943; CAB 80-69 "SOE Activities in 1943: Appreciation by SOE" 21 April 1943; PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill "Yugoslavia Mihailović Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 94-96; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 464.

It is in work such as Roberts' where one begins to witness a shift towards rehabilitating Mihailović's position or at least trying to appreciate his perspective.⁸⁹ While continuing to argue HMG had to ditch Mihailović in favour of Tito, there is a move towards rehabilitating Mihailović's position. This serves as a useful starting point to discuss the Revisionist school.

Revisionist

The Orthodox narrative has left holes and misconceptions within the historiography that have persisted for years. Agitated by unanswered questions surrounding HMG's about-face in Yugoslav policy, a Revisionist counter narrative has developed.⁹⁰ With a lack of credible sources available until many years after the war, this narrative began by, in part, promoting theories concerning such issues as Communist subversion within the highest levels of HMG.⁹¹ Although many of these theories have been adequately debunked, legitimate issues also raised by the Revisionists' alternative narrative still impose themselves on modern analysis.⁹²

Revisionists demonstrated a genuine need to rehabilitate the historiographical narrative, which had been tainted by Yugoslavian Communist propaganda and Cold War Politics. The Revisionists approach is, therefore, rooted in addressing real issues in the Orthodox view of events.⁹³ In response to the official line of pro-Tito literature, and just as surely motivated by evolving Cold War dynamics, a historiographical revolt against the Orthodox narrative began to emerge as early as the mid-1970s.⁹⁴ Early Revisionist historiography dealing with Yugoslavia was concerned with tempering the pro-Tito state sponsored official

⁸⁹ Wheeler, "Review of *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies*," 878-880.

⁹⁰ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 56-7, 86-9; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxiii, 108, 161; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60; Michael S. Goodman, *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee Volume 1: From the Approach of the Second World War to the Suez Crisis* (New York: Routledge, 2014) 97; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 63-5.

⁹¹ Roderick Bailey, "SOE in Albania: the 'conspiracy theory' reassessed," In *Special Operations Executive : a new instrument of war*, Ed. Mark Seaman (London: Routledge Press, 2006), 185-190; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, x, 247-248.

⁹² Bailey, *SOE in Albania*, 185-190; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 247-248.

⁹³ Elisabeth Barker, "Review of *Patriot or Traitor: The Case of General Mihailovich*, by David Martin." *International Affairs* 55, no. 3 (1979) 456-457; Stephen Clissold, "Review of *Ally Betrayed*, by David Martin" *International Affairs* 23, no. 2 (1947): 265; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 3-22, 337-8, 362.

⁹⁴ Matteo J. Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); Walter, R. Roberts, *Tito, Mhailovic, and the Allies*. Durham (NC. USA: Duke University Press Books. 1987).

history.⁹⁵ This was no doubt, in part, spurred by growing knowledge of Britain's wartime intelligence picture, including ULTRA.⁹⁶

The effort at tempering the narrative focused on Mihailović and his Četniks, with the aim of clearing Mihailović and his forces of the label of 'collaborator,' imposed by the Communists after the war.⁹⁷ Arguing against what was viewed as a one-sided, misleading, and even at times falsified narrative of events, these works began their own equally one sided narrative, rooted in the same forces they criticised their predecessors of having fallen victim to.

Revisionists' efforts to vindicate Mihailović and condemn HMG have, at moments, led them to selectively construct the perceived Orthodox narrative as they see it. They then proceed to cry foul against constructed, perceived, or overlooked shortcomings.⁹⁸ There are, in fact, a great many claims made within the Orthodox literature through memoirs that time has proven correct and substantiated through growing access to archival material, as this thesis will come to demonstrate.⁹⁹

The Revisionist school's stated purpose, as articulated through its flagship works, aims at deconstructing the perceived established Orthodox school.¹⁰⁰ Their criticisms are often legitimate and point to specific elements which need redressing.¹⁰¹ However, in proving the issues and failures of the, partially constructed, Orthodox narrative Revisionists have failed to properly articulate an overarching alternative narrative to these events. Instead of building upon the existing understanding they have sought to replace it with an equally problematic and limited view.

This often times comes about not out of intentional neglect or obfuscation but the same tendency both schools fall victim to. That being, the mistake of fixating on a small point of contention and on teasing out new details while failing to properly appreciate the overarching context in its entirety. To be fair, this is not to suggest these works and their researchers are incorrect in approaching these complexities one small piece at a time. Indeed, it is a necessity. However, from the

⁹⁵ Barker, "Review of *Patriot or Traitor*", 456-457; Stephen Clissold, *Whirlwind: an Account of Marshal Tito's Rise to Power* (London: Cresset Press, 1949); 265.

⁹⁶ Harold C. Deutsch, "The Historical Impact of Revealing The Ultra Secret" *Journal of the U.S. Army War College*. DOCID: 3827029. 26 October 2006.

⁹⁷ Barker, "Review of *Patriot or Traitor*", 456-457; Clissold, "Review of *Ally Betrayed*," 265.

⁹⁸ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 115; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 77, 233, 314; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 60-5; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 138.

⁹⁹ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 115; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 77, 233, 314; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 60-5; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 138.

¹⁰⁰ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 12.

¹⁰¹ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 121.

point of view of the school of thought as a whole, the overarching view is an incomplete vision of events.

The flagship works of the Revisionist school include two significant books. Both are impeccably and painstakingly researched and have served to permanently alter the understanding of HMG's Yugoslav policy by shedding new light on events within wartime Yugoslavia.¹⁰² They do, however, have significant issues in the conclusions they draw from this research. These two flagship works referred to are Michael Lees' *The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power 1943-1944*, already mentioned, and David Martin's *The Web of Disinformation: Churchill's Yugoslav Blunder*.

To begin with Lees, *The Rape of Serbia* represents a personal narrative as a member of SOE who served as a BLO in Yugoslavia as head of the FUGUE mission to one of Mihailović's regional commanders.¹⁰³ Published towards the end of his life, after years of reflection, Lees' work represents his personal view of events and response to conventional wisdom.¹⁰⁴ Lees has reached beyond mere memoir with archival research to support his view that HMG's policy was derailed and the RYG was betrayed. His work is part historical analysis, part memoir, and represents, at best, a quasi-academic personal crusade against Orthodox literature.¹⁰⁵ Lees is no academic and he has a clear and stated agenda.¹⁰⁶ Due to these motivations, his work presents as problematic on several fronts that are symptomatic of faults within the Revisionist school as a whole and which should be addressed.

Lees very clearly, even startlingly, represents one of the most important elements of the Revisionist school. His aim is to rehabilitate the historiographical narrative and vindicate Mihailović as a hero and condemn HMG's policy shift as, at least a failure, or worse a betrayal.¹⁰⁷ As such, Lees' and Revisionist works like his are jaded by a pre-determined set of conclusions and suffer from a form of confirmation bias. Lees' aim is to implicate the SOE, and Churchill himself, as complicit in orchestrating what he paints as a nefarious shift in British policy; as such he works towards evidence supporting this view sometimes making leaps along the way.¹⁰⁸

Although Lees' bottom-up view of HMG's organization holds value, his inherent bias leads to conclusions that go beyond the evidence. These include indictments of whole sections of HMG as duplicitous and engaged in a communist conspiracy of subversion.¹⁰⁹ The Revisionist approach, like the Orthodox, carries

¹⁰² See, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*.

¹⁰³ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 164; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 12.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 209.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 12.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 317-8.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 315, 318.

with it an agenda. There is, therefore, a tendency to rely on selective research, cherry-picking documents and presenting selective interpretations, which conform to a predetermined view of events.

David Martin¹¹⁰ has a more balanced approach but, likewise, begins *Web of Disinformation* with the stated view that Mihailović was misrepresented by subterfuge, therefore implying the shift was a mistake and sets out to prove this fact.¹¹¹ Having a stated view of events is not in itself necessarily problematic, nor is setting out to prove ones' view. However, in the case of Revisionists like Lees and Martin this ambition to prove the validity of a particular view of events drives research in a particular direction and leads to a narrowness of approach, inductive reasoning, selective reasoning, confirmation bias, and leaps to support what becomes a problematic narrative.

To Martin's credit he has produced a more complete narrative that presents more a balanced assessment of some tenants of the Orthodox school.¹¹² Martin, for example, downplays Maclean's involvement as opposed to overemphasising it as many, including Maclean himself, have done.¹¹³ His work also serves to dispel long-standing myths such as the level of HMG's involvement in fomenting the Yugoslav *coup d'état*.¹¹⁴ These progressive moves by Martin are, however, offset by equally regressive claims that are problematic, clouding the issue.¹¹⁵ This includes perceiving HMG's pivot in support as representative of a major reversal in HMG's policies, a view that can be challenged when events are taken in a different light.

The basis for the Revisionist rehabilitation of the historical narrative is built on counterfactuals, hindsight, and huge assumptions about the basis of motive and action.¹¹⁶ Their view assumes HMG's choice is representative of one objective outweighing all others or, alternatively they focus on duplicity or nefarious activity to explain that which they do not agree with. The favourite target is SOE Cairo, upon which Revisionists have created a narrative guilty of these traits. Having already made the leap of assuming SOE Cairo to be corrupt on hearsay and circumstantial evidence, any action taken by SOE Cairo is interpreted as serving to illustrate this assertion, such as messages from the field being misdirected or

¹¹⁰ David Martin was a Journalist, political analyst who has served on the US Senate Judiciary Committee and an extensively published historian on the subject of Draža Mihailović and the Četniks.

¹¹¹ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xvii.

¹¹² Ibid, 182.

¹¹³ Ibid; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 60, 63-5, 94-7, 125; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 280-1; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 43, 99; Clissold, *Whirlwind*, 195-6.

¹¹⁴ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 17.

¹¹⁵ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xvii, xxv, 16, 28, 57, 75.

¹¹⁶ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 115, 226.

ignored, or a pro-Tito report being presented. The authors immediately point to any such event as evidence of their assumptions about SOE Cairo.¹¹⁷

Furthermore, among Revisionists there is a tendency to engage in fallacies of logic such as *post hoc ergo propter hoc* reasoning wherein results are assumed to be tied to ‘causes’ that they may very well be unrelated to. In doing so, possible alternative explanations are left unexplored. The Revisionist school holds a great many lessons on what not to do. There are, however, many positive lessons from the Revisionist school that will serve exploration into the subject. Revisionists have pointed out there are many questions left by the Orthodox literature, whose picture is, at the very least, incomplete.

Revisionists have quite rightly pointed out Mihailović was operating from a different paradigm than HMG and are right to argue the need to rehabilitate the Mihailović narrative by approaching questions with a consideration to paradigms. In highlighting paradigms Revisionists remind us of a need to examine events from each player’s approach. With this in mind, there is a need to challenge the Revisionist narrative by exploring possible alternative explanations that might explain HMG’s moves. Armed with a more complete archival record other alternative explanations emerge that might serve to paint HMG’s decisions in a different light. Observing another lesson from the Revisionist school there is a need not to forget the larger picture. In assessing HMG’s policy choices there is a need to focus on the larger context and how it might have served to influence HMG’s considerations.

A Post-Revisionist Possibility

Recent work within Western historiography seems to represent a nascent Post-Revisionist school that has yet to fully articulate itself. These works are far more balanced but are still unable to shake off old influences and have failed to clearly and articulate a new way forward. Instead, they accept past framing and go the old route of teasing out new views of small points of contention within the narrative. These works do seem to implicitly adopt a view similar to that which will be advocated by this thesis but without ever articulating it. Likely the most elemental point in Post-Revisionist works is embracing the issue of paradigms promoted by Revisionist counter-narratives.

In the case of Mihailović, the Post-Revisionist narrative argues it is important to remember that HMG’s policy shift does not in itself represent an indictment of Mihailović as ineffective, lacking force, or worse as a collaborator. It also argues that HMG’s assessments and policy shift are rooted far deeper than simply in “who was killing the most Germans.”¹¹⁸ Intriguingly, these works have

¹¹⁷ Bailey, *SOE in Albania*, 185-190; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 247-248; Stafford, *Camp X*, 177; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 51-2; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 24, 203; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxx, 40-1, 105.

¹¹⁸ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 281.

begun to appreciate that some of the decision process was beyond the control of HMG. As well, the decisions made were never one of military concern alone and political considerations were not divorced but closely tied to these decisions. Furthermore, these political considerations were far more complex than previously considered.

Stevan K. Pavlowitch's¹¹⁹ *Hitler's New Disorder: The Second World War in Yugoslavia* is an excellent example of a Post-Revisionist approach that demonstrates the various levels that need be considered. Pavlowitch emphasizes conflicting paradigms and roots Mihailović's view in civil war.¹²⁰ He explores early accommodation between Mihailović and the Italians, and discusses how accommodation contrasts with collaboration.¹²¹ This is an important distinction to make given how Orthodox narratives have painted Mihailović as a collaborator, which, in turn, raises interesting questions as to why this label was first attached.

Pavlowitch does not, however, specifically advocate a view on the issue of HMG policy evolution. His work deals more with viewing events on the ground in Yugoslavia through the lens of civil war, and is important for making this point. Despite this approach he does make interesting commentary on HMG's intelligence picture, pointing out that HMG never lost the picture of events on the ground in 1942 but, instead, arguing HMG's attention shifted elsewhere.¹²² This point holds tremendous significance in assessing HMG's policy evolution, as this thesis will demonstrate. Pavlowitch does not aim to dispute Orthodox assessments of Mihailović; quite the contrary, he agrees with them, but his desire is to place them in context, thus providing depth.¹²³

Heather Williams' *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans: the Special Operations Executive and Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* also moves in this direction. Williams' makes a narrow inquiry into the actual role SOE played in HMG's intelligence network and, by extension, policy development.¹²⁴ She is dismissive of the question of a left-wing conspiracy being responsible for HMG's policy shift and works to disprove the notion that any one agency, like the SOE, could control the course of HMG's policy development.¹²⁵

In examining SOE's actual impact and demonstrating it to be quite less than it has been built up to be, Williams makes an integral move towards creating a Post-Revisionist understanding HMG's policy evolution. Through the course of her examination she also hints at an overarching conceptual framework that should be

¹¹⁹ Stevan K. Pavlowitch is a Serbian émigré historian who has served as emeritus professor of Balkan history at the University of Southampton and as a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, specializing in history, international relations, and current affairs.

¹²⁰ Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 60-1, 89, 92-3.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 52-55, 67.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 92.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 57, 59, 66.

¹²⁴ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, x.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

utilized in assessing and interpreting events. Williams does not, however, lay it out directly but implies that a multitude of factors, sometime far afield, influenced HMG's considerations concerning Yugoslavia. In some cases these factors were largely divorced from the Yugoslav resistance.¹²⁶

It is this work that this thesis would like to take up in its upcoming examination. Authors like Williams and Pavlowitch have begun to develop a new *de facto* Post-Revisionist lens by which to view events. Unfortunately, this far more balanced and appropriate approach to the subject has so far only been haphazardly and incompletely applied to only very select aspects of the events in question.¹²⁷ There is still a need to 'revise the Revisionism' as a whole and create a new view to, and possible explanation of, HMG's policy evolution. Doing so works towards building a holistic narrative including alternative views never before considered or, at least, clearly articulated. It is this prevailing problem that this thesis has been steering the reader towards. A dispassionate eye focused on reconciling these narratives, with HMG's archives as a guide, finds the truth is found in aspects of each of these apparently conflicting narratives.

The issue is not so much the evidence itself so much as the perception of that evidence. These examinations all seem to suffer from one fault or another. The Orthodox literature tends to be simplified and often neglect significant faults within the narrative of HMG's policy evolution, not to mention the mixed results that finally came from these policies. Orthodox claims concerning HMG's motivations are not wrong but oversimplified and apologetic, and consequently misleading. Revisionist narratives, alternatively, are sensationalist and often make unsupported leaps. Both narratives suffer from an obvious agenda of deconstructing, in a particular way, actions that have, in hindsight, certainly led to questionable results.¹²⁸

All of these works can serve as a guide to the primary source material. In this case there is a very real need to go back to that source material. However, simply going back to the CAB and PREM files to examine high-level discussions within HMG is not enough by itself. Establishing the context of these policy decisions is only half the battle. There is also a need to be conscious of HMG's inner workings and decision-making paradigms as well as HMG's own views and approach. To do so requires a discussion of approach, the view by which HMG saw events needs to be understood. This is what the next chapter will address.

Closing

This examination has shown us that there is a considerable body of research material available for use on the subject of HMG's Yugoslav policy. The memoirs and other secondary material are eclectic, full of rich detail, context, and

¹²⁶ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, x.

¹²⁷ See Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans* as one an example.

¹²⁸ Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 463, 499.

share intimate first hand views of events. There is, however, a great deal of material that has yet to be fully utilized, such as HANSARD, or new archival material in the PREM and CAB collections, as examples. That material has been relied upon and the interpretations of events derived from them often appear problematic.

One can see that the context in which the literature was authored, for the Orthodox literature in the crucible of the Cold War and Revisionists in a crusade to rehabilitate Mihailović's name, colours the interpretation made by the literature. These limitations also provide insight and lessons and serve as a guide to areas that require greater scrutiny. Armed with the knowledge of the context of publication a great wealth of insight can be provided by these as well as first hand accounts and memoirs.

The limitations of these works and the overinflated place in the historiography, however, represents a clear indication as to the source of some of the persistent conflicts within the historiography between Orthodox and Revisionist narratives. These works and their limitations also provide a key to moving beyond current historiographical loggerheads. As this thesis has discussed there is value to be found in juxtaposing alternative memoirs, such as Eden, Churchill, and Alanbrooke's, against one another and compared to archival material.

There is still a wealth of underutilized resources and a great body of archival material, unavailable at the time these original views were formulated, that provides a context and further depth to weigh when considering these memoirs. Indeed, CAB and PREM files alone, as this thesis will demonstrate, can serve to alleviate many of the persistent points of friction between Orthodox and Revisionist narratives created by an over reliance upon first hand accounts.

It would seem that the body of literature concerning HMG's Yugoslav policy has become largely out-dated. This can be seen when looking to the large body of archival material that has only recently become available, after the bulk of the literature on the subject was published. The literature that has emerged since the release of this material has been consumed primarily with factors other than the larger picture of policy evolution. This would indicate that there is a need to, as this thesis suggests, go back to the archives with the literature and memoirs in hand and see what can be discovered about existing debates and what is thought to be known.

The more recent literature's focus on highlighting the divergent paradigms at play between the major players in this story is also cause to demand a re-examination of policy. Armed with this view and access to newly released archival material, there is a need not to just revisit points of contention but reconsider them with these paradigms established. From here these events need to be viewed from each side with each paradigm to see how perspective influenced events. Doing so may provide new lessons about how the course of HMG's was shaped.

The advantage moving forward is that, having developed awareness of the pitfalls inhering within the literature, they can be turned to advantage. By

considering these limitations and shortcomings as well as strengths, and by pairing them with their opposing counterpart, a starting point is created. It is from these points where this thesis can begin to approach the new primary archival material and develop alternative explanations that incorporate and build upon existing views, as the following chapters will do.

Chapter 3
His Majesty's Government's Aims & Motivations

Small sparks sometimes cause big fires
- *Michael McConville*

A fundamental issue to revising the revisionism lies in understanding HMG objectives in Yugoslavia and their place within the greater context of HMG's war effort. There is no issue within the narrative more neglected or misunderstood. One must start by acknowledging that HMG's aims evolved and swung in very wide arcs, appearing at times mercurial.¹ The issue is that HMG's aims were context specific and chronologically sensitive. In the simplest terms HMG's objectives one day might run counter to those of the next day and two seemingly complementary objectives might suddenly be found to be at cross-purposes or might be deeply impacted by some small far off event.²

This chapter will establish the various considerations and objectives influencing HMG and what objectives were held and discarded as HMG become involved with Yugoslavia. By doing so one can demonstrate that HMG was not operating from a firm foundation with a clear set of specific policy objectives. Instead, this thesis will argue that two factors were at play: the first was HMG had only very broad, vague objectives, and secondly, they were fluid, reacting to external influences and the evolving realities of the war both inside and outside of Yugoslavia. When viewed in this way one sees HMG as operating in a chaotic matrix and far more reactive than proactive. An examination of these broad and changing, reactive policy objectives also shows us HMG's policy was not seamlessly evolving across a homogenous body. These changes were occurring at a different pace across different elements inside HMG. Understanding this leads one to see how Revisionist claims of HMG betraying earlier set policies and objectives reflect a misunderstanding of how HMG's policy evolved.

¹ PREM 3-510-4 "Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean from COS" 7 November 1941; PREM 3-409-2 "The Prospects of Subversion" 21 April 1941; PREM 3-409-2 "The Prospects of Subversion: Summary" 21 April 1941– 21 April 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill" 23 October 1941; PREM 3-510-2 "MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941" 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers," 761, 770-1; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 536; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.112, 98; PREM 3-510-6 "Yugoslav PM's Message to General Mihailovic" 9 April 1943; CAB 80-69 "Draft Telegram from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav PM" May 1943; PREM 3-510-7 "Situation in Yugoslavia" 18 June 1943, 5.

² CAB 66-7-14 War Cabinet "Implications of Possible Italian Action in the Mediterranean" Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 21 April 1940; CAB 65-6-53 War Cabinet: Minutes "Allied policy in the event of an Italian attack on Yugoslavia" 30 April 1940.

This chapter will select several aspects of this early stage in HMG's view to highlight the evolving, reactive nature of HMG's policy as well as the uncertainty in which it developed. This will begin with an examination of how HMG's view of the Balkans evolved before the Axis invasion and the factors influencing this view. Next this thesis will highlight the uncertainty in HMG's early plans that resulted from these influences. Following this will be a look to HMG's reaction to the Yugoslav *coup* and the Axis invasion that followed. This will also include a focus on HMG's early response to the resulting resistance that developed in the wake of the Axis invasion. Finally, this thesis will look to HMG's shift toward exploring active resistance inside Yugoslavia and the motivations behind this shift.

By understanding these developments, the reality that HMG's policies evolved in reaction to external forces serves to underscore the importance of context and the greater picture of British perspectives. This lends itself to this thesis' overall approach and the assertion that British policy was formulated through the consideration and influence of multiple variables inside and outside of HMG control. By tracing the evolution of HMG's policy motivations and considerations two important points emerge that apply to considering HMG's policy. Firstly, British policy evolved, and secondly, as it did, priorities and considerations changed.

The Balkan Front – Greece and Turkey

To start one must understand HMG's aims in Yugoslavia and the greater Balkan context prior to the Axis invasion and how HMG viewed the region and what they hoped to achieve. The events prior to the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia are often glossed over, almost as a footnote to the 'real' events that would follow: the Tito-Mihailović affair. The context of these early events and considerations provide for understanding what occurred in HMG's decision-making process is lost on researchers. The events prior to the Axis invasion would affect HMG's attitudes towards the country and region as a whole, creating the foundation by which future considerations were framed.

Although priorities would change in regards to what HMG required of Yugoslavia there remained one seemingly constant established in the early days of the war, HMG's emphasis on Greece and Turkey.³ As with Greece and Turkey, Yugoslavia was further viewed as extensions of a greater eastern Mediterranean strategy. This strategy held a naval-centric outlook focused on global imperial and logistical considerations. This included two important focal points, the Turkish

³ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939; CAB 65-22-8 "Campbell to Eden" 16 March 1941; CAB 65-22-9 "Secretary of State for PM" 19/20 March 1941; PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill to Eden" 20 March 1941; FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers,"; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 98; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 21.

straits, and the Suez Canal.⁴ When one examines both HMG's internal and Allied pre-*coup* discourse on Yugoslavia one finds that it is almost entirely consumed with how the Yugoslav question served HMG's own aims in the Balkans, specifically how Yugoslavia could help defend British interests in Greece and Turkey, as well as greater Allied interests.⁵

There were, however, further considerations that can be seen in the archival record. The War Cabinet's conversations touched on a wide variety of considerations in weighing its view of Yugoslavia. A continued focus of British interest was the Greek port at Salonika, which held both strategic and logistical significance. Another consideration was the importance of the resource-rich Balkans to both Allied and Axis war efforts both in availability as well as denial to the enemy.⁶ What can be seen even before HMG becomes involved directly in internal Yugoslav affairs is that several very different considerations played a role in formulating HMG's view and by extension policy.

Italian entry into the war added yet another external factor to this matrix which lends credence to the view that HMG's Yugoslav policy was, in fact, the extension of other policies.⁷ Italy's entry into the war deeply impacted HMG view of the Balkans as a whole. One therefore needs to appreciate how Italian entry was considered by various agencies within HMG and how this altered Balkan strategy.

Various agencies, individuals, and allies viewed events in the Balkans with an eye to very different variables such as: resources, be it access for HMG or denial to the Axis; politically, be it concerned with alliance obligations or a message active Allied resistance sent to other countries still on the fence; militarily, with regards to Royal Yugoslav Forces' usefulness in fighting the Axis, or defending Greece and Turkey as part of a greater Balkan front, even attempting to

⁴ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939; CAB 66-5-20 "Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council" 19 December 1939; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 98; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 21.

⁵ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939, 2; CAB 66-7-14 "Implications of Possible Italian Action in the Mediterranean" 21 April 1940; CAB 66-7-14 "Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee" 11 June 1940, 3; CAB 65-22-8 "Campbell to Eden" 16 March 1941; CAB 65-22-9 "Secretary of State for PM" 19/20 March 1941; PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill to Eden" 20 March 1941; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 186-220.

⁶ CAB 66-7-14 "Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee" 11 June 1940; CAB 66-5-20 "Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council" 19 December 1939, 2.

⁷ CAB 66-7-14 "Implications of Possible Italian Action in the Mediterranean" 21 April 1940; CAB 65-6-53 War Cabinet "Allied policy in the event of an Italian attack on Yugoslavia" 30 April 1940, 468; CAB 66-7-14 "Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee" 11 June 1940; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 26.

keep Italy from joining the war.⁸ All of these considerations were being discussed and weighed simultaneously. There was, however, little to no disagreement as to one final issue, Yugoslavia's importance, even if there were varying reasons as to why it was viewed as important.⁹

Uncertainty in Early Plans

The uncertainty of early British plans centered on what was a rapidly evolving situation. In December 1939 HMG was meeting with the French to discuss joint policy in the Balkans which centered a great deal on "what ifs" and French alliance commitments to Yugoslavia. These discussions also spent a great deal of time discussing Italy and what might be done to keep them neutral and developing contingency plans for the various possibilities which might occur.¹⁰

By the spring of 1940, in rapid succession, several major ground-shifting events occurred that left HMG staggering. First, France was attacked, leaving HMG to confront an ally invaded. Shortly afterwards, Anglo-French fears of Italy joining the Axis were realized. Before an opportunity had come to even appreciate this fact France surrendered, leaving HMG on their own.¹¹ If this was not enough to alter and confuse HMG's policy considerations, within months of joining the war Italy had realized HMG's fears by invading Greece.¹²

HMG's early policy had initially aimed at creating a neutral Balkan block that would limit the war and deprive the Axis of allies, resources, and regional expansion towards the Aegean and sensitive British interests in the Mediterranean.¹³ It is not surprising to learn that considering this chaotic environment these plans were quickly dashed. What developed next was a policy

⁸ CAB 66-7-14 "Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee" 11 June 1940; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 235; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 142, 152.

⁹ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939; CAB 66-5-20 "Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council" 19 December 1939

¹⁰ Ibid; CAB 66-7-14 "Implications of Possible Italian Action in the Mediterranean" 21 April 1940.

¹¹ CAB 66-7-14 "Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee" 11 June 1940, 1; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 157-8.

¹² CAB 66-7-14 "Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee" 11 June 1940 – Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee – 11 June 1940; CAB 65-6-53 War Cabinet "Allied policy in the event of an Italian attack on Yugoslavia" 30 April 1940; CAB 66-7-14 "Implications of Possible Italian Action in the Mediterranean: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee" 21 April 1940; Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE*, 121.

¹³ CAB 66-7-14 "Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee" 11 June 1940; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 194.

aimed at creating an Allied Balkan front. This, too, would become altered by the Italian invasion of Greece and growing Axis encroachment into the region.¹⁴

The main point to take away from this is the recognition of HMG's policies having to react and evolve, altering priorities and objectives rapidly and considerably in a fluid and changing matrix. With so much uncertainty, multiple contingency plans were being floated that addressed several diverse possibilities sometimes being merged or divorced from one another. It is, therefore, inappropriate to infer specific long-term, Yugoslav specific, policy objectives from these early days. This means that when an individual points to HMG's policies at one stage as serving one set of interests and then pointing to a later stage after they have changed and suggests it represents HMG betraying earlier principals, the accusation is disingenuous.

What this evolution does show us is an internal consistency, however vague, to HMG's policies rooted in reacting to ever-changing variables on the ground within the framework of very broad objective directions focused not insignificantly upon strategic logistical concerns. What one can walk away from this appreciation with the following two points to consider: one, HMG's policy was multi-track and developed inside a chaotic setting; two, one can only discern general, very broad, objectives concerning HMG's interests in the region that are primarily focused on furthering immediate considerations of strategic significance and protecting HMG's long-term regional interests.¹⁵ This was articulated as early as 11 December 1939 when HMG met with the and French agreed:

Preparations to build up a Balkan front, which would cover the Aegean Sea and the Straits, were therefore essential ... The military objectives might be merely to defend the Straits and Salonika, or to go further and defend the integrity of Yugoslavia or ... From the political point of view, it was evident that we could go to Thrace only with the agreement of Turkey; to Salonika only with the agreement of Greece...¹⁶

¹⁴ CAB 66-7-14 "British Strategy in a Certain Eventuality" 25 May 1940, 13; CAB 66-7-14 "Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee" 11 June 1940; CAB 65-22-8 "Campbell to Eden" 16 March 1941; CAB 65-22-9 "Secretary of State for PM" 19/20 March 1941; PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill to Eden" 20 March 1941; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 219.

¹⁵ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939; CAB 66-5-20 – Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council held at the Ministry of War, Paris, December 19, 1939; CAB 66-7-14 – Implications of Possible Italian Action in the Mediterranean 21 April 1940; CAB 65-6-53 – War Cabinet 108 (40) 30th April 1940; CAB 66-7-14 – Balkan Policy in the New Situation – Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee – 11 June 1940; Churchill, *SWW Vol3*, 10-11.

¹⁶ CAB 66-4-9 – War Cabinet – The Balkan Problem, 1-2.

The Coup - Hold Fast - Preparation for the Future

Yugoslavia had attempted to walk a fine line among the greater powers in Europe as war went from rumour to reality to immediate threat.¹⁷ However both Axis and Allied powers saw in the Balkans far too great a strategic consideration to be left to chance.¹⁸ Germany was able to effectively accomplish *Einkreisung*, the strategic encirclement of the country, by early 1941, producing increased pressure on the part of Yugoslavia to side with the Axis powers, inducing Prince Regent Paul to sign the Tripartite Pact.¹⁹ This was done with Prince Paul keenly aware of a growing resentment within Yugoslavia to any deal with the Axis powers.²⁰

The Yugoslav peoples rejected the pact. Before the ink was even dry, a *coup d'état* in Belgrade on 27 March 1941, under the direction of senior Air Force officers, removed Regent Prince Paul from power. King Peter II was declared to have reached the age of majority and was placed on the Yugoslav throne.²¹ On the same day as the *coup*, Hitler issued *Führer Directive No. 25* ordering the immediate invasion of Yugoslavia.²² The Axis invasion came on 6 April 1941. In the face of overwhelming forces, the Yugoslav army rapidly collapsed.²³ The rapidity of the Royal Yugoslav military's collapse allowed much of their forces to escape into the mountains. From here they would carry on the traditional Balkan guerrilla resistance and await assistance from abroad.²⁴

¹⁷ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 113.

¹⁸ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet Meeting "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939, *The National Archives of the UK*. "The Cabinet Papers - Records of the Cabinet Office" CAB, London 2015. <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/browse/C44?v=h>; CAB 66-5-20 "Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council" 19 December 1939; CAB 68-7-23 War Cabinet: Economic Warfare "Third Monthly Report submitted by the Minister of Economic Warfare covering the period of 1 – 31 October 1940"; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 13-5.

¹⁹ Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 159; Victor Rothwell, *Anthony Eden: a political biography, 1931-1957* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1992) 57; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 13-5; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 292.

²⁰ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 292; Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest* (Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2003) 268; Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Bloomington IN, USA: Indiana University Press, 2006) 110.

²¹ CAB 65-18-11 "Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet" 27 March 1941" 169-70; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 161-2; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 292; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 75; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 13-5.

²² Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 164; US Army Center of Military History, "The Balkan Campaign: The Invasion of Yugoslavia" 5-6; "Führer Directive No. 25" *De Bello*, Last Accessed 30 April 2015. <http://ww2.debello.ca/library/410327.html>

²³ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 292; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 76; Milan Deroc, *British Special Operations Explored: Yugoslavia in Turmoil, 1941-1945, and the British Response* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) 22-24; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 71.

²⁴ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 51.

News of the early Yugoslav rebellion that flared up after the formal surrender was met with mixed feelings in London as yet another new variable to contend with.²⁵ HMG was still attempting to play ‘catch up’ with events when the RYG, now in exile, arrived in London. If that was not enough to have placed HMG on their heels, the news of widespread anti-Axis rebellion beyond the reach of Allied control inside Yugoslavia was enough for a moment’s pause. Concern developed over how to view these events and how to place them into the context of the greater war effort. The question was if this revolt was in the interests of, or contrary to, HMG’s objectives and, indeed, that of the Yugoslavs themselves.²⁶

There were those in London who viewed Yugoslav uprisings as the continued expression of anti-Axis spirit, which had ushered forth the *coup*. The RYG were, at least in part, eager to be associated with anti-Axis resistance at a time when there were few things for the Allies to feel positive about, this no doubt bolstered RYG standing in London.²⁷ However, the response was far from uniform. There were those within RYG as well as HMG who greeted the news of early revolt with dismay and concern respectively. As Martin correctly points out, the news of growing fratricidal massacres associated with what was beginning to look like the makings of a civil war, along with fear of further atrocities, created tensions between Serb and Croat ministers.²⁸ HMG, for their part, were aware of these factors but also held further cause for concern.²⁹ These uprisings were viewed as premature and their results questionable. Concerns were raised by HMG about their ability to support a movement they were no doubt responsible for, indebted to, and compelled to try and preserve for their own later advantage.³⁰

²⁵ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 44-5; Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia*, 63; Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder*, 104.

²⁶ PREM 3-409-2 - The Prospects of Subversion Summary, i, PREM 3-510-2 - Ministry of Economic Warfare – [To?] The PM – In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th [1941] – 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); PREM 3-510-4 – Admiralty to C-in-C Mediterranean – 15 October 1941.

²⁷ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 44-5; Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia*, 63; Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder*, 89-91, 10; Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, 465; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 83; Roberts, *Tito, Mhailovic, and the Allies*, 27.

²⁸ Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 221; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 53; Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder*, 89; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 42-5; Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia*, 63.

²⁹ PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt “Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden],” 31 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 Office of the Minister of Defence “Chiefs of Staff, 379th Meeting, Minute 2: Yugoslav Revolt” 9 November 1941; Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder*, 89.

³⁰ PREM 3-409-2 “The Prospects of Subversion Summary” 21 April 1941; PREM 3-510-2 “MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941” 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); PREM 3-510-4 “Churchill to Yugoslav PM” October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet “Annex II: Draft Telegram to the Commanders-in-Chief Middle East” 30 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee

There was cause for fear among HMG that their inability to provide much if anything in the way of support would lead to these rebels being snuffed out.³¹ Thus, there was an urgent need to begin coordinating their efforts and arranging what meager supplies HMG could provide. The main aim became preserving their integrity. The prevailing view in HMG was to keep these groups underground and build up their supplies. The goal was to have them further develop their networks and encourage coordination while helping to organize enough subversive and sabotage activities to keep them going and the Axis busy while avoiding the risk of major engagements.³²

With these factors in mind, this view held the dominant position for some time to come. HMG was reluctant to get too involved in fomenting a major insurgency when it posed perhaps more risk than reward. This was especially true when HMG had little in the way of supplies to give.³³ The prevailing view, concentrating on preserving the resistance and having it remain in the wings, was spearheaded by the Foreign Office. It was centered on the long-game and viewed Mihailović and his forces as the best hope of a quick and seamless transition when the Allies were in a position to exert their power in the region. The aim was to preserve the RYG that HMG had worked so hard to build up over the decades since the First World War.³⁴

(Operations), Yugoslav Revolt “Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden],” 31 October 1941 ; PREM 3-510-4 “Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean, forward of message from Chiefs of Staff” 7 November 1941; PREM 3-510-4 “Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill” 23 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 Office of the Minister of Defence “Chiefs of Staff, 379th Meeting, Minute 2: Yugoslav Revolt” 9 November 1941; PREM 3-510-1 “Anthony Eden to PM Yugoslav Revolt” 7 December 1941.

³¹ PREM 3-510-2 “MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941” 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); PREM 3-510-4 “Churchill to Yugoslav PM” October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet “Annex II: Draft Telegram to the Commanders-in-Chief Middle East” 30 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 “Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean, forward of message from Chiefs of Staff” 7 November 1941.

³² Ibid.

³³ PREM 3-510-4 “Churchill to Yugoslav PM” October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet “Annex II: Draft Telegram to the Commanders-in-Chief Middle East” 30 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt “Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden],” 31 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 “Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean, forward of message from Chiefs of Staff” 7 November 1941; PREM 3-510-1 “Anthony Eden to PM Yugoslav Revolt” 7 December 1941; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 46; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 1.

³⁴ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM “Mihailovic” 17 December 1942; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 88; WO 208-2014 “DMI Report and Map” 23 August 1942; Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder*, 181-185; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and*

During this same period there was another view within HMG slowly gaining ground. Not all agencies were viewing events from the same lens.³⁵ The Soviets has just entered the war on the side of the Allies and there were pressure at hand regarding the Axis advance into the Soviet Union. Those whose purpose was to focus on military considerations approached the revolt in Yugoslavia with a very different agenda. During the same period, late summer and fall of 1941, this group, including the SOE and PWE saw an opportunity and had slowly begun advocating for a more active hand in Yugoslavia, pushing forward the notion that HMG should encourage a further expansion of rebel activity.³⁶

Exploring Active Resistance

HMG was not blind to the unfolding situation in Yugoslavia and the effects it was having upon Axis occupation forces.³⁷ The evolving situation served to influence and alter the views and policies within HMG. There was simply no denying the potential that revolt in a region such as Yugoslavia held for hurting the enemy.³⁸ The possibility of setting occupied territories alight and siphoning off Axis forces with a few supply drops was becoming increasingly attractive. The effects of expanding the revolt would also serve as a stopgap measure that would fulfill HMG's Allied commitments to their new Soviet allies, maintain activity, and provide propaganda benefit while HMG bought time and prepared itself for more direct action. It would also allow HMG to move the war to multiple theatres beyond their immediate means.

As a result of these considerations, throughout 1942, the various individuals and agencies within HMG's policy apparatus came to develop conflicting views of HMG's policy both in regards to the Yugoslav revolt as well as HMG support of it. Some of these views were at odds with established doctrine.

Partisans, 144-45; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 53; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170; See Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: six months that changed the world* (New York: Random House, 2002) for further reading.

³⁵ PREM 3-510-4 Office of the Minister of Defence "Chiefs of Staff, 379th Meeting, Minute 2: Yugoslav Revolt" 9 November 1941; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 83; Roberts, *Tito, Mhailovic, and the Allies*, 27; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 2-3.

³⁶ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942 ; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942 ; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 61-2; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 69.

³⁷ PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; "USAF Historical Study No. 121: Special Operations: AAF Aid to European Resistance Movements, 1943-1945" (US) *Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA)* by Harris G. Warren (1947) 81. Last Accessed 30 April 2015. <http://www.afhra.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090522-060.pdf>

³⁸ *AFHRA*, "USAF Historical Study No. 121," 81.

Increasingly there were prominent disagreements emerging about HMG's course forward.³⁹

By the fall of 1941 most of Serbia had been brought to a standstill by rebel activity and the rest of occupied Yugoslavia was suffering the same effects to varying degrees.⁴⁰ By this point another factor besides the revolt's success was playing into the growing divide within HMG over policy course. Since the entry of the Soviet Union into the Allied camp in the summer of 1941 the idea of large-scale underground armies lying in wait had become antiquated. HMG was slowly coming around to this realization as early as the fall of 1941.⁴¹ There was also the realization that HMG's inability to provide the scale of supplies necessary made any plan somewhat pie in the sky.⁴²

It would take some time before these notions would take root. However, the events of 1942 would intervene to motivate an altered view. The revolt's successes coupled with continuing concern over the situation on the Soviet front was pushing HMG to reconsider its position and approach.⁴³ As a result of these new developments HMG was beginning to view widespread revolt in Yugoslavia as more attractive by early 1942. In part this was due to the distraction it offered to Axis operations against the Soviets.⁴⁴ It was also viewed by SOE as an opportunity for it to finally get up to something, even with the severe limitations caused by supply priorities.⁴⁵

However, all was not good news concerning the rapid expansion of the Yugoslav revolt. In late 1941 HMG was also increasingly aware of growing divisions within the resistance between Royalist and communist elements and were keen to stifle divisions that could turn the revolt into a civil war.⁴⁶ By the fall of

³⁹ Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 104.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 61-2.

⁴¹ PREM 3-510-4 - War Cabinet – Defence Committee (Operations) – Yugoslav Revolt – Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden] – 31 October 1941.

⁴² PREM 3-409-2 - The Prospects of Subversion Summary – 21 April 1941; PREM 3-510-2 – Churchill to the Yugoslav PM – 25 August 1941; On 28 August 1941 Churchill memo to Hugh Dalton Minister of Economic Warfare.; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 47.

⁴³ PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt “Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden],” 31 October 1941; PREM 3-510-12 “The Situation in Yugoslavia” 2 June 1942; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 84-6; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 237; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60 ; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161.

⁴⁴ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 77.

⁴⁵ Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 71-72.

⁴⁶ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt “Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to

1941 there was a real need developing to get in and sort the situation out, avoid civil war, keep the resistance alive, and direct its energy towards the enemy and away from internal feuds.⁴⁷

The one resource HMG was able to provide to assist in these matters was coordination with leadership through the deployment of BLOs.⁴⁸ With this in mind, HMG had sent it their first BLO mission in September 1941 to get in touch with all parties and attempt to coordinate efforts. HMG also reached out to the Soviets to see what could be done to reconcile communist and Royalist movements.⁴⁹

Meanwhile the events of the winter of 1941/42 revived HMG's concerns that a premature uprising could serve to see the revolt snuffed out.⁵⁰ In late August 1941 the Germans appointed Serbian General Nedić president of the 'Serbian government', a puppet collaborationist administration, which had absorbed large numbers of Četniks. This was, however, no straight Quisling government and these Četniks had gone over as part of the larger strategy of infiltration and preservation.⁵¹ It was essentially an effort to build a fifth column. However, German anti-guerrilla operations had forced these 'legal Četniks' into confrontations with Mihailović's main resistance force and the results had been severely damaging, significantly weakening Royalist resistance.⁵² All of this created a sense of urgency within HMG about getting into Yugoslavia, regardless the reason. This urgency would promote momentum towards an inevitable policy development of building resistance in order to save it.⁵³

the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941

⁴⁷ PREM 3-510-12- CIGS to PM – 2 June 1942.

⁴⁸ Deakin 125-6, 203 PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941.

⁴⁹ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 125-6; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 80; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 2-3, 31-4; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 56-7.

⁵⁰ PREM 3-510-2 "MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941" 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); PREM 3-510-4 "Churchill to Yugoslav PM" October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet "Annex II: Draft Telegram to the Commanders-in-Chief Middle East" 30 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean, forward of message from Chiefs of Staff" 7 November 1941

⁵¹ Deakin, 143; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 98.

⁵² PREM 3-510-1 "Anthony Eden to PM Yugoslav Revolt" 7 December 1941; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 58, 100; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 145-6.

⁵³ PREM 3-510-1 Labeled Mr. Martin "Your minute to Major Morton at Flag A" (Written in the margin to PM: following is report for which you asked at Chequers on latest information on the Yugoslav Revolt) 27 January 1942; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers," 538; PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet

During the spring of 1942 Soviet pressure on HMG to get up to more inside Europe to relieve pressure of the Soviet front, ideally by opening a second front, added a new dimension to HMG's considerations and further force behind those within HMG on the side of advocating for greater involvement. The issue held an Allied dimension that required consideration beyond HMG's policy desires. HMG's view of Yugoslavia was being altered by external factors.⁵⁴

Those making the assessments as well as the relevant agencies also underwent significant changes during this period that lend credence to the view that HMG's view was never stable but always evolving and being confronted by new variables. In February 1942 Hugh Dalton, the Minister of Economic Warfare for Churchill's war ministry, and director of SOE, had been replaced by Lord Selborne. Under Selborne's direction the SOE, whose position had been somewhat vague since its inception, was placed firmly within the policy hierarchy and made subordinate to the Foreign Office, Chiefs of Staff and Special Intelligence Service (SIS). HMG's policy apparatus was shaking itself into order. From this point on SOE was strictly focused on encouraging guerrilla activity inside occupied Europe. This singular purpose would come to affect how it viewed and influenced HMG's policy.⁵⁵

What was occurring with HMG with regards to policy was not a graceful and seamless uniform shift across a homogenous body.⁵⁶ Nor was this transition an instantaneous one or without tension. Indeed, there was to be conflict and mixed messages, and while certain branches of HMG pushed Mihailović to be more active others were still sending the older message of laying low and building networks.⁵⁷

Closing

What one walks away from when examining the early stages of HMG's policy development is a sense of the multi-track chaos of it all. Variables were constantly changing causing realignments of policies and the introduction of new considerations. Major events altered the landscape upon which decisions and

Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 42.

⁵⁴ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 63-5, 200; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 79 – 80; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 47, 313-4; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 84-5.

⁵⁵ Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE*, 250-255; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 70.

⁵⁶ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 97.

⁵⁷ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 61-2; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 69; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 44.

policies would function. Far off developments occurred which held vast implications for Yugoslav policy. HMG's policies were never a set dogma, it was at all times reactive to external forces that shaped and altered their course. Beyond broad strategic considerations the details were always hazy at best. Even broad strategic considerations were, as can be seen with the example of the Italian entry into the war and HMG's shift from a neutral to Allied Balkan block, open to change. Changing realities altered HMG's needs, view, approach, and even objectives.

Revisionist claims that the later shift in policy regarding dropping support of Mihailović in favour of Tito was somehow remarkable represents a misunderstanding of the nature of HMG's policy and how it was formed. Instead, HMG had only broad objectives that were, even then, subject to change because it was at all times reactive in nature, governed, as it was, by multiple external variables that could be cause for complete policy reversals. Moreover, in looking at the formation and evolution of these broad strategic objectives and HMG's policies in this regard it seems there was never any single policy course nor was there any one set of aims. HMG's policy, like HMG itself, was not homogenous and this evolution of policy was not seamless or uniform. This makes clear that any claim of HMG's betrayal of earlier policies or objectives reflects a misunderstanding of how HMG's policy was formulated.

What is left is a picture of a policy that was evolving and reactive. With this in mind it would seem that earlier narratives suffer a fundamental fault in approach. Instead of looking to HMG shaping the course of events the inverse is true. From this starting point one approaches events with an eye to not how HMG steered them but how they altered HMG's approach and policy. That leaves a need to search back before the event to see what events and external forces were shaping HMG's views and approach to the situation in the Balkans and how HMG's Yugoslav policy was the end result of events and not the catalyst.

Chapter 4
Understanding His Majesty's Government's Intelligence

I have a suspicion that grey is a more common Balkan colour
- *Anthony Eden*

In the previous chapter the reactionary nature of HMG's policy evolution, responding as it did to external variables inside and outside of Yugoslavia was discussed. Events on the ground did more than compel policy in various directions; it forced it onto the defensive, onto a reactive footing where it would need to respond to terms dictated to it and well outside of British control or even prediction.

Policy, at a fundamental level, is centered on articulating a stated idea or set of objectives, plotting a course towards this end, and developing a strategy that addresses the obstacles which stand in the way of these objectives. Understanding HMG's objectives is, however, only one element and it is in fact only understood with the appreciation of HMG's perception of what the obstacles were, their views of these obstacles, and debates concerning HMG's understanding of them. The next logical question, therefore, becomes, by what means was HMG learning of and viewing these events. The intelligence picture is therefore essential to understanding how objectives and obstacles were framed and how policy evolved.

HMG's intelligence network was multi-layered. Understanding these layers is critical to appreciating HMG's changing views, objectives, as well as policy development in response to perceived obstacles. This includes HMG's collection of networks from on the ground to Whitehall, their function, inter- and intra- agency relationships, and individuals within them. By understanding the intelligence HMG was receiving as well as the nature of the agencies collecting, interpreting, and disseminating it a better understanding of how HMG came to view events and chose to respond is created. This in turn can serve to reframe assertions made by Revisionists in regards to HMG's underlying motivations and speaks to how variables were identified and framed, and how policy was developed.

In developing an understanding of how HMG came to learn and view variables within the policy process this chapter will identify key forms of intelligence by which HMG understood Yugoslavia. This includes BLOs, the SOE, and ULTRA. These main sources of intelligence will be deconstructed through an examination of their role within HMG's decision-making process. This will highlight the influence of these various intelligence sources, their own agendas, shortcomings, and influences. It will also serve to create an understanding of the interactions and negotiations between each other, as well as other elements within HMG's decision-making process. Doing so will serve to create a better

understanding of the dynamic and multi-track nature of HMG policy development as well as the limitations HMG faced due to this fractured environment. This chapter will then demonstrate that, contrary to Revisionist accounts, there was no singular approach or view that prevailed within HMG.

British Liaison Officers (BLO)

Perhaps the most compelling narratives within the historiography on the subject of HMG's view inside Yugoslavia have come from BLOs. They were not the only source of intelligence but BLO's on-the-ground impressions and personal assessments of Yugoslavia's various resistance groups and their leaders provided HMG with important depth, background, and context. BLOs are also perhaps the most unreliable or at least contradictory source within HMG's intelligence network. From 1941 until the closing days of the war, HMG developed dozens of these missions, both political and military nature, inside Yugoslavia to provide intelligence, ascertain the course of events, and to provide assistance and attempt to influence the direction and coordination Yugoslav resistance.

BLOs had skin in the game. They could be incredibly biased, even naïve, and far from objective in their views.¹ Hindsight and extensive research done by Revisionists have proven undeniably that their assessments exaggerated and distorted the situation.² However, knowing this, understanding the role of BLOs in HMG's intelligence network, the way they functioned, their perceived purpose and missions, how their intelligence was weighed and compared against other sources, is still an issue in need of repair.

The earliest mission to arrive in Yugoslav came via submarine to the Montenegrin shores in the Gulf of Kotor on 20 September 1941. Codenamed BULLSEYE, this was the first experimental mission sent by HMG. It had originally been designed as a purely Yugoslav affair but HMG, and more specifically, SOE were eager to have a 'Brit' on the ground to make appraisals. It was led by Capt. D.T. (Bill) Hudson of SOE, an operative fluent in Serbo-Croat and intimately familiar with the country having lived and worked there before the war. Hudson was sent in without much to go on. His mission was all very vague and more than a little slapdash. He was to make contact with various groups, deliver cyphers to Mihailović, and see what he could see.³

Hudson's landing was blind and his only knowledge of what he was walking into was that Italians occupied the area of the Montenegrin coast where he landed and that there had been growing news of rifts developing between

¹ See Michael Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, as such an example.

² Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 182.

³ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 128; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 80; Stafford, *Camp X*, 169; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 2-3, 31-2; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 56-7.

nationalist and suspected communist groups.⁴ His first contact was with a group, which called itself the 'Montenegrin Freedom Force.' Hudson's initial impressions were that these groups consisted of a loose association of communist and nationalist elements that he referred in general terms to as 'patriots.' The level of central control was at first difficult to appreciate. His first communiqués however, reported a favourable impression and called for aid to be sent in.⁵

Early in his mission Hudson would meet Tito, a figure HMG would not come to fully appreciate for quite some time. In fact he met Tito *before* Mihailović. In a brief encounter Hudson met Tito in Užice shortly after heavy fighting and a German withdrawal and was confronted with Tito's criticism that Mihailović was refusing to coordinate with the Partisans in joint attacks on occupation forces. After this meeting Partisans would escort Hudson to Mihailović's HQ in Ravna Gora. Hudson would meet Mihailović a full month after landing in Yugoslavia.⁶

During the interim Hudson traveled through areas of Montenegro controlled by the Partisans and became impressed by their strength and organization. Hudson's reports on these forces were favourable.⁷ Upon arriving at Mihailović's HQ Hudson's first audience was a rocky one. Mihailović leveled serious criticism against Hudson's association with communists. It did not take long for Hudson to appreciate that there was a serious schism within the Yugoslav resistance.⁸

Hudson's early reports quickly put into stark light the difficulties faced by a BLO in obtaining accurate and considered appreciations. His access and view were limited and deeply impacted by personal relationships. His appraisals were undoubtedly biased by local conditions and obstructed by suspicion, local interference, and the labyrinth of HMG's intelligence network which would filter, distort, dissect and reassemble his mission reports in many different ways with many different results.⁹

Despite their limitations these missions provided valuable insight into the intelligence streaming in from various sources providing much needed context and a level of personal appraisal otherwise not available. When Hudson was forced to drop off the air in November 1941 in response to German anti-guerrilla activities it was no small loss and highlighted the value these missions held in corroborating, and contextualizing HMG's intelligence. There is no misunderstanding as to why

⁴ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 130; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 31-2.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 34.

⁷ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 133-6; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 85.

⁸ PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden]," 31 October 1941; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 136-7; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 34; Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War & the Great Powers, 1804-1999* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001) 493.

⁹ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 88; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 170-3.

SOE felt compelled to send further missions in, regardless of the risks or their limitations.¹⁰

There has been some contention that has arisen over by what lens these missions were expected to assess local conditions on the ground.¹¹ This is because these eclectic and multi-skilled individuals were not expected to utilize one lens, or one consideration, but several. It was never strictly a military or political affair but a hybrid. Their purposes were, indeed, varied. HMG would eventually send in a whole gambit of individuals, from politicians and conventional military officers, to subversives, criminals, and experts on sabotage and essentially raising all sorts of hell.¹²

By September 1942 Hudson had re-established contact, thanks in part to further BLO missions and was reporting positive opinions of the Partisans and criticising Mihailović but only so far as immediate military action was concerned. Hudson had concerns that Mihailović could be doing more to take advantage of his connections with local Italian forces suggesting, “Mihailović has...agreed to adopt the policy of collaboration with the Italians pursued by the Montenegrin Četniks... Mihailović [however] remains opposed to undertaking sabotage against the Italians.”¹³ He did not, however, at any time, hold doubt of Mihailović’s post-war intentions to re-establish the RYG.¹⁴

These reports were enough to cause considerable concern within the higher policy levels of HMG. Eden and Churchill’s discussions on the matter in mid-December 1942 reflect the fact that HMG had doubts about the course of events on the ground in Yugoslavia. Eden articulated these doubts in a report to Churchill, dated 17 December 1942, describing the situation as such:

Mihailović’s policy is at present to abstain from all serious action against the occupying forces, whether German or Italian, because: (a) he fears reprisals and their possible effect on his authority (b) he wishes to consolidate his own political position so that he can establish an ordered government at least in Serbia when the Axis tide recedes. (c) He relies to some extent on Italian forces to help in his fight against the Partisans: In particular he will not act against the

¹⁰ PREM 3-510-1 Labeled Mr. Martin “Your minute to Major Morton at Flag A” (Written in the margin to PM: following is report for which you asked at Chequers on latest information on the Yugoslav Revolt) 27 January 1942; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 39, 59-60; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 21, 65; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 71-72; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 63-5, 177, 200.

¹¹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 63-5.

¹² Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 64-5.

¹³ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 50-4.

¹⁴ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 109; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 152.

Italians, because: (d) they supply him with food and arms and (e) he hopes to inherit their arms and equipment when the Axis collapse begins to set in.¹⁵

Furthermore, Eden makes it clear they had concerns over the reports they were receiving which were judged as giving “an exaggeratedly favourable idea of Mihailović’s strength and general position in Yugoslavia.”¹⁶

SOE Cairo was well aware of the pitfalls of BLO mission reports. The potential for the BLO to become compromised or misinformed was cause enough to motivate SOE to have other BLOs confirm Hudson’s early reports.¹⁷ Coinciding with HMG’s greater strategic shift towards an offensive stance after the TORCH landings in North Africa and with the invasion of Sicily (HUSKY) to come in July, SOE sent their own Col. Bailey from Cairo in to Mihailović’s HQ to ‘appraise Hudson’s appraisals’ on the night of 24/25 December 1942.¹⁸ This is important to consider in discussions of BLO missions. There was a conscious awareness, demonstrable by policy and action, on the part of SOE that their own sources were, at best, in constant need of second-guessing.¹⁹

Col. Bailey’s arrival as new senior BLO to Mihailović’s HQ represented the second of the few BLOs HMG sent into Yugoslavia that were fluent in Serbo-Croat and represents the considerable degree of effort HMG went in accommodating and supporting the RYG’s man. Bailey was sent in to clean up the picture and within a short time of his arrival he had confirmed Hudson’s reports and impressions as accurate and that any doubts regarding Hudson were groundless. Bailey also reaffirmed the view that the rift between Partisans and Četniks was beyond reconciling. All this added to the concern and debate raging at Whitehall and elsewhere within HMG policy apparatus as to the future course of HMG’s Yugoslav policy.²⁰ In a moment of frankness Eden made clear to Churchill, in his 17 December 1942 report, the conflict in policy facing HMG regarding Yugoslav policy:

It might be argued that it is our short-term interest to break with Mihailović, who is at present contributing little to the general war effort, and to transfer our support and assistance to the Partisans, who

¹⁵ PREM 3-510-5, Anthony Eden to PM “Mihailovic”, 17 December 1942, 2.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 39, 48-54; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 177-9; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 88, 92; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 65

¹⁸ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 48.

¹⁹ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM “Mihailovic” 17 December 1942; Stafford, *Camp X*, 171.

²⁰ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 50-4; Stafford, *Camp X*, 171; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 178.

are offering active resistance to the occupying forces. On the long view, however, I believe that we should be wise to go on supporting Mihailović in order to prevent anarchy and Communist chaos after the war.²¹

Although bleak, Bailey was not dismissing Mihailović's forces as beyond use. Both Hudson and Bailey were coming to appreciate the different paradigms Tito and Mihailović were approaching anti-Axis action from. Indeed, 17 March 1943 Hudson wrote:

Guerrilla warfare in an occupied country must be based on the protection it can offer to the civilian manpower threatened by occupation methods. That is why Tito failed in Serbia and succeeded in Bosnia.²²

This represented a growing acknowledgement on the part of the BLOs attached to Mihailović of the conflict in paradigms developing between HMG and their Yugoslav partners on the ground. This also represents one of the phenomenon associated with BLO missions that make their reports so difficult to appraise. Time in country with these forces invariably led to a sense of empathy on the part of the BLOs towards the resistance groups they served alongside and began to identify with.

Despite the sympathy apparent in Hudson and Bailey's reports there was also a growing sense of frustration. Bailey had negotiated with Mihailović for the arrival of nine further British sub-missions with independent radio links to gain a better understanding of Mihailović's ongoing military struggle and value. Despite the empathy associated with BLO missions there was continued and consistent reports that, however favourable politically, could not ignore that the divide in considerations behind HMG's objectives and that of Mihailović was making continued military action with Mihailović more and more difficult.²³ Churchill

²¹ PREM 3-510-5 – Anthony Eden to PM on Mihailovic – 17 December 1942, 3.

²² Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 87; WO 202-162 “Report from Hudson” 17 March 1943, 2.

²³ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM “Mihailović” 17 December 1942; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 87; WO 202-162 “Report from Hudson” 17 March 1943, 2; PREM 3-510-6 “Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill” 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 Draft letter “Churchill to Yugoslav Prime Minister” 29 March 1943; PREM 3-510-7 War Cabinet “Annex II: Situation in Yugoslavia: Report” 18 June 1943; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet “Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee” 14 July 1943; The Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations *Found in* Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 315; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 50-4; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 463; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 183, 191.

would come to agree that “the attitude of Mihailović was ‘intolerable’, but so was his position, and little had been done for him.”²⁴

These independent analysis and critical appraisals on this front were feeding what was becoming a growing body of opinion at SOE Cairo and GHQME that Mihailović’s forces might be more trouble than assistance.²⁵ This is reflected in the Foreign Office draft of a letter to be sent by Churchill to the Yugoslav PM Slobodan Jovanovitch, 29 March 1943, voicing HMG’s concerns:

[HMG] are becoming seriously disturbed at recent developments in Yugoslav affairs and are increasingly apprehensive in regard to the future unless steps are taken to effect a greater measure of unity, not only among the various elements of resistance within the country, and among the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, but also among Yugoslav circles abroad.²⁶

It was at this point that the TYPICAL mission headed by Capt. Deakin of SOE Cairo and friend of Churchill, was parachuted in to Tito’s HQ. The timing of the first official BLO mission to Partisan HQ was no coincidence. It would also serve to further challenge HMG’s conventional thinking regarding Yugoslav resistance.²⁷ The TYPICAL mission actually occurred outside of, or at least before, SOE London was aware of it and it would serve to stir up quite a bit of trouble for SOE in London.²⁸ The mission, which arrived 28 May 1943, was the culmination of a great many conflicting and varied reports about Partisan activity and was at least in part rooted in growing frustrations over HMG’s inability to effectively influence resistance on the ground through Mihailović. Part of the controversy over a BLO mission to Tito was concern that it would come to imply *de facto* recognition and hold possible political repercussions.²⁹

TYPICAL had originally been divided between Deakin, whose responsibilities were to consult with Tito on joint operations on behalf of SOE, and Capt. William Stuart, a Canadian, tasked with reporting on the military situation on behalf of the Military Intelligence branch of GHQME. They both had their own

²⁴ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 191.

²⁵ CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet “Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee” 14 July 1943; FO 371-37590 “Mihailović: minutes by Eden, Howard, and Sargent” 9 September 1943; PREM 3-510-7 War Cabinet “Annex II: Situation in Yugoslavia: Report” 18 June 1943; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 171-2; Wheeler, “Review of *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies*,” 878-880; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 50-4.

²⁶ PREM 3-510-6 – Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [J]Yovanovitch 29 March 1943.

²⁷ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 138.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 138.

²⁹ PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill “Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute” 24 June 1943.

Wireless Transmitter (W/T) and cyphers and it was hoped that this could provide a balanced appraisal.³⁰ Unfortunately, TYPICAL dropped in at a time when Tito's HQ was under siege by German anti-guerrilla operations and was fighting their way out of an encirclement. During these early moments of the mission Stuart was killed. This would leave TYPICAL assessments somewhat lopsided in the months to come. Deakin also suffered from another fault, besides being unqualified to fulfill Stuart's role and provide military assessment; he spoke not a word of Serbo-Croat. His dependency on the Partisans, his inability to converse with locals, and the lopsided nature of their relationship, as well as the comradeship that developed during these difficult times, made Deakin less than objective.³¹

As Deakin was working hard to establish an effective relationship with the Partisans he was sending back reports that expressed admiration for Tito's forces. There were several other missions that would be sent to Tito's various units facing the same difficulties of intense combat with German anti-guerrilla operations who would report much the same sentiment.³² Deakin did, in fact, become quite successful in developing an effective relationship with Tito. This may have been in part due to Tito's desire to see the relationship work. The prestige and *de facto* recognition implied by the presence of a BLO mission to Tito's HQ served a useful propaganda tool, despite Tito's protests about HMG's continued support of Mihailović.³³

Deakin began reporting in early summer that he was of the opinion that there was clear evidence of not just Četnik-Partisan conflict but clear Četnik collaboration. The Partisans apparently provided Deakin with this evidence but it would seem it was never questioned by Deakin and simply taken as gospel.³⁴ By mid-summer Deakin felt his initial work sufficient to recommend a Brigadier be sent in to establish a formal diplomatic mission to Tito's HQ to discuss and arrange matters of high policy.³⁵

The appointment of a senior mission was the culmination of high level policy debates raging at Whitehall which had seen HMG, under pressure from Churchill, adopt a policy of supporting all resistance inside Yugoslavia fighting the Axis occupation.³⁶ As part of Churchill's continued involvement he had personally

³⁰ Stafford, *Camp X*, 181; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 62-3.

³¹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 29; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 67; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 70.

³² PREM 3-409-5 "SOE Activities, Quarter: April to June 1943," 4; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 29; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 67; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 321-2.

³³ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 321-2; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 165.

³⁴ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 71.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 108.

³⁶ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943 ; WO 202/162 17 March 1943 ; PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943;

selected the representative that would be sent into Tito's HQ. His desire for what the PM famously described as a "daring ambassador leader to these hardy and hunted guerrillas" led him to appoint Fitzroy Maclean.³⁷

Maclean's counterpart was a GHQME affair. Brig. Armstrong was selected and although equal in rank he was very different from Maclean. He was a career officer and considered himself a 'simple soldier.' He lacked the political awareness and experience of Maclean as well as the influence and connections. He had little access to Churchill and thus suffered a disadvantage to Maclean that made the two missions lopsided.³⁸

This lopsidedness is a point often made by Revisionists, arguing the game was fixed or, at least, slanted in Tito's favour. It should, however, be pointed out that these two groups were under entirely different situations when these missions were sent in. These were in fact not equivalent missions, holding very different context and aim. Unlike Maclean's diplomatic mission, Armstrong's was military. Armstrong was also not the single connection between HMG and Mihailović's HQ. Besides diplomatic channels between HMG and the RYG, when Armstrong arrived there were, in fact, seven senior British officers stationed with Mihailović's HQ.³⁹ At no time did the number of BLOs with Partisan units come close to rivalling the numerical superiority of those stationed with Četnik units.⁴⁰

The Brigadier missions arrived at a time when relations with both resistance movements were suffering.⁴¹ Despite the tensions both Brigadiers, like all other BLOs, fell victim to the comradery that left BLOs fiercely loyal to the groups to which they were attached. The two 'opposing' Brigadier missions culminated in the drafting of two long form reports from the field assessing the relative strengths of their resistance group. The two reports were Maclean's

Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 138; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 87; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 108, 191.

³⁷ PREM 3-510-9 "Churchill to Eden" 28 July 1943; FO 371-37610 "Selborne to Eden" 6 August 1943; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 168-9; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 84-5; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 181.

³⁸ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 115.

³⁹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 102.

⁴⁰ PREM 3-409-5 "SOE Activities, Quarter: April to June 1943", 4; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 102.

⁴¹ PREM 3-510-9 – D.M.I. [Military Intelligence?] report sent from CIGS Alanbrooke to Churchill – Note on the Situation in Yugoslavia 27/28 October 1943; "Yugoslavia: The Resistance Movement" *Library of Congress*; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 6; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942, 2; PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; US Army Center of Military History, "US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans" 44; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 114-6; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 173-4.

Blockbuster Report and the *Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations*.⁴² Maclean would deliver his report personally in Cairo to several high-ranking officials, including the Chiefs of Staff (COS) and Eden, during the build-up to the SEXTANT and EUREKA conferences.⁴³

At the same time Maclean was distributing his *Blockbuster Report*, Armstrong and Bailey were drafting a report of their own. Equally important in hindsight, it did not have the same impact as *Blockbuster*. The *Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations* pointed to the legitimate grievances of Mihailović as well as HMG's failures, both in support and appreciation of events. It was highly critical of HMG's use of Yugoslav resistance for greater British and Allied aims without consideration for the impact to the individuals on the ground. The *Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations* called for HMG to redouble their supply efforts to Mihailović's forces arguing it would provide an increase in sabotage activity inside Serbia and that his was the only group with the potential to do so.⁴⁴

The report, however, did not change the fact that HMG's policy had developed a certain momentum and a groupthink uniformity of outlook. There was no disputing that in the other areas of Yugoslavia the Partisans were doing more.⁴⁵ With Maclean in Cairo promoting *Blockbuster* at the same time as SEXTANT it would seem that the level of depth and nuance provided in the *Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations* was beyond what HMG could afford to consider in the moment. HMG also had several other variables they were compelled to consider and would soon need to, in the words of Maclean, "reconcile our *de jure* obligations with the *de facto* situation."⁴⁶

⁴² PREM 3-511-2 "The MacLean Report a.k.a the 'Blockbuster' Report" 6 November 1943, Also found in, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 305; The Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations Found in, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 315.

⁴³ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 401-2.

⁴⁴ WO 202-140 sheet 424 19 December 1943; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 191-3, 205; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 211-4.

⁴⁵ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-7 "Situation in Yugoslavia" 18 June 1943; PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill "Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943; PREM 3-510-13 Telegram from COS to the Middle East Defence Committee, 27 June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 "Selborne to Churchill" 29 June 1943; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943; PREM 3-510-9 "From the British Mission to Partisan GHQ" 20 September 1943; PREM 3-510-9 "Report: From the British Mission [Maclean] to Partisan GHQ" 29 September 1943; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 86, 161-2; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 185; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 448; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 128; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, x.

⁴⁶ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 462.

The take away from this impassioned chaos is that the underlying situation was that the BLO missions were a quagmire of conflicts. They produced controversial and suspect intelligence and operated in the fray. It also seems that HMG was aware of their shortcomings but viewed it as having value in more ways than one. These missions were the best HMG had on the ground and did provide needed context. They were also the best chance HMG had coordinating events on the ground.

Special Operations Executive (SOE)

A strong argument could be made that the most controversial agency within HMG intelligence network associated with Yugoslav policy was SOE.⁴⁷ More specifically SOE Cairo. During the war, Cairo served as the General Headquarters of British North African and the Middle Eastern commands as well as the location of SOE's major base outside of London. As Maclean described it, 'in those days Cairo seemed to lie on the road to almost everywhere.'⁴⁸ From here, SOE Cairo was responsible for SOE operations in the Balkans and Middle East, and served as the coordination point between SOE London and the local military. Serving in this capacity would prove fertile ground for intra- and inter-agency quarrels.⁴⁹ It would be SOE Cairo that would serve to establish BLO missions and coordinate supply for resistance fighters across the Balkans. It would also come to serve as the support base to later American OSS missions into the region, which added another level of controversy and mystique of SOE.⁵⁰

In the early days of the SOE Mission in Cairo, with little supply and little direct connection with Yugoslavia, there was not much that SOE could really get up to. They were chomping at the bit to get the ball rolling and their first BLO mission, BULLSEYE, led by Capt. Hudson, was no small feat. When Hudson dropped out of contact in November 1941 it was a big loss for SOE and they spent a great deal of effort advocating for greater resource allocations so they could get back to work.⁵¹ As part of this desire to get more active, SOE would take a strong

⁴⁷ See Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*. Lees fixates on the issue of SOE Cairo's role. Also see Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans* who addresses the issue at book length.

⁴⁸ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 389.

⁴⁹ Stafford, *Camp X*, 168.

⁵⁰ PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 16 June 1942; PREM 3-513-5 War Cabinet: Bring. Maclean "A note on Anglo-Yugoslav Relations" 28 February 1945 Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 82; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 111; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 80.

⁵¹ PREM 3-510-1 Labeled Mr. Martin "Your minute to Major Morton at Flag A" (Written in the margin to PM: following is report for which you asked at Chequers on latest information on the Yugoslav Revolt) 27 January 1942; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 39, 59-60, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 21, 65 ; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 71-72; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 63-5, 200.

line in advocating greater support be given to Mihailović. SOE's early and committed support for Mihailović is an important point that is often neglected by Revisionists who paint the organization as doggedly pro-Tito in outlook and infested with communists.⁵² SOE Cairo's position regarding Mihailović would begin to run into conflict with the views of other agencies. Throughout most of 1942 HMG's opinion of Mihailović was being called into question as Tito's Partisans were increasingly being viewed in a more positive light.⁵³ Further joint HMG-RYG missions sent by SOE into Yugoslavia seemed to only cast more uncertainty within various elements of HMG as to their understanding of Yugoslav resistance.⁵⁴

SOE's continued position concerning sole support for Mihailović was running into opposition from organizations such as the Political Warfare Executive (PWE). It is worth noting that far from leading the pack in influencing HMG to adopt joint support for communists, SOE was running further back along with the Foreign Office and Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) arguing in favour of Mihailović.⁵⁵ SOE was, however, not getting the entire picture and there were influences within HMG who were working from different considerations and intelligence.

One of the reasons SOE had been out of the loop is a significant point often overlooked. SOE was on shaky ground from the get go and Cairo was never really trusted inside HMG.⁵⁶ This runs contrary to Revisionist narratives that would argue SOE Cairo not only held a central role but came to almost single handedly steer HMG's Yugoslav policy which is rooted in their overemphasis on BLO reports.⁵⁷

⁵² Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 88; WO 208/2014 DMI Report and Map 23 August 1942.

⁵³ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 59-60, 161; Stafford, *Camp X*, 178.

⁵⁴ PREM 3-510-5 – Anthony Eden to PM on Mihailović – 17 December 1942.

⁵⁵ WO 208-2014 “DMI Report and Map” 23 August 1942; PREM 3-510-12 “CIGS to PM” 2 June 1942; PREM 3-409-5 “SOE Activities: Summary for the PM, Quarter: January to March 1943”; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 89.

⁵⁶ FO 371-43646 “Soviet policy in the Balkans” 7 June 1944; WO 208-2014 “DMI Report and Map” 23 August 1942; PREM 3-510-7 “A ‘questionable report’ SOE Activities in Yugoslavia” 1 June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 “Note from Mjr. Morton to Mr. Martin” 10 June 1943; FO 371-37590 “Mihailović: minutes by Eden, Howard, and Sargent” 9 September 1943; PREM 3-409-6 “Foreign Office to Minister of State, Cairo” 11 October 1943; PREM 3-409-6 “MidEast Command to Air Ministry” 15 October 1943; Stafford, *Camp X*, 168; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 105, 197-8; Foot, *S.O.E.*, x, 51; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 7-9, 12-6, 50, 88-9, 171-2; Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE*, 250-255; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 70; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 84-8; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 184-5, 203; Stafford, “Upstairs/Downstairs,” 55-61.

⁵⁷ Bailey, *SOE in Albania*, 185-190; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 171-2, 247-248; FO 371-37590 “Mihailović: minutes by Eden, Howard, and Sargent” 9 September

As early as the summer of 1941 SOE had run into problems wherein its distinct directive to “set Europe ablaze” as Churchill once famously remarked, and overlapping responsibilities saw it run up against other agencies.⁵⁸ SOE would be plagued throughout its existence by intra- and inter- agency conflicts that it usually lost. SOE’s broad mandate had led to confusion and disputes with the War Office, the Foreign Office and SIS. Beyond simply a conflict in purpose, SOE was viewed with considerable disdain.⁵⁹

A major realignment in HMG’s intelligence hierarchy came in 1941; this saw SOE’s independence diminished considerably. Eden had justified SOE’s subservient position, in part, by showing Hugh Dalton a private communiqué from Gen. Wavell to Gen. Dill wherein he referred to SOE Cairo as ‘a racket’ and discussed allegations going well beyond inter- and intra- agency feuds, including corruption, inefficiency, and gross incompetence. It was for these reasons that many of SOE’s responsibilities were stripped away and reassigned.⁶⁰

The February 1942 replacement of Dalton by Lord Selborne saw SOE placed under the direction of the Foreign Office and instructed to focus solely on guerrilla activity, *sans* political subversion.⁶¹ Despite reorienting SOE to specifically focus on sabotage and guerrilla activity, SOE London would continue to have difficulties with its regional offices in Cairo (later Bari) and New Delhi. This honing of purpose, regional office conflicts, and Cairo being made responsible for Balkan operations is in part why Revisionists who, aware with the benefit of hindsight of HMG’s eventual pivot to Tito and overemphasis placed on BLO mission reports, view SOE Cairo not altogether accurately as dyed-in-the-wool pro-Tito advocates.⁶²

1943; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxx, 40-2, 105, 124, 165, 197-8; FO 371-43646 “Soviet policy in the Balkans” 7 June 1944; Stafford, *Camp X*, 177; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 51-2; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 24, 203, 318-8; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 412-3.

⁵⁸ *The National Archives of the UK*. “Guide reference: Military Records Information 26, Intelligence and security services” London. 2015.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/research-guides/intelligence-records.pdf>; Mark Seaman, Ed. *Special Operations Executive: A New Instrument of War* (London New York: Routledge, 2006) 7-18; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 6-7; M.R.D. Foot, *S.O.E.: An Outline History of the Special Operations Executive 1940-46* (London: Bodley Head, 2014) 54; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 109.

⁵⁹ *The National Archives*, “Intelligence and security services”; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 121; Stafford, *Camp X*, 5; Foot, *S.O.E.*, x, 51; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 7-9, 89.

⁶⁰ *The National Archives*, “Intelligence and security services”; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 121; Stafford, *Camp X*, 5; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 94-5; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 50.

⁶¹ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 88; WO 208-2014 “DMI Report and Map” 23 August 1942; Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE*, 250-255; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 70

⁶² Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 94-5.

Early in 1942 SOE launched three further missions HENNA, HYDRA and DISCLAIM into Yugoslavia.⁶³ By March communications were up and running again with Hudson and SOE was gaining growing evidence of Četnik inactivity. More than simply doing little to interfere with the Axis occupation, reports were suggesting that Četniks, both affiliated and unaffiliated with Mihailović, were focusing their energy on liquidating communists.⁶⁴ Perhaps the most concerning of Hudson's reports regarded the level of familiarity between Četniks and the Italian occupation forces which was becoming cause for alarm within HMG.

To be fair, SOE had instructed Mihailović to cultivate friendly relations and even to enter into some accommodation with the Italians with the aim of relieving anti-guerilla pressure as well as gaining intelligence and supplies.⁶⁵ Hudson's reports suggested that the relationship was, however, not paying the dividends intended.⁶⁶ It was these signals along with SOE's narrowed purpose that would make for the start of a change in view that was being paralleled by other elements of HMG at the time. However, this shift would come slowly. SOE, like any organization, found reconsidering their accepted views difficult.⁶⁷

In late 1942 when SOE was starting to get reports from the field that were challenging established opinions, SOE Cairo's intelligence picture began to grow considerably. This was the result of the transfer of Brig. (then Col.) C.M. [Cleveland Mervyn] Keble as Chief of Staff to Lord Glenconner, the then head of SOE Cairo. Keble has been described by former associates in Cairo as "ambitious, ruthlessly efficient to the point of habitual corner-cutting" and when he arrived at SOE Cairo he brought something with him.⁶⁸ In his previous post as Army HQ in

⁶³ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 39; Jerca Vodušek Starič, "The Concurrence of Allied and Yugoslav Intelligence Aims and Activity" *The Journal of Intelligence History* 5, no.1 (2005): 39.

⁶⁴ Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 94-96; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161.

⁶⁵ PREM 3-510-2 "MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941" 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); PREM 3-510-4 "Churchill to Yugoslav PM" October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet "Annex II: Draft Telegram to the Commanders-in-Chief Middle East" 30 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean, forward of message from Chiefs of Staff" 7 November 1941; US Army Center of Military History, "US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans." 20; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 145-6; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 80 ; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 23.

⁶⁶ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 109; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 47-54; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 153-4.

⁶⁷ WO 208-2014 "DMI Report and Map" 23 August 1942; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; PREM 3-409-5 "SOE Activities: Summary for the PM, Quarter: January to March 1943"; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 89.

⁶⁸ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 82.

Cairo, Keble had been one of the privileged few on the ULTRA distribution list.⁶⁹ By chance of serious security error, Keble had not been removed from the distribution list when he was reassigned to SOE. In short order he began to learn from ULTRA decrypts of the considerable trouble the Partisans were causing to Axis occupation. With his predisposition to ambitious ruthlessness, corner cutting, and without any thought to the Official Secrets Act, Keble began sharing this intelligence with two staff officers in Cairo, Mjr. Davidson⁷⁰ and Capt. Deakin, both of whom would later become BLOs to Partisan units.⁷¹

This marks a turning point that is often, rightfully, pointed to by Revisionists. However, it has been viewed from the Revisionists' narrative of communist subversion and has been both misunderstood and overstated. One point that is implied by Revisionists that is quite correct is that by sharing this intelligence with Davidson and Deakin, Keble unwittingly biased the view of two officers who would later be sent in to evaluate the truth of these reports. In doing so, both Deakin and Davidson arrived with a preconceived and positive opinion of the Partisans that they were looking, consciously or not, to have reaffirmed. The Partisans, eager for British supply drops, were all too eager to accommodate.

The overall impact of these events has, however, been distorted to disproportionate levels. The Revisionists have, in fact, made mountains from molehills. Even after the arrival of Keble the overall opinion of SOE did not shift towards Tito for some time. It was gradual shift and not a uniform one. As late as January 1943 SOE was still producing analysis which continued to advance the argument for complete and sole support for Mihailović.⁷²

Revisionists also fail to acknowledge that the Keble reveal of ULTRA only hastened SOE's awareness of these signals by two months.⁷³ By early 1943 even elements of the Foreign Office were beginning to feel SOE's continued support for Mihailović lacked realism and long-term consideration. The Foreign Office was coming round to Soviet considerations and therefore a need to seek alternative

⁶⁹ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 82.

⁷⁰ Basil Davidson was a British historian who started the war serving as a Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) / MI-6 D Section (sabotage) officer in Budapest. In April 1941, with the Nazi invasion, he fled to Belgrade, Yugoslavia. In May, he was captured by Italian forces and was later released. From late 1942 to mid-1943, he was chief of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) Yugoslav Section in Cairo, Egypt. He parachuted into Bosnia on 16 August 1943, and spent the following months serving as a BLO with the Partisan.

⁷¹ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60, 82; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161 ; Stafford, *Camp X*, 178.

⁷² FO 371-37607 "SOE Policy towards Yugoslavia" 15 January 1943; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 114.

⁷³ PREM 3-409-5 "SOE Activities, Quarter: January to March 1943"; PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; PREM 3-409-5 "SOE Activities, Quarter: January to March 1943"; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 7-9, 89, 115-18; Foot, *S.O.E.*, x, 51.

neutral leadership for the Yugoslav revolt that was more malleable.⁷⁴ With this in mind SIS, which was equally concerned with SOE's naiveté and poor understanding of events, decided in January to begin sharing elements of ULTRA with SOE, the same decrypts Keble was receiving.⁷⁵ So, far from radically altering SOE's view, Keble barely sped it up by two months; this was hardly a revolutionary disclosure.

This is only part of the Revisionist fascination with Keble. In late January 1943 while Churchill was on his way back from SYMBOL he stopped in Cairo. While there, Churchill met for lunch with his old friend, Deakin. Keble managed, thanks to Deakin's personal relationship with Churchill, to live up to his compatriots' characterization as a 'ruthlessly ambitious corner-cutter.'⁷⁶ Keble had Deakin pass on a memorandum that the two, along with Davidson, had drafted outlining the scale of Partisan activity as being far greater than that of Mihailović and asserting the need for a move towards the Partisans.⁷⁷

Many have since pointed to this event as what brought Churchill into the picture. It is said this is where the PM became personally involved and exerted his influence on Yugoslav policy, however correlation is not causation. Churchill had just outlined a major policy move to the offensive with Roosevelt at SYMBOL, where HUSKY had been agreed upon, and it was this which was motivating Churchill to get more active with Yugoslav details.⁷⁸ Far too much emphasis is placed on the Keble memorandum. It was based on *some* of the ULTRA material. Churchill was reading *all* of it and was a voracious reader; Keble was not telling him anything he did not already know.⁷⁹ Churchill did not suddenly become aware of Yugoslavia or Partisan activity thanks to the Keble memorandum; rather, Churchill was already and at all times well informed on events.

Over the next several months, momentum would pick up. Although SOE Cairo would begin pushing hard for the Partisans, the opinion was not uniform and reports traveling through SOE Cairo were still reaching London praising Mihailović's value and his sabotage activity.⁸⁰ However, SOE Cairo was preparing for eventual missions to Tito, but doing so outside of the prescribed hierarchy. In so doing SOE London and the Foreign Office were being left behind. Through its

⁷⁴ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 114-6.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 115; Stafford, *Camp X*, 178.

⁷⁶ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 82.

⁷⁷ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161-2.

⁷⁸ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 103.

⁷⁹ PREM 3-510-7 – Correspondence and Response concerning a Report with no author - June 1943; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 464; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 215; FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers," 538, 554 737-771; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 360-1, 366, 376; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.104, 92, No.112, 98 ; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 115-18.

⁸⁰ PREM 3-409-5 "SOE Activities, Quarter: January to March 1943."

control of missions SOE Cairo would begin to exert considerable influence over HMG's intelligence picture and potential policy course.⁸¹

As a result of this growing influence, as things began moving in favour of Tito, they also began moving out of favour for SOE Cairo. SOE Cairo managed to achieve their goal of missions to the Partisans as part of its mandate to foment resistance. On the heels of the Mihailović 'Christening speech row'⁸² and growing reports of Mihailović's unreliability, and possible collaboration, SOE Cairo was handed a directive by the COS on 20 March 1943, known as the *March Directive*, to establish contact with groups outside of Mihailović's area of control (*read: possible communists*).⁸³ This came as part of the larger build up for HUSKY, which would occur in July 1943. In obtaining this victory, however, SOE Cairo had stepped on a number of toes and they were quickly becoming the focus of a great deal of scrutiny.⁸⁴

SOE's appreciation of events in Yugoslavia in late April 1943 still estimated Mihailović's force as considerable and outlined a program of continued and expanded support for Mihailović.⁸⁵ In the meanwhile SOE Cairo inserted Deakin into Tito's HQ on 28 May 1943 as part of their efforts to expand support to Partisan elements. This represented a radical departure from the stated aim of the *March Directive* seeking to make contact with possible communist elements outside of Mihailović's area of influence. SOE Cairo had, in fact, established a direct link with the leader of the Communist Partisans, a criminal revolutionary movement in the eyes of RYG, and without direct consent of the Foreign Office. Things at this point would turn difficult for SOE Cairo.

On 1 June 1943 a "questionable report" on SOE activities would be filed by an unknown author at SOE Cairo, it did not go unnoticed. The report asserted that Mihailović had no support outside "Old Serbia" and that the Partisans had

⁸¹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 24.

⁸² *The christening speech row concerns a speech delivered by Mihailović at a christening on 28 February 1943 witnessed by and reported on by Col. Bailey. The speech was a product of growing frustrations and tension in Mihailović relationship with HMG and would cause a first rate diplomatic crisis between HMG and the RYG when news of it reached London. In his speech Mihailović had levelled accusations at London of failure in their efforts to support his resistance and that HMG was pressuring him for a program of resistance that held no consideration of the repercussions it would hold for Yugoslavia. He argued that due to HMG failure to provide support and their attitudes on operations inside the country the reality was that the Italians were his only friends and his real enemy were the Communists; For further reading see Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 76-8.*

⁸³ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943; WO 202/162 17 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 138; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 87; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 191.

⁸⁴ PREM 3-510-7 "Note from Mjr. Morton to Mr. Martin" 10 June 1943.

⁸⁵ CAB 80-69 "SOE Activities in 1943: Appreciation by SOE" 21 April 1943, 3-4.

effectively crippled Mihailović's collaborationist forces, operating only in eastern and central Serbia. This report argued that HMG should keep Mihailović east of the river Ibar and throw their support behind Tito.⁸⁶ The report was immediately called into question for asserting facts known by several agencies and individuals within HMG with greater access to the complete intelligence picture to be factually inaccurate and for obviously holding a particular agenda.⁸⁷

The report made its way to both Mr. Richard Casey, the Resident Minister of State in Cairo and representative of the British Cabinet, as well as Admiral Cunningham, the C-in-C of the Mediterranean Fleet. It had just missed the PM in North Africa. It did, however, find its way to Churchill's personal assistant, Mjr. Sir Desmond Morton who immediately viewed it as suspect. In response to this 'questionable report' he requested on 8 June 1943 that Mjr-Gen. Gubbins, of SOE London, put together a counter report for Churchill which included input from intelligence services, the Foreign Office, and the War Office that could shed light on the *actual* situation in Yugoslavia.⁸⁸

The same day Mjr. Morton sent off a letter raising the alarm that something was most certainly wrong at SOE Cairo. In his view the report confirmed what he indicated in his letter was already suspected by "SOE [London] [who] already think that something has gone very wrong with the head man in Cairo."⁸⁹ At this point Mr. Casey became deeply involved in the situation and filed two confidential reports with the PM detailing SOE Cairo's operations in Yugoslavia and contact with Tito, which represented a major departure from HMG's policy. Churchill's response was one of fury and on the same day, 8 June 1943, he immediately called for an explanation of "these extraordinary series of documents", much to the dismay and embarrassment of SOE London and the Foreign Office.⁹⁰

This is a truly significant moment in HMG's Yugoslav policy and completely undermines Revisionist justifications for focusing on SOE Cairo as well as the crux of their argument that HMG's policy was hijacked by Cairo. It was here that SOE Cairo's ticket was punched. From this moment forward it was considered suspect and no longer trusted. This incident also proves unequivocally that SOE Cairo had *already* been very much under suspicion and was now most certainly on the PM's radar as being unreliable.⁹¹ SOE Cairo reports were taken not only with a grain of salt but looked at with sincere doubt. It is therefore unlikely SOE Cairo had the undue influence to hijack HMG's policy and move policy towards sole support of Tito and abandonment of Mihailović more than six months

⁸⁶ PREM 3-510-7 "A 'questionable report' SOE Activities in Yugoslavia" 1 June 1943.

⁸⁷ PREM 3-510-7 "Note from Mjr. Morton to Mr. Martin" 10 June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 "A 'questionable report' SOE Activities in Yugoslavia" 1 June 1943.

⁸⁸ PREM 3-510-7 "Note from Mjr. Morton to Mr. Martin" 10 June 1943.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 223.

⁹¹ PREM 3-510-7 "Note from Mjr. Morton to Mr. Martin" 10 June 1943; Deakin 223.

later, as suggested by Revisionists.⁹² The only thing hijacked was SOE Cairo and it was no secret. In fact it would seem that by June 1943 SOE Cairo was all but cut from the picture.

As Heather Williams has pointed out, the move to Tito is no indication of communist subversives at work. If it did than HMG was full of them. There were many agencies besides SOE Cairo within HMG with strong pro-Tito sentiments. SOE Cairo could not have ever pulled the policy shift off on their own even if they were not suspect. The reality is that in the culture of the period there were strong feelings, especially among the younger individuals of the time, that the USSR, ‘Uncle Joe,’ (Stalin) and individuals like Tito represented the vanguard of a brave new world whereas Mihailović was seen as representative of the destructive old order whose death throws were being fought out. It is also important to acknowledge a final point by Williams that “the colouring of opinion by Cairo would have come to nothing without the massed conservative forces of the Foreign Office, Churchill, and Maclean” supporting them.⁹³

As for claims of bias on the part of SOE Cairo, it is also worth noting that the bias was not as great as it has been portrayed. Despite the startling revelations of June 1943, as far as what Churchill appears to be seeing from Cairo as indicated in the PREM files the reports seem fairly balanced.⁹⁴

The summer of 1943 leading up to the December decision to throw HMG’s lot in with Tito and abandon Mihailović saw SOE Cairo’s standing plummet. In the fall of 1943 SOE Cairo would get caught up in a confrontation with Maclean that would cause irreparable damage.⁹⁵ When Maclean was appointed Churchill’s representative and personal liaison to Tito elements within SOE Cairo made every effort to gum up the works and prevent Maclean from taking the post.⁹⁶ As to why SOE Cairo took this course, one can only guess that perhaps it was institutional protectionism as Cairo worked to hang onto what small slice of the game was still their own.⁹⁷

By one account the efforts SOE Cairo went to in protecting their slice of the game were remarkable. Keble went so far as to forge a letter from then C-in-C Middle East, Gen. Wilson, to Churchill objecting to Maclean’s appointment.⁹⁸

⁹² Bailey, *SOE in Albania*, 185-190; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 171-2, 247-248; FO 371-37590 “Mihailović: minutes by Eden, Howard, and Sargent” 9 September 1943; FO 371-43646 “Soviet policy in the Balkans” 7 June 1944; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxx, 40-1, 105, 124, 165, 197-8; Stafford, “Upstairs/Downstairs,” 59-60; Stafford, *Camp X*, 177; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 51-2; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 24, 203, 317-8.

⁹³ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 247.

⁹⁴ PREM 3-510-6 “Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan” 27 March 1943; PREM 3-409-5 “SOE Activities, Quarter: January to March 1943”; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 463.

⁹⁵ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 84-7; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 105.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 106.

⁹⁸ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 84-7.

When Maclean and Wilson finally met (the two, old friends) the truth came out in rather short order. With Wilson on the war-path and determined to discover who had the audacity to misrepresent him to the PM, things came to a climax with startling rapidity. Both Keble and Lord Glenconner, the head of SOE Cairo, were unceremoniously sacked within days of Maclean's arrival. This would mark the third straight year in a row that August had seen SOE 'purged,' an annual event at this point.⁹⁹ It is also worth noting that Churchill was aware of these events, having been informed by Maclean.¹⁰⁰ One result of this row was Maclean was able to establish a direct signal link with London and bypass SOE entirely.¹⁰¹

From the time of Maclean's arrival a pro-Tito sentiment began to gain wider support becoming something of a subtle juggernaut. Despite this fact HMG's opinion was never uniform. Agencies with specific points-of-view and considerations continued to voice opposition to supporting Tito, abandoning Mihailović, or both. The Foreign Office was pronounced in its refusal to entertain the idea of courting leftist-revolutionaries. During this period interagency tensions became incredibly pronounced and led to some bitterness. Sir Douglas Howard, head of the Foreign Office's Southern Department, complained to Eden in a letter dated 9 September 1943, writing:

The fact is, I am sure, that SOE Cairo...do not want us to come to a satisfactory arrangement with Mihailović. We have been on the verge of doing so many times, but on each occasion a spanner has been thrown in to prevent us...¹⁰²

Growing tensions did not go unnoticed and, in late September, Lord Selborne, in a letter to Churchill, acknowledged the tension between SOE and the Foreign Office had become quite heated, with the Foreign Office levelling charges of disloyalty at SOE. These were rooted in SOE's contacts with various left-wing leaders in the Balkans, which had garnered complaints from as far afield as the Greek King.¹⁰³ In his letter Lord Selborne took issue with the Foreign Office position. His argument was that SOE had been implicitly given permission by the Foreign Office to make contact with "extreme left wing movements", a policy reaffirmed by the *March Directive* allowing for contact to be made with various

⁹⁹ Ibid; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 105; Stafford, *Camp X*, 168 ; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 66-7.

¹⁰⁰ Foot, *S.O.E.*, 175.

¹⁰¹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 204; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 88; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 43.

¹⁰² FO 371-37590 "Mihailović: minutes by Eden, Howard, and Sargent" 9 September 1943; FO 371/43646;

Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 158, 197-8; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 171-2; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 204-5.

¹⁰³ PREM 3-409-6 – From Selborne to Churchill – SOE Middle East - 22 September 1943.

possibly communist groups.¹⁰⁴ It was this very interpretation which had been used by SOE Cairo to justify the TYPICAL mission to Tito's HQ without explicit consent.

Lord Selborne's letter and SOE attitudes towards leftist elements were not taken well, despite an increasingly positive view of Tito. HMG was not keen to see revolutionary movements making waves in Britain's purported post-war sphere of interest – most especially Greece. In October another reorganizing would occur concerning SOE. This time, however, it was motivated more by changing military concerns regarding command divisions in the Mediterranean theatre than by SOE itself.¹⁰⁵ The result however was that SOE policy would henceforth be determined in London by the Foreign Office and Minister of Economic Warfare directly with the official approval of the PM and War Cabinet. The policy authority of SOE in Greece, Yugoslavia, and Albania was thus stripped away and given to the C-in-C Middle East because they had become operational theatres.¹⁰⁶ Essentially, SOE was kicked out of the game just as it was about to get good. By the time the call was made to throw support behind Tito, SOE was long out of the picture.

The removal of SOE Cairo, and later SOE London, from the field had little effect on HMG's policy course. As HMG looked to move forward with more decisive and productive action in the Balkans 'groupthink' began to influence events.¹⁰⁷ Another word for it might be momentum. As opinion grew and policy advanced the resultant position became influenced by greater levels of negotiations and compromise, increasing the desire to find a common resolution and move past dissention.¹⁰⁸

Walking away from this picture it seems relatively clear that SOE, and even more so SOE Cairo, played a lesser role in HMG's policy formulation than believed by Revisionists. SOE influence was never very great, its highest moment was short lived and it never reached the lofty peaks hoped for. SOE was constantly to hold a subservient position and lose out to other agencies, never becoming the predominant intelligence agency in the game. Certainly it played a role in developing a view but it was not radical or revolutionary in its revelations or influence. SOE is without a doubt an overblown issue in HMG's Yugoslav policy. Thus the Revisionists have misjudged its role and influence and, in so doing, distorted their narrative of events.

¹⁰⁴ PREM 3-409-6 – From Selborne to Churchill – SOE Middle East - 22 September 1943.

¹⁰⁵ The Office, U. S. Secretary, Office of the Combined Chiefs of Staff 1943, ed. *SEXTANT Conference November-December 1943: Papers and Minutes of Meetings SEXTANT and EUREKA Conferences* (Washington D.C.: Joint History Office, 2003) 463-4; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 795; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 331-2.

¹⁰⁶ PREM 3-409-6 "Foreign Office to Minister of State, Cairo" 11 October 1943; PREM 3-409-6 "MidEast Command to Air Ministry" 15 October 1943, 1.

¹⁰⁷ Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 283-4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 306.

ULTRA

ULTRA is likely the least appreciated element in HMG's wartime intelligence picture. The source commonly known as ULTRA refers to the decrypts coming from HMG Government Code and Cypher School (GCCS) at Bletchley Park.¹⁰⁹ The Bletchley project was far larger in scope than simply cracking the German Enigma machine, as commonly thought, and included the development of a program that, by 1942, saw HMG reading virtually the entire breadth of Axis signal traffic.¹¹⁰

It has been commonly asserted that during 1942 HMG received little to no information from Yugoslavia and the ULTRA revelation is inconsequential as is never gave HMG much on the Balkans.¹¹¹ The reality, according to those who were there, is quite different.¹¹² Individuals such as Deakin, Ralph Bennett,¹¹³ Sir David Hunt,¹¹⁴ and Sir Peter Wilkinson¹¹⁵ have all, since the secret ULTRA was revealed, confirmed, that quite to the contrary, HMG was receiving a wealth of information on the situation inside the Balkans and Yugoslavia through ULTRA.¹¹⁶

It has been calculated that starting in the summer of 1941 a growing ULTRA decryption ability (until the spring of 1942) was able to provide HMG with 2,000 Italian decrypts a day by the peak of the Mediterranean War and a total of 30,000, rising up to 90,000, Enigma decrypts a month. This system was fully established by early in 1942.¹¹⁷ The scale of this intelligence windfall is unappreciated within the dated Yugoslav historiography and represents a rather new discovery.

When one considers ULTRA in assessing HMG's Yugoslav policy conventional wisdom is challenged and some prevailing disputes resolved. ULTRA can point to places where authors of memoirs have misrepresented events, where

¹⁰⁹ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 5.

¹¹⁰ Wilkinson, "Italian naval ciphers" 61-7; Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War"; Hinsley, et al, *British intelligence in the Second World War*, 501-3; Cripps, "Mihailovic or Tito?" in *Action This Day*, 240-42; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 5.

¹¹¹ Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 177; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 78-79; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527; Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War."

¹¹² CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943, 1; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527; Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War"; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 5.

¹¹³ Bennett was a historian specializing in ULTRA who served at Bletchley Park in the intelligence section, producing reports based on decrypts of the Enigma cipher.

¹¹⁴ Hunt was a senior army intelligence officer in Tunisia, Sicily, and Italy and in the course of his duties received all Balkan ULTRA signals.

¹¹⁵ Wilkinson was on the staff at SOE London. He later held a senior appointment at SOE Cairo (September and December 1943). From December 1943 until the end of March 1944 he was head of an SOE mission with the Partisans.

¹¹⁶ Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 526.

¹¹⁷ Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War."

they have gotten it wrong, and suggest the reason why, to protect the ULTRA secret. False claims in some cases have perpetuated myths that prevail in the historiography to this day, such as the Balkans being dark and HMG gaining little in way of intelligence about the region in 1942.¹¹⁸

When ULTRA is factored in, a new interpretation presents itself. This consideration must be made at several levels and, as Sir Harry Hinsley, suggests:

It is not enough to establish accurately the availability of the ULTRA and to reach reasonable conclusions about its influence on British ... assessments and decisions. You have also got to consider the consequences of those assessments and decisions on the war.¹¹⁹

In doing as Hinsley suggests one begins to see not only the effects ULTRA based decisions held for the war but how all this began to influence HMG's Yugoslav policy.

The Balkan picture was quite vivid with Bletchley reading the bulk of signals dealing with "location, movements and intentions" of Axis forces, meaning that HMG was keenly aware of German anti-guerrilla operations aimed at Tito's forces outside areas known to be under Mihailović's control.¹²⁰ Conversely, their silence regarding Mihailović spoke volumes to HMG which was seeing a lack of activity and German communiqués discussing Axis contacts with various Četnik groups assumed to be loosely subordinate to Mihailović.¹²¹

Until the summer of 1942 HMG was still moving forward with planning and support with Mihailović, who was seen as the most logical and best long-term option.¹²² CIGS Alanbrooke made this clear in a letter to Churchill, 2 June 1942, in which he lays out the argument:

we are right in backing Mihailović. If we do so successfully not only will we have a certain control over the revolt but we will:- (i) Continue to contain at least the present number (i.e. 30) Axis divisions in Yugoslavia (ii) build up a serious threat to the German flank when they are extended in Russia (iii) prepare the way for any operation we may eventually make in the Balkans.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 129, 177; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-65, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 37-38.

¹¹⁹ Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War."

¹²⁰ Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 16 June 1942 ; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 197-8.

¹²³ PREM 3-510-12- CIGS to PM – 2 June 1942.

This was a view that would persist in certain parts of HMG for quite some time and HMG's policy would be slow to deviate.¹²⁴ As late as July 1942 HMG was still reading intercepts from the Germans that painted Mihailović as their greatest challenge *in Serbia*, a sentiment that would still be echoed by some within German command well into 1943.¹²⁵ However, like HMG, the German policy apparatus was hardly homogenous in structure or opinion.

By June 1942 HMG had four British officers on the ground with Mihailović and a large sum of money had been sent in, but very little else.¹²⁶ Although not a great deal of material had made its way into Yugoslavia, HMG was growing its support plans and had set SOE to working out what supply arrangements could be made. There was, however, a growing awareness from ULTRA intercepts, of the great deal of trouble the resistance in Bosnia and Montenegro, areas known to be outside of Mihailović control, was causing.¹²⁷

These growing reports, coupled with concern raised by the BLO missions with Mihailović over a lack of activity, were cause for enough concern that on 8 August 1942 a meeting was held at the Foreign Office with PWE, SOE, and SIS represented. This meeting was to address an issue that was not in dispute between these agencies; over the whole of Yugoslavia the Partisans were causing greater trouble to the Axis occupation than Mihailović's forces.¹²⁸ This assessment had been made based on German intercepts that had been silent about Mihailović and were included in a DMI report sent to Churchill in early June.¹²⁹ There was however uncertainty as to what this meant for the future of HMG's Yugoslav policy.

The meeting was not one of uniform opinion. Although there was agreement on the fact that Partisans covered a larger area and were more active, not everyone saw this as meaning the same thing. The PWE report of the same month (August 1942) based upon its own sources reached a very different set of conclusions than those agency representatives involved with the meeting. The Foreign Office and SOE had argued that, considering the long view and post-war

¹²⁴ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 88, 144-5; WO 208-2014 "DMI Report and Map" 23 August 1942; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 181-185; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 53; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170.

¹²⁵ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 126-7.

¹²⁶ PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 16 June 1942.

¹²⁷ PREM 3-510-12 "The Situation in Yugoslavia" 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 86; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 108; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 177.

¹²⁸ PREM 3-510-12 "The Situation in Yugoslavia" 2 June 1942; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 86; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 108; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170.

¹²⁹ PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-12 "The Situation in Yugoslavia" 2 June 1942 Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 86.

political considerations, HMG's continued focus should be solely directed towards Mihailović, the RYG's official representative in country.¹³⁰

The PWE asserted that SOE and the Foreign Office appreciations in Yugoslavia were limited by their own particular view of the situation. It is ironic then to note a certain level of hypocrisy in this claim as PWE was arguing for a shift in policy toward joint support of Četniks and Partisans without being privy to ULTRA and by applying their own particular view.¹³¹ One point is clear, the news coming out of Yugoslavia in 1942 was not dark and obscure, and the Balkans were certainly being given close attention by HMG.¹³²

The reality is that evidence was accumulating both within ULTRA circles, as well as outside of it, of growing Partisan activity. Although the bulk of SOE and PWE were ignorant of ULTRA, leadership was not. SIS, DMI, JIC, Anthony Eden and elements of the Foreign Office, were all in the know.¹³³ Yet, the increasing pressure for policy attention to be directed towards the Partisans was not being orchestrated by those in the know. It was not top-down, but bottom-up and was only being passively approved by a somewhat reluctant leadership as consistent with ULTRA intelligence. However, even that is a stretch and, as has been seen with SOE, despite the intelligence, there were many still arguing HMG should be 'dancing with the one they brung.'¹³⁴

This point alone disputes a major tenant of Revisionist historiography that argues that fringe elements in agencies like SOE with anti-Mihailović, pro-Tito leanings were actively manipulating the policy in the direction of the Partisans without much in the way to back it up. The reality is, in fact, the very opposite. The growing material was forcing pressure onto these agencies to reevaluate, reluctantly, their view.¹³⁵ Growing pressure for Partisan considerations was increasingly being supported by ULTRA intelligence.

The very language used in approaching this intelligence was, however, problematic. Just like this thesis' use of terms like 'HMG' or the 'Foreign Office,' which in reality consist of a multitude of individuals and views, there is a need to be aware that HMG was forced into the same trap, at times knowingly and at others unaware. Even within HMG's intelligence discussions confusion often arose over what their labels actually meant.¹³⁶ In the case of terms like 'Partisan' and 'Četnik,'

¹³⁰ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 86-9.

¹³¹ Ibid, 86-9.

¹³² PREM 3-510-12- CIGS to PM – 16 June 1942.

¹³³ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 89; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161; Goodman, *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee*, 97.

¹³⁴ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 88; WO 208/2014 DMI Report and Map 23 August 1942.

¹³⁵ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 59-60, 161; Stafford, *Camp X*, 178.

¹³⁶ PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942.

not only within the historiography but also within HMG there is a tendency to apply these terms *carte blanche*, which oversimplifies matters dramatically and boils events down into a case of two opposing forces. There is, in fact, a great deal of confusion over the application of these terms that played a considerable role in affecting HMG's approach to policy.¹³⁷ The reality was the situation on the ground was far more complex with many groups existing outside this dichotomy. This too significant implications to this thesis' approach as well as HMG's own approach and policies.

As an example, the term Četnik itself was misleading in its use within HMG. In point of fact Mihailović avoided referring to his Četniks as such. Instead, he referred to his forces as the "Yugoslav Home Army" or "Yugoslav Army in the Homeland."¹³⁸ This was because there were, in fact, a great many unaffiliated Četnik groups that had very different approaches to resistance.¹³⁹ Mihailović was keenly aware of this fact but HMG's application of the word would suggest their understanding might have been otherwise, at least at the higher levels of the policy apparatus.¹⁴⁰ This confusion did not stop here.

German communiqués intercepted by HMG tended to refer to all resistance within the country as 'Partisans.' HMG level of awareness of this fact was not well developed.¹⁴¹ As a result, one has to be aware that the term Partisan in specific context might have been, in fact, referring to Četniks or even Mihailović forces and, furthermore, that HMG might be oblivious to this fact. This could help to explain why there has been such a great deal of dispute over the accuracy of HMG's intelligence generated maps of resistance positions within Yugoslavia.¹⁴² Regardless of the confusion, HMG was indeed aware the discussion still had to be pursued given what the intelligence was suggesting.

It has been argued that in March 1943, when the official decision was taken to support the communist Partisans, represents the major shift in HMG's policy that would eventually lead to the abandonment of Mihailović. It is suggested this came about as a result of HMG regaining an image of things in 1943 with

¹³⁷ Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 66-7; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxxii-iii.

¹³⁸ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxxii-iii.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 248; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 59; Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 127; Roberts, *Tito, Mihailovic, and the Allies*, 21; Millazzo, 28-45; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 72.

¹⁴⁰ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942, 1-2; CAB 80-69 Draft Telegram "Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav PM" May 1943; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 191.

¹⁴¹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 84.

¹⁴² PREM 3-510-9 Note on the Situation in Yugoslavia 27/28 October 1943; PREM 3-510-10 From Desmond Morton, PM intelligence advisor, to Churchill - 2 December 1943; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 129; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 163; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 75-6.

greater BLO reports.¹⁴³ In fact the ball began rolling much earlier and it was the summer of 1942 almost a full year earlier when the foundations for communist support was first being formed. Indeed, HMG had known of Partisan prowess even as early as late 1941.¹⁴⁴ All of this has been deeply confused because of a lack of appreciation for the central role of ULTRA due to its many years held in secret. ULTRA had, in fact, been ‘slapping HMG in the face’ with the reality of it all and forcing a reevaluation of British policy for some time.

Part of the reason for the suspicion on the part of Revisionists, which is understandable, comes from what Stafford calls the “English disease,” a cult of ritual obsessed with secrecy.¹⁴⁵ ULTRA was a dead secret and, therefore, when one starts to look at BLO accounts and various daily government correspondence it appears that Yugoslavia is dark and that the information coming out of Yugoslavia of Partisan successes was rumour or Radio Free Yugoslavia propaganda.¹⁴⁶ What only the leadership with ULTRA access knew was how accurate these rumours and propaganda were. This is why, despite accounts of Whitehall being blank on Yugoslavia, HMG’s policy began to inexplicably open to other resistance movements.¹⁴⁷

The acceleration in British policy towards exploring these other resistance groups was actually the product of a year of intelligence analysis. The 1943 ‘sudden shift’ was brought about by intense debate centred on an increase in activity, which was the result of both external and internal factors. The external factors essentially represented the turning point for the Allies when they got off their heels and began to get offensive minded with the Mediterranean campaign. Internally, the need to ‘catch everyone up’ and get them in the know and on side led to the distribution lists for elements of ULTRA being expanded to include agencies previously unaware.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ Wilkinson, "Italian naval ciphers" 61-7; Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War"; Hinsley, et al, *British intelligence in the Second World War*, 501-3; Cripps, "Mihailovic or Tito?" in *Action This Day*, 240-42; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 5.

¹⁴⁴ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941; PREM 3-510-1 Labeled Mr. Martin – Your minute to Major Morton at Flag A – Written in the margin to PM: following is report for which you asked at Chequers on latest information on the Yugoslav Revolt – 27 January 1942; CAB 66-7-14 "Mr. Eden’s visit to Moscow," 17; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 203.

¹⁴⁵ Stafford, *Camp X*, xx.

¹⁴⁶ *Radio Free Yugoslavia: A clandestine Radio signal of Pro-Partisan character broadcasting from within Soviet Georgia.*

¹⁴⁷ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 279-80.

¹⁴⁸ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 115.

For Mihailović, Partisan momentum was a nightmare and growing interest on the part of HMG in exploring other resistance groups ran directly contrary to Mihailović's agenda. Mihailović's response was consistently antagonistic and further damaging. If Mihailović wished to drive HMG towards the Partisans he could not have done a better job of it. By February 1943 Mihailović's relations with his BLOs were strained and his fighting energies almost entirely directed towards fighting communists. Meanwhile HMG was receiving ULTRA intelligence confirming Partisan control of Croatia, as well as parts of Bosnia and Montenegro.¹⁴⁹

It was during this period, as HMG looked towards the Mediterranean and offensive operations there, that Churchill became more actively and directly involved with Balkan strategy. Churchill was an avid reader of ULTRA decrypts and was certainly well aware of the situation he waded into.¹⁵⁰ After SYMBOL Churchill, while in Cairo, began to address himself directly to those on the spot regarding Yugoslavia. True to his nature, Churchill ran roughshod over established hierarchy bypassing both Whitehall and Baker Street (home of SOE London's HQ) and relying on those with whom he knew and trusted.¹⁵¹ Churchill had always been governed by personal relationships. As a result of Churchill's involvement, HMG's policy did begin to pick up in pace, but the direction, contrary to claims made by Lees for one, was not drastically altered but simply encouraged to its logical end. With growing indications of Partisan strength Churchill confirmed approval of a program SOE Cairo had held in the wings since their first look at ULTRA at the end of 1942.

When the COS issued the *March Directive* it came at a time when Churchill and Stalin were at odds over issues concerning the opening of a second front and the evidence of both Tito's strength and Mihailović's 'uselessness' to HMG's aims was becoming painfully clear.¹⁵² Approval was given for exploratory missions to make contact with resistance movements outside of Mihailović's territory or control but without any indication in a shift in policy towards support

¹⁴⁹ PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; PREM 3-409-5 SOE Activities "Summary for the PM" Quarter: April to June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 War Cabinet "Annex II: Situation in Yugoslavia: Report" 18 June 1943; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 153-4; Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia*, 218-220.

¹⁵⁰ PREM 3-510-7 – Correspondence and Response concerning a Report with no author - June 1943; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 464; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 215; FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers," 538, 554 737-771; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 360-1, 366, 376; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.104, 92, No.112, 98.

¹⁵¹ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 115-18; HS 5-923 *The National Archives of the UK*. "Records of Special Operations Executive" HS, London 2015. <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/browse/C153?v=h>; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 319-20; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 84-5; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 181.

¹⁵² Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 138.

of Mihailović.¹⁵³ Despite some elements with HMG taking a rather hard line against Mihailović, opinion was far from uniform and there were those, Churchill included, pointing out that Mihailović might still be of use.¹⁵⁴

As with the inclusion of ULTRA into HMG's assessment paradigm, the introduction of BLO missions to Tito's forces served to rapidly accelerate HMG's course. Contrary to conventional views these missions were not to determine what was happening in the dark corners of Yugoslavia; they were to confirm what HMG already suspected and to coordinate the coming support.¹⁵⁵ This is the cause for the speed of events in 1943; pressure had actually been building for quite some time.

Closing

This chapter has shown how HMG's intelligence picture was formulated. This has shown us that HMG intelligence network was multilayered, complex, fluid, and at times conflicted or even at cross-purposes. HMG was never a single homogenous body with a clear line of demarcation between individuals and agencies, nor did it have a clear or necessarily linear hierarchy of authority. There were instead multiple overlaps and constant negotiations that saw various opinions and their supports, both individual and agency, rise and fall in prominence.¹⁵⁶

HMG's assessments were made in this environment and were a result of considerations based on intelligence produced within this same environment and in much the same way. The various elements were well aware of this situation as they negotiated their position and advanced their objectives. Exploring this has demonstrated that a major emphasis of Revisionists, the role of the SOE, needs serious reconsideration. The amount of intelligence and its various sources, the number of individuals and agencies involved in assessing it and forming policy paints a picture of ordered chaos that was far from dependent on the singular views of SOE at any point.

This chaos does, however, provide us with some important considerations that challenge the assertions of both the Orthodox and Revisionist narratives on the subject. From what has been seen in this chapter, HMG was not 'in the dark.'

¹⁵³ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 Draft letter "Churchill to Yugoslav Prime Minister" 29 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [J]Yovanovitch" 29 March 1943; PREM 3-510-7 "Selborne to Churchill" 29 June 1943; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 138; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 63, 191.

¹⁵⁴ PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 191, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 162.

¹⁵⁵ PREM 3-510-7 "Selborne to Churchill" 29 June 1943; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943.

¹⁵⁶ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 98.

ULTRA, in particular, demonstrates two key assertions about HMG's intelligence picture in 1942 need reconsidering. The first is that the intelligence picture was never dark and, secondly, that SOE was not the primary point of intelligence upon which HMG's policies relied. This chapter has shown that the lenses by which HMG viewed Yugoslavia were more complex and accurate than previously thought. HMG was well informed and the views within HMG were eclectic and the scope of considerations quite broad.

Discussions contained within both PREM correspondence and CAB file minutes of War Cabinet meetings tell us that HMG was deeply involved in discussing Yugoslav policy during 1942. This was during a period that it has commonly been asserted HMG's attention was elsewhere in North Africa preparing for the TORCH landings.¹⁵⁷ Perhaps the most interesting of all is that considerations of intelligence within HMG were never a question of military or political, long or short-term considerations, or the supremacy of one over the other. HMG's discussions, instead, reflect deeply nuanced considerations that not only took into account social, political, military, and greater strategic considerations but also realized the interconnected nature of these elements.

Moving forward, this suggests that not only were HMG's considerations and objectives in flux but that their picture in this regard was far more complex and multifaceted than previously thought; a great many factors were being weighed. HMG was well informed and engaged in considerable discussion, which involved several conflicted views. Understanding the intelligence mechanisms is, however, only one part of the equation. The next logical step is to develop an understanding of how these multiple conflicted views emerged and in what they were rooted.

¹⁵⁷ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 129, 177; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-65; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 37-38.

Chapter 5
His Majesty's and Royal Yugoslav's Governments

A merciless fate threw me into this maelstrom. I wanted much, I began much, but the gale of the world carried away me and my work.

- *Draža Mihailović*

At the heart of Revisionist narratives is the concept that HMG was solely committed to, or even indentured, to the RYG and that the abandonment of Mihailović was a betrayal of this commitment.¹ This view goes so far as to imply that perhaps HMG should have placed their immediate war-related interests aside to follow the lead of the RYG in considering long-term post-war Yugoslav interests.² The argument goes on to point out, rightly enough, that the RYG was the legitimate government and representative of the Yugoslav people, recognized and supported by HMG.³ This presents a narrative wherein HMG was committed solely to the RYG and by extension Mihailović.⁴ In this light, the Revisionist narrative paints a picture of HMG abandoning an ally and the Yugoslav Crown. The support given to other resistance movements, specifically Tito's Partisans, despite their known political ambitions, which HMG clearly understood, is thus portrayed as a betrayal of earlier policy.⁵

The question then becomes one of HMG's view and attitudes towards the RYG and Mihailović. The Revisionist presentation of RYG and HMG as steadfast allies both before the war and after the Axis invasion serves as the foundation of this narrative. This requires examining the nature of the relationship between the RYG and HMG as well as HMG's, oftentimes, conflicted view of their Yugoslav allies.⁶ From previous chapters it has been shown that HMG was willing to support

¹ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo" 11 December 1941; Glenny, *The Balkans*, 493.

² Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 115; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 24.

³ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 24.

⁴ Barker, "Review of *Patriot or Traitor*", 456-457; Clissold, "Review of *Ally Betrayed*," 265; Wheeler, "Review of *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies*," 878-880; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 117-119; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 230; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, ix; Stafford, "Upstairs/Downstairs," 56.

⁵ Barker, "Review of *Patriot or Traitor*", 456-457; Clissold, "Review of *Ally Betrayed*," 265; Wheeler, "Review of *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies*," 878-880; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 117-119; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 230; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, ix; Stafford, "Upstairs/Downstairs," 56.

⁶ Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 145-6; Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance*, 36-8; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 117.

any within Yugoslavia who were willing to fight the Axis from the very outset.⁷ This conflicts with the Revisionist narrative and warrants further inquiry. The eventual abandonment of Mihailović, as this thesis will demonstrate, did not extend to the RYG or Yugoslav Crown and suggests HMG's view of their Yugoslav partners was more complex and nuanced than the Revisionist narrative might suggest. HMG's continued efforts to promote the re-establishment of the RYG and preservation of the Yugoslav Crown up until war's end would imply the abandonment of Mihailović did not symbolize what the Revisionists interpret it as representing.⁸

Understanding that HMG was not a monolithic or homogenous entity but a fractured multi-track arena of agencies and individuals is at the heart of this thesis' appreciation of the evolution of British policy in Yugoslavia. So, too, must this logic be applied to the question of HMG subject matter, the RYG, Yugoslav resistance, and the Yugoslav monarchy.

This chapter will examine the foundation for, and development of, HMG-RYG relations and how these served to frame HMG's views of, and approach towards, Yugoslavia. This will lead into a discussion about how HMG's window into Yugoslavia and their Yugoslav relationship might have served to push the course of policy in various directions. Doing so serves to establish upon what grounds the HMG-RYG relationship and HMG's Yugoslav policy were based. Furthermore, it will serve to establish the true nature of HMG's relationship to Mihailović in relationship to the HMG-RYG relationship.

This examination will be accomplished by examining the evolution of HMG-RYG relations and their foundations. Mihailović's relationship with HMG will also be addressed directly to see how this relationship and the realities on the ground served to alter views and push policy. The question of paradigms and conflict between RYG, HMG, and Mihailović's agenda will be examined by

⁷ PREM 3-510-4 "Simovitch to Churchill" 20 (presumed) October 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo" 11 December 1941; PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), "Yugoslav Revolt" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden]," 31 October 1941.

⁸ PREM 3-511-1 War Cabinet "Eden and Churchill correspondence" early 1944; PREM 3-510-6 Foreign Office "Draft of Churchill letter to Yugoslav PM: To be given to King Peter for delivery" 29 March 1943; CAB 65-40-19 "War Cabinet Minutes" 28 December 1943; PREM 3-511-1/2 "Churchill – Eden Correspondence" January 1944; PREM 3-510-10 "Eden to Churchill" 22 December 1943; CAB 66-46-50 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Correspondence Between Churchill and Tito: The PM to Marshal Tito 8 January 1944" 10 February 1944; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet "The position in Yugoslavia" 10 January 1944; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet "Minutes of conversations between Churchill and Tito" Naples 12-13 August 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 471.

considering the question of where the line between accommodation and collaboration lay. Finally, the question of HMG attitude towards, an view of, the Yugoslav Crown will be addressed serving to highlight HMG's awareness of the point made in the previous paragraph: the Yugoslav government was not a homogenous monolith.

All of this will serve to advance this thesis by demonstrating several points of consideration. The first is HMG's view of Yugoslavia and resulting policy was far more nuanced and broad in consideration than previously thought. It also serves to undercut the assertion made by Revisionists that HMG's abandonment of Mihailović in favour of Tito represents a betrayal of HMG's commitment to the RYG. Instead, the truth is far less black and white. In reality, this chapter will highlight HMG's nuanced view of a compartmentalized RYG and Yugoslav resistance. This means that although HMG's turn towards Tito would eventually facilitate the creation of a Communist Yugoslavia at war's end, HMG did not betray the RYG but, instead, failed the Yugoslav Crown in its ceaseless attempts to ensure the restoration of the Yugoslav monarchy.

His Majesty's Government - Royal Yugoslav Government Relations

The HMG-RYG relationship, both before and after the Yugoslav *coup*, was rocky. This shaky foundation would come to epitomize HMG's relationship with the RYG throughout the course of the war. In reality HMG had never fully trusted RYG and, instead, saw them as the only, or best, option that presented itself. There was at all times mutual distrust and tension between these two partners rooted in events early in the war.⁹ This tension could be seen as early as Eden's attempts to coordinate a Balkan front with Regent Prince Paul's government. In his memoirs Eden describes a more active anti-Axis policy "would only have been possible if the Yugoslavs had promptly declared their intention to entre the conflict, which none of us expected."¹⁰

In order to understand the dynamic of the HMG-RYG relationship, one has to go back to the pre-*coup* relations between HMG and Regent Prince Paul's government. When HMG first approached the issue of Balkan policy with the French in 1939 they were well aware that it was not unlikely the Allies may sooner

⁹ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan - Churchill" correspondence March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [JJ]Yovanovitch" 29 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Mihailovic speech row" 6 April 1943; FO 371-37584 "Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic"; FO 371-37590 "CD to Sargent" 6 September 1943; FO 371-37590 "Mihailović: minutes by Eden, Howard, and Sargent" 9 September 1943; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 193-203.

¹⁰ Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 193-202.

or later face being drawn into the region.¹¹ They had hoped to avoid the possibility by working to establish a neutral Balkan front.¹²

After the invasion of France and Italian entry into the war, followed quickly by Italian action in the Balkans, HMG faced a considerable realignment of approach. It was during this critical stage of diplomatic hopscotch that HMG's opinion of the Yugoslavs would suffer a major blow. British urgency was met consistently by Yugoslav obstinance.¹³ HMG had, for quite some time leading up to the Yugoslav *coup*, been working with Turkish, Greek, and Yugoslav ministers to coordinate an anti-Axis Balkan front. This however, hinged on the military commitment of the Yugoslavs who possessed the largest military in the region.¹⁴ As Eden put it in his memoirs, during this period:

I could not stop thinking of Yugoslavia. This was the country with the best and largest army in the Balkans and ...[who] far exceeded [the] total strength of any other Balkan country, and indeed our own in that theatre of war.¹⁵

Despite continued efforts, Prince Paul's government refused to engage. They were, in fact, so committed to waiting things out that they actively took measures detrimental to HMG, such as limiting the release of mineral shipments already paid for by HMG for fear of upsetting the Germans.¹⁶ Diplomatic channels between the two governments remained almost non-existent. Some have argued that this was, in part, due to the personal history between HMG's Foreign Minister Eden and Prince Paul from their school days at Oxford.¹⁷ Whatever the reason, even after the writing was on the wall, the Yugoslavs refused to discuss in concrete terms any anti-Axis proposals beyond expressing a continued pro-Allied

¹¹ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939; CAB 66-5-20 "Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council" 19 December 1939.

¹² CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939; CAB 66-5-20 "Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council" 19 December 1939; CAB 66-7-14 "Implications of Possible Italian Action in the Mediterranean" 21 April 1940; CAB 66-7-14 "Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee" 11 June 1940; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 194.

¹³ CAB 65-22-7 War Cabinet, "Belgrade Telegram No. 380: Mr. Campbell to Mr. Eden, 10 March 1941" 13 March 1941; CAB 65-22-8 "Campbell to Eden" 16 March 1941; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 200 – 3, 230-4.

¹⁴ CAB 65-22-9 "Secretary of State for PM" 19/20 March 1941; PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill to Eden" 20 March 1941; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 98, 169-70; PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill to Yugoslav President of Council" (Shortly after Coup) April 1941; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 200-3; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 111.

¹⁵ Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 219.

¹⁶ CAB 68-7-23 War Cabinet "Economic Warfare" 31 October 1940.

¹⁷ Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 203; Rothwell, *Anthony Eden: a political biography*, 57.

sentiment.¹⁸ Again, as Eden describes it in his memoirs, “though already enmeshed [mid February 1941] the Yugoslavs were still wriggling to avoid committing their country to the Axis”¹⁹

While HMG could only watch, the Yugoslav government slowly drifted into a position where Axis pressure became insurmountable, leading to the eventual signing of the Tripartite Pact. The position was such that HMG was beginning to investigate if they could foment a *coup* and remove Prince Paul from power. A spontaneous popular *coup*, however, rendered the issue moot.²⁰

After the *coup*, the new RYG, under the guidance of the young King Peter, asserted their desire to reject the Pact and stand fast with HMG and the Allies. These words, however, did little to change the reality of Yugoslav military unpreparedness. The Yugoslav’s under Prince Paul had been overly cautious and slow in coordinating military preparations and mobilization, which had left HMG deeply disappointed.²¹ Eden summed up HMG views regarding the Yugoslavs:

the Yugoslav army was not already fully mobilized, [this] disturbed me because it was contrary to the impression conveyed to us more than once by the previous Government, that the Yugoslavs had already taken this action.²²

Disappointment would not be a one-way affair. Churchill’s personal appeal to the Yugoslav peoples was a call to resist and included his steadfast promise that “The British Empire is fighting with you.”²³ Support would, however, not be forthcoming. HMG was unable to provide anything more in the way of support to the Yugoslavs than words at this early stage. The RYG had pleaded with HMG on

¹⁸ CAB 68-7-23 War Cabinet “Economic Warfare”; CAB 65-22-7 War Cabinet, “Belgrade Telegram No. 380: Mr. Campbell to Mr. Eden, 10 March 1941” 13 March 1941; CAB 65-22-8 “For Secretary of State from PM”; CAB 65-22-8 “Campbell to Eden” 16 March 1941; CAB 65-22-9 “Secretary of State for PM” 19/20 March 1941; Rothwell, *Anthony Eden: a political biography*, 57; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 10-11; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 145; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 197-201.

¹⁹ Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 194.

²⁰ PREM 3-510-11 Telegram “Eden to Mr. Campbell: Belgrade” 24 March 1941; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 227.

²¹ CAB 65-22-7 War Cabinet, “Belgrade Telegram No. 380: Mr. Campbell to Mr. Eden, 10 March 1941” 13 March 1941, 75; CAB 65-18-11 “Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet” 27 March 1941, 169-70; CAB 65-22-12 War Cabinet “Conclusions Minute 2 Confidential Annex” 11 April 1941, 5; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 220.

²² Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 231-2.

²³ PREM 3-510-11 “Churchill message to the people of Yugoslavia” 13 April 1941.

this point only to be disappointed.²⁴ A letter penned in the last days of October 1941 reached Churchill from the RYG's Prime Minister Simovitch:

My dear PM, On October 29th I received the following telegram from the leader of our troops [Mihailović] in occupied Yugoslavia: '*In God's name send us help while the weather is still fine...*' I am sending this telegram to show you what the situation there is, and if it is possible to beg you to send help immediately.²⁵

HMG's failure on this front would have long-lasting implications for the HMG-RYG relationship and leave a lasting impression on Mihailović.

The arrival of the RYG in London had done little to improve the situation. Dalton's view of the governments-in-exile, for example, was one of borderline contempt.²⁶ After their arrival in London the RYG and HMG continued to run into difficulties related to the issue of supplies. This was an uncomfortable embarrassment to HMG and a betrayal in the eyes of the RYG.²⁷ HMG's instructions to lay low, build networks, and await coordination with Allied offensives was quickly and unilaterally reversed by HMG to one of active resistance despite a lack of supply and concerns of reprisals. This did great damage to the RYG's opinion of HMG.²⁸

HMG's interactions with the RYG were also causing some concern for the British. Within months of the RYG arrival in London King Peter would begin

²⁴ PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill to Commander-in-Chief Middle East" 13 April 1941; CAB 65-22-12 War Cabinet "Conclusions Minute 2 Confidential Annex" 11 April 1941,5; PREM 3-409-2 "The Prospects of Subversion" 21 April 1941; PREM 3-409-2 "The Prospects of Subversion Summary" 21 April 1941; PREM 3-469-350 War Cabinet "Minute 2" May 1941; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 170, 177.

²⁵ PREM 3-510-4 – Simovitch to Churchill - October 1941.

²⁶ FO 898-11 Hugh Dalton, "memorandum on Propaganda," 6 Dec 1941; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 58.

²⁷ PREM 3-510-2 "Churchill to the Yugoslav PM" 25 August 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Simovitch to Churchill" 20 (presumed) October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Churchill to Yugoslav PM" October 1941; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 78-79.

²⁸ PREM 3-510-4 "Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill" 23 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 Message sent through Admiralty "Chiefs of Staff to C-in- C Mediterranean" 7 November 1941; PREM 3-510-2 "MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941" 30 August 1941; PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; US Army Center of Military History, "US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans." 20; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 44-5, 77, 109; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 66; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 53; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 22; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 89; Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia*, 63.

confiding in the British that he held concerns regarding his government ministers. It would eventually lead to the Yugoslav King's dismissal of his PM, on 12 January 1942, as part of a larger shake-up that not only instilled a sense of doubt in HMG concerning the RYG but also caused considerable inconvenience. The dismissal of the Yugoslav PM, Gen. Simović, caused a sensation among the Yugoslav military stationed in Cairo that resulted in a mutiny of sorts that HMG was forced to quell.²⁹ This also came at the worst possible moment as HMG was in the midst of discussing ways of creating a more active resistance in Yugoslavia, having by then warmed to the idea.³⁰

Throughout 1942, the British-Yugoslav relationship would continue to ride waves of tension. If this were not enough, King Peter sent the RYG through another round of shake-ups motivated by dissatisfaction and distrust late in 1942.³¹ At this point, it is also worth taking a moment to stress a very important and totally overlooked point within this narrative. HMG consistently viewed King Peter, the RYG, and Mihailović, as separate or at least divisible units of the whole; King Peter's discussions with HMG concerning the RYG guaranteed as much.³² HMG's conception of the monarchy was such that King Peter and the RYG were not synonymous with one another and the rejection of the RYG at any level was in no way a reflection upon British attitudes towards the Yugoslav Crown. One would

²⁹ PREM 3-510-5 King Peter to Churchill "Generally very dissatisfied with my Government" 9 December 1942; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; Nigel Thomas, *Foreign Volunteers of the Allied Forces, 1939-45* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1991) 34; Yapou, *Governments in Exile, 1939-1945*, 35.

³⁰ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 77.

³¹ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill to Commander-in-Chief Middle East" 13 April 1941; PREM 3-510-2 "MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941" 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); PREM 3-510-2 "Churchill to the Yugoslav PM" 25 August 1941; PREM 3-510-4 Message sent through Admiralty "Chiefs of Staff to C-in- C Mediterranean" 7 November 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill" 23 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Simovitch to Churchill" 20 (presumed) October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Churchill to Yugoslav PM" October 1941; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; PREM 3-510-5 King Peter to Churchill "Generally very dissatisfied with my Government" 9 December 1942.

³² CAB 65-34-33 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Conclusions" 31 May 1943, 69-70; PREM file 3-510-13 - CAB 66-38-13 War Cabinet "Yugoslav Government Crisis" 22 June 1943; PREM 3-511-1 War Cabinet "Eden and Churchill correspondence" early 1944; PREM 3-510-6 Foreign Office "Draft of Churchill letter to Yugoslav PM: to be given to King Peter for delivery" 29 March 1943; CAB 65-40-19 "War Cabinet Minutes" 28 December 1943; PREM 3-511-1 War Cabinet "Eden and Churchill correspondence" early 1944; PREM 3-511-2 "Eden to Churchill" 1 January 1944; PREM 3-511-1/2 "Churchill – Eden Correspondence" January 1944; PREM 3-510-10 "Eden to Churchill" 22 December 1943.

think that given HMG's own framework and monarchy this would be self-evident; it may have been but nowhere has this point been properly emphasised.

King Peter's second government shake-up further damaged HMG's view of the RYG. King Peter had alerted HMG to a growing problem: Yugoslav leadership outside the monarchy was deceitful, manipulative, untrustworthy and shamelessly ambitious. By King Peter's own assessments "to save their own skins, they are capable of doing harm to their country."³³ The King also highlighted a problem HMG was all too aware of: these Yugoslav ministers, in their bids for power, were causing increasing distraction and inconvenience for Whitehall.³⁴ It was clear these individuals were more concerned with self-interest than what was best on the whole and were not above undercutting coordination with units outside of RYG control.³⁵ The RYG, like HMG, was not a uniform entity and it too suffered the same issues of inter- and intra- agency, as well as individual competition.

The COS *March Directive* establishing contact with units outside of Mihailović's control as the official policy of HMG also caused further difficulties in the British-Yugoslav relationship during 1943.³⁶ The results were not small and a great deal of correspondence, going as high as Churchill and King Peter, circulated regarding both HMG's needs, and RYG's concerns, over this policy.³⁷ Churchill also wrote a letter to the Yugoslav PM, to be passed on through King Peter, with the intent that the King should read it, which was clearly startling for the Yugoslavs. The letter was polite but stern and made clear HMG was:

becoming seriously disturbed at recent developments in Yugoslav affairs and are increasingly apprehensive in regard to the future unless steps are taken to effect a greater measure of unity, not only among the various elements of resistance within the country, and

³³ PREM 3-510-5 King Peter to Churchill "Generally very dissatisfied with my Government" 9 December 1942.

³⁴ PREM 3-510-13 "Simovic to Churchill" 29 October 1942; PREM 3-510-13 "unidentified to D.W. Brown" 8 November 1942.

³⁵ PREM 3-510-5 King Peter to Churchill "Generally very dissatisfied with my Government" 9 December 1942.

³⁶ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943; WO 202-162 17 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 87; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 191; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 123-4, 138.

³⁷ PREM 3-510-6 Draft letter "Churchill to Yugoslav Prime Minister" 29 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [J]Yovanovitch to be given to King Peter for delivery" 29 March 1943.

among the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, but also among Yugoslav circles abroad.³⁸

There was yet another RYG crisis in June 1943 that left HMG urging King Peter to shrink his government to almost non-existent status, to a minimum few ministers. It was also suggested he move his government to Cairo to escape London's politics and be closer to Yugoslavia.³⁹ This was not an unwise recommendation on the part of HMG even if it were motivated, in part, by self-interest. By removing politics from King Peter's government His Majesty could then focus entirely on the resistance and be in a better position at the end of the war, free from baggage, to return to form a new government with whatever forces might be in the country.⁴⁰

HMG's policy of fomenting open revolt and embracing any willing to fight was given greater urgency by the Third Washington Conference (TRIDENT) in May 1943, where Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that the cross-Channel landing (OVERLORD) would be set for the spring of 1944.⁴¹ From this moment on, British activity inside Yugoslavia would be entirely concerned with tying down Axis forces. Any concern for reprisals against the Yugoslav peoples was jettisoned, written-off as a necessary evil for the greater good.⁴²

With this new consideration in play, HMG needed to quickly move forward with heating things up inside Yugoslavia. The decision in late 1943 to adopt support of Tito might well have served to heat things up in Yugoslavia but it also brought London to a broil. The RYG saw it as a *de facto* recognition of a revolutionary power inside Yugoslavia undermining their own authority and that of King Peter.⁴³ For HMG's part they again demonstrated the compartmentalization

³⁸ PREM 3-510-6 "Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [J]Yovanovitch" 29 March 1943.

³⁹ CAB 65-34-33 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Conclusions" 31 May 1943, 69-70; PREM 3-510-7 "Situation in Yugoslavia" 18 June 1943, 5; CAB 65-34-41 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Conclusions" 21 June 1943, 97; CAB 66-38-13 War Cabinet "Yugoslav Government Crisis" 22 June 1943; PREM 3-510-13.

⁴⁰ CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet "Memorandum by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: The position in Yugoslavia" 10 January 1944.

⁴¹ PREM 3-510-7 Richard Casey to Admiral Cunningham "Enclosing report" 1 June 1943; FO 371-37609 Morton; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 143; CAB 65-34-33 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Conclusions" 31 May 1943; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 401-11.

⁴² PREM 3-511-2—Eden to Churchill — 28 December 1943; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 332; The Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations — found in Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 323; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 157.

⁴³ PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill "Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 92-3; PREM 3-511-7 "Churchill-Eden Correspondence" January 1944; PREM 4-20-4 "Communiqué from The Yugoslav Central National Committee" 30 January 1944; CAB 66-52-1 War Cabinet "Yugoslav Affairs" 5 July 1944.

of their view by warning that Mihailović might soon be dropped from HMG's supply program and that he was causing increasing difficulties in British-Yugoslav relations.⁴⁴ Churchill himself would make this point clear to King Peter directly when they met, 11 December 1943, warning the King that "in the fairly near future HMG might suggest to him the desirability of elimination of Mihailovic from Cabinet."⁴⁵ It was suggested that King Peter would be best to rid himself of this 'millstone round his neck.'⁴⁶ HMG, and Churchill directly, also made strong emphasis, however, that come what may, HMG would continue its unwavering support of King Peter.⁴⁷

Mihailović the Dissatisfying

Despite the ongoing issues within the RYG, it was not this factor that most contributed to HMG's eventual abandonment of Mihailović. It was Mihailović himself. Mihailović's behaviour and attitude as the RYG's Minister of War in his relationship with HMG was astonishingly irresponsible given the circumstances.⁴⁸ This stands true regardless of Revisionist explanations of being rooted in justifiable grievances (rightly so from Mihailović's point-of-view).⁴⁹

⁴⁴ PREM 3-511-7 "Eden to Churchill" 7 January 1944 ; PREM 3-511-7 "Churchill to Eden" 9 January 1944; PREM 3-511-7 "Eden to Churchill" 9 January 1944; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet "The position in Yugoslavia" 10 January 1944, 1; PREM 3-511-7 "FO to HMG Ambassador to RYG" Cairo, 13 January 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 431; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 207; HS 7-272 SOE Diary "Bailey at Downing Street" 1145-7.

⁴⁵ PREM 3-510-10 – Stevenson to FO – 11 December 1943.

⁴⁶ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 201; FO 371-44243 "Churchill to Eden" 19 January 1944; PREM 3-511-2 "Churchill to Eden" 2 January 1944; PREM 3-512-1 "PM Churchill to President FDR" 6 April 1944; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 123, 129.

⁴⁷ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; CAB 65-40-19 "War Cabinet Minutes" 28 December 1943; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet "The position in Yugoslavia" 10 January 1944; PREM 3-510-10 "Eden to Churchill" 22 December 1943; CAB 66-46-50 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Correspondence Between Churchill and Tito: The PM to Marshal Tito 8 January 1944" 10 February 1944; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet "The position in Yugoslavia" 10 January 1944; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet "Minutes of conversations between Churchill and Tito" Naples 12-13 August 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433 ; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 471.

⁴⁸ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 111.

⁴⁹ FO 371-37584 "Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic"; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 40-1; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 60, 65, 132; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 85, 92; Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance*, 92-5; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 41-44, 94-6; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 60-1, 89, 92-3.

The issue at heart of the conflict in the Mihailović-HMG relationship is, as Revisionists have pointed out quite correctly, one of paradigms.⁵⁰ Mihailović, from very early in the resistance took two important positions. The first was that he was the official representative of the Yugoslav state's resistance. The second was, his responsibility, in the face of overwhelming brutality in the form of the German program of reprisals against civilians, was to preserve the safety and security of both the Yugoslav people and his resistance forces until a time where Allied operations were closer at hand.⁵¹

Beyond these issues Mihailović was also confronted with the same challenges as HMG in negotiating the fractured power struggles occurring within the RYG.⁵² This no doubt influenced Mihailović's independent attitude and his disregard for instructions from RYG and HMG urging greater resistance activity regardless of the costs associated.⁵³ Mihailović came to see the RYG as an extension of HMG. As such, his disregard for these instructions, although further

⁵⁰ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 40-1; FO 371-37584 "Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic"; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 64-5, 71, 77 130-6; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 33, 401-2; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170-1; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 60, 65, 132; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 85, 92; Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance*, 92-5; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 41-44, 94-6; Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE*, 116-117; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 464.

⁵¹ PREM 3-510-4 "Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean from COS" 7 November 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill" 23 October 1941; US Army Center of Military History, "US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans." 20; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 66, 179; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 22; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 44-5, 109; Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia*, 63; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 55, 104, 149; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 71.

⁵² PREM 3-510-5 King Peter to Churchill "Generally very dissatisfied with my Government" 9 December 1942; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; CAB 65-34-33 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Conclusions" 31 May 1943; CAB 66-60-21 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Copy of a letter dated 29 December, 1944, From King Peter II of Yugoslavia to the PM" 6 January 1945; Thomas, *Foreign Volunteers of the Allied Forces*, 34; Yapou, *Governments in Exile, 1939-1945*, 35; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 128.

⁵³ CAB 80-69 "SOE Activities in 1943: Appreciation by SOE" 21 April 1943; The Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations *Found in* Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 317; HANSARD Foreign Affairs 24 May 1944 vol 400 cc762-829; PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944; PREM 3-512-5 "Churchill to Foreign Secretary Eden" 21 September 1944; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 477-8 ; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 163-4.

damaging his relationship with HMG, was seen as in keeping with his duties as a Royal Yugoslav officer.⁵⁴

Mihailović's attitude and behaviour concerning his relationship with HMG was nothing short of astonishing and underscores just how deeply damaged his relationship with HMG was. This serves to explain why HMG might not simply start looking for support elsewhere in Yugoslavia but go so far as to abandon Mihailović. Contrary to some assertions, it was never an issue of HMG placing one set of priorities, such as military, over another.⁵⁵ HMG was weighing several priority sets simultaneously. Political and military considerations were always closely connected in discussions of Yugoslav policy.⁵⁶ When examining the archival documents one sees Mihailović's behaviour and political considerations weighed just as heavily in HMG's policy decisions.⁵⁷ For example, in a letter to Churchill on 17 December 1942, Eden was seen already musing over the political and military implications of a break from Mihailović, outlining:

⁵⁴ CAB 80-69 "SOE Activities in 1943: Appreciation by SOE" 21 April 1943 ; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 85-6 ; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 67.

⁵⁵ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan – Churchill correspondence" March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [J]Yovanovitch" 29 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Mihailovic speech row" 6 April 1943 ; FO 371-37584 "Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic"; FO 371-37590 "CD to Sargent" 6 September 1943 ; FO 371-37590 "Mihailović: minutes by Eden, Howard, and Sargent" 9 September 1943 ; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 40-1, 77; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 171-2 ; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 145-6 ; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 92 ; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 94-96.

⁵⁶ PREM 3-511-1 War Cabinet "Eden and Churchill correspondence" early 1944; PREM 3-510-6 Foreign Office "Draft of Churchill letter to Yugoslav PM: to be given to King Peter for delivery" 29 March 1943; CAB 65-40-19 "War Cabinet Minutes" 28 December 1943; PREM 3-511-1/2 "Churchill – Eden Correspondence" January 1944; PREM 3-510-10 "Eden to Churchill" 22 December 1943; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433 ; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 471.

⁵⁷ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943 ; PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 Draft letter "Churchill to Yugoslav Prime Minister" 29 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [J]Yovanovitch" 29 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Mihailovic speech row" 6 April 1943 ; FO 371-37584 "Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic" 9 September 1943; FO 371-37590 "CD to Sargent" 6 September 1943; FO 371-37590 "Mihailović: minutes by Eden, Howard, and Sargent" 9 September 1943; PREM 3-510-10 –From FO to Washington – Repeated to Mr. Stevenson, Cairo – 7 December 1943, 1-2; PREM 3-511-9– HMG Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government in Cairo [Stevenson] to FO – 20 December 1943; PREM 3-510-5 – Anthony Eden to PM on Mihailovic – 17 December 1942, 3.

It might be argued that it is our short-term interest to break with Mihailovic, who is at present contributing little to the general war effort, and to transfer our support and assistance to the Partisans, who are offering active resistance to the occupying forces. On the long view, however, I believe that we should be wise to go on supporting Mihailovic in order to prevent anarchy and Communist chaos after the war.⁵⁸

Mihailović's attitude towards the BULLSEYE mission and to Hudson himself was appalling by any standard of allied behaviour. When Hudson first arrived at Mihailović's HQ he was given a public dressing down for having associated with "communist rabble."⁵⁹ Besides being Hudson's mission to contact all these various groups, it was required for his survival. It was this association and a Partisan escort that had allowed Hudson to make his way to Mihailović's HQ in Ravna Gora. Without this association Hudson could not have hoped to deliver cyphers and coordinate what could be done in the way of supply and support for Mihailović.⁶⁰

This was only a slight breeze in comparison to the storms this relationship would witness. There would be constant and severe complaints and criticisms from Mihailović concerning HMG's lack of supply, which were understandable but hardly productive given HMG's limited means.⁶¹ One might also point out that the Partisans did fine supplying themselves with Axis equipment captured in operations.⁶²

⁵⁸ PREM 3-510-5 – Anthony Eden to PM on Mihailovic – 17 December 1942, 3.

⁵⁹ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 136-7.

⁶⁰ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941 ; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 125-137, 202-3 ; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 83-6 ; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 31-4 ; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 56-7 ; Glenny, *The Balkans*, 493.

⁶¹ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942 ; CAB 80-69 "SOE Activities in 1943: Appreciation by SOE" 21 April 1943, 3-4 ; CAB 66-49-34 – PREM 3-511-12 - War Cabinet – Yugoslavia p. 1-3 ; HANSARD – War and International Situation - 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795 ; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 2 ; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 76, 167, 70 ; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 178 ; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 437 ; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 50-4 ; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 111-2.

⁶² Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 169 ; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 245 ; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 65-6 ; "Yugoslavia: The Resistance Movement" *Library of Congress*; US Army Center of Military History, "US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans." 33; Wheeler, "Review of *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies*," 878-880 ; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 2

Mihailović displayed a general distrust towards Hudson and an unwillingness to cooperate with him in organising sabotage missions.⁶³ When Tito and Mihailović met, 27 October 1941, at Brajci to discuss possibly coordinating their efforts, it was Tito who requested Hudson be present as an observer and Mihailović who refused and demanded Hudson remain outside a meeting that concerned his primary function in country – coordination.⁶⁴

This was not to be the worst of it. During the winter of 1941-42 when Hudson and Mihailović were forced underground and their communications went dark, Hudson was left abandoned.⁶⁵ As host to a BLO mission, Mihailović held tremendous responsibilities regarding Hudson. Both duty and honour bound, Mihailović was responsible for his well-being. Mihailović would, however, dishonour himself in his disregard for this duty. After Hudson went on a short fact-finding mission which included visits to communist units in late November and early December 1941 Mihailović barred him from his HQ. Hudson's return coincided with major German operations against Mihailović's HQ which had been cause for Mihailović to relocate. Mihailović did nothing to ensure Hudson was involved with the withdrawal. Hudson was left to fend for himself during the course of the winter. After Hudson's return to Mihailović's units he remained off air because Mihailović refused him the use of his W/T and kept Hudson banished from his HQ until April 1942.⁶⁶ This was a situation London was well aware of as demonstrated by a letter from CIGS Alanbrooke to Churchill on 16 June 1942:

SOE have with Mihailović one of their officers Major Hudson, who has been in Yugoslavia since last September and, whilst for a long time he was apparently not allowed to send his own messages, recently a number of interesting telegrams from Major Hudson have been received.⁶⁷

This left a less than a favourable impression of the RYG's man on the spot which was only compounded by the reports HMG was receiving regarding Partisan

⁶³ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 169; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 34-9, 50-4 ; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 56-61, 245.

⁶⁴ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 85-7; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 10 ; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 137, 141.

⁶⁵ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 146.

⁶⁶ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 16 June 1942 ; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 125-146.

⁶⁷ PREM 3-510-12- CIGS to PM – 16 June 1942.

activity, which was by this time far more substantial and being clearly substantiated by other BLO missions as well as ULTRA.⁶⁸

In discussing these early supplementary missions something should be mentioned of Mjr. Atherton of the HYDRA mission. He had gone missing shortly after his arrival. This had occurred upon returning from a similar fact-finding mission to local Partisan units. Atherton never returned to his assigned Četnik unit and it would take some time to determine what exactly had happened to him. It was eventually discovered he had been killed by Četniks outside of Mihailović's core cadre.⁶⁹ Obviously this left HMG with a less than a favourable impression of the reliability of Četniks and Mihailović's influence.

Mihailović the Inactive

HMG's growing picture, built up by ULTRA and BLO mission reports, was also starting to show a pattern. HMG was beginning to see what Mihailović was all about and it conformed to the growing opinion within HMG of the Yugoslavs in general, given their experiences with the RYG. The Yugoslavs were starting to be viewed as fence-sitters and infighters. This was especially true of Mihailović as he seemed capable of much but preferred to preserve himself for, as Eden put it, a "grand finale."⁷⁰

A letter from Eden to Churchill in December 1942 serves well to demonstrate a growing opinion within HMG with regards to Mihailović.⁷¹ It is also interesting to consider that Eden and the Foreign Office are usually portrayed as the pro-Mihailović camp and SOE the pro-Tito policy usurpers. In the letter Eden argues that in considering Hudson's reports and other sources it seemed HMG now knew what Mihailović was all about. Eden argued that HMG had been given "exaggeratedly favourable idea of Mihailovic's strength and general position in Yugoslavia" and that his "policy is at present to abstain from all serious action against the occupying forces"⁷² Beyond this Eden painted Mihailović as an opportunist and not even a very reliable one.

Mihailović explained his fundamental position in a letter to his own government on 31 March 1943, which indicated he and HMG were operating from irreconcilably different paradigms. In it Mihailović describes how his "tactics differ basically from those adopted by the communists" in that they were unwilling to abandon the local population to the whim of the occupier's reprisals.⁷³ It was not

⁶⁸ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 195 ; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 47.

⁶⁹ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 92 ; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 46.

⁷⁰ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942 ; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 153-4 ; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 50-4.

⁷¹ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 153-4; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 50-4.

⁷² PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942.

⁷³ FO 371-37584 "Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic"; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 40-1.

that Mihailović was completely useless or inactive, HMG was well aware from ULTRA intercepts that Mihailović still weighed heavily on the minds of the Axis occupiers.⁷⁴ As late as April 1943 SOE was placing estimates of Mihailović's strength at 100,000 with the possibility of rapid expansion to 250,000 with appropriate supplies.⁷⁵

The issue was a combination of Mihailović's reach and his level of cooperation in staging operations, or lack of either. Essentially, HMG was viewing "the situation in Yugoslavia [as] very unsatisfactory" and in the words of both Churchill and Sir Alexander Cadogan⁷⁶ Mihailović's "attitude [was] intolerable."⁷⁷ Increasingly, HMG's opinion of Mihailović was suffering serious blows. GHQME and the JIC were increasingly disturbed by Mihailović's lack of vigour.⁷⁸ This said, Cadogan did acknowledge when corresponding with Churchill that:

our long-term interests demand continued support of Mihailovic, not only in order to back up King Peter and the present Yugoslav Government but also in order to have an armed force in existence to prevent anarchy and communist chaos in Yugoslavia on the withdrawal of the Axis.⁷⁹

The issue was never black and white and political and military considerations interacted within every assessment. Churchill himself acknowledged in a letter to Cadogan that Mihailović was not without his right to gripe and that "his position is terrible... we must not forget the very little help we can give." This was a sentiment Churchill would often repeat.⁸⁰

Mihailovic's position was, in no doubt, dreadfully damaged by the Christening speech row. Although it had aimed at bringing to light legitimate grievances on the part of Mihailović with regard to HMG's program in Yugoslavia it had set off a chain of events within HMG that had only served to further damage the already fragile relationship.⁸¹ Revisionists point to this as either the point when

⁷⁴ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 126-7.

⁷⁵ CAB 80-69 "SOE Activities in 1943: Appreciation by SOE" 21 April 1943 ; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943.

⁷⁶ *Sir Alexander Cadogan: Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office*.

⁷⁷ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943 ; PREM 3-510-6 – Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan 27 March 1943.

⁷⁸ CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943 ; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 437.

⁷⁹ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943.

⁸⁰ PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill "Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943; HANSARD "War and International Situation" 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795.

⁸¹ PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [J]Yovanovitch" 29 March 1943 ;

HMG began to move away from support of Mihailovic or, at least, the excuse to justify a plan already in the works.⁸² In considering this claim it is interesting to note that despite the damage caused by the Christening speech row HMG continued to officially reiterate its position of support for Mihailović.⁸³ The frequency with which this was stated and the number of individuals restating it would suggest HMG was still genuinely committed to trying to make things work.⁸⁴

Regardless of what intentions or efforts may have existed, there was no escaping the assessments HMG was receiving: Mihailović was believed to have the means to engage in active resistance but intended to remain inactive. He was viewed as wilfully ignoring opportunities, and even obstructing others from taking advantage of opportunities, to damage the Axis occupation.⁸⁵ To add further insult to injury Mihailović had demonstrated a willingness to fight when the target was Partisan forces, who were without a doubt fighting the Axis occupation.⁸⁶ This was an assessment that even the Revisionist's sacred text, the much lauded and oft misrepresented *Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations* did not dispute. In fact, it describes Mihailović as:

wily and a master of evasion and procrastination. [Who held] a strong sense of duty and loyalty to his King and people, but [would] not

PREM 3-510-6 "Mihailovic speech row" 6 April 1943 ; CAB 80-69 "Draft Telegram from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav PM" May 1943

⁸² McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 54; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 111-2; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 75.

⁸³ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan – Churchill Correspondence" March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 Foreign Office "Draft of Churchill letter to Yugoslav PM: to be given to King Peter for delivery" 29 March 1943; CAB 80-69 "SOE Activities in 1943: Appreciation by SOE" 21 April 1943 ; CAB 80-69 "Draft Telegram from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav PM" May 1943; PREM 3-409-5 SOE Activities "Summary for the PM" Quarter: April to June 1943 ; PREM 3-510-7 War Cabinet "Annex II: Situation in Yugoslavia: Report" 18 June 1943; PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill "Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943.

⁸⁴ PREM 3-510-6 Draft letter "Churchill to Yugoslav Prime Minister" 29 March 1943 ; CAB 80-69 "Draft Telegram from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav PM" May 1943 ; PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill "Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943.

⁸⁵ CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet "The position in Yugoslavia" 10 January 1944; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 115; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 152 ; Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, 466; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 149.

⁸⁶ CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943; PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill "Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943 ; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 179.

hesitate to manipulate or even ignore this to gain his own ends or secure respite in negotiation.⁸⁷

With Allied supplies feeding the fuel for this fire HMG was finding the situation beyond ignoring for the sake of principal.

These events had so damaged HMG's relationship with Mihailović that the Foreign Office opinion had developed by 19 November 1943 to one stating that "during the last 18 months there is no evidence of any effective anti-Axis action initiated by Mihailović".⁸⁸ This is no doubt an overstatement but the frustration voiced is telling of how badly strained the relationship had become. This was coupled with the realisation on the part of HMG that despite their best efforts "that it [was] no longer practical politics to try and affect a reconciliation between Mihailović and the Partisans."⁸⁹

Beyond this a more telling realisation had set in among members of HMG. In a report from the Foreign Office dated, 7 December 1943, politics began turning on the Mihailović argument as well. In this report the Foreign Office argued, "the more likely prospect [is] Yugoslavia being unified after the war in the form of a Communist state closely linked to the Soviet Union."⁹⁰ With this in mind HMG was coming round to the idea that, sooner rather than later, HMG would have to, as Maclean put it, "reconcile our *de jure* obligations with the *de facto* situation which existed inside the country".⁹¹ The reality on the ground was shifting at a moment when HMG was finally starting to come into a position where it could begin to contemplate a real sustainable and substantial supply program for the Yugoslav resistance.⁹²

As HMG's supply program developed teeth, it was seen in the moment that the supplies should be directed to those who would use them to the Allies' intended purpose, against the Axis and not each other.⁹³ Right or wrong, in the moment it

⁸⁷ The Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations *Found in*, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation* 319; PREM 3-511-12- HMG Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government in Cairo [Stevenson] to FO – 15 February 1944.

⁸⁸ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 120-2; WO 202/132A.

⁸⁹ PREM 3-510-10 "FO to Washington, Repeated to Mr. Stevenson" Cairo, 7 December 1943, 2-3.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 462.

⁹² PREM 3-510-13- Former Naval Person [Churchill] to President Roosevelt- 23 October 1943 ; PREM 3-510-9 Note on the Situation in Yugoslavia 27/28 October 1943 ; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 478, 609, 795; CAB 80-76 War Cabinet: Chiefs of Staff Committee "Supplies for Guerrilla Activities in the Balkans: Note by Lt.Gen. Ismay" 10 November 1943; Office of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, *SEXTANT Conference*, 463-4, 534-8, 543-7; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 330-1.

⁹³ HANSARD War Situation September 1943 vol 392 cc69-170; HANSARD – War and International Situation - 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795 ; PREM 3-510-10 "From FO

appeared to HMG to be Tito and the Partisans and that any effort spent to supply Mihailović would likely pay little to no return or perhaps even be counter-productive.⁹⁴ It is worth noting that when HMG developed the opinion that it was time to abandon Mihailović, they went to great lengths to reassure the RYG and bring them on side with the policy.⁹⁵ Churchill, for his part, felt Mihailović to be “a millstone tied round the neck of the Little King.”⁹⁶

Churchill knew the likelihood of Communist influence in post-war arrangements as well as Tito’s dislike of Mihailović.⁹⁷ This is why Churchill, as he would describe in a letter to Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov on 14 April 1944, had spoken with “King Peter and advised him to dismiss [his] Government immediately and to form a small administration composed of people not particularly obnoxious to Tito.”⁹⁸ It was felt by Churchill, not without dissent from Eden, that HMG’s best efforts of maintaining King Peter’s throne in post-war Yugoslavia required convincing the King to abandon Mihailović in order to gain greater standing with resistance forces loosely aligned with Tito. Eden’s objection to this was rooted in the belief that this would in fact serve the opposite function and further weaken King Peter’s hand. In a memorandum to the entitled “The

to Washington: Repeated to Mr. Stevenson, Cairo” 7 December 1943; CAB 66-49-34 – PREM 3-511-12 - War Cabinet – Yugoslavia p. 1-3 ; FO 371/37584 - Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic; FRUS “The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran,” 608-9.

⁹⁴ PREM 3-510-10 “Immediate for Chiefs of Staff, From Air Ministry” – [presumed] 22 December 1943; PREM 3-511-2 “FO to HMG Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government, Cairo: PM copied” 28 December 1943 ; FO 371/37616 - Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic: Partisan movement ; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 120-2 ; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 339; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 352; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 74.

⁹⁵ CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet “The position in Yugoslavia” 10 January 1944; PREM 3-511-1/2 “Churchill – Eden correspondence” 2 1944; PREM 3-510-10 “Stevenson to FO” 11 December 1943; PREM 3-511-2 “HMG Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government, Cairo to FO” 27 December 1943; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet “The position in Yugoslavia” 10 January 1944; PREM 3-511-9– Tito to Churchill – 28 January 1944; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 472; CAB 66-46-50 – War Cabinet “Yugoslavia” 10 February 1944.

⁹⁶ PREM 3-511-2 “Churchill to Eden” 2 January 1944; PREM 3-512-1– PM Churchill to President FDR – 6 April 1944.

⁹⁷ PREM 3-510-10 “From FO to Washington: Repeated to Mr. Stevenson, Cairo” 7 December 1943; CAB 66-48-46 – War Cabinet Yugoslavia - 17 April 1944; CAB 66-49-34 – PREM 3-511-12 - War Cabinet – 1 May 1944 Yugoslavia p. 1-3; PREM 3-511-12 Maclean “The New Yugoslavia in Relation to the Soviet Union” 18 May 1944; CAB 66-51-4 War Cabinet “Soviet Policy in the Balkans” 7 June 1944; CAB 66-52-1 War Cabinet “Yugoslav Affairs” 5 July 1944.

⁹⁸ PREM 3-511-3– Churchill to Molotov – 14 April 1944.

position in Yugoslavia” dated 10 January 1944 when these ideas were first being considered he had explained that:

I have, however, inclined to the opinion that if the King were to get rid of Mihailovic before there is any guarantee that Tito is willing to accept him the King will have sacrificed his last remaining link with Yugoslavia and will probably in addition alienate quite a substantial section of opinion in Serbia.⁹⁹

Whatever the approach to Mihailović, it is clear that with the aim of preserving King Peter that Churchill went to incredible efforts right until war’s end to maintain the Yugoslav throne.¹⁰⁰ He also placed considerable effort on convincing King Peter to abandon his only bargaining chip in negotiations with Tito, that being Mihailović, under the belief it would make a post-war transition back to the rule of the Yugoslav Crown more palatable for the Partisans.¹⁰¹ Regardless of Churchill’s efforts or errors one thing remains clear, HMG did view the RYG in a compartmentalized way and abandoned Mihailović outside of considerations concerning the preservation of the RYG or Yugoslav Crown.

At all Times – The Support for King Peter

HMG’s compartmentalized view of the RYG and Yugoslav resistance in relation to policy meant that HMG was able to emphasize an unwavering commitment to the reestablishment of the Yugoslav monarchy at war’s end. The motivation for this was multifaceted. It held elements of honour, selflessness, and chivalry, it held ideological elements, and elements of self-interest.¹⁰² The implications of this serve to seriously challenge the Revisionist narrative of HMG’s betrayal.

In long-term considerations HMG’s self-interest was confessedly best served by maintaining the Yugoslav monarchy. British interests in the region were best preserved by a friendly, likeminded, and dependent monarchy and served as a welcomed buffer to the distasteful alternative of a Communist state.¹⁰³ As Lord

⁹⁹ CAB 66-45-19 – War Cabinet – The position in Yugoslavia p.2

¹⁰⁰ CAB 66-46-50 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia “Correspondence Between Churchill and Tito: The PM to Marshal Tito 8 January 1944” 10 February 1944; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet “The position in Yugoslavia” 10 January 1944; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet “Minutes of conversations between Churchill and Tito” Naples 12-13 August 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 471; HANSARD War and International Situation 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795.

¹⁰¹ PREM 3-511-1 “Eden to Churchill” 19 January 1944.

¹⁰² Ibid; CAB 65-40-19 “War Cabinet Minutes” 28 December 1943; CAB 66-46-50 – War Cabinet Yugoslavia p.1; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 471.

¹⁰³ PREM 3-511-12 “Report from Selborne For PM” 11 May 1944.

Selborne once wrote to Churchill “I should prefer King George with a Liberal Government in Greece, and King Peter in Serbia to Communism.”¹⁰⁴

From the moment of the *coup*, Churchill, an ardent old school imperialist and devout monarchist, made it clear in no uncertain terms HMG’s commitment to the Yugoslav Crown.¹⁰⁵ This would be one of few constants that would serve at all times to underscore HMG’s policy. When discussions did begin to emerge regarding concerns over the RYG or Mihailović, Churchill and the Foreign Office’s deep commitment to the Yugoslav Crown noticeably coloured events. At the greatest moment of crisis in HMG’s Yugoslav policy, the shift from Mihailović to Tito, Churchill and Eden’s personal correspondence were almost entirely concerned with King Peter’s long-term interests.¹⁰⁶

HMG would make great strides to out manoeuvre Tito and present King Peter as a *fait accompli*, who could swoop in and remove some of the wind from Partisans sails.¹⁰⁷ Churchill would also go to great personal lengths to exert considerable pressure on Tito to accept any number of schemes to accept the King at some level. Any crack of opportunity was sought knowing that it could be used to drive in a wedge into Yugoslavia and force open the throne for King Peter.¹⁰⁸

When these options failed Churchill went so far as to reconsider that basic tenant of HMG’s policy: a unified post-war Yugoslavia. Churchill would eventually consider, and even vaguely threaten to support, an independent Serbia in order to maintain the Karadorđević dynasty, even alluding to this when speaking before the House of Commons.¹⁰⁹ Speaking on 24 May 1944 before Parliament Churchill would say:

We do not know what will happen in the Serbian parts of Yugoslavia...It must, however, be remembered that the question does not turn on General Mihailović alone. There is a very large body, amounting to perhaps 200,000, of Serbian peasant proprietors who are

¹⁰⁴ PREM 3-511-12 “Report from Selborne For PM” 11 May 1944.

¹⁰⁵ PREM 3-510-11 “Churchill message to the people of Yugoslavia” 13 April 1941 ; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet “Minutes of conversations between Churchill and Tito” Naples 12-13 August 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433.

¹⁰⁶ PREM 3-511-1/2 “Churchill – Eden Correspondence” January 1944; PREM 3-511-2 “Eden to Churchill at SEXTANT” 7 January 1944 ; PREM 3-511-7 “Churchill to Eden” 9 January 1944 ; PREM 3-510-10 “Eden to Churchill” 22 December 1943 ; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433.

¹⁰⁷ PREM 3-511-2 “Eden to Churchill” 1 January 1944.

¹⁰⁸ PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet “minutes of conversations between Churchill and Tito” Naples 12-13 August 1944.

¹⁰⁹ HANSARD Foreign Affairs 24 May 1944 vol 400 cc762-829 ; PREM 3-511-12 “Report from Selborne For PM” 11 May 1944; PREM 3-512-5 “Churchill to Foreign Secretary Eden” 21 September 1944; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 477-8; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 163-4.

anti-German but strongly Serbian, and who naturally hold the view of a peasant ownership community in regard to property. They are not enthusiastic in regard to communism as are some of those in Croatia and Slovenia.¹¹⁰

The sentiment that “We do not know what will happen in the Serbian parts of Yugoslavia” was one Churchill repeated to Tito directly in his personal correspondence with the Partisan leader.¹¹¹ At this point one could not argue this to have been in HMG’s best long-term considerations. With Soviet pressures one could only argue that this was done out of the more noble motivations of honour and chivalry.¹¹²

Accommodation vs. Collaboration

A central issue within HMG Yugoslav policy debate over Mihailović centred on the question of collaboration. These are damning indictments when levelled against a resistance force. The difficulty with the issue within HMG was due to the fine line between what constituted accommodation and collaboration, the former being a useful ploy while the latter is nothing short of treason. Mihailović was plagued by this debate from very early on and the main question for HMG became whether Mihailović was crossing this line. The problem is drawing the line between the two is very much dependent upon context and is, ultimately subjective.

In the case of HMG, uprisings by the Yugoslav resistance had been a blessing and a curse. Seen as premature there were genuine concerns over what kind of response these uprisings would garner from the occupiers.¹¹³ The course of events, however, served to alter this view. A time came when even accommodation, and the certain level of inactivity invariably associated with avoiding direct action as a condition of accommodation, came to be viewed by HMG as serving the enemy’s needs.¹¹⁴ Therefore, the view of HMG evolved to a

¹¹⁰ Martin, 163-4 ; HANSARD Foreign Affairs 24 May 1944 vol 400 cc762-829.

¹¹¹ Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 477-8.

¹¹² PREM 3-513-10 - Churchill “Memo to his Private Office” 25 April 1945; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 334; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 482-3, 523.

¹¹³ PREM 3-510-4 “Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean, forward of message from Chiefs of Staff” 7 November 1941; PREM 3-409-2 “The Prospects of Subversion” 21 April 1941; PREM 3-510-4 “Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill” 23 October 1941; PREM 3-510-2 “MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941” 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); PREM 3-510-4 “Churchill to Yugoslav PM” October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet “Annex II: Draft Telegram to the Commanders-in-Chief Middle East” 30 October 1941.

¹¹⁴ CAB 80-69 “Draft Telegram from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav PM” May 1943.

point where even mild accommodation, formerly encouraged as advantageous, became viewed as a form of collaboration.

The issue at the heart of this comes back to the reality that HMG was operating from a different paradigm than Mihailović with very different considerations and objectives. Each party was rightfully looking after their own concerns first and foremost but eventually these went from serving one another to running in direct contradiction to one another's aims. The conversations within HMG concerning Mihailović's on the issue of accommodation and how far this relationship actually went evolved parallel to the definition of what HMG considered to be appropriate versus unacceptable levels of accommodation. Therefore what was considered an acceptable level of accommodation in late 1941 was, by late 1943, totally unacceptable.¹¹⁵ The issue that developed for HMG was that for the Germans nothing suited them better than Četnik passivity. By leaving one another alone it allowed not just Mihailović room to breathe, but the Germans room to focus on the elimination of the resistance piecemeal, starting with the Partisans.¹¹⁶

HMG was also painfully aware that, like it or not, Mihailović required Italian support for his survival. Mihailović would, therefore, not engage the Italians with the hope that, perceiving their collapse as imminent, he would be in a position to inherit their weapons and supplies.¹¹⁷ Given these considerations and concern of reprisals it is not at all surprising that Mihailović was only willing to fight the Partisans; nor is it surprising HMG would object.¹¹⁸

By December 1943 HMG's view of Mihailović "anything but whole-hearted in his resistance to the Germans."¹¹⁹ On 7 December 1943 the Foreign Office reported, "Partisans are prepared to collaborate with all resistance groups except that of General Mihailović, whom they accuse of being a traitor and are determined to liquidate."¹²⁰ The Partisan position was no doubt motivated by an understanding that Mihailović's claim to legitimacy as the official leader of the Royal Yugoslav Resistance posed the greatest challenge to Partisan revolutionary ambitions. Putting aside the insight provided by hindsight to the motivations for this position, HMG was left in somewhat of a corner. This Foreign Office report is possibly the nail in the coffin, often overlooked by Revisionists. Instead, Revisionists tend to point to a meeting between Churchill and Deakin on 9

¹¹⁵ CAB 80-69 "Draft Telegram from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav PM" May 1943

¹¹⁶ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 336.

¹¹⁷ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 50-4; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 153-4.

¹¹⁸ PREM 3-510-6 "Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill" 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Draft Churchill letter to Yugoslav Prime Minister" 29 March 1943.

¹¹⁹ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 401-2.

¹²⁰ PREM 3-510-10 "FO to Washington, Repeated to Mr. Stevenson" Cairo, 7 December 1943, 1.

December 1943 in Cairo where Deakin made out his “hostile brief,” as Deakin later described it, for the case against Mihailović.¹²¹

The Foreign Office, for long-term political considerations, was arguably Mihailović’s greatest defender. Nevertheless the report, which was shared with Washington, was quite damning and went on to argue that “Mihailović is not only of no military value to the Allies but has also become a standing obstacle to any sort of Yugoslav unity either now or in the near future.”¹²² A critical point that should be emphasised here is that it made very clear that HMG had, as of yet, no clear evidence of Mihailović’s direct collaboration with the Germans, a point of considerable importance to Revisionist scholars.¹²³

The die had, however, been cast and HMG, with Churchill in the lead, made the decision in early December to support Tito and begin disengaging from Mihailović as part of a larger strategy of support for Tito to tie down Axis forces while still aiming at reestablishing King Peter at war’s end.¹²⁴ Churchill would use the allegations of collaboration against Mihailović as a convenient explanation for what was an immensely complex and dissatisfying necessity. It is this reality, and perspective, that explain Churchill’s dogged commitment to the assertion of Mihailović as a collaborator despite a lack of hard evidence.¹²⁵ In the coming months Churchill would have to justify HMG’s policies to King Peter, to the House of Commons, to his Allies, and to himself.¹²⁶ Collaboration was never a certainty but HMG was convinced enough to be reasonably sure of at least

¹²¹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 119-20 ; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 262-3.

¹²² PREM 3-510-10 “FO to Washington, Repeated to Mr. Stevenson” Cairo, 7 December 1943, 1-2.

¹²³ CAB 66-44-2 War Cabinet “Weekly resume no. 222” 2 December 1943, 5-6; PREM 3-510-10 “From FO to Washington: Repeated to Mr. Stevenson, Cairo” 7 December 1943; PREM 3-510-10 “Stevenson to FO” 11 December 1943; CAB 65-40-18 War Cabinet “Minutes” 22 December 1943; PREM 3-510-10 “Immediate for Chiefs of Staff, From Air Ministry” [presumed] 22 December 1943; PREM 3-511-2 “FO to HMG Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government, Cairo: PM copied” 28 December 1943; PREM 3-511-1/2 “Churchill – Eden Correspondence” January 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433.

¹²⁴ PREM 3-511-1/2 War Cabinet “Eden and Churchill correspondence” early 1944; CAB 65-40-19 “War Cabinet Minutes” 28 December 1943; PREM 3-511-7 “Churchill to Eden” 9 January 1944; PREM 3-510-10 “Eden to Churchill” 22 December 1943; CAB 66-46-50 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia “Correspondence Between Churchill and Tito: The PM to Marshal Tito 8 January 1944” 10 February 1944; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet “The position in Yugoslavia” 10 January 1944; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet “Minutes of conversations between Churchill and Tito” Naples 12-13 August 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 471.

¹²⁵ PREM 3-511-2 “Churchill to Eden” 2 January 1944; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 123.

¹²⁶ PREM 3-510-10 “Stevenson to FO” 11 December 1943; PREM 3-511-2 “Churchill to Eden” 2 January 1944; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 123; HANSARD War and International Situation 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795

accommodation and, moreover, it was congruent with HMG's necessary decision.¹²⁷

It was not just Churchill that was convinced despite the presence of hard evidence; the War Cabinet, COS and CIGS concurred with Churchill's assessments and felt there was little point in wasting any more time.¹²⁸ The Foreign Office, for their part, was ready to go along but still held reservations over the lack of clear irrefutable evidence on the matter of Mihailović's collaboration.¹²⁹ They may have been, in part, encouraged by the 'groupthink' phenomenon to get on side and move forward. However, it would seem that it was as much about injecting what they could of their own long-term political aims through give-and-take intra-agency negotiations, as it was concern over the strength of HMG's evidence. Whatever the reason, a consensus of sorts had formed within HMG to set down a path that they could not easily come back from.¹³⁰ However, it is worth noting that many within HMG who endorsed the decision to support Tito did not support the corollary condemnation of Mihailović.

Instead the abandonment of it was Mihailović was in part a *de facto* result of support for Tito. Tito's insistence that he would not work with Mihailović and requiring his abandonment as a condition of cooperation, coupled with HMG's sincere desire to reestablish the Yugoslav Crown, left little other option, regardless of how undesirable.¹³¹ As described by the COS 22 December 1943, there was a:

political necessity of postponing all political issues until after liberation of Yugoslavia ...on this basis we would continue with King Peter and Yugoslav Government and be free to give or withhold military support to any elements in Yugoslavia on purely military grounds.¹³²

It is here where HMG begins to attempt to frame their policy as one that had divorced politics from military affairs. This was, however, only a useful excuse and moving forward, Churchill's advocating on behalf of King Peter

¹²⁷ PREM 3-511-9 "President of Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia" forwarded by Stevenson HMG. Ambassador to RYG (Cairo) to FO, Forwarded to Churchill. 15 February 1944; PREM 3-511-2 "Eden to Churchill" 1 January 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 124; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 123, 299-300.

¹²⁸ CAB 65-40-18 War Cabinet "Minutes" 22 December 1943; PREM 3-510-10 "Air Ministry to Med Air Command Post 22 December 1943" For Churchill from Eden, copy of a telegram to HMG Ambassador to Yugoslav Government, 21 December 1943.

¹²⁹ PREM 3-511-2 "FO to HMG Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government, Cairo: PM copied" 28 December 1943 ; CAB 65-40-19 "War Cabinet Minutes" 28 December 1943, 2; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 196

¹³⁰ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 317-8.

¹³¹ PREM 3-510-10 "FO to Washington, Repeated to Mr. Stevenson" Cairo, 7 December 1943, 1.

¹³² PREM 3-510-10 "Air Ministry to Med Air Command Post" 22 December 1943.

and the restoration of the Yugoslav Crown demonstrates that, despite the COS “necessity,” political issues had not been postponed for a moment.

Closing

This chapter demonstrates not only the underlying importance of HMG’s own aims as they ran counter to that of elements of the Yugoslav government, it illuminates a great deal regarding how HMG viewed their partner and therefore framed discussions and approached policy on the subject. For example, it seems fairly obvious from internal discussions, HMG’s actions, discussions with Allies, and even discussions with the Yugoslavs themselves that they at all times viewed the Yugoslav Crown, the RYG, and Mihailović as distinctly separate or, at least, divisible entities.¹³³ When the issue is approached with this view it serves to undercut a great deal of the Revisionist betrayal argument.

Furthermore, regardless of perceived commitment held by Revisionists HMG’s attitude towards the Yugoslavs from very early on was a dissatisfied one. This dissatisfaction carried forward and was expanded to HMG’s relationship with Mihailović. It is clear and fair to say, as Revisionists do, that the aims of HMG and Mihailović diverged.

In a report shared by the Foreign Office with the War Cabinet dated, 21 April 1944, Hudson described “the Četnik movement [as] essentially one of passive resistance to the Germans where active resistance appears unprofitable.”¹³⁴ Indeed, it was unprofitable to Četnik but the inverse was true with regards to HMG. Their agendas were at cross-purposes with one another.¹³⁵

It is important to acknowledge that Revisionists are quite right to point out that Mihailović never held the level of cooperation found in the German relationship with the Ustaše.¹³⁶ His aims were nonetheless admittedly different than HMG. If Mihailović’s aims ran counter or in conflict to HMG what should HMG have been expected to do? Perhaps it is Machiavellian but HMG’s aim was to serve their own interests: as right as it is to point to Mihailović’s paradigm to explain his actions, is it not justified to point to HMG’s own paradigm as legitimate defense for British policy decisions concerning Yugoslavia?

¹³³ PREM 3-510-13 - CAB 66-38-13 – War Cabinet – Yugoslav Government Crisis 22 June 1943; CAB 66-45-19 – War Cabinet – Memorandum by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs - The position in Yugoslavia – 10 January 1944; PREM 3-510-5 – King Peter to Churchill – Generally very dissatisfied with my Government - 9 December 1942; CAB 65-34-33 – War Cabinet 79 (43) – Conclusions 31 May 1943 – Yugoslavia; PREM 3-511-2 – Eden to Churchill at SEXTANT – 7 January 1944; CAB 65-45-21 – W, M, (44) 35TH Conclusions, Minute 1 Confidential Annex -15 March, 1944.

¹³⁴ PREM 3-511-12 - CAB 66-49-34 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia “ FO Report from Lt-Col. Hudson: Recommendations” 21 April 1944.

¹³⁵ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 57; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 129.

¹³⁶ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 129.

What this chapter's examination has demonstrated is that HMG's relationship with the RYG, the Yugoslav Crown, and Mihailović was seen not only as divisible but also that these relationships were far more complex than previously thought. A considerable number of variables would emerge within these complex relationships that would serve to influence the course of HMG's overall policy evolution. Ultimately, one begins to understand HMG's move away from Mihailović towards Tito was seen in a very different light by HMG than by it is viewed by Revisionists. In this light, the Revisionist narrative of HMG's lack of commitment and even betrayal is challenged and a far more complex and nuanced understanding of these decisions and what they reflect of HMG appears.

Contrary to a widely made assertion in both Orthodox and Revisionist historiography it would appear that this shift, pivot, betrayal (whatever it may be called) was not motivated by a need to place the supremacy of immediate military necessity over political, or immediate over that of long-term considerations. Instead, it would appear that these issues were never truly divorced from one another and that HMG's approach to the issue was far more complex than some have considered it to be. At all times HMG was negotiating both political and military needs and trying not only to advance both agendas but use each in support of the other. This is well worth considering while moving forward and beginning to develop an understanding how HMG approached the issue of Tito and his Partisans.

Chapter 6

His Majesty's Government & Tito

It is permitted to walk with the devil until you have crossed the bridge
- Old Balkan proverb

Considering what has been observed of HMG's policy course in previous chapters new questions emerge regarding HMG's involvement with communists and support for Tito. Given the development of policy, the clarity of intelligence, and the problems associated with Mihailović it is worth questioning a narrative of events which characterizes support for Tito as a sudden shift or betrayal.¹ When reading archival documents concerning HMG's discussions of possible communist resistance as well as Tito and his Partisans it becomes clear that both military and political conversations were ever-present in discussions concerning Yugoslavia that were broad in scope as well as complex and nuanced.

This chapter will trace the course of HMG's knowledge of and relationship with the communist resistance and Tito himself. This will begin by examining HMG's knowledge of Tito and the communists with emphasis on HMG's parallel knowledge of Tito's resistance along with that of Mihailović. This one point totally undermines a major tenet of both Orthodox and Revisionist narratives concerning HMG's move to Tito. Doing so leaves one confronted by a very different image of HMG with very different approaches and considerations. This chapter will also examine the clandestine advantages that HMG sought to extract from the recruitment of communists and why HMG would be so motivated. It will also look to claims of value and results concerning the performance of Partisan units against the Axis occupation. Finally, this chapter will view the greater picture of events on the ground in comparison to the larger war effort to understand the gap between intentions and reality, and how much room HMG really had to manoeuvre. The question must be asked, how much of what occurred was beyond HMG's reckoning or control and presented simply as *fait accompli*?

By revisiting these key issues in the light of the new considerations thus far developed it is possible to begin to establish a very different narrative. By approaching things in this light a new, albeit more complicated, description of events provides greater context to these decisions as well as a far more complete explanation than previously presented. One realizes HMG's attitude towards the Yugoslav resistance, and by extension communists, was multifaceted. The pivot towards Tito therefore may not represent the break in policy suggested. Instead, one has to ask if this did not follow a linear and even logical line. HMG's policies

¹ Barker, "Review of *Patriot or Traitor*", 456-457; Clissold, "Review of *Ally Betrayed*," 265; Wheeler, "Review of *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies*," 878-880; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 117-119; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 230; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, ix; Stafford, "Upstairs/Downstairs," 56.

concerning resistance could be viewed as holding an internal consistency that provides a view wherein the pivot to Tito was a logical continuation of some of HMG's existing policies.

HMG appears to have been keenly aware of communist elements from very early on in the Yugoslav program and expressed considerable interest in them, motivated by alarm or possible advantage.² It has been established that HMG was well informed about these groups. HMG seems keenly aware they were dealing with communists and were keeping this reality and its long-term political implications front and centre in their discussions.³ These conversations appear to have been highly evolved, nuanced, and showed considerable depth on the part of HMG. It leaves us to ask if HMG eventually became not so much convinced these groups were somehow not true communists but instead convinced that, despite the dangers in courting this force that it could no longer be ignored.

In the debate concerning these communist elements HMG never overlooked the close ties between the potential short-term military advantage and long-term political disadvantage represented in these forces. HMG seems to have also understood these two factors were not entirely divisible nor were the indivisible.⁴ Eden conveyed this conflict in a letter to Churchill concerning the 'Mihailović-Partisan Dispute', 24 June 1943. In it you can read Eden going back and forth on the subject seeing the value of both groups and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each:

Our policy, as you are aware, has all along been to support Mihailović to the best of our ability. It has not always been easy to justify this policy in view of Mihailović's comparative inaction, reports of his collaboration with the Italians, his own Pan-Serb and dictatorial tendencies and his skirmishes with the partisans. But taking a long-term view there was no doubt that our interests lay in backing Mihailović and thereby enabling him to preserve Yugoslavia – or at least Serbia – from Chaos and anarchy when liberation comes... There has been no doubt that it is the Partisans who have been causing the Axis the most trouble and that they constitute a military organisation to be reckoned with. The

² PREM 3-510-1 - War Cabinet – Intelligence Committee (operations) – Yugoslav Revolt – Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM – 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 – From Hugh Dalton to Churchill – Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo - 11 December 1941.

³ PREM 3-510-12– CIGS to PM – 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-5 – Anthony Eden to PM on Mihailovic – 17 December 1942; PREM 3-510-6 –Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill - 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-13– Eden to Churchill – Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute – 24 June 1943; HANSARD “War Situation” 21 September 1943 vol 392 cc69-170.

⁴ PREM 3-510-6 –Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill - 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-13– Eden to Churchill – Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute – 24 June 1943.

recent Chiefs of Staff request, therefore, that sabotage and other operations by guerrillas and resistance groups in the Balkans should be supported and encouraged as far as possible induced us to reconsider our policy towards the Yugoslav Partisans.⁵

HMG would move forward working hard to exploit what cracks they could and cling to whatever small measure of hope they could garner from the thought that perhaps these communists could be worked with and somehow be moderated to advance HMG's aims.⁶ Regardless of the likelihood of success, which rose and fell in HMG's eyes depending on when one looks and which of HMG's aims are considered, it would seem HMG saw value, even necessity, in the Partisan risk.

Parallel Knowledge

The most startling inconsistency within the historical narrative might just be the simplest, chronology. Revisionists tend to paint Mihailović as first into the field and therefore the legitimate leader of the revolt. They go further by painting Tito as a Johnny-come-lately.⁷ It is true that Tito did not enter the field until two full months after Mihailović. He had been quiet while waiting for word from the Comintern.⁸ At this time the Soviets were still German allies.

Tito was not inactive; he was working underground to prepare for the expected Nazi-Soviet break. This is why, when the time came, Tito was able to enter the field so forcefully and create such chaos in such short order.⁹ Tito was, after all, in Maclean's very knowledgeable opinion on this particular subject, a

⁵ PREM 3-510-13– Eden to Churchill – Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute – 24 June 1943

⁶ CAB 66-48-46 – War Cabinet Yugoslavia – Report from Brig. MacLean 17 April 1944; PREM 3-511-2 / PREM 3-511-7 – Eden to Churchill Correspondence - January 1944.

⁷ PREM 3-510-4 “Simovitch to Churchill” 20 October 1941; PREM 3-409-2 “The Prospects of Subversion: Summary” 21 April 1941; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 51, 177; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 37, 42, 56, 74-5; Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia*, 64-65; US Army Center of Military History, “US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans.” 33; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 1, 27, 35; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 126; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 89-91; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 462.

⁸ PREM 3-510-4 “Simovitch to Churchill” 20 (presumed) October 1941; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 10; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 51, 177; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 37, 42, 56, 74-5; Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia*, 64-65; US Army Center of Military History, “US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans.” 33; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 27, 35; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 126; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 91; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 462.

⁹ Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 462; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 91; US Army Center of Military History, “US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans.” 33.

Moscow trained Communist of the highest professional calibre whose full-time job, it should be remembered, even before the invasion, had been subversion and revolution.¹⁰

The time frame between Mihailović and Tito's entry into the field was two months.¹¹ During those two months Revisionists argue that Mihailović was busy establishing networks and leading the charge to make the occupiers' lives miserable. They unjustly gloss over Tito's underground efforts and describe him as in hiding, or waiting in silence, inactive and on the sidelines.¹² This is an inaccurate characterization of the situation Tito was indeed abstaining from direct action during this period but was busy underground.

This may also be slightly more than kind to Mihailović's efforts during the period in question. There was little activity immediately after the *coup* and events remained calm for some weeks. This was due to the reality of the situation on the ground. Both groups, Partisan and Četnik, logically, required a certain period of time to regroup, organize, and activate their networks.¹³ On the part of the Četniks drawn from the Royal Yugoslav military time was needed for these soldiers to make their way through the wilderness from their disbanded units towards the safe havens of the traditional Četnik mountain strongholds.¹⁴

It is worth remarking that when Tito entered the field both he and Mihailović were still question marks for HMG. It was not until BULLSEYE that HMG had any really clear idea of what sort of resistance Mihailović really represented. It should also be remembered that Hudson met Tito and traveled through his territory before first meeting Mihailović.¹⁵ As a Royal Yugoslav officer, Mihailović would come to be recognised by his association with the RYG as the *de facto* official leader of the Yugoslav state resistance. However, it was never an issue of one and then the other with HMG regarding Mihailović and Tito. HMG was receiving reports concerning both groups. These were concurrent not consecutive discoveries.

¹⁰ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 333; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 168; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 57.

¹¹ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 23; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 91.

¹² McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 23; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 168 ; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 56; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 418-9.

¹³ Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid*; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 57.

¹⁵ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941; Deakin, 125-136, 202-3; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 805; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 2-3, 31-4; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 56-7.

Hudson's early reports had been quite positive in their opinion of the forces he had observed outside of Mihailović's area of control.¹⁶ There was never a time when HMG ever received negative reports concerning the Partisans' military effectiveness and discipline from even the very early days of the first BLO mission to the Montenegrin coast.

This is not to say HMG's view of the Partisans was entirely positive. They were certainly at all times apprehensive over concerns regarding the political stripes of these groups, which were seen as partially communist in makeup.¹⁷ Even before that fear was realized there was not a single conversation about the Partisans, even those totally military in nature within HMG that did not address at some level the political implications of Tito and the Partisans.¹⁸

HMG's awareness of the division between Četnik and Partisan groups was established very early on. By November 1941 HMG was already hearing the reports of outbreaks of violence between Partisans and Četniks.¹⁹ They were beginning to worry that these groups' ambition for the future may not have been the same as HMG's.²⁰ As events inside Yugoslavia progressed HMG's picture did also. Between greater success at Bletchley, and further BLO missions, HMG was

¹⁶ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden]," 31 October 1941; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 279; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 65-6, 130-6; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 85; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 61.

¹⁷ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 200.

¹⁸ CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet "The position in Yugoslavia" 10 January 1944; PREM 3-510-10 "Stevenson to FO" 11 December 1943; CAB 65-40-19 "War Cabinet Minutes" 28 December 1943; CAB 66-49-34 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "FO Report from Lt-Col. Hudson: Recommendations" 21 April 1944; PREM 3-511-12; PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 471.

¹⁹ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden]," 31 October 1941.

²⁰ PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden]," 31 October 1941 ; PREM 3-510-4 Office of the Minister of Defence "Chiefs of Staff, 379th Meeting, Minute 2: Yugoslav Revolt" 9 November 1941; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 8; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 47.

relatively well informed on the general course of resistance, if not the finer details.²¹

By June 1942 CIGS Alanbrooke was describing to Churchill the situation with regards to the Partisans as one wherein:

Partisans or Communists, against whom Mihailović has often complained embarrass not only the enemy but ourselves as they drive the more moderate opponents of the Axis into co-operation with any power that can restore a semblance of law and order.²²

This indicates is that HMG was becoming aware that the Partisans were a double-edged sword. Partisan activity was viewed as polarizing. On the one hand, they were actively fighting the Axis and their activity stimulated resistance by the Yugoslav people. However, their actions drove the moderate elements of the population into cooperation with local authorities that could provide some level of security and safety such as General Nedić. It was the growing awareness of Partisan activity, however, when coupled with dissatisfaction among members of HMG over Mihailović's attitude and performance, which would serve as a catalyst for HMG's eventual pivot to Tito.²³

The Partisans had the advantage of an effective, disciplined central command under singular leadership. This was a by-product from their pre-war activities.²⁴ This contrasts sharply with the situation faced by Mihailović who was confronting territorially proprietary regional commanders.²⁵ There is no doubt this served to advance the Partisans in the eyes of HMG.²⁶ The Partisans were further blessed by the ironically good fortune of being largely ignored by HMG's BLO missions early in the war. As Williams points out, the face that Tito was able to put forward was controlled, his mistakes were made largely outside direct observation. HMG was able to see from ULTRA Partisan military activity but was unaware of the

²¹ PREM 3-510-12 "The Situation in Yugoslavia" 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942 ; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 86; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 108; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 177; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527.

²² PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942.

²³ PREM 3-510-12 "The Situation in Yugoslavia" 2 June 1942; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 86-9; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 108, 161; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60; Goodman, *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee*, 97.

²⁴ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 489; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 56; Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, 465-6; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 311-3; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 151-2; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 168.

²⁵ Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 56; Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, 465-6; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 311-3; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 151-2.

²⁶ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 311-3; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 95-6.

early issues the Partisans faced in maintaining popular support among the local population.²⁷

Another card in Tito's favour was less tangible. Revisionists have pointed to it but also, as they often do, blown it out of proportion. Despite concerns among the higher levels of HMG, the old guard conservatives of the Empire, there was somewhat of a cultural sympathy towards leftists. As already mentioned this was predominantly among the younger elements of HMG's operatives and analysts but they represented a large part of the gears that made up the daily functions of HMG's vast systems. Williams aptly describes the *zeitgeist*:

There were strong cultural feelings that this was a war for a brave new world, especially for younger generation. The USSR 'Uncle Joe' and the likes of Tito were viewed as representing this feeling while Mihailović was seen as representative of the old order.²⁸

Moreover, this younger generation of academics and intellectuals were the very individuals who were recruited into HMG's intelligence and policy agencies.²⁹

Recruiting Communists

Partisan development was rapid. The cadres that led the revolt were well versed and experienced in the art of subterfuge and clandestine activity. Their experience as a fringe quasi-legal party left them well prepared to confront occupation. The life of the communist was one well acquainted with the clandestine war and in confronting a hostile government system.³⁰ It is this experience which is why, when the invasion came, most of the Party managed to remain intact having made quick their escape into the mountains to wait until the opportunity to wage their preferred war of the subversive to present itself. When the time did come they were well prepared for it.³¹

Beyond the advantages of subversive networking, Partisan discipline and centralized command gave them significant advantage over Mihailović's networks. The Partisans were organized with ruthless discipline. When orders were issued they were expected to be followed and disobedience of even the slightest degree was met with the harshest of responses, usually a summary execution on the spot.³²

²⁷ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 245; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 151-2.

²⁸ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 247.

²⁹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 316.

³⁰ Foot, *S.O.E.*, 168.

³¹ Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 95-6; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 168, 183.

³² Glenny, *The Balkans*, 489; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 56; Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, 465-8; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 311-3; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 151-2; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 168.

Discipline and ideology were not the only factors that distinguished the Partisans from their Četnik counterparts. The largest issue which would play a central role in the eventual schism between these two groups concerned reprisals. Whereas Mihailović looked upon German reprisals with horror, Tito took a more pragmatic view. Tito correctly calculated that German reprisals against the civilian population would harden civilian opinion against the occupation and feed the Partisans more recruits.³³ With this in mind, Tito encouraged Partisan hit and run tactics that would provoke reprisals against the local civilian population. The collateral damage suffered by traditional social networks was only an added advantage in the eyes of the Partisans. This was, after all, a revolutionary movement and by attacking the enemy, they gained supplies, garnered new recruits, and if, as an added bonus, they worked towards tearing down the established order, so much the better.³⁴

By spring of 1942 HMG was already well aware of Tito's activity through ULTRA, which was being coupled with increasing reports from BLO missions in the field testifying to Partisan discipline.³⁵ It was this which had led to a secret meeting on 8 August 1942 between SOE, SIS, and the Foreign Office on the subject of support to possible communists, well outside the knowledge not only of the RYG but many elements of HMG.³⁶ The reality was, however, that HMG had already begun recruiting communists long before this meeting. SOE London had established a program in North America through British Security Co-ordination (BSC) to begin recruitment of Yugoslav émigrés suitable to develop into agents to insert into their homeland for subversive activity.³⁷

This had logically led BSC to contact the RCMP who supplied BSC with lists of known subversives suitable for the task at hand. This inevitably led BSC to

³³ PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; "Yugoslavia: The Resistance Movement" *Library of Congress*; Glenny, *The Balkans*, 489; US Army Center of Military History, "US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans."

³⁴ PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; "Yugoslavia: The Resistance Movement" *Library of Congress*; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 41-44; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 60; Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE*, 116-117; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 313; Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 233-4; Glenny, *The Balkans*, 489.

³⁵ Hinsley, "The Influence of ULTRA in the Second World War"; Bennett, et al. "Mihailović and Tito," 527; PREM 3-510-4 "Simovitch to Churchill" 20 (presumed) October 1941; PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden]," 31 October 1941; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 462.

³⁶ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 108-9; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170.

³⁷ Stafford, *Camp X*, 171; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 41-2.

known Communists, who else would be on the RCMP's watch list of potential subversives other than members of the Canadian Communist Party (CPC)? And who else would be of a suitable disposition than Communists? Indeed, they had actively been sought out because of this fact.³⁸ This suited the RCMP just fine who were happy to see their problem solved for them by way of shipping these undesirables abroad.³⁹

The groundwork for even these initial efforts had been laid even earlier than this. It was in fact July 1941, only four months after the Yugoslav *coup* and invasion and part of a grander European wide strategy of subversion, that HMG had first laid the foundation stones. This was with the Ministry of Defence's orders to establish a secret camp inside Canada for the purpose of training subversives.⁴⁰ It was this early initiative that would lead to the formation of Camp X on the shores of Lake Ontario east of Toronto where the Yugoslavs of future BLO missions would be trained.⁴¹

HMG was never duped by these Communist agents and knew what they were dealing with. They had been sought out for this purpose. All those involved from SOE London to Churchill were aware of the undesirability of these individuals from a political standpoint but they were nonetheless pragmatists. These individuals realized that HMG's policy must be adaptive and reflect reality as much as desire.⁴² The speculation put forward by Revisionists such as Martin and Lees that Communist agents did all this under HMG's nose and outside of HMG knowledge is both absurd as well as verifiably false.⁴³ This was a major policy evolution spearheaded by high-level agencies which occurred in stages and was rooted in an internal consistency that reached well beyond the influence of particular individuals.

This was never a case of one group or the other. HMG's approach to these groups ran in a parallel. Early in the war Hugh Dalton had pointed out the value of the left in fighting this kind of war.⁴⁴ It has been established that HMG was not ignorant to the value of communist subversive networks from before the war.

³⁸ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 130-32; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 62-3; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 209-10.

³⁹ Stafford, *Camp X*, 46, 52, 170-1.

⁴⁰ CAB 66-7-14 "British Strategy in a Certain Eventuality" 25 May 1940; PREM 3-510-2 "Office of the Minister of Defence to PM" 11 July 1941.

⁴¹ Stafford, *Camp X*, 52.

⁴² Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 10; Stafford, *Camp X*, 178-9; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 62-3; PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944.

⁴³ PREM 3-510-2 "Office of the Minister of Defence to PM" 11 July 1941; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 107-110; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 41-2.

⁴⁴ PREM 3-510-2 "MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941" 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 83, 109; Roberts, *Tito, Mhailovic, and the Allies*, 27; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 6-7, 132; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170-1.

Developing these forces into assets was in keeping with the SOE policies of late 1941 which had argued it necessary to get up to something. Therefore, the recruiting in early 1942 that HMG and, more specifically, SOE were pursuing was simply in keeping with the policy they always had pursued of coordinating the efforts on the ground and using anyone willing to fight. It was also in keeping with earlier Foreign Office initiatives aimed at securing a clean transition at war's end by bringing all groups in line under the banner of Yugoslav liberation and the direction of HMG and, by extension, the RYG.⁴⁵

Better Results – The Pivot and what Motivated it

The British decision to pivot support to the Partisans came as the result of a lengthy process. Ultimately HMG viewed the Partisans as providing better results by British calculations and in relation to British and greater Allied objectives.⁴⁶ The reports and memoirs of BLOs with Partisan units provide valuable insight into British assessments on this front regardless of their inherent limitations and potential bias. Beyond the on the ground results the Partisans also played a larger political role in considerations concerning Anglo-Soviet relations.

As has been discussed, Hudson's initial reports painted Partisans as a disciplined and useful ally very early in HMG's Yugoslav policy evolution.⁴⁷ This was, however, not the real catalyst behind HMG support. It was the shifting needs of HMG's war efforts as the landscape of the war evolved. It was the Allied decisions taken at SYMBOL to focus on the Mediterranean theatre for a significant offensive action in 1943 that was the true catalyst. It was the need for greater activity that meant an end to HMG's ability to wait it out as previously considered.⁴⁸ Mihailovic's justifiable squeamishness concerning reprisals became a

⁴⁵ PREM 3-510-5 – Anthony Eden to PM on Mihailovic – 17 December 1942, 3.

⁴⁶ PREM 3-510-12 “CIGS to PM” 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM “Mihailovic” 17 December 1942; PREM 3-510-6 “Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill” 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-7 “Situation in Yugoslavia” 18 June 1943; PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill “Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute” 24 June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 “Selborne to Churchill” 29 June 1943; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet “Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee” 14 July 1943; PREM 3-510-9 “Churchill to Eden” 28 July 1943; PREM 3-510-9 “From the British Mission to Partisan GHQ” 20 September 1943; PREM 3-409-6 “SOE Major Contributions” 22 September 1943; PREM 3-510-9 Note on the Situation in Yugoslavia 27/28 October 1943; CAB 66-43-15 War Cabinet “Weekly resume no. 219” 11 November 1943, 6; FRUS “The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran,” 537-8; The MacLean Report *Found in*, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation* 305; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 463-6; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 468.

⁴⁷ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 34; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 133-4, 152, 182.

⁴⁸ FRUS “Casablanca Conference Papers,” 584, 747-51, 761, 770; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.104, 92.

liability to British interests and that forced the re-evaluations witnessed concerning the perceivably more active, if politically undesirable, Partisans.⁴⁹

It was not that HMG's view of the Partisans was distorted. HMG was becoming aware that Partisan activity had caused increased reprisals, which had damaged support among the local population. It was simply that HMG did not value those considerations with the same weight it did activity against the Axis occupation, regardless of success.⁵⁰ With the growing activity in the Mediterranean any action seen to tie up forces on major Allied flanks was well received, especially by their Soviet ally.⁵¹

Activity alone was not enough, however, to justify sole support and HMG forgoing the opportunity to hedge its bets. To explain this one must look to the civil war and why it was perceived as necessary for HMG to make a choice between Mihailović and Tito. This came down to the issue of receptiveness. That is, the receptiveness of both Tito and Mihailović to cooperating with each other to further Allied ambitions of which there seemed little hope, as well as their willingness to cooperate with the greater Allied agenda.

By the time of Maclean's arrival any suggestion of coordinating activity between Tito and Mihailović was viewed as foolhardy by prevailing assessments within HMG.⁵² This very issue was a prime consideration of the Maclean mission and he was quick to stress in his reports from the field, reports Churchill was personally reviewing, that Mihailović represented an insurmountable obstacle to Partisan cooperation, which was becoming far more valued.⁵³

Beyond this was the reality that HMG did not have the ability to dictate terms to the Partisans and both sides were aware of this fact.⁵⁴ It is without a doubt the need for HMG to stimulate as much activity as possible within Yugoslavia in

⁴⁹ The Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations *Found in*, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 315; PREM 3-510-10 "Stevenson to FO" 11 December 1943; PREM 3-511-12 - CAB 66-49-34 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "FO Report from Lt-Col. Hudson: Recommendations" 21 April 1944, 1-3; HANSARD "War and the International Situation" 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795.

⁵⁰ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 107; FO 898-157 "Pearson to Howard" 12 February 1943, enclosing Bailey's review of the Partisans.

⁵¹ USSR, *Correspondence*, No.112, 98, No.129, 111.

⁵² PREM 3-512-8 "Bring. Maclean to PM Churchill" 24 September 1944; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 340; The MacLean Report *Found in*, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 305.

⁵³ PREM 3-510-9 Eden to Churchill "Lt.Col. Maclean's mission to Yugoslavia" 2 August 1943; PREM 3-510-9 "From the British Mission to Partisan GHQ" 20 September 1943; PREM 3-510-9 "Report: From the British Mission [Maclean] to Partisan GHQ" 29 September 1943.

⁵⁴ PREM 3-510-7 "Situation in Yugoslavia" 18 June 1943, 5; PREM 3-510-9 Eden to Churchill "Lt.Col. Maclean's mission to Yugoslavia" 2 August 1943; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 77; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 313, 340.

support of Allied Mediterranean operations coupled with the little leverage HMG held with the Partisans that allowed Tito to dictate terms.⁵⁵

Italian capitulation had left the Partisans in control of coastal areas of southern Yugoslavia, notably Montenegro. The Partisans even managed to gain control for some time of the harbour at Split and saw operations as far north as Istria. With the help of the Royal Navy they were able to extend their reach to several of the Dalmatian islands.⁵⁶ This all placed Tito in a much stronger position to receive supplies and support from HMG via ships than that of Mihailović via air drops. It would also see the Partisans operating in a coastal area of far greater value to not only the Allies but also the Axis, meaning they were likely to achieve the objective of occupying Axis forces at a far greater level. The naval dimension of the situation was not lost on any element or individual within HMG and the British, in a good position to do so, were eager to exploit it.⁵⁷

There is little wonder that the confluence of these various considerations led to the pivot in support towards Tito. It was in part for HMG a simple return on investment. The best bang for the buck, where the effort would produce the best results, was perceived correctly or incorrectly given the material available, to have been the Partisans. Furthermore it coincided with what HMG was most capable of doing in the way of naval supply drops. All of these considerations reached this confluence at a time when Brig. Maclean, as well as the American OSS operative, Mjr. Farish, who had accompanied Maclean to Tito's HQ, were submitting their rather lengthy and confident assessments of Partisan value.⁵⁸ The situation had truly reached critical mass with Maclean's arrival in Cairo just ahead of the

⁵⁵ CAB 80-76 War Cabinet: Chiefs of Staff Committee "Supplies for Guerrilla Activities in the Balkans: Note by Lt.Gen. Ismay" 10 November 1943; FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers" 747; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.112, 98; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 406, 468; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 188-9.

⁵⁶ PREM 3-510-9 Note on the Situation in Yugoslavia 27/28 October 1943, 3; CAB 66-43-15 War Cabinet "Weekly resume no. 219" 6; CAB 66-44-2 War Cabinet "Weekly resume no. 222"; CAB 66-44-32 War Cabinet "Weekly resume no. 225" 5; CAB 66-44-41 War Cabinet "Weekly resume no. 226," 5-6; CAB 66-43-15 War Cabinet "Weekly resume no. 219" 6; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 468; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 330-1, 464; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 227; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 410.

⁵⁷ FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 331, 478-80; CAB 66-44-2 War Cabinet "Weekly resume no. 222" 2 December 1943, 5-6; CAB 66-44-32 War Cabinet "Weekly resume no. 225" 23 December 1943, 5; PREM 3-511-3 "Churchill to Molotov" 14 April 1944; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 98; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 330-1; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 188-9.

⁵⁸ FRUS The Farish Report, 29 October 1943 "Report from the Office of Strategic Services Bari, Italy" The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 609, *Also found in*, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 363; FO 371-37615 - PREM 3-511-2 "The MacLean Report a.k.a the 'Blockbuster' Report" 6 November 1943, *Also found in*, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 305.

SEXTANT and EUREKA with his *Blockbuster* report.⁵⁹ As Maclean describes it, Cairo was “buzzing,” and it would seem the groupthink phenomenon was beginning to show itself.⁶⁰

Elements within HMG were increasingly coming onside with the pro-Partisan argument, not unjustifiably. It should be remembered that at a time when HMG was struggling to cajole Mihailović to take any sort of action against Axis rail traffic, the Partisans were not simply attacking rail traffic but they had gone so far as to seize a rail line and locomotive.⁶¹ By the time of Maclean’s arrival, Partisans were operating a somewhat erratic but reliable Partisan railway, a fact both Maclean and Deakin reported on.⁶² The difference between the two groups in the eyes of HMG was, indeed, night and day.

The internal momentum within peripheral branches of HMG compelled even the core policy apparatus of HMG to continue forward. Even Churchill himself, who would grow increasingly concerned over Tito’s intentions, was somewhat pigeonholed by both internal and Allied momentum and pressures.⁶³ Discussions in the House of Commons in February 1944 demonstrate that government and public opinion had decidedly shifted to a pro-Tito stance that Churchill was actively trying to ratchet back.⁶⁴ Churchill spoke in balanced terms stating:

⁵⁹ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 182-4; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 390; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 211-4.

⁶⁰ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 401-2.

⁶¹ PREM 3-510-10 “Immediate for Chiefs of Staff, From Air Ministry” [presumed] 22 December 1943; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 202-3; WO 201/1599; WO 202/140 “sheet 424” 19 December 1943; PREM 3-511-12 “HMG Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government in Cairo [Stevenson] to FO” 15 February 1944; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 437; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 115; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 431.

⁶² PREM 3-510-9 Note on the Situation in Yugoslavia 27/28 October 1943, 2; CAB 66-43-15 War Cabinet “Weekly resume no. 219” 11 November 1943, 6; PREM 3-409-5 “SOE Activities” Quarter: October to December 1943, 6; CAB 66-44-2 War Cabinet “Weekly resume no. 222” 2 December 1943, 5-6; CAB 65-36-34 War Cabinet: Balkans “Conclusions” 6 December 1943, 227; CAB 66-44-32 War Cabinet “Weekly resume no. 225” 23 December 1943, 5; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 343; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 264.

⁶³ PREM 3-513-8 Churchill to FO 25 April 1945 Requesting Dossier on Tito; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet “Minutes of Conference at Naples 12 August 1944; PREM 3-513-6 “Churchill to Halifax (Ambassador to USA)” 18 April 1945; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 230; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 334-6.

⁶⁴ HANSARD Sir James Grigg – Military Operations in Yugoslavia 18 January 1944 18 January 1944 vol 396 cc39-41; HANSARD “War and International Situation” 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 18 ; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 470.

the position is a somewhat complicated one, and I hope to have the confidence of the House in working with my right hon. friend the Foreign Secretary to unravel it, as far as possible, in concert with our Russian and United States Allies.⁶⁵

Three months later in, before Parliament Churchill would go further:

We do not know what will happen in the Serbian parts of Yugoslavia...It must, however, be remembered that the question does not turn on General Mihailović alone. There is a very large body, amounting to perhaps 200,000, of Serbian peasant proprietors who are anti-German but strongly Serbian, and who naturally hold the view of a peasant ownership community in regard to property. They are not enthusiastic in regard to communism as are some of those in Croatia and Slovenia.⁶⁶

Regardless of the possible concerns held by core elements of HMG's policy apparatus pressure and momentum were an unseen force steering HMG's policy course. This pressure was being clearly felt. Like a raft being carried downstream British policy could not opt to change direction but only navigate a course down the river in which it flowed.

With this course set, Allied interests would increasingly shift further afield and away from Yugoslavia. This would leave HMG's policy in a lurch of sorts where a great deal would be left in the hands of the Yugoslavs to decide, now out of the reach of HMG's intentions by way of decreasing means. The pro-Partisan momentum was increasingly becoming a beast impossible to tame even if HMG had decided to reverse course. This was a realisation that Churchill himself came to as events proceeded.⁶⁷ The PM expressed his resignation to this distasteful truth with startling frankness in a letter to Eden, 21 September 1944, stating:

There was probably a period in 1943 when we could have procured the return of the King to Serbia and a good arrangement made with Tito. This moment was lost by "contradiction" [in policies] ... We now have to deal with the result of situation which is not at all agreeable ... We have ... to be careful to give [Tito] no excuse to

⁶⁵ HANSARD "War and International Situation" 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795.

⁶⁶ HANSARD "Foreign Affairs" 24 May 1944 vol 400 cc762-829.

⁶⁷ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 317-8; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 253; PREM 3-512-5 "Churchill to Foreign Secretary Eden" 31 August 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 471; PREM 3-512-5 "Foreign Secretary Eden to PM Churchill" 15 September 1944.

throw himself completely into the hands of Russians. This has become not only possible but probable now.⁶⁸

As control over the course of events transferred more and more from HMG into that of the Partisans, and the two increasingly diverged in objectives, HMG would continue to make efforts to realign the situation but the reality was the situation had gone beyond HMG's means.

Fait Accompli – Reconciling the De Facto and De Jure

In *Eastern Approaches* Maclean demonstrated a level of pragmatism in his assessments that adds a valuable dimension to discussions of HMG's Yugoslav policy. He wrote,

The probability that Yugoslavia would before long, by one agency or another, be freed from the Germans made it desirable to reach without delay some kind of compromise which would enable us to reconcile our *de jure* obligations with the *de facto* situation which existed inside the country.⁶⁹

This introduces another level to HMG's assessments that has begun to develop within this discussion of momentum. HMG was more and more a servant of circumstance as opposed to its master, carried along by the current of events. The reality was that, regardless of HMG's intentions, objectives, or desires, there was an element of chaos beyond their control. Events on the ground inside Yugoslavia, as much as the greater events of the war, dictated the course of policy, the options opened, and at times compelled HMG to set a particular course. There is such an element at play in HMG's move to Tito. That is, it was *fait accompli*.⁷⁰

The arrival of Maclean in Cairo with *Blockbuster* was the articulation of a growing view of Yugoslav events that saw Tito's stronger, more ruthless, and active force as playing a decisive role in post-Yugoslav events. This compelled HMG, despite the political distastefulness of it all, to embrace the Partisans.⁷¹ The Foreign Office would express as much in a report to Washington dated 7 December 1943, which explicitly stated "the more likely prospect [is] Yugoslav being unified

⁶⁸ PREM 3-512-5 – PM Churchill to Foreign Secretary Eden – 21 September 1944.

⁶⁹ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 462.

⁷⁰ PREM 3-510-10 "FO to Washington, Repeated to Mr. Stevenson" Cairo, 7 December 1943, 2-3; CAB 66-51-4 War Cabinet "Soviet Policy in the Balkans" 7 June 1944, 1-2.

⁷⁰ CAB 66-51-4 War Cabinet "Soviet Policy in the Balkans" 7 June 1944.

⁷¹ PREM 3-510-10 "FO to Washington, Repeated to Mr. Stevenson" Cairo, 7 December 1943, 2-3; CAB 66-51-4 War Cabinet "Soviet Policy in the Balkans" 7 June 1944, 1-2.

⁷¹ CAB 66-51-4 War Cabinet "Soviet Policy in the Balkans" 7 June 1944; PREM 3-511-2 "Eden to Churchill" 28 December 1943; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 390; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 181.

after the war in the form of a communist state closely linked to the Soviet Union.”⁷² The ‘why of it’ was, in part, rooted in HMG’s greater concerns. Looking at the long view, HMG was anxious to avoid any chaotic post-war transitions that could serve to destabilize the region and threaten British interests, particularly in Greece.⁷³

Members of HMG including Eden were becoming painfully aware of an uncomfortable truth; the RYG alone might not be able to meet HMG’s needs concerning the maintenance of a unified Yugoslavia at war’s end.⁷⁴ To do this would require the acquiescence and assistance of the Partisans and this is why HMG would not stop until war’s end to find a way of reconciling King Peter and the Partisans in hopes of achieving both the maintenance of the Yugoslav monarchy and the peaceful transition to a unified post-war Yugoslavia.⁷⁵

Greater Allied factors would come intervene to inhibit HMG intentions in Yugoslavia. Churchill and Stalin along with CGIS Alanbrooke and Eden, had met in Moscow for the Fourth Moscow Conference TOLSTOY, 9 October 1944, to work out the finer details of the post war Balkan map. Churchill and Stalin had come to their now infamous ‘*percentage agreement*’ often referred to as the ‘*fifty-fifty arrangement*’ in Yugoslav historiography. Essentially Churchill and Stalin agreed to specific levels of shared involvement in various countries of the region creating post-war spheres of influence, which guaranteed HMG’s interests in Greece.⁷⁶ This greater consideration would come to, in part, limit HMG’s in Yugoslavia.

HMG would also begin to become keenly aware that the long feared nature of Communism so mistrusted had come to the forefront of events. Increasingly, the Communists were becoming viewed as subversive, dishonest brokers, keen to advance their own agendas where and how they could. Perhaps a somewhat hypocritical view, it was nonetheless cause for HMG to begin raising alarm bells

⁷² PREM 3-510-10 –From FO to Washington – Repeated to Mr. Stevenson, Cairo – 7 December 1943, 2-3.

⁷³ PREM 3-511-2 “Eden to Churchill” 28 December 1943; PREM 3-409-7 Selborne to Churchill “Communism in Resistance Movements” 10 November 1943; PREM 3-510-10 “FO to Washington, Repeated to Mr. Stevenson” Cairo, 7 December 1943, 2-3.

⁷⁴ PREM 3-511-2 “Eden to Churchill” 28 December 1943; PREM 3-512-5 “Foreign Secretary Eden to PM Churchill” 13 September 1944.

⁷⁵ PREM 3-511-1/2 War Cabinet “Eden and Churchill correspondence” early 1944; PREM 3-511-2 “Eden to Churchill at SEXTANT” 7 January 1944; PREM 3-511-7 “Churchill to Eden” 9 January 1944; PREM 3-510-10 “Eden to Churchill” 22 December 1943; PREM 3-512-5 “Foreign Secretary Eden to PM Churchill” 13 September 1944.

⁷⁶ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 195; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 227-8; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 461; Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance*, 176; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 482

and working hard to find ways of limiting a move they had little direct influence over.⁷⁷

By the spring of 1944 HMG was already moving towards resigning themselves to their fate. They were increasingly aware they had been sold a bill of goods by Tito which was not as promised. Churchill was already moving away from Tito but was also increasingly aware HMG was in a difficult position regarding preserving the security of their interests in Greece.⁷⁸ Ultimately, as Eden once made painfully clear, Yugoslavia did not weigh as high in importance to HMG as Greece and that one might need to be traded for the other.⁷⁹ There was also a sense, articulated by Maclean quite astutely it would prove, that perhaps Tito had become his own man and broken free of the Comintern.⁸⁰ If this was true not only could Tito be worked with, but a Tito-led Communist Yugoslavia might also prove a useful buffer with the Soviets for HMG's interests in Greece.⁸¹

The pragmatist realized that the Red Army before long would be in that part of the world, whereas the armies of the Dominions would largely be absent.⁸² Some, such as Maclean, argued that it was perhaps logical that Slavic ties bind Yugoslavia to the emerging Soviet sphere. Individuals such as Eden and Selborne were likewise, reluctantly, coming round to the idea while still raising alarms over Communist intentions *vis-à-vis* British interests.⁸³ Eden's focus on one particular

⁷⁷ PREM 3-409-7 Selborne to Churchill "Communism in Resistance Movements" 10 November 1943; PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944.

⁷⁸ HANSARD "Foreign Affairs" 24 May 1944, vol 400 cc762-829; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 92; CAB 66-51-4 War Cabinet "Soviet Policy in the Balkans" 7 June 1944, 1; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 163-4; PREM 3-510-10 "FO to Washington, Repeated to Mr. Stevenson" Cairo, 7 December 1943, 2-3; CAB 66-48-46 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia; PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944; PREM 3-512-5 "Foreign Secretary Eden to PM Churchill" 13 September 1944; PREM 3-511-12 "Maclean: The New Yugoslavia in Relation to the Soviet Union" 18 May 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 523-4; PREM 3-513-6 "Churchill to Foreign Secretary" 11 March 1945; PREM 3-513-10 Churchill "Private Office Memo" 16 April 1945; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 333-4.

⁷⁹ Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 523-4.

⁸⁰ PREM 3-512-8 "Bring. Maclean to PM Churchill" 24 September 1944; PREM 3-513-5 War Cabinet "Bring. Maclean: A note on Anglo-Yugoslav Relations" 28 February 1945; PREM 3-513-5 War Cabinet "Bring. Maclean: An Appreciation of the Situation in Yugoslavia" February 1945.

⁸¹ CAB 66-48-46 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Report from Maclean" 17 April 1944; PREM 3-513-5 War Cabinet "Bring. Maclean: An Appreciation of the Situation in Yugoslavia" February 1945.

⁸² PREM 3-511-12 Maclean "The New Yugoslavia in Relation to the Soviet Union" 18 May 1944; PREM 3-512-5 "Foreign Secretary Eden to PM Churchill" 13 September 1944.

⁸³ CAB 66-51-4 War Cabinet "Soviet Policy in the Balkans" 7 June 1944; PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944; CAB 66-48-46 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Report from MacLean" 17 April 1944.

issue gives voice to a concern shared by the entirety of HMG, stability. In a letter to Churchill on 13 September 1944, Eden expressed the reality of this concern as well as the limits of HMG's options in addressing the problem:

there is a grave danger that liberation may only mean the outbreak of civil war or the bloody suppression of non-partisans in Serbia by Tito's men backed up perhaps by Russian arms. The only chance of avoiding such a situation is that control of the country should be assumed at the earliest possible moment military conditions permit by a single united Yugoslav Government fully recognised and supported by all the United Nations, in particular the Soviet Union.⁸⁴

The argument was also made that establishing firm relations with Tito and acting to facilitate this transition might best serve to ensure a future working relationship, and protect British interests regardless of political colouring.⁸⁵

Soviet expansion into the region had produced a concern for HMG. Churchill's '*percentage deal*' with Stalin was not being honoured and this left HMG in a bit of a panic. They would essentially be compelled to rely on Stalin's good graces to preserve their position in Greece unless HMG was willing to ignite the entire region in another massive conflict or simply lose Greece to the Communists as well. With this in mind, HMG came round to a bitter realisation; they would have to accept Yugoslavia as an unavoidable 'cost of doing business.'⁸⁶ They were presented with a *fait accompli* that left HMG's greater interests threatened.

Although Churchill and Eden continued to debate finer points of policy in Yugoslavia, they were both slow to accept the reality and even slower to resign themselves to it. By the spring of 1944 the reality was that what little HMG had done or could do had little effect on what did occur. Eventually HMG's position concerning Yugoslavia would come to be seen as untenable and HMG were unable, despite the effort, to preserve the King Peter's throne. It was Greece that was the greater concern to HMG and played a role in the feebleness of the British position regarding Yugoslavia. Increasingly, HMG had become disillusioned with their Soviet ally as much as with Tito who was presenting HMG with a *fait*

⁸⁴ PREM 3-512-5 – Foreign Secretary Eden to PM Churchill – 13 September 1944.

⁸⁵ CAB 66-51-4 War Cabinet "Soviet Policy in the Balkans" 7 June 1944; CAB 66-48-46 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Report from Maclean" 19 April 1944; PREM 3-513-5 War Cabinet "Bring. Maclean: An Appreciation of the Situation in Yugoslavia" February 1945.

⁸⁶ PREM 3-513-10 - Churchill "Memo to his Private Office" 25 April 1945; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 334; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 482-3, 523

acompli that was supported by the Soviets.⁸⁷ HMG was forced into the bitter position of accepting a Communist Yugoslavia as a *fait accompli* and swallow their inability to assert their aims regarding Yugoslavia by the realities of the Soviet position on the ground. HMG was essentially presented with what would occur and compelled to make their peace within those parameters. Despite all of the manoeuvring and influencing HMG was simply not on the ground or in a position politically to alter the course of events in Yugoslavia to the degree that would be necessary to ensure the return of the King.

Closing

The criticisms of HMG's pivot to Tito seem largely rooted in other potential avenues revealed, in part, by the clarity and distortion of hindsight as well as eventual resultants. When moving past this judgment a great many factors emerge that lend credence to HMG's decisions in the moment. Although the argument could be made that it was not the only course available, through the development of this thesis it has been shown how decision compounded with decisions to develop a course and momentum. In understanding context, timelines, pressures, and HMG's perception and discussion of events in relation to other factors inside and outside of Yugoslavia, one can understand how and why HMG could have moved in the direction chosen.

There is no great mystery to it; HMG was not duplicitous, nor were they hoodwinked. One can argue that it was not the best choice but one cannot be mystified by why HMG would, at least, consider the Partisans as a viable course. Furthermore, when considering the cumulative effect generated by decision compounding upon decision, one is no more mystified over how events steered HMG as much as HMG steered events.

Looking at the issues covered in this chapter and reflecting upon the nature of the conversations contained within the archival material, several points seem clear. HMG was quite aware of the Partisans from very early in the game and became aware of Tito within a few months of learning of Mihailović. The intelligence concerning these groups developed in parallel, and although HMG's support fell first and solely to Mihailović, the suggestion that HMG had only become aware of Tito later and was changing horses mid-stream seems, at least, disingenuous.⁸⁸ Building upon this fact, beyond simply being much better informed on the nature of both Mihailović and Tito's organizations than previously thought HMG's understanding was also more subtle and nuanced than originally thought.

⁸⁷ PREM 3-513-10 Churchill "Memo to his Private Office" 25 April 1945

⁸⁸ Barker, "Review of *Patriot or Traitor*", 456-457; Clissold, "Review of *Ally Betrayed*," 265; Wheeler, "Review of *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies*," 878-880; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 117-119; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 230; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, ix; Stafford, "Upstairs/Downstairs," 56.

HMG was quite politically sensitive towards the significance of both the Četniks and Partisans.

The reality of these groups did not escape HMG but that did not preclude their potential usefulness. HMG's recruitment of communists, for example, is not a break in policy but the logical result of seeking out subversives to "set Europe ablaze."⁸⁹ HMG was well aware of the forces they were attempting to wield. Therefore it would seem that it was not the Communists that used HMG so much as HMG who was trying to use them. Furthermore, courting communists did not represent a break in policy as suggested.⁹⁰ It instead may be argued that it suggests an internal consistency in HMG's policies which justifies the pivot towards Tito in keeping with HMG's aim of utilizing resistance movements to advance Allied objectives.

One could present the counter argument that although supporting the advancement of Allied wartime policies the pivot towards Tito ran counter to HMG's long-term post-war interests. It is here where the confusion sets in. HMG was not sacrificing long-term post war interest in the name of expediency and immediate need. HMG instead sought to secure both needs. This was prevented when HMG was confronted with realities on the ground it could not change; it was *fait accompli*. The Partisans were stronger and wider spread, and the fact they held the coast, making supply easier, only compounded this reality. Partisans were also better occupying Axis forces. Soviet pressures, furthermore, combined with an Allied shift to France, left the Red Army as the only Allied military of any substance that would have boots on the ground in Yugoslavia at war's end. Politically, HMG saw advantage in allowing Yugoslavia to go communist if it ensured a smooth transition preventing post-war chaos and, most importantly, secured Soviet acquiescence to HMG's hand in Greece.⁹¹

For HMG, in the *context of the moment*, Tito seemed the logical course to take on many fronts. It may have been a distasteful choice but of those available, there were few options and none that were any better. It was, in essence, the least bad choice of several bad choices. Examining HMG's views and considerations concerning Tito, one can clearly see why HMG pursued Partisan cooperation as

⁸⁹ *The National Archives of the UK*. "Guide reference: Military Records Information 26, Intelligence and security services" London. 2015.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/research-guides/intelligence-records.pdf>; Seaman, *Special Operations Executive*, 7-18; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 6-7; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 54; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 109.

⁹⁰ Barker, "Review of *Patriot or Traitor*", 456-457; Clissold, "Review of *Ally Betrayed*," 265; Wheeler, "Review of *Tito, Mihailović, and the Allies*," 878-880; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 117-119; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 230; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, ix; Stafford, "Upstairs/Downstairs," 56.

⁹¹ CAB 66-51-4 – War Cabinet – Soviet Policy in the Balkans; PREM 3-513-10 - Churchill memo to his Private Office – 25 April 1945; Letter from Churchill to Sir Orme Sargent – 20 April 1945 *found in* Lees, *Rape of Serbia*, 334.

well as a clear apprehension about feeling compelled to do so. One can prove unequivocally that HMG was not blind to the perils and why HMG felt the perils might be mitigated. One can also see how a pivot towards Tito could be, in some respects, viewed as a continuation of British policy concerning resistance movements. So too can one see HMG felt it a terribly regrettable thing. Revisionists may not be wrong to characterize it as they have. However, in calling it a betrayal one must ignore that when the pitfalls and perils HMG was working to avoid concerning the Partisans became unavoidable HMG was not blind to them nor too weak or unmotivated to confront them. Indeed, HMG struggled tremendously to attempt to balance support of Tito with their desire not to abandon the Yugoslav Crown. It was only the reality that events themselves took command and wrested HMG's abilities from intentions that prevented HMG from intervening in post-war Yugoslavia.

When one considers these points a new view into the evolution of policy develops. This narrative of events is far less sensational and it can be difficult comprehend that the all-powerful British government was left impotent. Despite the most measured approach, complete information, and purist intentions these events had a life of their own. Some of policy is simply left to the swirling abyss of chaos and is beyond any control. Such is the nature of wartime strategy.

Chapter 7
The Changing War: Considerations

If you're going through hell, keep going.
- *Winston Churchill*

Through the various avenues of examination taken by this thesis a reoccurring theme has emerged. Throughout the course of HMG's policy evolution in Yugoslavia, issues from far afield and well detached from the Yugoslavs intruded to influence its course. There occurs throughout the evolution of HMG's relationship with the resistance, the RYG, and King Peter the intrusion of specific personalities and agencies within HMG. However, beyond this, external considerations also played an ever-present role.

We can identify some constants that seem to emerge when discussing any element of HMG's Yugoslav policy. From HMG's relationship with Tito, Mihailović, RYG, or the Yugoslav Crown it has been demonstrated that HMG was considering their own greater immediate and long-term regional Mediterranean interests in regards to Yugoslavia. HMG's discussions show that serious consideration was being paid to what the long-term political implications events in Yugoslavia held for HMG's regional interests. Furthermore, this examination has also shown how greater Allied considerations intruded upon and altered HMG's own considerations and aims.

HMG had Allied considerations to consider concerning Yugoslavia early in the war with the French before the *coup* and Axis invasion, during the course of supporting the resistance and discussing the pivot towards Tito with the Americans, and late in the war in 1944 and 1945 after the shift to Tito with, or concerning, the Soviets and post-war spheres of influence.¹ These intrusions would not just serve to compel HMG to alter course but cause HMG to alter even the lens by which they themselves viewed events. There is little doubt that the issue of greater Allied consideration heavily influenced HMG's evolving Yugoslav policy.

The personalities of agencies and individuals, the host of prominent figures within HMG such as Lord Selborne, Anthony Eden, CIGS Alanbrooke, and most of all Churchill held significant influence over the course of policy. Revisionists have heavily scrutinized Churchill's personal involvement as playing a central role

¹ PREM 3-513-10 - Churchill memo to his Private Office – 25 April 1945; CAB 66-4-9 – War Cabinet – The Balkan Problem; CAB 66-5-20 – Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council 19 December 1939; CAB 66-63-12 War Cabinet: ARGONAUT, 60; FRUS - The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943 - Report from the Office of Strategic Services – Bari, Italy 29 October 1943, 609; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 483, 523; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 226; Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 378; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 232; Lees, *Rape of Serbia*, 7.

in HMG's perceived about face concerning Yugoslav resistance.² Churchill's relationship with Eden and the debates over Yugoslav policy serve as an apt voice to articulate the various considerations within HMG's debate over Yugoslav policy.³ Although it does not cover the whole issue, just looking to discussions between Churchill and Eden would leave a reader with a relatively clear indication of what was happening inside HMG. It is this very issue that will be addressed in this chapter.

Understanding the role of some of these constants, when placed in appropriate context, can serve to add further depth to this examination and give the reader cause to consider the way some of these peripheral forces played central roles in HMG's policy evolution. One can then begin to understand underlying factors influencing not just HMG's policy course but also the fundamental view HMG held of events. These factors and the connection between distant priorities operating within a highly connected and complex matrix served as HMG's foundation for framing discussions as well as viewing events and objectives. Developing an understanding of these factors helps to acquire an appreciation of the chaos HMG was trying to bring order to and that chaos truly was the order of it all. If nothing else it is a reminder of Allison's assertion that "a large number of factors that constitute a governmental game intervene between issues and resultants."⁴

With this in mind the following chapter will chart the external influences of *Grossmachtpolitik*, greater Allied considerations, in order to demonstrate further ways in which HMG's policy was not their own. Instead, HMG's policy was subject to change caused not only by influences of the on the ground events but inversely large-scale considerations that had little to do with HMG's intentions in Yugoslavia. This will then be juxtaposed against an examination of Churchill as PM and the influence, or more appropriately, the lack of influence that even the great office of the PM held within its own government in steering both policy and the course of events. All of this feeds back into a larger more complete, slightly less satisfying narrative of HMG's Yugoslav policy formation that underlines the sheer vastness of the chaos facing policy decisions.

Grossmachtpolitik - Greater Allied Considerations

It is often said that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. From the examination of Tito and Mihailović, this study would seem to show that this is not always the case. This thesis has come to discover that allies does not mean friends.⁵ With this in mind, this thesis has shown at several moments how greater Allied

² Lees, *Rape of Serbia*, 222-3.

³ see PREM 3-511-1/2/7 "Eden-Churchill correspondence" December 1943 - February 1944.

⁴ Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 305.

⁵ Foot, *S.O.E.*, xiv.

considerations, the game of *Grossmachtpolitik*, intruded into events to redirect the course of policy. With all this discussion of ‘HMG Yugoslav policy’ this thesis has yet to formally and explicitly articulate that: HMG’s Yugoslav policy was actually partially ‘Allied Yugoslav policy.’ This distinction is not trivial and these two layers of policy would trade the subservient position. At various moments they were in concert and at others, at odds. The relationship was a sort of macabre symbiotic one.

Officially, HMG led the way on Allied policy in Yugoslavia.⁶ It was Britain’s wheelhouse, and for the most part, the Soviets and Americans were willing to follow, or at least appear to follow the British lead. In some respects, at least early in the war, British policy and British concerns in Yugoslavia would become official Allied policy and concerns. However, in many other cases, the inverse would become true. Many times Allied views or concerns regarding Yugoslavia would serve to alter the course of HMG’s policy.

HMG’s policies in the Balkans developed in somewhat of a slapdash way. Early discussions with the French saw a wide mix of assorted considerations thrown together. The development of policy evolved rapidly, changing course drastically with events such as the Italian entry into the war.⁷ The message to take away from this is that HMG’s Balkan, and more specifically Yugoslav policy, was never entirely their own. From the very outset it was being shaped by external factors beyond Britain’s control as well as Allied considerations. It was not proactive but reactive. When the French were eliminated from the conversation, HMG assumed sole responsibility for Balkan policy. It is for this reason of *de facto* ownership along with specific interests regarding Greece and Turkey as well as naval logistical considerations in the eastern Mediterranean that would not only compel HMG to take the lead on events but also serve to leave the Balkans, essentially Britain’s sphere of Allied policy.⁸

The entry of the Soviet Union and the United States into the war on the Allied side served to transform policy much in the same way French considerations and subsequent surrender had. The relationship between HMG and the Americans, as opposed to the Soviets, was however, quite different. They had both entered the

⁶ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 182.

⁷ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet “The Balkan Problem” 11 December 1939; CAB 66-5-20 “Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council” 19 December 1939; CAB 65-6-53 War Cabinet “Allied policy in the event of an Italian attack on Yugoslavia” 30 April 1940, 468; CAB 66-7-14 “British Strategy in a Certain Eventuality” 25 May 1940; CAB 66-7-14 “Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee” 11 June 1940.

⁸ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet “The Balkan Problem” 11 December 1939; CAB 65-22-8 “Campbell to Eden” 16 March 1941; CAB 65-22-9 “Secretary of State for PM” 19/20 March 1941; PREM 3-510-11 “Churchill to Eden” 20 March 1941; FRUS “Casablanca Conference Papers”; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 98; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 21.

war for essentially the same reason (having been attacked) but carried very different situations and baggage along with them. Both had their primary gaze focused elsewhere and were happy to allow HMG to take the lead in the Mediterranean, indeed, it was logical given the circumstances and British strategic outlook.⁹ For HMG the Mediterranean was a key strategic consideration because of a global naval-centric view that emphasised the region in regards to maritime supply.¹⁰

The main thrust of all this is that both HMG's major allies, the Soviets and Americans, walked into an Alliance with somewhat established policies, and a partner (HMG) with an established outlook. The Allied arrangements did not begin at one point on equal footing and with a single course. In the case of the Balkans much of Allied policy was already established and thus the Americans and Soviets inherited a particular framework that in the future they would be compelled to work from as a starting point if they wished to barter and trade in an effort to see the course altered. In the case of the Americans they not only inherited a policy framework but their entire intelligence organisation. The OSS was almost entirely dependent on British tutelage in its early stages.¹¹

For HMG this was a tremendously difficult affair. HMG's partners did not always appreciate British emphasis on the Mediterranean.¹² As Alanbrooke put it in his war diaries, 18 May 1943, after a meeting with the American COS:

in spite of all my hard work at Casablanca ... the Americans still failed to grasp how we were preparing for a re-entry into France through our actions in the Mediterranean. We had now opened the Mediterranean, and in doing so had regained the equivalent of about a million tons of shipping, thus regaining a great deal of the strategic mobility which we had lost. ... We had now opened the way for an attack on Sicily

⁹ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 182; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 1; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 115.

¹⁰ CAB 66-5-20 "Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council" 19 December 1939; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 331, 478-80; CAB 66-5-20 "Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council" 19 December 1939; CAB 66-44-2 War Cabinet "Weekly resume no. 222" 2 December 1943, 5-6; CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939; CAB 66-44-32 War Cabinet "Weekly resume no. 225" 23 December 1943, 5; PREM 3-511-3 "Churchill to Molotov" 14 April 1944; CAB 66-57-14 War Cabinet "Weekly resume no. 270" 2 November 1944, 7; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 98; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 330-1; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 188-9.

¹¹ Stafford, *Camp X*, xiv, xviii.

¹² FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 537-8; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.112, 98; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346-8, 406, 443, 463-5, 483; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 331-2; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 115; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 177.

and Italy and we were forcing the enemy to expend forces for the defence of Southern Europe, a region of bad intercommunication and likely to absorb more than its share. We were in fact taking the best road for the liberation of France and final defeat of Germany¹³

The ability of the British to effect policy in the region was deeply hampered by having to constantly try to compel their allies, upon whose support and good will they depended, to appreciate the importance of HMG's Mediterranean focus. From very early on HMG's course was constrained by the injection of both Soviet and American considerations that would strain both policy and relationships.¹⁴

Despite HMG's 'claim' to the Balkans, elements within the American war effort would begin to encroach. The OSS, not unlike the SOE, was eager to get up to something. HMG welcomed support but was also very hesitant to allow their allies to get too close and gum up the works of British interests.¹⁵ They were forced to walk a fine line and it was hardly a smooth course. M.R.D. Foot described the emerging relationship as such,

It is abundantly clear that the British and the Americans were rivals as well as allies, sometimes working closely together on operations but often disagreeing bitterly about their political aims. For both allies were engaged not just in a war against common enemies, in which co-operation delivered rich rewards, but also in laying the groundwork for postwar influence, where differing national interests and objectives came forcefully into play. [*sic*]¹⁶

The tension in the relationship began to show quite early on. President Roosevelt, in July 1941, before having officially entered the war, was already engaged in voicing concern over HMG's lead in the Balkans. Specifically, the President had taken objection to rumours that the British were making post-war territorial concessions for immediate action, in this case allegedly promising Trieste to Yugoslavia.¹⁷ At the same moment the Soviets were pulling HMG in another direction. By early September the Soviets had begun pleading for the opening of a large scale second front in Europe, a request that they would continue to hammer home until OVERLORD was decided upon.¹⁸

¹³ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 406.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 346, 348, 406, 410-11.

¹⁵ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 79-80.

¹⁶ Foot, *S.O.E.*, xiv.

¹⁷ Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 221.

¹⁸ PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden]," 31 October 1941; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.129, 111; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 537-8; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 237; Alanbrooke, *War*

The Anglo-American relationship was further complicated by the proprietary attitude of HMG towards Balkan policy after the American entry into the war. Soon after the American entry into the war, the RYG, dissatisfied with the level of support coming from the British, had made direct appeals to President Roosevelt to intervene. Initially responsive to the appeal, the uproar created by HMG, Churchill and the SOE in particular, left the Americans cowed and withdrawing from the region.¹⁹ This did little to help what was becoming an increasingly rocky relationship. Nor did it serve to dissuade the Americans of their distrust of HMG's post-war intentions in the region.²⁰

HMG's relationship with the Soviets fared little better during 1942. The Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov visited London in May 1942 to request that a second front capable of drawing off forty German divisions from the Eastern Front be opened in 1942.²¹ The response from Churchill had been less than what the Soviets had hoped for. Molotov would return in June 1942, this time armed with a US-Soviet draft on the urgency of opening a second front in 1942.²²

On 12 August 1942, the day when Churchill arrived in Moscow to explain to Stalin directly that there would be no second front in Europe in 1942, Soviet policy took a decided shift. An anti-Mihailović article appeared in the Soviet War News and it marked the beginning of a shift in Soviet Balkan policy.²³ Going forward, the Soviets began broadcasting, via Radio Free Yugoslavia, a pro-Partisan, anti-Mihailović propaganda campaign that would run directly contrary to the message being beamed into Yugoslavia by the BBC.²⁴ This was no small thing, the resistance in Yugoslavia, both Partisan and Četnik, placed high value on radio propaganda transmitted into the country.²⁵

Diaries, 346-8; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 367-70; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 84

¹⁹ Stafford, *Camp X*, xviii; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 120; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 79, 152, 182.

²⁰ FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 480; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 459; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 120.

²¹ CAB 66-24-50 War Cabinet "Regarding: USSR Proposed Treaty Between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union" 25 May 1942, 3-4; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 84.

²² Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 84.

²³ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 88; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 85.

²⁴ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 46, 59-60; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 82-5.

²⁵ FO 371-37615 - PREM 3-511-2 "The MacLean Report a.k.a the 'Blockbuster' Report" 6 November 1943, *Also found in*, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 305; The Armstrong-Bailey Recommendations *Found in*, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 315; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 50-4; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 65-6.

Allied pressures resonated throughout HMG's policy networks and this pressure was felt particularly hard by Churchill. While Eden and Molotov continued the difficult task of negotiating the troubled Anglo-Soviet relationship, and SOE attempted to keep OSS at bay, Churchill began pushing hard for greater action in the Balkans and the Mediterranean as a whole, as a way of opening a second front.²⁶ All of this tension was having an effect on HMG's internal relationships, most notably between the PM and both the CIGS and Foreign Secretary.²⁷ The relationship between Allies was showing its wear as well and most of 1943 would demonstrate the same urgency in Allied relations that have been discussed with regards to HMG's relationship with Yugoslav resistance.²⁸

Anglo-American relations, at the highest and lowest levels, began to suffer tremendously by the end of summer 1943. Maclean's mission had originally been an entirely British affair but the unavoidable addition of OSS officer Mjr. Farish had been an unwelcomed one. Maclean's efforts to keep Farish out of the loop did not play well at OSS.²⁹ At the same time, Churchill's dealings with the Americans and his personal relationship with Roosevelt were far from ideal. Churchill's hesitance with regard to OVERLORD had left CIGS Alanbrooke deeply concerned over what would come of negotiations at SEXTANT and EUREKA.³⁰ As Alanbrooke wrote in his war diary, 8 October 1943:

I am slowly becoming convinced that in his old age Winston is becoming less and less well balanced! I can control him no more. [he is] endangering his relations with the President and with the Americans, and so the whole future of the Italian campaign. He refused to listen to any arguments or to see any dangers!...The Americans are already desperately suspicious of him, and this will make matters far worse ... It should be remembered that the Americans always suspected Winston of having concealed desires to spread into the Balkans. These fears were not entirely ungrounded! They were determined that whatever happened they would not be led into the Balkans. At times I think they imagined I supported Winston's Balkan ambitions, which was far from being the case.

²⁶ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346-8, 360-66.

²⁷ PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346-8, 360-66.

²⁸ USSR, *Correspondence*, No.112, 98, No.129, 111, No.163, 137, No.167, 145; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 406, 443.

²⁹ "OSS – SSO, Report from Capt. Melvin O. Benson A.C. to Dept. Director SSO, 22 June 1944, Work and Experience with Marshal Tito and the Yugoslav Partisans." *NARA of the United States*, 28-9; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 297.

³⁰ PREM 3-510-13 "War Cabinet to General Wilson" 23 October 1943; PREM 3-510-13 "Former Naval Person [Churchill] to President Roosevelt" 23 October 1943; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 459.

Anyhow the Balkan ghost in the cupboard made my road non-the easier in leading the Americans by the hand through Italy!³¹

Leading up to these conferences, the Americans had begun to make very clear that did not share the same interest as HMG in the possibilities of the Mediterranean. SEXTANT and EUREKA would not go well for HMG, nor be at all pleasant for Churchill. Both the Americans and Soviets made clear that they viewed anything other than a cross-Channel invasion to be a sideshow.³² At EUREKA, a meeting of 'The Big Three,' 29 November 1943, Roosevelt and Stalin crushed Churchill's Balkan ambitions. Roosevelt stated that, "the danger of an expedition in the eastern Mediterranean might be that if not immediately successful it might draw away effectives which would delay OVERLORD," Stalin would go further by arguing that "the operations in the Mediterranean have a value but they are really only diversions."³³ Despite Churchill's enthusiasm for the Yugoslav resistance the Americans were not interested in increasing support beyond what was already established. They were happy to let Churchill have his hand in the Mediterranean but stressed it must not detract from operations elsewhere, essentially tying HMG's hands.³⁴

Stalin was even less impressed. He questioned Churchill's assertions regarding the number of units being held up in Yugoslavia, stating quite bluntly at a meeting of Combined Chiefs of Staff, 29 or 30 November 1943, that, "the figures given by the PM regarding German divisions in the Balkans were wrong."³⁵ This may be because, unbeknownst to his allies, Stalin had had the NKVD operating in Yugoslavia for over a month by the time of the conference and had been in contact with Tito far longer. Furthermore, Stalin was becoming less interested in seeing Britain gain a stronger footing in a region he was eyeing for himself.³⁶

If the conference had not been enough of a blow to HMG's view of their Allied relationship events which occurred soon afterwards were salt in the wound.

³¹ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 459.

³² FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 331-2, 352, 367-70, 478-80, 529, 537-8, 545-7; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 331-2, 352, 367-70; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.129, 111; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 443; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 103; Davidson, *Partisan Picture*, Ch. 1.

³³ FRUS Cairo Tehran / SEXTANT 1943, 538.

³⁴ FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 331-2, 352, 367-70, 478-80, 529, 537-8, 545-7; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 331-2, 352, 367-70; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.129, 111; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 443.

³⁵ PREM 3-510-9 "Churchill to Eden" 28 July 1943; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 545; FRUS Cairo Tehran / SEXTANT 1943, 547; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 483; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 370, 467.

³⁶ Office of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, *SEXTANT Conference*, 543-7; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 537-8; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 483; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 187; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 370.

It was clear that the Allies were not friends, it was also clear that again, as Foot has said, “the British and the Americans were rivals as well as allies” and both were “laying the groundwork for postwar influence, where differing national interests and objectives came forcefully into play.”³⁷

Almost immediately after Allied policy had been set at SEXTANT and EUREKA the Americans began to disregard it. The OSS was increasingly asserting its independence in Yugoslavia as it pursued its own policy with almost complete disregard for the British. It was not that the OSS disagreed with assessments of Tito’s usefulness; they were, however, keen to retain what usefulness Mihailović might still hold, Partisan objections be hanged.³⁸ The insistence of OSS to begin sending their own missions into Yugoslavia created tension between themselves and SOE that were hard to reconcile.³⁹

The independence of American policies was concern enough for HMG but learning that the OSS was, under Roosevelt’s direction, set to send missions into Mihailović’s HQ at the very moment HMG was attempting to disengage from the Četniks created considerable tension.⁴⁰ The American missions placed HMG’s relationship with both the Soviets and Tito in jeopardy. This came at a time when the Soviets were increasingly pushing HMG to cut Mihailović and the RYG off completely and recognize Tito, the Partisans, and the Partisans *de facto* interim government, the Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation (AVNOJ)’s authority; to call this an impossible situation would have been a polite description.⁴¹ Churchill’s direct appeal to Roosevelt on this point garnered nothing more than lip service. Although the President acknowledged the issue and promised to rectify it, the OSS was instructed to continue on regardless.⁴²

To be fair to the Americans their motivations were justifiably self-serving and although difficult for HMG’s relationship with the Soviets it was a necessity. In August 1943 US bombers had begun to fly missions against Rumanian oilfields at Ploesti from their bases at Foggia on the Adriatic.⁴³ In order to avoid the bulk of German air defenses their route took them over Yugoslavia. The Americans quickly began to lose a number of their aircrew that were forced to bail out on their return trip. These aircrews were, often enough, landing in old Serbia, right in Mihailović’s backyard. It was therefore necessary to maintain contact with

³⁷ Foot, *S.O.E.*, xiv.

³⁸ Ibid, 170; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 203; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 43; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 245-6.

³⁹ PREM 3-511-9 “HMG Ambassador to YGE, Cairo to FO” 22 February 1944; PREM 3-511-9 “Eden to Churchill” 20 February 1944.

⁴⁰ PREM 3-512-1 “HMG Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government in Cairo [Stevenson] to FO” 5 April 1944; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 43.

⁴¹ CAB 66-63-12 War Cabinet: ARGONAUT, 60.

⁴² PREM 3-512-1 “PM Churchill to President FDR” 6 April 1944; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 139-52.

⁴³ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 226.

Mihailović in order to coordinate their evacuation in what has become known as operation HALYARD, a colossal testament to Mihailović honour and commitment to the Allied cause.⁴⁴

Mounting Soviet pressure and the apparent disregard on the part of the Americans left a bitter taste in Churchill's mouth. It would serve in part to motivate his inclination to disengage from Yugoslav affairs, reluctantly given his attachment to the young King Peter.⁴⁵ Ironically, Churchill, in part, did so because he believed he would receive little to no support from the Americans not keen to see another about-face in Allied policy concerning Yugoslavia.⁴⁶ As Churchill put it in March 1945, the Americans "have never been enthusiastic about our pro-Partisan policy and it has always been with great difficulty that we have dragged them reluctantly behind us."⁴⁷ If communication had been better between these two allies those within HMG still advocating on behalf of Mihailović would have likely found at least a few sympathetic ears among the Americans.⁴⁸

When examining these greater Allied pressures at play one begins to see how events well outside of Yugoslavia and well outside HMG served to deeply influence HMG's Yugoslav policy. In considering Allied pressures one sees a new interesting and less apparent explanations or at least partial explanations as to why events flowed as they did. A great deal of chaos abounds in these events, some of it far afield.

The Churchill Factor

A major focus of blame for shortcomings and perceived failures of HMG's policy failures has often been Churchill. In some respect it may be the burden of leadership that is the cause. This tendency is especially prominent among Revisionists who view Churchill as personally responsible for the 'betrayal' of the Yugoslav Crown and Mihailović.⁴⁹ When one comes across a historical narrative that relies heavily on the RAM model and 'Great Man History' this fixation on blame becomes especially apparent. HMG was not however, a top-down

⁴⁴ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 139-52; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 226; Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 378.

⁴⁵ PREM 3-513-6 "Churchill to Foreign Secretary" 11 March 1945.

⁴⁶ PREM 3-511-9 "HMG Ambassador to RYG, Cairo to FO" 22 February 1944; PREM 3-512-1 "PM Churchill to President FDR" 6 April 1944; "OSS – SSO, Report from Capt. Melvin O. Benson A.C. to Dept. Director SSO, 22 June 1944, Work and Experience with Marshal Tito and the Yugoslav Partisans." *NARA of the United States*; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 128; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 334.

⁴⁷ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 7.

⁴⁸ PREM 3-513-5 War Cabinet "Bring. Maclean: A note on Anglo-Yugoslav Relations" 28 February 1945; PREM 3-513-10 Churchill "Memo to his Private Office" 25 April 1945; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 334; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 523.

⁴⁹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 317-8; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 55.

dictatorship, it was a committee of committees and Churchill was only one element, however prominent.⁵⁰

Churchill is, unsurprisingly, a highly contentious figure. His role in the development of policy is highly controversial, distorted, and incessantly reinterpreted. Regardless of whether one looks to a RAM model for a conceptual framework or digs more deeply into negotiations occurring within HMG between individuals and agencies, there is no denying that Churchill figured prominently.

This said, Churchill's level of control over events and how his behaviour and intentions are interpreted are a vastly more complex proposition to address than simply identifying a key figure. Churchill is larger than life; he is as much myth as he is man. It is not surprising then, to learn that there is little consensus from historians working on the issue of HMG's Yugoslav policy over what was happening inside the PMO beyond what the PREM files can now show.⁵¹ Understanding both Churchill's influence and limitations, his ambitions and anxieties, his virtues and shortcomings, are an important element to understanding policy but one which must be approached with deep caution and extensively prefaced.

Revisionists have seen Churchill as primarily responsible for steering HMG's policy development in Yugoslavia and argue that he was hoodwinked.⁵² They look to his eccentric behaviour, his self-injection into policy matters, sometimes bypassing the traditional hierarchy.⁵³ They argue that he stepped in and personally steered the course of events. This gives far too much credit to the role of the PM and his control over the course of events well outside his direct purview.⁵⁴ It is also a misreading of HMG's awareness of events. Churchill did not suddenly and inexplicably inject himself into Yugoslav policy after abruptly discovering from Klebe and Deakin that there was a Yugoslav resistance. Churchill had always been involved, more closely than usually recognized.

Churchill did have a propensity to go his own way, often going off script. He also had the tendency to rely on those close to him who he knew and trusted.⁵⁵ Churchill was also, as Martin described him, "and incurable romantic" with a certain streak of "big-power cynicism."⁵⁶ Churchill was a maverick of sorts who

⁵⁰ Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 267-9; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346, 401, 406, 410, 411.

⁵¹ See Reynolds, *In Command of History*.

⁵² Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, ix; Nora Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy: Yugoslavia and the West since 1939* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985); Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 6.

⁵³ Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 464; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 413.

⁵⁴ Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 267-8; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 6.

⁵⁵ PREM 3-511-2 - Churchill to Eden - 2 January 1944; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 123; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 376.

⁵⁶ PREM 3-511-2 "Churchill to Eden" 2 January 1944; PREM 3-511-7 "Churchill to Eden" 9 January 1944; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 450-1; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 123; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 55; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 248.

had wandered the political wilderness for some time in his career. In reading Churchill's daily correspondence one gets the feeling that Revisionist depictions are not entirely unfair. Churchill held a certain romanticism and seemed to have been searching for his Lawrence, a romantic great-guerrilla.⁵⁷ There is no doubt that these characteristics assisted in establishing HMG's policy of embracing anyone willing to fight the Axis and was cause for some strange bedfellows, but so too was it circumstance.⁵⁸ Churchill is not the master designer as much as he is a reflection of all the chaos swirling around HMG focused into one individual.

This swirling chaos is most notably demonstrated within the PM's extensive correspondence with Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. It would seem that the two men served as each other's counter-point.⁵⁹ The correspondence between the two is significant for demonstrating both the reach and limitations of Churchill, and for that matter, Eden as well. Both held limited control and were as much subject to the currents as anyone else.

The course of the war and events inside Yugoslavia created a *perceived* turning point in early 1943 that seemed abrupt and the result of Churchill's intervention when one pursues the Revisionist focus and approach. This is, however, a misreading of the situation; the momentum had been building to critical mass for quite some time. This *perceived* policy turning point, which is largely a construct of Revisionist historiography, holds very little relation to reality. Obviously early 1943 was a turning point in the Allied war effort. It is this reason and HMG's policy beginning to gain traction, which provides the real explanation, not a convoluted, suspicious, and selective reading of parallel events.

Events would begin to accelerate from this point forward and with increased activity came increased presence on the part of Churchill. At first glance it would appear, as the Revisionists have incorrectly framed it, that Churchill suddenly became personally invested in Yugoslav affairs, but again this had far more to do with the changing realities of the war effort, which brought long-standing pressures to bear. When one considers this along with the primary documents demonstrating a serious program of intelligence gathering concerning Yugoslavia in 1942 a completely different picture emerges.

⁵⁷ PREM 3-510-9 "Churchill to Eden" 28 July 1943; PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill message to the people of Yugoslavia" 13 April 1941; HANSARD "War Situation" 21 September 1943 vol 392 cc69-170; HANSARD "War and International Situation" 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 55, 182; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 294; Stafford, *Camp X*, 169; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 198-9; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 226; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 84-5.

⁵⁸ Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, 464.

⁵⁹ PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill "Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943; PREM 3-510-10 "Eden to Churchill" 22 December 1943; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 431-2; PREM 3-511-2 "Eden to Churchill" 1 January 1944; PREM 3-511-2 "Churchill to Eden" 2 January 1944; PREM 3-511-2 "Eden to Churchill at SEXTANT" 7 January 1944; PREM 3-511-7 "Eden to Churchill" 7 January 1944.

In looking through the events of 1943, contrary to Revisionist assertions that Churchill somehow took hold of HMG's policy and completely redirected it, in some regard the opposite seems true. Churchill served to articulate a growing interest in Partisan activity as well as dissatisfaction with the corresponding inactivity of Mihailović. This said, he had not created it. Instead, it was the product of a massive number of variables given focus by the PM. The policy flowed up to the PM as much as down from him. Events themselves also seemed to dictate the course more than HMG's desires. Churchill would have much preferred to work with a stable, cooperative RYG seeing their man on the ground provide an effective force.⁶⁰ The reality, however, of what both the RYG and Mihailović presented in the way of an ally compelled HMG to reluctantly begin placing greater emphasis on their peripheral efforts, such as recruiting undesirable communist elements, in order to achieve greater strategic and operational aims.

This is not to say Churchill's personal feelings on the matter held no sway. Alanbrooke describes Churchill as "temperamental like a film star, and peevish like a spoilt child," prone to fixation, as well as unpredictable and willing to alter strategy dramatically in short order.⁶¹ This can be inferred from the sudden adoption of establishing contact with all resistance groups inside Yugoslavia including approving missions to the Partisans in May 1943. This decision came with Churchill's urging just one month after the Mihailović speech row that Churchill seems to have taken as a personal affront.⁶² However, pressure for this move had been building in certain quarters of HMG for some time. There is no doubt, however, that in this instance Churchill's personality intervened to lend weight to the already developing momentum within HMG's policy.

HMG had already been pushing for greater activity to serve as screen for the Allied invasion of Sicily (HUSKY) and future Allied operations in Italy.⁶³ The

⁶⁰ PREM 3-511-2 – Eden to Churchill - 28 December 1943; PREM 3-409-7 Selborne to Churchill "Communism in Resistance Movements" 10 November 1943; PREM 3-510-10 "FO to Washington, Repeated to Mr. Stevenson" Cairo, 7 December 1943, 2-3; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; WO 208-2014 "DMI Report and Map" 23 August 1942; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 181-185, Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 88, 144-45; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 53; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170.

⁶¹ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 376, 450-1; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 213-4.

⁶² PREM 3-510-6 "Mihailovic speech row" 6 April 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Yugoslav PM's Message to General Mihailovic" 9 April 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan" 27 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Foreign Office draft of Churchill letter to Slobodan [J]Yovanovitch" 29 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 "Mihailovic speech row" 6 April 1943; CAB 80-69 "Draft Telegram from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav PM" May 1943; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 77.

⁶³ Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 463; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 115-18; PREM 3-510-7 Richard Casey to Admiral Cunningham "Enclosing report" 1 June 1943; FO 371-37609 Morton to Sargent 8 June 1943; FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers,"

Partisans were largely being viewed as the better bet on this front.⁶⁴ It should also be recalled that TRIDENT was also held May 1943.⁶⁵ TRIDENT had been far from a resounding success and tensions within the Anglo-American relationship were showing; Churchill is reported by Alanbrooke to have been left quite frustrated on this front.⁶⁶ According to Alanbrooke, Churchill had “done untold harm by rousing all the suspicions as regards ventures in the Balkans” damaging the Anglo-American relationship at the conference and it was only Alanbrooke’s wrangling Churchill back that had avoided more serious trouble.⁶⁷ The message to take away from this is that Churchill was as much a slave of momentum as anyone else and those whom he placed around him, such as Alanbrooke, were not beyond pulling the PM back or steering events in their own fashion.

This is not to say Churchill did not keep himself personally apprised of events, or for that matter was not closely involved. It is quite clear from Churchill’s correspondence that his interest was certainly held by the appointment of Deakin to the Partisan mission.⁶⁸ There is little doubt, however, that Churchill would have been equally interested were it not for Deakin. Churchill was notoriously well informed on all manner of wartime affairs.⁶⁹ His stamina is no doubt impressive and has fed the Churchill myth.

This has led to a further debate of more critical importance, the appointment of Fitzroy Maclean. Churchill intervened personally to see Maclean appointed as head of the diplomatic mission to Tito. His efforts were less than

761; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.112, 98; US Army Center of Military History, “US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans.”; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 226-7; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 406.

⁶⁴ PREM 3-510-7 “Situation in Yugoslavia” 18 June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 Selborne to Churchill 18 June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 Churchill to L.C. Hollins 23 June 1943; PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill “Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute” 24 June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 “Selborne to Churchill” 29 June 1943; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet “Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee” 14 July 1943; PREM 3-510-9 “From the British Mission to Partisan GHQ” 20 September 1943 ; PREM 3-510-12 “The Situation in Yugoslavia” 2 June 1942.

⁶⁵ PREM 3-510-7 Richard Casey to Admiral Cunningham “Enclosing report” 1 June 1943; FO 371-37609 Morton; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 143, 157.

⁶⁶ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 410, 406, 410-11; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 334.

⁶⁷ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 410, 406, 410-11.

⁶⁸ PREM 3-511-2 “Churchill to Eden” 2 January 1944; HANSARD “War and International Situation” 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795 ; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 144; PREM 3-510-7 “Selborne to Churchill” 18 June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 “Churchill to L.C. Hollins” 23 June 1943; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 226; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 464.

⁶⁹ Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 115, 120; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 53, 246; Stafford, *Camp X*, xiv; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 215.

subtle and were, in part, motivated by Churchill's intent to see that he had personal control and first class access to assessments and policy regarding Tito.⁷⁰

Churchill had for some months been personally corresponding with individuals like Lord Selborne, General Ismay, Gen. Alexander, and Gen. Wilson to ensure resources were allocated to Yugoslavia for BLO missions and supply runs. This is not at all strange given the level of importance being placed on Yugoslav resistance as part of HMG's greater Mediterranean strategy and the ongoing Italian campaign.⁷¹ This is even more logical when one considers Churchill's personal feelings regarding the Mediterranean as the desired place to focus on establishing a second front.⁷² Ultimately, Churchill was simply acting, as he should, as a point of concentration for coordination of policy.

When the time came for a diplomatic mission to Tito, Churchill argued that what was now required was "a daring Ambassador-leader with these hardy and hunted guerrillas."⁷³ He had in mind an individual that would serve him directly and was far more politically equipped than the average soldier.⁷⁴ Some suggest that this placed Tito at an unfair diplomatic advantage over Mihailović. There is legitimacy to this argument but there seems little other option available. Mihailović was dealt with through HMG's diplomatic relations with the RYG and missions to his HQ were strictly military affairs. Tito on the other hand had no state. The RYG had also protested any contact with resistance forces outside their control.⁷⁵ HMG's policy was at loggerheads and direct diplomatic relations with Tito were required. Furthermore, they needed to be kept quiet. Churchill's effort to handle them directly was as much aimed at limiting liability to as small a cadre as possible as it was control.

⁷⁰ PREM 3-510-9 "Churchill to Eden" 28 July 1943; PREM 3-510-9 "Eden to Selborne" 2 August 1943; PREM 3-510-9 "Churchill to Eden" 28 July 1943; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 168-9; FO 371/37610 Selborne to Eden 6 August 1943.

⁷¹ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 144; PREM 3-510-7 Selborne to Churchill 18 June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 "Churchill to L.C. Hollins" 23 June 1943; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 464; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 226-7.

⁷² Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 406, 463-4, 459; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.129, 111, No.163, 137.

⁷³ PREM 3-510-9 "Churchill to Eden" 28 July 1943.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-5 King Peter to Churchill "Generally very dissatisfied with my Government" 9 December 1942; CAB 66-60-21 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia 6 January 1945; CAB 66-63-12 War Cabinet: ARGONAUT; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 203.

To acknowledge a key point made by Revisionists, Maclean did operate outside of the standard hierarchy of other BLO missions. Churchill had gone so far as to brief Maclean himself at Chequers, 24-5 July 1943, at the very moment HMG was learning of Mussolini's resignation.⁷⁶ As Maclean describes it, Churchill's emphasis was on making an appraisal of Tito from a purely military point-of-view.⁷⁷ As Maclean put it, his task was "simply to find out who was killing the most Germans and suggest means by which we [HMG] could help them kill more. Politics must be a secondary consideration."⁷⁸ It would also seem Churchill was under little illusion as to whom the Partisans were politically if perhaps naïve over his ability to work with them, or perhaps work them over.⁷⁹ Maclean's reports would nonetheless emphasize considerations regarding Tito's politics.⁸⁰ This seems to have been unavoidable given Maclean's background. Furthermore, given the considerations mentioned in Maclean's reports it suggest that his writings may have designed to suit the emerging Orthodox narrative.

The Revisionist argument goes that Maclean's assessments, framed as they were, convinced Churchill to change course. This however may be a 'chicken or the egg' question. Lees argues that Churchill may have already had his mind made up when he briefed Maclean in July.⁸¹ This may very well be true and Lees may have a point. One might also suggest that most of HMG was already on board by that point and Churchill was merely reflecting this fact.⁸² There would be some

⁷⁶ McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 84-5; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 181.

⁷⁷ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 281, 402-3.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 281; Martin, *Web of Disinformation*, 194.

⁷⁹ PREM 3-513-5 War Cabinet: Bring. Maclean "A note on Anglo-Yugoslav Relations" 28 February 1945, 4; PREM 3-513-5 War Cabinet "Bring. Maclean: An Appreciation of the Situation in Yugoslavia" February 1945; PREM 3-512-8 "Bring. Maclean to PM Churchill" 24 September 1944; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 228; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 87, 195.

⁸⁰ PREM 3-510-9 "Report: From the British Mission [Maclean] to Partisan GHQ" 29 September 1943; PREM 3-510-10 "From FO to Washington: Repeated to Mr. Stevenson, Cairo" 7 December 1943; FO 371-37615 - PREM 3-511-2 "The MacLean Report a.k.a the 'Blockbuster' Report" 6 November 1943, *Also located in*, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 305; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 333; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 168; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 57.

⁸¹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 314-5; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 201; FO 371/44243 Churchill to Eden 19 January 1944; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 124, 163-4; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 97.

⁸² PREM 3-510-13 Telegram from COS to the Middle East Defence Committee, 27 June 1943; PREM 3-510-7 "Selborne to Churchill" 29 June 1943; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943; PREM 3-510-9 "From the British Mission to Partisan GHQ" 20 September 1943; FO 371-37615 - PREM 3-511-2 "The MacLean Report a.k.a the 'Blockbuster' Report" 6 November 1943, *Also found in*, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 305; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*,

truth to this; momentum was growing even among the last holdouts at the Foreign Office.⁸³ By this point it seems the move was inevitable and Churchill may have simply been pushing for groupthink conformity and a smooth transition.

It is the milieu of chaos that was Allied policy in the fall of 1943 as SEXTANT and EUREKA approached that indeed explains why the conferences were occurring. HMG and Allied policy were being pulled in multiple directions.⁸⁴ So, too, was Churchill. There was little agreement but a great many ideas on how to move forward. Churchill was laying the foundations for his continued pursuit of a Mediterranean-centric approach to the Allied war effort.⁸⁵

Churchill's selective and unquestioning emphasis on *Blockbuster* and the Partisans was aimed at creating continuity and conformity that could drive forward Mediterranean strategy. When one looks over the minutes and reports from SEXTANT and EUREKA it seems clear that Churchill entered knowing he was fighting an uphill or even losing battle in advocating his view.⁸⁶ This might explain his willingness to present *Blockbuster* as he did. Lees points out that the numbers presented in *Blockbuster* about Partisan strength were wildly outlandish. Moreover HMG and Churchill knew this.⁸⁷ This is an admittedly accurate criticism of Churchill. The interpretation presented by Lees, however, as to *why* is short-sighted and fails to consider events from the view presented here. Churchill did misrepresent events, this served to advocate strongly in favour of Tito, but it also served to advance HMG's and, more importantly, Churchill's greater regional considerations. At the conferences both the Americans and Soviets called Churchill's numbers into question. Churchill's arguments did, however, serve to compel them to acquiesce to a compromise that saved the Mediterranean campaign

182-4; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 390, 401-2; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 211-4; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 224.

⁸³ PREM 3-510-1 Labeled Mr. Martin "Your minute to Major Morton at Flag A" (Written in the margin to PM: following is report for which you asked at Chequers on latest information on the Yugoslav Revolt) 27 January 1942; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers," 538; PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet "Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee" 14 July 1943; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 230; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 42.

⁸⁴ Office of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, *SEXTANT Conference*, 385; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 331; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 97.

⁸⁵ Office of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, *SEXTANT Conference*, 385; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 33; PREM 3-510-13 "Former Naval Person [Churchill] to President Roosevelt" 23 October 1943; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 331-2, 352, 367-70; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346-8, 406, 443, 459, 463-5, 483; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 177.

⁸⁶ Office of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, *SEXTANT Conference*, 385; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran."

⁸⁷ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 211-4; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 87; WO 202/162 (17 March 1943) 2.

from complete neglect. In Churchill's eyes, this was critical for HMG, especially with concerns over the likelihood of OVERLORD's success.⁸⁸ Essentially, Churchill may have been trading for time.

Churchill, as well as elements of HMG like CIGS Alanbrooke, had harboured doubts about a cross-Channel approach and preferred a 'war on the periphery' approach in the Mediterranean. The concern was that a cross-Channel operation would slow down operations in Italy weakening the Mediterranean campaign.⁸⁹ This would in turn serve to, as Churchill put it, see "that our affairs ... deteriorate in the Balkans" which would allow the Aegean to remain in Axis hands.⁹⁰

HMG saw the Mediterranean as already bearing fruit and OVERLORD was a risk to this investment. As Alanbrooke put it:

[opening the] Mediterranean ... had regained the equivalent of about a million tons of shipping, thus regaining a great deal of the strategic mobility which we had lost. We had taken a quarter of a million prisoners and inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy both at sea and in the air. We had .. opened the way for an attack on Sicily and Italy and we were forcing the enemy to expend forces for the defence of Southern Europe, a region of bad intercommunication and likely to absorb more than its share. We were in fact taking the best road for the liberation of France and final defeat of Germany.⁹¹

HMG's aim focused on supporting the ongoing Italian campaign and widening the Allied move up the Mediterranean and Aegean. This Mediterranean approach was held the wiser move by HMG, which aimed to knock Italy out of the war, secure Greece, and bring Turkey into the war; principals established early and

⁸⁸ PREM 3-510-13 "War Cabinet to General Wilson" 23 October 1943; PREM 3-510-13 "Former Naval Person [Churchill] to President Roosevelt" 23 October 1943; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.112, 98, No.129, 111; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 478-80, 529, 537-8, 545-7; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 331-2, 352. 367-70; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346-8, 406, 443, 459, 463-5, 483; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 177; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 115.

⁸⁹ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 463-4.

⁹⁰ Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 332.

⁹¹ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 406.

promoted throughout the war.⁹² This aim had even led Alanbrooke to consider forcing the Dardanelles in neutral Turkey in an effort to encircle the Balkans.⁹³

By doing so, HMG had argued at SYMBOL in Casablanca, the Allies would be able to interrupt the Danube supply route to Germany, create a threat to the German lines of communication to southern Russia, and cut Axis sea communications between the Mediterranean and Black Sea.⁹⁴ HMG aim was to push Italy out of the war, bring Turkey in, and encircle the Balkans, which was seen as the best method to relieving Axis pressure on Russia.⁹⁵

Churchill viewed securing Yugoslavia as securing the flank of this Mediterranean advance, which would have seen the capture further Mediterranean islands while widening this advance north.⁹⁶ HMG aim was not to confront the Axis head-on but instead to wear it down in the Mediterranean. As Churchill described to Stalin in a letter, 12 February 1943, the aim was:

[the] clearing the Mediterranean, promoting an Italian collapse with the consequent effect on Greece and Yugoslavia and wearing down of the German Air Force; ... to be closely followed by an operation in the Eastern Mediterranean, probably against the Dodecanese.⁹⁷

As Alanbrooke describes it:

What was wanted was to knock all the props from under the Germans in the defence of the Mediterranean, let them alone to bear this full burden. We had been forced to miss some opportunities through lack of forces in the Mediterranean.⁹⁸

Moving forward from SEXTANT and EUREKA Churchill had secured a decision to swing support to Tito and Churchill certainly had the bit between his teeth. Eager to move things forward in the Balkans Churchill would go so far as to send his son Randolph with Maclean when he headed back into Yugoslavia.⁹⁹ There is no doubt that Churchill was eager and pushed hard; he was also clearly

⁹² CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939; CAB 65-22-8 "Campbell to Eden" 16 March 1941; CAB 65-22-9 "Secretary of State for PM" 19/20 March 1941; PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill to Eden" 20 March 1941; FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers," 744, 747; Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 98; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 21.

⁹³ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 465.

⁹⁴ FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers," 751.

⁹⁵ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 348.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 459, 465, 476.

⁹⁷ USSR, *Correspondence*, No.112, 98.

⁹⁸ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 476.

⁹⁹ Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 469.

swayed by his son's positive reports concerning Tito.¹⁰⁰ This however is the resultant and not the cause.

Tito and the Partisans had made it very clear that they would not work with Mihailović, viewed him as a traitor, and he stood in the way of establishing firm cooperation.¹⁰¹ It has been clearly established that Churchill was also firmly committed to King Peter and this is the motivation underlying Churchill's efforts to expedite the abandonment of Mihailović.¹⁰² Therefore, contrary to those who accuse Churchill of abandoning the Yugoslav Crown to Communists in an act of *realpolitik* duplicity, it would seem Churchill's motives may have been quite idealistic, if perhaps naïve or misguided.

This is further demonstrated by the knowledge that Churchill turned very sour on Tito, threatening to partition Yugoslavia and even working against the Partisans' territorial expansion at war's end.¹⁰³ What inhibited Churchill were his limitations, perceived or otherwise. Contrary to the picture painted by Revisionists of the PM as all-powerful, his ability to reverse or even alter course was deeply constrained by elements beyond his grasp.¹⁰⁴

Churchill was confronted by limiting pressures on several fronts. For one, Churchill felt limited by perceived American reluctance to again alter course, having grown impatient and distrustful of British intentions in the

¹⁰⁰ CAB 66-46-50 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia, 8 January 1944, 1; PREM 3-511-2 "Churchill to Eden" 9 January 1944; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 469; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 125, 318; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 201; FO 371/44243 Churchill to Eden 19 January 1944.

¹⁰¹ CAB 66-48-5 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Correspondence between Churchill and Tito, Tito to Churchill 9 February 1944" 10 March 1944; PREM 3-512-1 "PM Churchill to President FDR" 6 April 1944; PREM 3-511-2 "Churchill to Eden" 2 January 1944; PREM 3-510-9 Eden to Churchill "Lt.Col. Maclean's mission to Yugoslavia" 2 August 1943; PREM 3-510-9 "From the British Mission to Partisan GHQ" 20 September 1943; PREM 3-510-9 "Report: From the British Mission [Maclean] to Partisan GHQ" 29 September 1943.

¹⁰² PREM 3-511-2 "Churchill to Eden" 2 January 1944; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 123; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; CAB 65-40-19 "War Cabinet Minutes" 28 December 1943; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet "The position in Yugoslavia" 10 January 1944; HANSARD "Foreign Affairs" 24 May 1944 vol 400 cc762-829; PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944; PREM 3-512-5 "Churchill to Foreign Secretary Eden" 21 September 1944; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 477-8; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 163-4; Clissold, *Whirlwind*, 195-6.

¹⁰³ HANSARD "Foreign Affairs" 24 May 1944 vol 400 cc762-829; PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944; PREM 3-512-5 "Churchill to Foreign Secretary Eden" 21 September 1944; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 477-8; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 163-4.

¹⁰⁴ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 317-8; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxix, 25-7, 106, 163-4; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, 356.

Mediterranean.¹⁰⁵ Stalin had also placed Churchill in an unenviable position by pushing so hard for OVERLORD as to make any other operation a difficult negotiation.¹⁰⁶ Finally, the British military themselves placed limits on Churchill. As Alanbrooke would put it, Churchill could not:

grasp the relation of various theatres of war to each other. He always gets carried away by the one he is examining and in prosecuting it is prepared to sacrifice most of the others. I have never in the 1½ years that I have worked with him succeeded in making him review the war as a whole and to relate the importance of the various fronts to each other.¹⁰⁷

The implications of which were that you could only do so much at once and Churchill would have to triage his priorities. Churchill was, therefore, to see his desire for action in the Balkans limited and an inability through lack of force to impose British will. In other words, Churchill's own military tied his hands with regards to how much could be done.¹⁰⁸

The PM, like any other element within HMG, was limited in scope, influence, and authority. Like every other element in the equation, the PM's assessment was based on a particular lens of assessment unique to the PMO. Likewise, Churchill's ability to advance an agenda was dependant upon interactions and negotiations with other agencies and their own considerations developed through their own unique lenses. Furthermore, Churchill also had to deal with other individuals both within his own government as well as the leadership of the Allies that further limited what options were available for pursuing the PM's objectives. As Allison reminded us, HMG's policy was the result of the multiple inputs and negotiations of various agencies, agendas, committees, and individuals

¹⁰⁵ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 443, 459; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 480; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 120.

¹⁰⁶ PREM 3-513-10 Churchill "Memo to his Private Office" 25 April 1945; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 334; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 482-3, 523.

¹⁰⁷ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 401.

¹⁰⁸ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; CAB 66-24-50 War Cabinet "Regarding: USSR Proposed Treaty Between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union" 9 June 1942, 3-4; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 480, 537-8; Office of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, *SEXTANT Conference*, 54-5, 295, 385; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.167, 145; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 330-1, 352, 367, 370; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346, 443, 459; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 84; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 47, 313-4; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 63-5, 200; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 79 – 80.

and that Churchill's greatest strength may have been his wiliness to allowed himself to be overruled by these forces.¹⁰⁹

Far from controlling events, Churchill was caught in the rapids of the river. Beyond not being able to select the river or its eventual course, even his ability to chart a line through these rapids was constrained by factors at home and abroad well out of his control. For the most part, Churchill was on the defensive reacting to events while attempting to advance a vague set of general objectives that were often forcefully and brutally prioritized.

Closing

In looking at the very broad lens of *Grossmachtpolitik* and the very fine lens of the individual one observes the chaos factor is an ever-present actor worthy of serious note. There is an unlimited level of uncertainty, confusion and sheer randomness that serves to alter variables. There are also almost infinite variables and influences that reach far beyond the events of Yugoslavia that play into the development of policies concerning that country's hearty resistance.

In seeing this chaos as an order British policy is seen to be not entirely in HMG's hands. It was, instead, made up and imposed upon HMG as much as HMG imposed their will upon events. British policy was reactive. This chapter has highlighted how events far afield, Allied discussions, and the issues of HMG's partners did not just influence the course of HMG's policy but, more importantly, changed how HMG looked at the world. This was not simply an issue of *Grossmachtpolitik* and Allied squabbling limiting HMG's options, although it did that too. More importantly, these issues also served to fundamentally alter HMG's view of events.

With this in mind one can see how Churchill could tread down the road he did or how HMG's policies would evolve as they did. In looking at the discussions on intelligence and Churchill's personal involvement one is on secure ground in asserting that Revisionist have failed to fully appreciate Churchill's views on Yugoslavia. Instead of being oblivious or suddenly discovering Yugoslav resistance and the Partisans in 1943 after reading the Keble memorandum the PM has been shown to have been someone actively engaged and consistently well informed.¹¹⁰ Instead of the Revisionist explanation that Keble somehow hoodwinked Churchill, it is instead greater Allied considerations that had shifted and intruded upon Yugoslav policy compelling HMG and Churchill to shift gears as they moved forward.

¹⁰⁹ Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 267-8; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346, 401, 406, 410, 411.

¹¹⁰ PREM 3-510-7 – Correspondence and Response concerning a Report with no author - June 1943; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 464; Kimball, *Churchill & Roosevelt Correspondence: Vol 1*, 215; FRUS “Casablanca Conference Papers,” 538, 554 737-771; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 360-1, 366, 376; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.104, 92, No.112, 98.

Churchill was not spearheading this move forward nor dictating terms so much as having them dictated to him. Wartime policy, framed as it was by objective, was primarily rooted in reaction. There is a line that can be drawn from how HMG found Allied views altering the course of British aims in Yugoslavia to Churchill finding his approach altered by the changing views in HMG. The resulting narrative is far less sensational but far more pragmatic and serves to align itself with what can be seen in reviewing the archival material available concerning the high level discussions occurring both within the PMO and the War Cabinet over the competing views within HMG with regards to Yugoslavia.

Ultimately, what is left is a narrative of events that is far more complex and less satisfying. In a sense pointing to the complexity and chaos is simplicity itself. Despite being unsatisfying, the removal of the sensational and a look to context provides valuable insight. What remains is a much wider understanding of HMG's policy development that serves to remove a great deal of indictment, criticism or justification for decisions. Instead, what is left is the absence of a need to defend or condemn decisions rooted in one thing or another and providing positive or negative results. Conversely, there is no single consideration and therefore, much of the finer points of the Revisionist argument are demonstrably wrong.

Chapter 8
Conclusion : Looking Forward

It is more proper to say that they were the common people of Yugoslavia, a people confused and suffering, suffering under the heel of the occupying enemy and then at the same time torn by internal strife.

- LtCol Linn M. Farish

From start to finish the entire Yugoslav affair was somewhat slapdash, a sort of controlled chaos. HMG's policy, likewise, had an element of riding the whirlwind. HMG spent a great deal of time on their heels reacting. Momentum was a force all its own and pace was mostly dictated by external factors.¹ With the ground constantly shifting beneath its feet, HMG was engaged in a sort of macabre game of policy 'whack-a-mole.' All of these variables and events dictated HMG's course of action by limiting or framing considerations and options while presenting both immediate and long-term concerns.

Often times in war countries are forced to make quick decisions on the fly without all the facts or the luxury of measured consideration. HMG was no exception. The assessments of these decisions are often coloured by judgement rooted in the results of these decisions as much as the intent behind them. The slow measured appreciation of the historian with time and hindsight while knowing the results biases them. It is the antithesis of the situation on the ground unfolding in real time. For historians to pass judgement over these events they must, either with the benefit of hindsight or with the delusional belief of having claimed some special insight into the *in situ* view, require a *de facto* claim of moral superiority, of knowing better. This smacks of arrogance. Call it moral relativism but it would seem wiser to remain dubious of judgment and try instead to focus on understanding perspectives and the lessons the situation might provide for the future.

Walking away from this thesis' look into the evolution of HMG's policy and the conflicting historical narratives that have attempted to explain these events it is not surprising, nor hard to appreciate why the historiography exists in a perpetual state of internal opposition. Often historiographical assessments have been made with either political or military considerations weighing heavily in the mix and often with the wisdom of *hindsight* in their application of these

¹ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet "The Balkan Problem" 11 December 1939; CAB 66-5-20 "Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council" 19 December 1939; CAB 66-7-14 War Cabinet: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee "Implications of Possible Italian action in the Mediterranean" 21 April 1940; CAB 65-6-53 War Cabinet "Allied policy in the event of an Italian attack on Yugoslavia" 30 April 1940; CAB 66-7-14 "British Strategy in a Certain Eventuality" 25 May 1940.

assessments.² This is wrong on both fronts. The reality was that this policy evolved in parallel to HMG's evolving understanding of the situation in the Balkans and it was always as much political as military. This evolution was the result of countless influences, agencies, and individuals engaged in, again, countless negotiations. Knowing this requires an entirely new view to the narrative of HMG's Yugoslav policy.

A re-reading of the PREM and CAB documents suggests the evidence and research from both Orthodox and Revisionist camps is, at times, quite correct. Their conclusions, however, suffer perhaps from tunnel vision. HMG's policy decisions may not be an issue of nefarious intent, or duplicity, nor an issue of HMG being 'hoodwinked', or making the best choice for HMG strictly in terms of a single consideration. The only viable explanation may be the simplest, chaos. To suggest otherwise is to make a dubious claim against a complex system.

As PREM and CAB files demonstrate, HMG's policy evolved in parallel to its growing intelligence picture and as a result of numerous negotiations over how to view what HMG was learning of events. HMG weighed ideological, political, and military considerations but not within the frameworks post-war assessments have imposed upon them. Ideologically, the concept of preventing the spread Communism is an amplified by-product of the Cold War more than it is of wartime Allied tensions. Although this did exist, it took a back seat to the ideological aim of defeating Fascism, the Nazis, and winning the war.³ By examining the high level discussions occurring within HMG, as reflected in the CAB and PREM files, early in the war interesting insights and important context emerge. It would seem that this critical period in which the development of HMG's Yugoslav policy is rooted may be the most overlooked and poorly understood.

From chapter 3's examination some key themes appear. In reviewing material pertaining to HMG's early considerations one is immediately struck by the reality that HMG's objectives and views were not static.⁴ Although a general course was set in these early days that would persist through the course of the war far more would change than remain the same. These early broad strategic goals

² Lees, *Rape of Serbia*, 113; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 463, 499; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 87, 94-5, 182.

³ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 281, 402-3.

⁴ PREM 3-510-4 "Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean from COS" 7 November 1941; PREM 3-409-2 "The Prospects of Subversion" 21 April 1941; PREM 3-409-2 "The Prospects of Subversion: Summary" 21 April 1941– 21 April 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill" 23 October 1941; PREM 3-510-2 "MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941" 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); FRUS "Casablanca Conference Papers," 761, 770-1; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 536; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.112, 98; PREM 3-510-6 "Yugoslav PM's Message to General Mihailovic" 9 April 1943; CAB 80-69 "Draft Telegram from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav PM" May 1943; PREM 3-510-7 "Situation in Yugoslavia" 18 June 1943, 5.

would become focused on the logistics and the naval concern of securing the eastern Mediterranean. However, as the war went on, beyond this goal was the aim to hurt the enemy and tie up Axis forces. The view of the best way to do so would change. It was the course needed to reach these broad strategic goals and the obstacles that would arise, the context in which HMG's pursuit would occur, that was fluid and ever changing. Indeed, there was a multi-track chaos to HMG's policy development. As a result, it becomes clear that HMG's policy evolution can be framed as reactionary and conflicted, constantly struggling to adapt, and indeed even how to adapt, to the changing realities of the war.

Further along this line, it becomes resoundingly clear that HMG was not a homogenous monolith.⁵ Understanding the nature of competing and overlapping agencies, individuals, and agendas negotiating within HMG and how one approaches and views this matrix becomes the key to understanding HMG's policy evolution. Any generalization of HMG's objectives or considerations is, therefore, inappropriate. What is left is a more complete but less satisfying picture of a government at odds with itself involved in broad, complex, sometimes heated, and nuanced discussions of multiple viewpoints simultaneously while struggling to amalgamate all these considerations into a coherent policy course.

The discussions of HMG's intelligence picture contained in Chapter 4 are, likewise, illuminating in this context of a fractured multi-track and multi-agency arena. One begins to understand HMG's sources for intelligence regarding Yugoslavia were dramatically eclectic. Not only was HMG's intelligence coming from a great many and varied sources and was, at times, contradictory, but the network that this intelligence was running through was vast, conflicted, and complex, holding its own views. The organizations within HMG involved in collecting, organizing, interpreting and disseminating this intelligence represent a huge multi-layered, multi-track network. The result was that HMG's view to events was not only contradictory but also in a constant state of flux and these various sources competed, negotiated, converged, and diverged.

How HMG's high-level discussions framed intelligence is reflected in PREM and CAB files, most especially Churchill's personal correspondence and the War Cabinet minutes. These sources demonstrate a great deal about HMG's policy evolution, the most obvious being, HMG's understanding of the nature of the Partisans and the motivation behind approaching them. These conversations are reflective of what HMG's policy decisions were rooted in. This was, again, very broad, strategic goals and a generally reactive policy position. Understanding how HMG viewed the elements involved and approached decisions can tell us a great

⁵ Bailey, *SOE in Albania*, 185-190; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 171-2, 247-248; FO 371-37590 "Mihailović: minutes by Eden, Howard, and Sargent" 9 September 1943; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, xxx, 40-2, 105, 124, 165, 197-8; FO 371-43646 "Soviet policy in the Balkans" 7 June 1944; Stafford, *Camp X*, 177; Foot, *S.O.E.*, 51-2; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 24, 203, 318-8; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 412-3.

deal more about HMG's intent and how HMG considered events and decisions with an eye to their aim for the future. This demonstrates the assertion concerning very broad but consistent strategic goals were not abandoned but, instead, defeated by circumstance.

There are several important points that compel one to reconsider existing narratives on HMG Yugoslav policy course. The most incredible involves the claim that HMG's knowledge of the situation in Yugoslavia in 1942 was limited as British attention was elsewhere.⁶ It is clear, however, that several conversations of import concerning the course of HMG's policy in Yugoslavia and the Balkans were held throughout 1942.⁷ Furthermore, it is also clear that HMG was fairly well informed about the details of what was occurring within Yugoslavia. HMG was not in the dark but was, instead, well informed on Yugoslavia. This is cause for reconsidering existing narratives on the subject. However, more than this it is also cause to reconsider the roots of HMG's policy. HMG's discussions demonstrated a level of consideration to policy as well as events that was deeply nuanced, as much political as it was military, and that these issues were indivisible.⁸ With this established one is left calling into question much of the established thinking regarding HMG objectives and appropriate policy course to meet these aims.

Chapter 5 sheds light on a view within HMG towards the Yugoslavs that is cause to reconsider a basic tenant of Revisionist narratives, namely that HMG was

⁶ Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 177; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 59-60, Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 161; Trew, *Britain, Mihailović, and the Chetniks*, 37-38.

⁷ CAB 66-7-14 – Mr. Eden's visit to Moscow, 17; PREM 3-510-1 - War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee – Yugoslav Revolt – 26 February 1942; CAB 66-24-50 – War Cabinet re: USSR – Proposed Treaty Between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union 25 May 1942; PREM 3-510-12– CIGS to PM – 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-12– CIGS to PM – 16 June 1942; PREM 3-510-13– unidentified to D.W. Brown 8 November 1942; PREM 3-510-5 – King Peter to Churchill – Generally very dissatisfied with my Government - 9 December 1942; PREM 3-510-5 – Anthony Eden to PM on Mihailovic – 17 December 1942; Casablanca Conference Paper WISC-FRUS, 538, 584, 737, 744-51, 770-1.

⁸ CAB 65-40-19 “War Cabinet Minutes” 28 December 1943; CAB 7-14-43 War Cabinet “Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee” 14 July 1943; FO 371-37584 “Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic” 9 September 1943; FO 371-37590 “CD to Sargent” 6 September 1943; FO 371-37590 “Mihailović: minutes by Eden, Howard, and Sargent” 9 September 1943; PREM 3-510-6 “Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill” 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-10 “From FO to Washington, Repeated to Mr. Stevenson, Cairo” 7 December 1943, 1-2; PREM 3-510-13 Eden to Churchill “Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute” 24 June 1943; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM “Mihailović” 17 December 1942; PREM 3-510-7 War Cabinet “Annex II: Situation in Yugoslavia: Report” 18 June 1943; PREM 3-511-1/2 “Churchill – Eden Correspondence” January 1944; REM 3-510-10 “Eden to Churchill” 22 December 1943; PREM 3-510-10 –From FO to Washington – Repeated to Mr. Stevenson, Cairo – 7 December 1943, 2-3; CAB 66-51-4 – War Cabinet – Soviet Policy in the Balkans – 7 June 1944, 1.

solely committed to the RYG and wilfully betrayed this commitment.⁹ One must acknowledge that with hindsight there is validity to the accusation of betrayal in so much as it applies to the Yugoslav Crown. In this case, ‘HMG failed because it let the Yugoslavia Crown down and saw the country turn Communist.’ This is, however, based in hindsight and ultimately irrelevant. Did the decision appear to serve one or several of HMG’s considerations *in the moment*? This is the only question that really matters. However, determining that is an immensely tricky proposition.

One has to also acknowledge that the situation from HMG’s view regarding the RYG was far from ideal. The constant shakeups in the RYG, King Peter’s distrust of his own government, the conflicting paradigms, and objectives that emerged between HMG and the RYG suggest a situation far less black and white. It also demands reconsidering such a simplified and sensationalist judgment of affairs.

This raises yet another point of subtlety and nuance that speaks volumes about HMG’s view and is cause for us to seriously reconsider basic tenets of existing historiography. HMG understood, as has been observed, that governments are not homogenous monoliths of uniform intent or view.¹⁰ The discussions contained within the CAB and PREM files concerning high level policy underline that HMG had a practical, nuanced, even insightful view of RYG. It seems clear HMG viewed the Yugoslav Crown, the RYG, and Mihailović as distinctly separate or, at least, divisible entities and understood that the Yugoslav government was not a single voice.¹¹ HMG approached the RYG, Mihailović, and the Yugoslav Crown as divisible units of the whole. When the issue is approached with this view it serves to undercut a great deal of the Revisionist betrayal argument.

⁹ PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt “Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM” 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill “Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo” 11 December 1941; Glenny, *The Balkans*, 493.

¹⁰ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 97-8, 103-7; FO 898-157 “Pearson to Howard” 12 February 1943, enclosing Bailey’s review of the Partisans; Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 269.

¹¹ PREM 3-510-13 - CAB 66-38-13 – War Cabinet – Yugoslav Government Crisis 22 June 1943; CAB 66-45-19 – War Cabinet – Memorandum by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs - The position in Yugoslavia – 10 January 1944; PREM 3-510-5 – King Peter to Churchill – Generally very dissatisfied with my Government - 9 December 1942; CAB 65-34-33 – War Cabinet 79 (43) – Conclusions 31 May 1943 – Yugoslavia; PREM 3-511-2– Eden to Churchill at SEXTANT – 7 January 1944; CAB 65-45-21 – W, M, (44) 35TH Conclusions, Minute 1 Confidential Annex -15 March, 1944.

In practical terms the instability apparent in the RYG, as reflected in part by King Peter's own distrust of it complicated matters for HMG.¹² Mihailović's behaviour and lack of cooperation were cause for further concern. Simply put, HMG's aims ran counter to elements of the Yugoslavs, this was an issue of conflicting paradigms. When this is considered with regards to HMG's clearly 'compartmentalized' view and approach to the Yugoslavs, distinguishing between the Crown, the RYG, and Mihailović, as HMG did, one has to reconsider what the abandonment of Mihailović really represented.

The question of betrayal seems far less clear in this light. One might argue that abandonment of Mihailović in HMG's eyes actually reflected the depth of commitment HMG had to re-establishing the Yugoslav Crown. Churchill, for one, made clear that he felt Mihailović was the largest obstacle standing in the way of negotiating the return of the King with the powers on the ground.¹³ This view was not without its dissenters and Eden, for one, argued against it, as reflected in the correspondence between Eden in Churchill seen in the PREM files from early 1944.¹⁴

To this end, considerations of Četnik and Partisan value were framed in the view of what can affect the best results, and again, both in concrete military as well as political terms, these were considerations of both long and short term, not 'one or the other' as some have framed it.¹⁵ The question was who could HMG send support to and see at least some of their own desired results realized.

¹² PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee "Yugoslav Revolt" 26 February 1942; PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill to Commander-in-Chief Middle East" 13 April 1941; PREM 3-510-2 "MEW: To the PM, In reply to your Minute M.837/1. Of August 28th 1941" 30 August 1941 – signed H.D. (Dalton); PREM 3-510-2 "Churchill to the Yugoslav PM" 25 August 1941; PREM 3-510-4 Message sent through Admiralty "Chiefs of Staff to C-in- C Mediterranean" 7 November 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill" 23 October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Simovitch to Churchill" 20 (presumed) October 1941; PREM 3-510-4 "Churchill to Yugoslav PM" October 1941; PREM 3-510-5 Anthony Eden to PM "Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; PREM 3-510-5 King Peter to Churchill "Generally very dissatisfied with my Government" 9 December 1942.

¹³ PREM 3-510-11 "Churchill message to the people of Yugoslavia" 13 April 1941; PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet "Minutes of conversations between Churchill and Tito" Naples 12-13 August 1944; PREM 3-511-1 "Eden to Churchill" 19 January 1944 ; CAB 65-40-19 "War Cabinet Minutes" 28 December 1943; CAB 66-46-50 "War Cabinet: Yugoslavia" 1; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 471; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433.

¹⁴ PREM 3-511-1/2 War Cabinet "Eden and Churchill correspondence" Early 1944; PREM 3-511-7 "Churchill to Eden" 9 January 1944; PREM 3-510-10 "Eden to Churchill" 22 December 1943.

¹⁵ PREM 3-510-6 –Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill - 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-13– Eden to Churchill – Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute – 24 June 1943.

In hindsight, arguments have been made questioning the value of the Partisans over the Četniks but all have been a question of degrees. Even the staunchest defender of the Četnik movement admits that the Partisans were doing more but only argues that the “more” was not so significant as believed *at the time*.¹⁶ That is a somewhat irrelevant issue imposed with the benefit of hindsight. It is only a question of HMG’s perception at the time. The condition imposed is that HMG did not understand that the Četniks were operating from a different paradigm; HMG did understand this, it was simply inopportune.¹⁷ It would also be hypocritical to use the excuse of paradigms to explain Mihailović’s inactivity and then point out HMG’s efforts to serve their own interests as a betrayal of the Yugoslav people.

Inversely, Orthodox recriminations against the Četniks are at best disingenuous. They were on the ground risking life and limb, bearing witness to gruesome bloodletting.¹⁸ Mihailović was trying to avoid a pyrrhic victory that would see his people annihilated.¹⁹ It is no less difficult to understand accommodation on the part of the Četniks who did what they must to survive than it is to understand HMG doing what it must in their eyes to survive. Mihailović was not a collaborator; he was a third party actor, a Yugoslavian, a Royalist, a Serbian, with his own priorities, concerns and ambitions.²⁰ This should be recognized and the label of traitor and collaborator should be re-evaluated with an eye to the context of these actions.

The instability and concerns HMG was facing in their ally were important factors in reconsidering why HMG was involved with communists. This brings us

¹⁶ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 86.

¹⁷ FO 371-37584 “Situation in Yugoslavia: activities of General Mihailovic”; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 40-1; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 87; WO 202-162 “Report from Hudson” 17 March 1943, 2; PREM 3-510-6 “Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill” 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-6 “Churchill to Sir Alexander Cadogan” 27 March 1943.

¹⁸ “Yugoslavia: The Resistance Movement” *Library of Congress*; Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder*, 55-9, 92-3 149; Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, 465; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 336; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 85, 177; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 22, 76.

¹⁹ PREM 3-510-4 “Message from Admiralty to C-in- C Mediterranean from COS” 7 November 1941; PREM 3-510-4 “Office of the Minister of Defence to Churchill” 23 October 1941; US Army Center of Military History, “US Army Pamphlet No. 20-243: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans.” 20; Yugoslavia: The Resistance Movement” *Library of Congress*; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 66, 179; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 22; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 44-5, 109; Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia*, 63; Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder*, 55, 104, 149; Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, 71; Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, 465.

²⁰ FO 371/37584 “Mihailović communiqué to his government in London” 31 March 1943 found in Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 40-1; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 76.

to chapter 6 and HMG's relationship with communist subversives and later Tito's Communist Partisans. As discussions of Orthodox narratives point out, the reality was that these groups were highly suited to HMG's aims regarding occupied Europe.²¹ One might also point to greater Allied pressure coming from the Soviets as well. All these considerations serve to explain how HMG became involved with these elements. Both RYG's instability and the suitability of Communist networks for subversion provided at least partial explanations, which serve to normalize narratives and provide insight into not just why HMG entered into these relationships but the aim in doing so. The result is a narrative far less sensational than Revisionists have created.

This was a situation HMG waded into knowingly and with intent. HMG pursued a multi-track policy in the regard. The recruitment of communists was done because they were seen to hold a potential use to HMG's aims and HMG was not above attempting to co-opt these groups for their own aims. This was not a question of HMG being hoodwinked. HMG was, instead, doing what best could be done for the greater cause. In this case, it included using communists if it meant they could advance one or several objectives. This interpretation of intent behind HMG's move to co-opt communists is also quite telling of HMG's views and approach to policy formulation. HMG was serving their own interests and this did include a view to restoring the Yugoslav Crown.

One point that can be ruled out, which has served as a basis for some Revisionist criticisms is the idea HMG was hoodwinked and did not fully appreciate with whom they were dealing. It would seem readily apparent from the conversations reflected in the PREM and CAB files that HMG had a clear understanding of what these forces were from very early on; indeed, this is why they were targeted.²² Churchill himself would lay this reality bare in his conversation with Yugoslav PM Puric on 11 December 1943. The meeting, which came as HMG was making the official pivot to Tito, was a tense moment in HMG-RYG relations. HMG's ambassador to the RYG reported back to the Foreign Office that Churchill did not deny the distastefulness of the Partisans but pointed out:

²¹ Foot, *S.O.E.*, 168; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 108-9; Stafford, *Camp X*, 170; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 130-32; McConville, *A Small War in the Balkans*, 62-3; Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 209-10.

²² PREM 3-510-4 "Simovitch to Churchill" 20 (presumed) October 1941; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-1 War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 Letter: From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo "11 December 1941; PREM 3-510-4 War Cabinet: Defence Committee (Operations), Yugoslav Revolt "Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden]," 31 October 1941.

they [Partisans] were fighting hard and successfully against the enemy and were containing some 14 German divisions. On the other hand Gen. Mihailovic for reasons which might seem good to him was doing nothing. It was therefore clearly to the advantage of the cause in which we were all engaged that all aid which could be spared should be given to those who were fighting and withheld from those who were not.²³

It becomes clear HMG was not simply aware of what the Partisans represented, but long before they had decided to make contact with these groups, HMG had been engaged in extensive political and military discussions and the decision was not come to lightly.²⁴

The view of HMG's activities, which emerges in this light, is one of opportunist and attempted puppet master. This war was one made up of several independent actors, third party players operating in the matrix of occupation and civil war. These players no doubt attempted to deceive one another and were not above temporary and fluctuating loyalties. HMG, likewise, was not above, as the old Balkan proverb put it, viewing it as permissible to 'walk with the devil until they had crossed the bridge.'

As has also now been shown, HMG were not the only ones aiming for temporary accommodations. Both the Četniks and Partisans were not above making accommodations with their adversaries. With the benefit of hindsight it is known that both Tito and Mihailović sought out accommodation with Axis occupation forces.²⁵ Mihailović's case was far more complicated because of his fifth column strategy's use of legal Četniks in open accommodation.²⁶ That may have contributed to the cloudy narrative on this point. This was a civil war and these groups were operating for their own paradigm, far divorced from HMG's 'World War.' This should be accepted as a legitimate explanation and not viewed

²³ PREM 3-510-10 – Stevenson to FO – 11 December 1943.

²⁴ PREM 3-510-1, War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations) "Yugoslav Revolt Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo" 11 December 1941; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-5 "Anthony Eden to PM on Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; PREM 3-510-6 –Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill - 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-7, A 'questionable report' SOE Activities in Yugoslavia, 1 June 1943; PREM 3-510-13, Eden to Churchill: "Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943.

²⁵ Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 145-6; Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance*, 36-8; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 117, 159; Leković, *Martovski Pregovori*; Roberts, *Tito, Mihailovic, and the Allies*, xv; Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 236-46.

²⁶ PREM 3-510-1 "Anthony Eden to PM Yugoslav Revolt" 7 December 1941; Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 58, 100; Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans*, 98, 145-6; Deakin, 143.

with recrimination. And this can be accepted, should it not also be accepted that HMG had its own paradigm and concerns that were, if not equally just, at least equally valid?

The idea put forward by Revisionists that communists attempted to, or did, use HMG is not wrong. However, suggesting that HMG was oblivious to the danger of this seems questionable given the discussions in the PREM and CAB files about the nature of these groups.²⁷ It would also seem fair to suggest that HMG was, likewise, attempting to use these groups to advance their own aims which included, among many other things, the restoration of the Yugoslav Crown at war's end.

One can convincingly argue HMG's policy had a loose consistency when one appreciates it from a large enough contextual base. Yes, HMG did 'shift' support from Mihailović to Tito. This however, may not represent the policy 'shift' in the sense it has been characterized as. Instead, it was the next evolutionary phase of the war for HMG, as well as Allied, policy. One can argue it represents not a shift in policy but HMG simply pivoting supply from one group to another as part of, as well as consistent with, larger policy, which held an internal consistency present throughout the course of the war.

This is not to suggest that HMG's policy did not evolve to adapt to new and changing realities. From first embracing the concept of establishing missions to areas outside of Mihailović control, to contacting and coordinating operations with the Partisans, to later abandoning support to Mihailović in favour of Tito this evolution can be observed. Policy developed considerably from its beginnings and its appearance changed dramatically in all characteristics except the most fundamental.

One could reasonably argue that HMG's attempts to utilize communist resistance was consistent with basic tenets of HMG's policy. That is, keeping with both HMG's stated aims of setting occupied "Europe ablaze" as well as the goal of restoring order to Yugoslavia at war's end, ideally under King Peter.²⁸ HMG's policy had a set of parameters that, albeit vague and broad, were consistently

²⁷ PREM 3-510-1, War Cabinet: Intelligence Committee (operations) "Yugoslav Revolt Extract of a Letter dated 11 December [1941] from the Minister of Economic Warfare to the PM" 14 December 1941; PREM 3-409-7 From Hugh Dalton to Churchill "Summary of fortnightly Report from Cairo" 11 December 1941; PREM 3-510-12 "CIGS to PM" 2 June 1942; PREM 3-510-5 "Anthony Eden to PM on Mihailovic" 17 December 1942; PREM 3-510-6 –Sir Alexander Cadogan to Churchill - 23 March 1943; PREM 3-510-7, A 'questionable report' SOE Activities in Yugoslavia, 1 June 1943; PREM 3-510-13, Eden to Churchill: "Yugoslavia Mihailovic Partisan Dispute" 24 June 1943.

²⁸ PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944; *The National Archives of the UK*. "Guide reference: Military Records Information 26, Intelligence and security services" London. 2015. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/research-guides/intelligence-records.pdf>; Seaman, *Special Operations Executive: 7-18*; Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 6-7; M.R.D. Foot, *S.O.E.*, 54.

applied in HMG's approach to all things Yugoslav. This is most well demonstrated in the fact that this 'shift' from Mihailović to Tito did not carry with it the implied corollary abandonment of the RYG. HMG instead, as this thesis has shown, remained doggedly committed to the restoration of the Yugoslav Crown until realizing they were faced with a *fait accompli*.²⁹

The eventual acceptance of British failure in this regard was done begrudgingly and was virtually impossible to avoid in the moment. HMG, by going along without too much protest, served to strengthen British claims to their own regional interests.³⁰ To wade into counterfactuals one might argue by doing so perhaps HMG prevented further regional problems. However, that might be hunting in the next field, especially when one considers events in Greece at war's end.

HMG's relationship with communists also relates to another element of HMG's eventual policy decisions late in the war, *fait accompli*. The Communists and the Red Army were on the ground in force at war's end and HMG was in the water off the coast with the Royal Navy and in a less than an enviable bargaining position. The greater strategic considerations concerning Greece became entangled with the situation in Yugoslavia and left HMG somewhat impotent in reaching all their goals.³¹ At war's end HMG found itself much in the same familiar position it had found itself in at the outset, reacting to forces outside their control.

There is, therefore, a need in all this discussion of context to appreciate events which HMG had no control over. Counterfactuals are fun but mostly useless traps. The reality is that unless the course of the war on a global scale went far differently than it did, HMG was going to be presented with a *fait accompli*. This

²⁹ PREM 3-511-1/2 War Cabinet "Eden and Churchill correspondence" Early 1944; PREM 3-510-6 Foreign Office "Draft of Churchill letter to Yugoslav PM" to be given to King Peter for delivery 29 March 1943; CAB 65-40-19 War Cabinet: Minutes 28 December 1943; PREM 3-511-2 "Eden to Churchill at SEXTANT" 7 January 1944; PREM 3-511-7 "Churchill to Eden" 9 January 1944; PREM 3-510-10 "Eden to Churchill" 22 December 1943; CAB 66-46-50 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Correspondence Between Churchill and Tito: The PM to Marshal Tito 8 January 1944" 10 February 1944; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet "The position in Yugoslavia" 10 January 1944; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet "Minutes of conversations between Churchill and Tito" Naples, 12-13 August 1944; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 433; Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 471.

³⁰ Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 195; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, 227-8; Reynolds, *In Command of History*, 461; Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance*, 176; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 482.

³¹ CAB 66-51-4 War Cabinet "Soviet Policy in the Balkans" 7 June 1944; PREM 3-511-12 Maclean "The New Yugoslavia in Relation to the Soviet Union" 18 May 1944; PREM 3-512-5 "Foreign Secretary Eden to PM Churchill" 13 September 1944; CAB 66-48-46 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia; PREM 3-511-12 "Report from Selborne For PM" 11 May 1944; PREM 3-511-12 "Maclean: The New Yugoslavia in Relation to the Soviet Union" 18 May 1944; PREM 3-513-6 "Churchill to Foreign Secretary" 11 March 1945; PREM 3-513-10 Churchill "Private Office Memo" 16 April 1945.

was realized by HMG in 1943 after OVERLORD was made priority, which, in part, explains HMG shifting gears in the region.³²

As discussions in chapter 7 have revealed, policy was not entirely in HMG's hands. Greater Allied considerations, inter-Allied negotiations, and events far afield served to dramatically alter the reality of HMG's strategic considerations. Even negotiations inside HMG served to play a role in the vast force of chaos that opened and closed possible courses. Chaos and the unlimited variables of *Grossmachtpolitik* intervened so that HMG was never completely at the helm of their own policy. Despite this chaos, HMG was well aware of, and experienced with, the nature of what they faced.

Churchill was, likewise, keenly aware of this fact, having run full on into it on more than one occasion.³³ Those arguments that seek to place the blame solely at the PM's feet are, at the very least, simplistic and, at worst, deeply misunderstand the functioning of HMG. As the discussion of the limitations faced by Churchill have aimed to demonstrate, HMG was a massive decision making committee; or, more appropriately, a committee of committees. The negotiations present between elements of HMG limited any one individual or agency agenda, even that of the PM. The idea that any one element could single handedly steer the course or unilaterally advance an agenda without reference to other actors deeply misrepresents the complexity of HMG's policy making process. Neither HMG nor Churchill were hoodwinked; they were, however, limited by circumstance. The insights afforded by the PREM significantly undercut the Revisionist accounts on this point and demonstrate that reasons of state (not ignorance, or communist conspiracy, or bureaucratic hidden agendas) won out. HMG knew what was happening but these forces could not be harnessed, never mind controlled, and HMG was simply riding the currents trying to stay off the rocks.

This is a reality that is subconsciously if not consciously felt within HMG, and is certainly manifested in Churchill's attitude towards the war with regards to distasteful events inside Yugoslavia as HMG lost their grip, however weak it had been, over the situation.³⁴ As Churchill would describe it in a memo to his private office, 25 April 1945:

In view of the way in which all our affairs are being sold down the counter in Yugoslavia and the mockery of the 50/50 agreement

³² Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, 330-1, 352, 367, 370; FRUS "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," 480, 537-8; Office of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, *SEXTANT Conference*, 54-5, 295, 385; USSR, *Correspondence*, No.167, 145; Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 443, 459; Martin, *The Web of Disinformation*, 86.

³³ Alanbrooke, *War Diaries*, 346, 376, 401, 450-1.

³⁴ PREM 3-513-10 - Churchill "Memo to his Private Office" 25 April 1945; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 334; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 482-3, 523.

with Russia I really cannot write to King Peter except in the strain that it has not been within my power to alter the course of events and that I am sure that we have done all we could in the circumstances. I cannot however claim that the result is at all satisfactory.³⁵

It came down to how much HMG could afford to risk for this one corner of the map when making the same assessment across the globe, as all parties involved were. To condemn them on this front seems futile. Could a more right course have been taken? This would depend very much on a subjective interpretation of ‘right’ and what one defines as acceptable cost. Certainly HMG could have taken a more ‘just’ position at war’s end with regard to Yugoslavia’s future, but at what cost?

There were points where Yugoslavia centred quite high in HMG’s greater Balkan, and even Mediterranean considerations. However, this was always in how Yugoslavia related to some greater British aim or concern.³⁶ In the end, Yugoslavia simply did not rank high enough on HMG’s priority list.³⁷ It was a priority but one among many. Yugoslavia’s importance waxed and waned within HMG depending on the point in time. However, Yugoslavia existed in HMG’s view both inside and outside a regional context and was often thrown into the milieu of global forces and negotiations.

There are those who view these events in the light of recrimination and seek to point a finger.³⁸ The wisdom of seeking someone to blame seems, at best, questionable. What occurred, occurred, and blame does not get one closer to true understanding of the ‘why of it all.’ All nations, all agencies seek to serve their own aims and agendas; this is not a point for recrimination, simply reality. Some might go so far as to say there are no allies in statecraft, only common interests. Ultimately, regardless of good intentions or nefarious duplicity, HMG would find itself choosing between one of several bad alternatives and, at best, seeking to try and choose the ‘least bad’ of them all.

That said, this thesis’ aim is not to defend British actions; rather it is to try and provide context that might explain them, to better understand the development of HMG’s Yugoslav policy. It is neither to defend nor condemn HMG but simply

³⁵ PREM 3-513-10 “Churchill memo to his Private Office” 25 April 1945.

³⁶ CAB 66-4-9 War Cabinet “The Balkan Problem” 11 December 1939, 2; CAB 66-7-14 “Implications of Possible Italian Action in the Mediterranean” 21 April 1940; CAB 66-7-14 “Balkan Policy in the New Situation: Report by the Chiefs of Staff Committee” 11 June 1940, 3; CAB 65-22-8 “Campbell to Eden” 16 March 1941; CAB 65-22-9 “Secretary of State for PM” 19/20 March 1941; PREM 3-510-11 “Churchill to Eden” 20 March 1941; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 186-220.

³⁷ PREM 3-513-10 - Churchill “Memo to his Private Office” 25 April 1945; Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 334; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*; Eden, *Memoirs: The Reckoning*, 482-3, 523.

³⁸ See Lees’ *The Rape of Serbia*, and Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain*, as examples.

to understand, in a properly framed approach and a correct context, the British point of view. This thesis' aim is to not remove the veil of uncertainty and confusion but simply to illuminate it. It is simply to appreciate the complexity of the multiple conflicting views one can hold and support on the issue. This is the greatest failure of the Revisionist movement, the fixation on not simply revealing new points-of-view or correcting errors in the narrative, but passing judgment for the wrongs done to their historical protagonist. This is the major fault that detracts from a rather noble endeavour to rehabilitate Mihailović's legacy.

The key issue is in how assessments are approached. Many criticisms have been levied against HMG's some are legitimate and some others are not. Some are rooted in ideas of what HMG should have done, some in what was done. HMG was attempting to pursue a policy that best served their own interests in conjunction with that of the Allies and Yugoslavs. This is nothing to condemn. It is perhaps distasteful. One would certainly like to see governments strive for higher principals than self-interest. Is self interest not, however, logical? Indeed, is it not what every nation fundamentally should and does pursue?

HMG was fighting a global war and their aim was first to survive and then, to win. Any move made was made within this framework and rightly so. The hope was to do so in a way that preserved a global order they found just, suitable, or at least advantageous. This included a noble enough desire to see the Yugoslav Crown preserved. To HMG's credit, continual effort was made to honour this Allied commitment.³⁹ There was a level of Machiavellian *realpolitik* to all of this to be sure. However, there was also an element of immensely high principals involved. The reality was HMG made one of several possible bad choices available that were aimed at balancing immediate and long-term need, both political and military. Trying to argue that one bad choice would be less bad than any other is like trying to argue it is better to be stabbed than shot. It is interesting to note that in some respects both camps get pretty close to this truth but cannot seem to make that final leap. There remains the need for historians to embrace the idea that one can approach this subject without viewing these players as making order from chaos, and instead entertain the idea that perhaps chaos was the order.

Did what happen to Mihailović represent a failure? Certainly. Did HMG policies lead to it on their own? No. They did, however, contribute to it. Mihailović was a victim of unjust circumstances. But let us not forget he was also a perpetrator

³⁹ PREM 3-511-1/2 War Cabinet "Eden and Churchill correspondence" Early 1944; CAB 65-40-19 War Cabinet: Minutes 28 December 1943; PREM 3-511-2 "Eden to Churchill at SEXTANT" 7 January 1944; PREM 3-511-7 "Churchill to Eden" 9 January 1944; PREM 3-510-10 "Eden to Churchill" 22 December 1943; CAB 66-46-50 War Cabinet: Yugoslavia "Correspondence Between Churchill and Tito: The PM to Marshal Tito 8 January 1944" 10 February 1944; CAB 66-45-19 War Cabinet "The position in Yugoslavia" 10 January 1944; PREM 3-512-3 War Cabinet "Minutes of conversations between Churchill and Tito" Naples, 12-13 August 1944; HANSARD "Foreign Affairs" 24 May 1944 vol 400 cc762-829; HANSARD "War and International Situation" 22 February 1944 vol 397 cc663-795.

and creator of unjust circumstances himself.⁴⁰ Occurrences like these warrant a historian's focus, appreciation, and regret but to pass judgement and point a finger of blame at either government or people is supremely arrogant. These decisions were made on the go and demanded decisiveness and speed. They no doubt failed to achieve all the desired resultants but context is key and they appeared to best serve the moment when they were made.

Certainly, what happened in Yugoslavia while HMG was at the helm was beyond the pale. If one must argue responsibility then one would not be unjustified in arguing the bulk of that responsibility, regardless of control over the situation, lies with HMG *and* the Allies. This should not however, carry with it the corollary condemnation. HMG did not follow this path without trepidation and regret. Churchill's appeal to newly minted British PM Clement Attlee at war's end on behalf of Mihailović to step in and prevent his execution as a traitor would seem to demonstrate this regret well enough.⁴¹

There are two ways to explain events that are well known to most and may apply here. One is Occam's razor, which says that the simplest explanation is usually the correct one, and the other is Hanlon's, which stipulates you should never attribute to malice that which can adequately be explained by stupidity. In this case both are applicable. The simplest explanation for the course of events is chaos. Likewise, the idea that nefarious intent steered HMG astray is less likely than the veil of chaos, or fog of war.

What this thesis has established is not a single explanation but it has provided key insights to consider. It is clear that HMG made these assessments in real time in an evolving environment and not without regret. These decisions were made through the lens of HMG's interests, Allied interests, and Yugoslav interests which included the direct, the indirect, the immediate, and the long-term, political and military, and often enough they conflicted. They represent HMG trying to get the best from a bad situation and weighing what was the best of several bad options while considering the least of several bad options in several other related areas simultaneously

A great deal more work is still required. What is required is a life-long commitment to rediscovering all the available material, to have all of Churchill's daily intelligence briefs, and correspondence laid bare, to sift through agency memos and diplomatic papers and to appreciate it in the lens or lenses advocated by this thesis. Beyond this, however, it is critical to return to the basics. It seems obvious that the material now available within the PREM and CAB files concerning high level policy discussions can serve to considerably alter the narratives that have developed over time. When one takes all of the new information available, new sources like ULTRA, along with the insights and contradictions that have arisen within the historiography juxtaposed against the

⁴⁰ Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 127.

⁴¹ Lees, *The Rape of Serbia*, 6.

CAB and PREM files, interesting insights are still to be found. The reality is that in order to address these persisting ghosts and place these events to rest, a massive expansion upon the approach advocated within the pages of this thesis is required.

The author's hope is that this thesis has made the case for a new line of inquiry into these events. The goal has been to advocate the need for the establishment of a new narrative with PREM, CAB and other archival collections which represent the large body of high level policy debate occurring inside HMG as the guiding tool. The primary purpose of this thesis has been to serve as a proof of concept of sorts on this front, a blueprint from which further pursuit can be launched.

This thesis represents only a first step in this regard. Some primary points of major debate have been identified, no doubt more remain. These points have been generally framed within the new approach advocated by this author and utilized as examples of the functionality and soundness of the approach. At first glance the reader may even say that this thesis has served to put some of these major points to bed. They, in fact, cannot and will not ever be totally laid to rest; that is the point. Although, certainly, the simplicity of this thesis' advocated approach is enticing, these issues are far more complex than the confines of this thesis allow to be demonstrated. More work is required to appropriately research each debate and fully explore it within this new approach.

The main ambition of this thesis has been to reflect upon the existing historiography and contribute fresh eyes. To develop a new angle that leaves the reader able to appreciate that the reality is far more complex than current approaches show it to be. With this in mind it is hoped the reader will walk away feeling that this thesis has demonstrated major issues persist within the current narrative and argue in favour of further examination. If nothing else, at a fundamental level, it is hoped this thesis contributes a fresh perspective that, at the very least, gives those familiar with the subject a moment's pause to reconsider established conventions.

Moving forward this author hopes to have the opportunity to encourage and partake in a renaissance of the subject of HMG's policy with regards to not only Yugoslav resistance but also Second World War resistance movements as a whole. If questions such as those raised by this thesis regarding existing narratives can be done by simply looking to the PREM and CAB files, what else is out there? The alternate views that emerge from this thesis are not based in discovering some hidden mislabelled document but from the fundamentals of research, top-level policy discussions in the PREM and CAB collections. If such a disconnect can be discovered here one has to ask if the same may not hold true of historiography regarding HMG's policies concerning Second World War resistance movements elsewhere.

For too long the narrative of the Second World War has read as a dichotomy of Axis and Allied. The reality, as eminent Second World War historian Antony Beevor has suggested, is:

The Second World War should be viewed as a conglomeration of conflicts with traditional state to state warfare between great powers but also, beyond this there is an element of international civil war.⁴²

This will, in the case of Yugoslavia, require a post-revisionist school founded in part upon the principles articulated within these pages. From this mixed conceptual framework that straddles, geostrategic, individual, Allied, as well as inter- and intra-agency considerations a new narrative must be established. Each issue must be taken in detail and processed through this new approach and once completed placed back within the greater narrative. It is hoped that the historiography will evolve to a point where it can embrace the notion that chaos is an order all its own.

⁴² “Q&A with Antony Beevor – 21 June 2012,” *CSPAN Video Library*, Accessed 30 November 2012. <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/Beev>

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- FRUS - Foreign Relations of the United States
AFHRA - United States Air Force Historical Research Agency

The British National Archives

- CAB - The Cabinet Papers - Records of the Cabinet Office
HS - Records of Special Operations Executive
PREM - Records of the Prime Minister's Office
FO - Records Created or Inherited by the Foreign Office
WO - Records Created or Inherited by the War Office, Armed Forces,
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