

The Heath-Pompidou Paris 20-21 May 1971 Summit: Franco-British European Honeymoon or Marriage of Convenience?

An actor-centred study of the reasons for and success of the Heath-Pompidou meetings and of the impact of 'personal diplomacy' in the development of Franco-British and European summitry under their leadership.

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Declaration of original authorship

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Content

Abstract	3
Chapter 1. Context of the Paris May 1971 Heath-Pompidou meetings	4
<i>Literature Review</i>	11
<i>Knowledge Gap</i>	37
<i>Sources</i>	39
<i>Objectives, Research Questions and Plan</i>	41
<i>Original Contribution</i>	43
Chapter 2. Britain's European Policy (1945-1969)	44
<i>Britain's fundamental dilemma: the difficulties in formulating a British European policy</i>	47
<i>The Mechanics of change</i>	58
<i>The Reality of the 'de Gaulle's Challenge'</i>	64
<i>Britain's limitations and mistakes</i>	78
Chapter 3. Two Close Leaders Who Talked About the Same Europe	97
<i>Similarities of biographies, of political status, ideas and influences</i>	101
<i>A similarity of minds and a compatibility of characters</i>	109
<i>Two leaders who talked about Europe, the same Europe</i>	116
Chapter 4. The Reasons for Franco-British Secret Tête-à-tête in May 1971	136
<i>A context and favourable factors for Franco-British meetings</i>	140
<i>The overriding importance of sterling</i>	151
<i>The sterling issue for the French: economic, Community and political problems</i>	161
<i>The British side of the argument and the need for secrecy</i>	169
<i>The personal dimension of the monetary issues for Pompidou</i>	175
<i>A tête-à-tête as a sign of distrust of European partners, institutions and collaborators</i>	181
Chapter 5. A New Kind of Summitry	200
<i>Characterisation of the May 1971 meetings</i>	204
<i>Preparations for the May 1971 meetings: specificities, tactics and constraints</i>	210
<i>Paris May 1971: the 'persuasion thematic' creates the conditions for 'personal diplomacy'</i>	224
<i>Post May 1971 Summit: success and consequences</i>	229
<i>From European discussions to discussions on Europe</i>	251
<i>A new kind of summitry at the highest level</i>	259
Conclusion	273
<i>Success in the aftermath of the Paris May 1971 summit meetings</i>	273

<i>Research Questions</i>	276
<i>Contribution</i>	283
<i>Limitations</i>	287
<i>Future research perspectives</i>	290
<i>Appendix. List and details of Heath-Pompidou one-to-one meetings</i>	295
Bibliography	296

Abstract

When British Prime Minister Heath and French President Pompidou met in Paris on 20, 21 May 1971, in a secretly prepared and conducted tête-à-tête summit, they ended a decade of Franco-British frictions over Britain's entry to the EEC and prepared the ground for fruitful negotiations in Brussels leading to Britain's official membership of the European Community on 1 January 1973. The Heath-Pompidou encounters took place in the context of Britain's previous European integration history marked, in the 1960s, by two French refusals of Prime Ministers Macmillan's and Wilson's applications, which both provided valuable information on how to change and nuance approaches to negotiations. They initiated a type of European top-level summitry in which exchange and personal chemistry seemed as important as, and indeed, acted as preconditions of tangible results. This summitry testified to a particular entente between the two men whose striking similarities in personality and in political conceptions of the European project played a determining role in establishing a temporary Franco-British European rapprochement. There were specific practical, political and personal reasons for the two leaders to decide to meet in secret and face to face. But beyond their particular historical and technical context, the May 1971 summit meetings uniquely marked the beginning of a series of similar Heath-Pompidou one-to-ones until December 1973.

Based on an innovative actor-centred focus on the two leaders' relationship, personalities and discourse, and on the examination of unexploited Franco-British sources, this study proposes an original approach to Franco-British summitry under Heath and Pompidou. This approach focuses on the concept of 'personal diplomacy', bringing to the fore the language and interactions of the principal actors and showing their decisive role, not only in the success of Britain's application for entry into the EEC, but also in the establishment of a structure for political dialogue at Europe's highest level.

Chapter 1. Context of the Paris May 1971 Heath-Pompidou meetings

In January 2013, Britain celebrated the 40th anniversary of its accession to the European Economic Community (EEC)¹. Three years later, arguing the need to recover Britain's influence and powers considered lost to Brussels, Prime Minister David Cameron committed himself to a renegotiation of Britain's European Union (EU) membership followed by an 'in/out' referendum to be held in June 2016. The referendum campaign opposed the *remainers*, partisans of Britain staying in the European Union, and *brexeters*, proponents of leaving the Union. The 23 June 2016 referendum gave a 51.9% majority in favour of *Brexit* and triggered complex, strenuous and uncertain negotiations between the British Government and Michel Barnier, the EU's Chief Negotiator, with the aim of Britain leaving the European Union on March 29, 2019. This process of Britain exiting was delayed with eventful political developments which saw the appointment of two Conservative Prime Ministers, two general elections, three extensions of the Article 50 process, and hectic and confusing Parliamentary activity reflecting the trans partisan split of the House of Commons and of the British Electorate, as well as demonstrating the intricacies of negotiating an official Withdrawal Agreement with the 27.

This on-going historical event marked a victory for those questioning the presence and future of Britain within the EU. It also raised the enduring questions of why, and how, Britain had acceded to membership in the first place. Central to these questions, this thesis will argue, is the role played by Prime Minister Edward Heath (June 1970 - March 1974) and President Georges Pompidou (June 1969 - April 1974). Both men carried out the vital negotiations that eventually led to British official entry to the European Community on 1st January 1973. They put an end to a decade of complex and turbulent Franco-British European relations which had seen De Gaulle twice veto Britain's application for membership of the Community in 1963 and 1967.

¹ Henceforth, the European Economic Community, established by the Treaty of Rome in 1957, will be variously designated in this study as EC, EEC, Common Market, European Union, European Community, or Community, regardless of the official name, changed in 1993 to European Union (EU).

De Gaulle's sudden departure in April 1969, and the election in June of his former Prime Minister Georges Pompidou as the second president of the Fifth French Republic opened up a genuine chance for Harold Wilson's Britain to revitalize its application for entry into the European Community. Pompidou had been elected on a slogan ('change and continuity') and a promise (to reopen talks with Britain) which he had made in order to win over a sufficient number of centrist supporters and pull ahead of his centrist opponent Alain Poher.² On the European stage, Pompidou had called The Hague Conference in December 1969 to present, promote and validate his 'Achèvement, Approfondissement, Élargissement'³ formula and reiterated the Community's commitment to progress and integration. Despite leaving little doubt that enlargement negotiations would be tough⁴, Pompidou's campaign in France and in Europe to relaunch entry negotiations reassured supporters of Britain's membership of the EEC on both sides of the Channel.

In Britain, the surprise defeat of Harold Wilson's Labour Party took the Conservative leader Edward Heath to Number 10 in June 1970. Heath was a firm believer in European integration despite the 1963 French veto of Britain's application which he had led as chief negotiator.⁵ His party's manifesto presenting Heath's '*sole commitment to negotiate; no more, no less*'⁶ was a clear sign of his intention to renew Britain's bid in the seemingly more favourable circumstances created by Pompidou's openings in The Hague. Britain's Conservatives claimed '*it would be in the long term interest of the British people to join the European Economic Community ... if [they could] negotiate the right terms*'.

² *Le Monde*, 22 May 1969, 31 May 1969, 12 June 1969.

³ Archives Nationales (henceforth 'AN') AG5(2)/644, Conférence de La Haye, discours du Président Pompidou, 1er décembre 1969.

Pompidou gave the following definitions for 'Achèvement' (completion): end of transition period and implementation of definitive financial regulations, 'Approfondissement' (deepening): also named 'development' related to Europe development perspectives, and 'Élargissement' (Enlargement): applications for membership. Author's translation.

NB: from this footnote onwards, all translations are the author's unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ AN AG5(2)/644, Conférence de La Haye, communiqué du Président Pompidou, 2 décembre 1969.

⁵ Mark Kevin Deavin, 'Harold Macmillan and the Origins of the 1961 British Application to Join the EEC', PhD Thesis (London School of Economics and Political Science, 1996).

⁶ 1970 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto 'A Better Tomorrow', Conservativemanifest.com. URL: <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1970/1970-conservative-manifesto.shtml> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

1970 seemed therefore to be a year of positive changes for Britain and France. Two new men, intent on discussing and making relevant and acceptable progress, and a new impulse, to get things right this time, boded well for the enlargement discussions. The negotiations officially started in Brussels on June 30, 1970, under the encouraging auspices of the Community's apparent readiness to achieve the integration of the four new prospective member states⁷, between the British team, led by Geoffrey Rippon, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the Six. Among them, France, with Vice President of the Commission Raymond Barre and Permanent Representative Jean-Marc Boegner leading the discussions, was bound to play a crucial and challenging role in the membership negotiations.

Nevertheless, the stumbling blocks to British entry were still significant in scope and content. The list of contentious items between Britain and the Six included issues of substantial importance for France, who was judge and jury in their resolution. At this stage of the negotiations, the four matters at the heart of the negotiations were essentially:

- the Common Agricultural Policy, seen as potentially harmful to British farmers' interests but intrinsically part of the irreversible *acquis communautaires* for the French,
- the Commonwealth issue, reduced by then to the economic treatment of Caribbean sugar and New Zealand milk and butter,
- sterling, because of its status as international reserve currency and the related problems of the 'sterling balances',
- and, finally, the British contribution to the European budget.

From the latter part of 1970 up to the end of the first quarter of 1971, British and European negotiators, of which the French were the most astringent representatives, failed to make noteworthy progress on these issues. Discussions in Brussels stumbled. A lack of understanding of what was at stake nationally, and blindness to the other party's motivations were again threatening the entire application process. The resurgence of the ghosts of the recent past reached its peak with

⁷ Britain, the Republic of Ireland, Denmark and Norway.

the 'Boegner coup' on 18 March 1971: France's proposal to consider the resolution of sterling-related issues before the next meeting of the Council of Ministers in June 1971 was perceived as a last-ditch attempt to delay, and even sabotage, the negotiations, a reaction which was greeted with surprise and incomprehension by the French, persuaded of the appropriateness and genuineness of their demands.

France's supposed intransigence towards Britain's assumed lack of deep commitment to membership of the European Community was once again threatening the integration process which had been engaged cautiously but positively after the Hague. Months of conflictual and unsuccessful negotiations risked engendering demotivation and fatigue amongst negotiating teams, more particularly on the French side who appeared to feel isolated in their endeavours to strike the right deal with Britain not only for France's sake, but also on behalf of the other five Member States.⁸ The promising post-Hague restart was heading to an all too familiar impasse. In these deteriorating circumstances, a meeting between the British Prime Minister and the French President seemed more and more like the panacea for the ailing negotiations process. Promoted informally by the German Chancellor Willy Brandt⁹ and secretly put in motion, at their leaders' request, by Christopher Soames, Britain's ambassador to France, and Michel Jobert, *Secrétaire Général* (Secretary-General) at the Élysée, the idea of a top-level meeting between Heath and Pompidou emerged as the potential solution to unblock the stalled process.

After weeks of discreet and secret preparations between Soames and Jobert (*'meetings or telephone conversations would take place several times a week'*¹⁰), the meeting, announced officially as late as

⁸ AN AG5(2)/76, Note Jean-René Bernard à Michel Jobert, note relative à un compromis sur le règlement financier, 12 février 1971.

⁹ Katrin Rücker-Guitelmacher, 'Le Triangle Paris-Bonn-Londres et le Processus d'Adhésion Britannique au Marché Commun, 1969-1973: Quel Rôle pour le Trilatéral au sein du Multilatéral?', Thèse de Doctorat (Institut d'Études Politiques, 2009).

¹⁰ Alan Campbell, 'Anglo-French Relations a Decade Ago: A New Assessment (2)', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, 58/3 (1982), p. 432.

May 8, 1971¹¹ including to the closest collaborators of Heath and Pompidou¹², took place less than a fortnight later in Paris in the Élysée Palace on Thursday 20 and Friday 21 May 1971. Widely considered as the turning point of the negotiations, the near 12 hour *tête-à-tête* confirmed Heath's and Pompidou's mutual appreciation and community of views on Europe.¹³

Whether it was because Heath satisfactorily convinced Pompidou who queried his European credentials, or because issues were adequately resolved by two leaders ready to compromise with respect to their personal and national interests, Heath and Pompidou reached an agreement which they announced publicly in the Élysée's *Salle des Fêtes*, in the exact room where General de Gaulle had previously vetoed Britain's entry into the European Community. The precise content of the discussions held during the two days was not widely communicated and the number of people initially privy to the conversations did not exceed a handful. Nevertheless the press could announce that:

*despite delays, mysteries and suspense logically associated with one of the longest negotiations ever witnessed at that level in Europe, the result of the Heath-Pompidou 'rencontre' was clear on one point: the way [was] open to Britain's membership of the European Community.*¹⁴

Following the Paris May meetings, at the end of which neither Edward Heath nor Georges Pompidou had deemed the remaining core issues insurmountable obstacles, negotiations in Brussels took a radically different turn. By June 7, 'to the astonishment of the Five', the French *Ministre des Finances* Valéry Giscard d'Estaing had no misgivings in accepting 'the vague assurances on the subject [of the status of Sterling and related balances] offered by Geoffrey Rippon'.¹⁵ Between June 20 and 23, an

¹¹ The National Archives (henceforth TNA) PREM15/371, Press notice, 10 Downing Street, 8 May 1971: 'Not to be published or broadcast or used on club tapes before 16.00 hours B.S.T. on Saturday 8 May 1971'.

¹² Maurice Schumann, the French Foreign Affairs Minister (*Ministre des Affaires Étrangères*) was informed the same day of the meeting at his return from an official visit to London where he was initially supposed to meet the British Prime Minister.

¹³ AN AG5(2)/676, AFP Texte intégral - Communications du Premier Ministre et du Président, 21 mai 1971.

¹⁴ *Le Monde*, "La voie ouverte", 24 mai 1971, in CVCE, URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/la_voie_ouverte_dans_le_monde_24_mai_1971-fr-84cc746b-7ea1-4cb6-8cc1-5581910f41a8.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁵ Campbell, 'Anglo-French Relations', p. 438.

agreement was reached by all delegations on the British contribution and on New Zealand issues, a global agreement was secured in Luxemburg on June 23, and the Treaty of Accession was signed on January 22, 1972, enacting Britain's membership of the European Economic Community, effective on 1 January 1973.¹⁶

In the timeline of British European integration and its specific relation to France, the story of past failures and future struggles placed the Heath-Pompidou parenthesis in a moment of convergence. The May 1971 Paris meetings were widely considered by journalists, officials and political commentators of the time as the 'clicking' moment between the two leaders, and the cornerstone of Britain's successful application for entry to the EEC.¹⁷ The two leaders' success in reaching an agreement they claimed they both wanted, for ideological, political and pragmatic reasons, logically stemmed from their capacity to overcome, at least momentarily, the divergences and disagreements on British and French European policy and expectations which seemed so irreconcilable before May 1971, as epitomised by the impasse reached in Brussels by their respective negotiating teams.

However, the British Prime Minister and the French President did not choose to meet with a cohort of advisers and experts to discuss highly technical and detailed matters already handled by specialised teams in Brussels in strict observance of European institutions and state-to-state discussion practice. Meeting in these conditions could have been seen as redundant given the ongoing high-level discussions which had taken place for the past 10 months in Brussels. Instead, Heath and Pompidou chose a specific and particular vehicle for their meeting. Its principal characteristics were:

- unusually extensive one-to-one conversations¹⁸,

¹⁶ On October 28, 1971, the House of Commons approved (Ayes 356, Noes 244) the United Kingdom's membership of the EEC. In France, Pompidou proposed a referendum on EEC enlargement held on 23 April 1972. About 60% of the electorate voted at c. 60% in favour of the Community enlargement to the four applicants.

¹⁷ Uwe W. Kitzinger, *Diplomacy and Persuasion: How Britain Joined the Common Market* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), p. 121.

¹⁸ '10 hours and 15 minutes of discussion, plus two hours of working luncheon and another official lunch and dinner. Probably the longest "rencontre à deux" in the history of European diplomacy' in AN AG5(2)/676,

- secretly prepared meetings, announced publicly only a fortnight before they took place,
- conversations held in an almost hermetic confidentiality. Close collaborators waiting in the anterooms just had '*scant and slightly disturbing information*' and were only able to observe '*the two men stroll and talk in the garden, and talk and stroll again*'¹⁹,
- talks held in a visibly cordial and agreeable ambiance resulting in Heath and Pompidou getting '*through the agenda in high good humour without settling anything of importance*'²⁰,
- discussions resulting in setting the conditions to an agreement rather than bringing about a fully detailed agreement insofar as '*the discussions produced a useful clarification of views which will provide a firm basis for the future*'²¹.

This method and nature of meeting were certainly unusual in the general operation of European discussions, particularly when considering the recent past of Franco-British relations involving the two leaders' predecessors. For the sake of comparison, a parallel might be drawn with the de Gaulle-Macmillan château de Champs tête-à-tête (2-3 June 1962) during which the latter's attempt to convince the General of the desirability of British membership based on a personal and almost emotional appeal failed irremediably.²² As far as Wilson was concerned, top-level one-to-one conversations with the French never found favour with him. He never met his counterparts alone, opting for instance to be accompanied by Brown when he requested a tête-à-tête with de Gaulle²³ (with the only exception of a one-to-one contact with de Gaulle which had no political relevance²⁴).

Dépêche AFP 234, 21 mai 1971, 'Quatre cent journalistes'. The only other persons present were Sir Michael Palliser and Prince Andronikof, official interpreters (and note takers) of the British Prime Minister and the French President.

¹⁹ Douglas Hurd, *Memoirs*, (London: Little, Brown, 2003), p. 199.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ AN AG5(2)/676, AFP - Communications du Premier Ministre et du Président, 21 mai 1971.

²² Peter Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 171-175. For de Gaulle, national interests superseded entente with his counterpart as expressed in a typical de Gaulle fashion: '*we do not wish ill to Macmillan, who is a sincere ally of France. But we cannot sacrifice a fundamental French interest to this sympathy. We will not change our position*'.

²³ Harold Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964-1970: a Personal Record* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson: Joseph, 1971), p. 334. At a one-to-one meeting requested on 24 January 1967, Harold Wilson preferred to be accompanied by his Foreign Secretary, George Brown.

²⁴ Ibid., pp 411- 413, in reference to a '*friendly*' discussion during a car journey to Versailles with the General and interpreter Andronikof about '*France without de Gaulle*' on 19 June 1967.

Conversely, Wilson's only request to hold a personal meeting with President Pompidou had been dryly rebuked by the French, probably adding to his dislike for this type of top-level exchange.²⁵ In any case none of these events were characterised as discussions led in a cordial and friendly atmosphere.

In these instances, the success (or failure) of each meeting depended on a combination of determining factors such as the nature and background of the meeting, the pursued objectives, the expected and actual results, and the quality of the relations between the interlocutors. It is therefore of some considerable academic interest to consider this combination in the particular case of the Paris May 1971 Heath-Pompidou meetings.

Literature Review

The literature covering Franco-British relations in general and the process of Britain's entry into the EEC in particular is varied and abundant. But when it comes to the specific issue of the Heath-Pompidou relationship and the impact of the Paris Summit, the literature shows certain limitations in terms of scholarly treatment, scope and even interest. The relative neglect of Heath and Pompidou on the part of scholars both in Britain and in France, typified by the only recently undertaken and still uncompleted cataloguing of Heath's private papers at the Bodleian Library, fourteen years after his death and forty five years after he left 10 Downing Street, is related to the overshadowing importance of the national and historical figures of Charles de Gaulle and Margaret Thatcher. Because these leaders left an indelible imprint on the Franco-British European saga, they have concentrated the attention of scholars, biographers and political commentators. Typically, many

²⁵ NA AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969-1970, Compte Rendu sur le Conseil des Ministres sur les Affaires Européennes du Mardi 21 octobre 1969 - Préparation du sommet de La Haye: *'D'ailleurs la Grande Bretagne nous a tendu la perche de la discussion bilatérale et le Président de la République l'a repoussée'* ('Britain has hinted the possibility of a bilateral discussion and the President has turned it down').

studies of Pompidou and Heath have been 'relative': 'relative' to de Gaulle's legacy in French foreign policy for the former²⁶, 'relative' to Thatcher's achievements and political orthodoxy for the latter²⁷.

In addition, the lack of focus on Franco-British relations under Heath and Pompidou may also reveal a certain reluctance to tackle Britain's entry to the EEC, in some ways perhaps considered in Britain as an 'original sin' on the part of the guardians of Conservative orthodoxy and of Labour's core tradition²⁸, or deemed a 'betrayal' of the General's ideas on the part of the self-professed keepers of the Gaullist tradition²⁹. This could partly explain the relative lack of interest in the European achievements of Heath and Pompidou until the Brexit vote, where negotiations and concerns for its aftermath might, arguably, generate a renewed interest in the endeavours of these two European leaders.

'*La France s'ennuie*' famously wrote Pierre Viansson-Ponté in *Le Monde* in 1968. Perhaps a similar feeling affects historians and political commentators alike when dealing with the comfortable *bourgeois* success of Heath and Pompidou. Despite being of primordial importance for European integration, the Heath-Pompidou success story may perhaps suffer from a sort of 'trains-arriving-on-time' syndrome which renders it less attractive than a good Gaullist drama or a complex Wilsonian intrigue. In the case of Heath, interest in the general economic and political difficulties in Britain provoked by social and trade-unionist challenges³⁰ or, with Pompidou, the overshadowing influence

²⁶ For instance, Edward A. Kolodziej, *French International Policy under De Gaulle and Pompidou: the Politics of Grandeur* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1974) and Philip H. Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France: French Security Policy and the Gaullist Legacy* (Princeton, N.J., Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1993).

²⁷ Stephen Wall, *A Stranger in Europe: Britain and the EU from Thatcher to Blair* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²⁸ Brian Hindley and Martin Howe, *Better Off Out? The Benefits or Costs of EU Membership* (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2001); Wolfram Kaiser, *Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration, 1945-63* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996); Lord Beloff, *Britain and European Union: Dialogue of the Deaf* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996); Uwe W. Kitzinger, *The Second Try: Labour and the EEC* (The Commonwealth and International Library. Liberal Studies Division, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1968).

²⁹ Tristan Mage, *Demain l'Europe telle que de Gaulle l'avait souhaitée* (Paris: T. Mage, 1988); Jean-Marcel Jannenev, *Le Monde*, 5 mai 1971: 'Trois raisons contre l'adhésion de la Grande-Bretagne à la C.E.E.'.

Or in studies on British Euroscepticism by Jolyon Howorth, 'Y a-t-il un Dialogue Franco-Britannique sur l'Europe ?', *Politique Étrangère*, 4 (2005), pp. 823-832, and Jolyon Howorth, 'La Grande-Bretagne et l'Europe: de la Résistance à la Rancœur', *Politique Étrangère*, 2 (2010), pp. 259-271.

³⁰ With for instance, Martin Holmes, *The Failure of the Heath Government* (2nd edn., Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); Laetitia Langlois, 'Edward Heath: the Failed Leadership of an Uninspiring Leader', in Agnès Alexandre-Collier and François Vergniolle de Chantal (eds.), *Leadership and Uncertainty*

of the events of May 1968 on the remarkable economic growth and modernisation of France over which he had presided³¹ making the case for ‘normalisation creating indifference’³², both contribute to explaining the lack of enthusiasm for a consideration of their European endeavours. Moreover, Pompidou’s early death (2 April 1974) and Heath’s short-lived tenure in power (19 June 1970 - 4 March 1974) may be another contributing factor to the scarcity of scholarly works more oriented towards the periods in office of their illustrious, or infamous, predecessors and successors, making Pompidou ‘the forgotten President’³³ and Heath the ‘largely forgotten meaner beauty of the night eclipsed by the refulgent moon of Margaret Thatcher’³⁴.

Literature Review: Limitations and Classification Issues

Demonstrating the nature and impact of the Heath-Pompidou entente (understood in this study as a ‘comprehension of an intellectual nature’, and the ‘fact of agreeing based on a community of views, conformity of feelings, deep state of accord’³⁵) requires an examination and comparison of each man’s personality and political convictions, especially about Europe. This investigation will find many of its sources in their personal writings and public speeches³⁶, as well as in official biographies,

Management in Politics: Leaders, Followers and Constraints in Western Democracies (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), pp. 230-248; Ian Robinson and David Sims, *The Decline and Fall of Mr. Heath: Essays in Criticism of British Politics* (Swansea: Brynmill Publishing Company Ltd, 1974), Rosaleen Anne Hughes, ‘“Governing in Hard Times”: The Heath Government and Civil Emergencies - the 1972 and 1974 Miners’ Strikes’, PhD Thesis (Queen Mary University of London, 2012).

³¹ Bernard Lachaise and Sabrina Tricaud (eds), *Georges Pompidou et Mai 1968*, (Collection Georges Pompidou Études, Bruxelles: PIE Peter Lang, 2009).

³² John Gaffney, *Political Leadership in France: From Charles de Gaulle to Nicolas Sarkozy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010), p. 96.

³³ Louis Muron, *Pompidou: le Président Oublié* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994).

³⁴ Philip Ziegler, *Edward Heath: the Authorised Biography* (London: Harper Press, 2010), Foreword xi.

³⁵ ‘Compréhension de caractère intellectuel’, ‘fait de s’accorder en raison d’une communauté de vues, d’une conformité de sentiments; état d’accord profond’: definition given by Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales, URL: <http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/entente> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

³⁶ Edward Heath, *The Course of my Life: my Autobiography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1998); Edward Heath, ‘European Unity over the Next Ten Years: From Community to Union’, *International Affairs*, 64/2 (1988), pp. 199-207; Edward Heath, *Old World, New Horizons: Britain, the Common Market and the Atlantic Alliance* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); Edward Heath, ‘Realism in British Foreign Policy’, *Foreign Affairs*, 48/1, (1969), pp. 39-50; Edward Heath, ‘One World: the Challenge Ahead’, *RSA Journal*, 136/5387 (1988), pp. 777-790.

Georges Pompidou, *Pour Rétablir une Vérité* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982); Georges Pompidou, *Le Nœud Gordien* (Paris: Flammarion, 1984); Georges Pompidou, *Entretiens et discours, 1968-1974*, Vol. I (Paris: Plon, 1975); Georges Pompidou, *Entretiens et discours, 1968-1974*, Vol. II (Paris: Plon, 1975); Georges Pompidou, *Anthologie de la Poésie Française* (Paris: Hachette, 1961).

interviews and testimonies of collaborators and contemporaries.³⁷ Classifying the abundant general literature on the subject of Franco-British relations, in both English and French, inevitably involves an element of subjective choice. Genre or chronology based classifications, or a pre/post archives release division would make it difficult to derive overall trends or qualitative perspectives in any particular aspect of the research topic. For instance, time overlap and diversity of genre would render unsuitable and difficult gathering under the same category of Britain's relation with Europe works as diverse as Heath's personal biography (published 1998), Ziegler's biographical work (published 2010), John Young's surveys of the country's relation to Europe since 1945 (published 1993), John Ramsden's study of Britain's Conservatives leaders since Macmillan (published 1996), or Douglas Johnson's ten centuries of Britain and France shared history (published 1980).

In response to this potential classification issue, this literature review will adopt the following structure with the intention of elucidating not only the variety of approaches, but also their development over time. It will first detail the added-value and drawbacks of the biographies and political portraits. It will then tackle the richness and limitations of the 'top-down' reading of the background literature. Lastly, it will analyse the evolution and various aspects of the academic literature opposing the 'Orthodox' to the 'Revisionists' in the sense developed in Oliver Daddow's thesis³⁸, with a special focus on the trend consisting in shifting from 'explanation' to 'understanding' the events. With this review, the thesis seeks to identify the state of knowledge about the facts

³⁷ Including, for Heath:

Denis MacShane, *Heath* (London: Haus, 2006); Margaret Laing, *Edward Heath: Prime minister* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1972); Philip Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, op. cit.; Douglas Hurd, 'Heath, Sir Edward Richard George (1916–2005)'; Oxford Dictionary of National Biographies (Online Edition, Sept 2012 edn., Oxford University Press, 2009) URL: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/95228> [last accessed 22.11.2019]; John Campbell, *Edward Heath: A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1993); George Hutchinson, *Edward Heath: a Personal and Political Biography* (Harlow: Longmans, 1970).

And for Pompidou:

Alain Frèrejean, *C'était Georges Pompidou* (Paris: Fayard, 2007); Bernard Pons, *Georges Pompidou: Vingt Ans Après* (Paris: Table Ronde, 1994); Georg-Philip Chartier, *Georges Pompidou 1969-1974* (Les Présidents de La Ve République, La Ferté St-Aubin: L'Archer, 1999); Michel Debré, *Entretiens Avec Georges Pompidou: 1971-1974*, (Paris: Le Grand Livre du Mois: Albin Michel, 1996); Jean-Pierre Corcelette and Frédéric Abadie; *Georges Pompidou: le Désir et le Destin* (Biographies; Paris: Éditions Balland, 1994).

³⁸ Oliver J. Daddow, *Rhetoric and Reality: the Historiography of British European Policy 1945-1973*, PhD Thesis (University of Nottingham, 2000).

relevant to the May 1971 Summit and associated negotiations. This in turn will help to identify the knowledge gaps which this research project intends to fill.

Most literature of the 1970s related to this subject, very often the works of biographers, diplomats, civil servants and political commentators, was based on interviews, testimonies, newspaper articles and available personal writings by Heath, Pompidou and other protagonists of Britain's application and negotiations. In the 1980s, but mostly during the 1990s, at the time of heightened questioning of Britain's membership of the EEC, historians and political scientists undertook a scholarly re-examination of the entry process based on available sources. Most studies put an emphasis on the precedents to Heath's bid for entry, namely the two British applications vetoed by de Gaulle in 1963 and 1967 (under Prime Ministers Macmillan and Wilson). The ones actually dealing in some fashion with the Heath-Pompidou discussions placed them in the broader context of French and especially British policy towards the European Community since 1945.³⁹ Scholarly works of this period tended to focus on the issues posed by British membership and its effects, giving rather slight consideration to the positive aspects of the Franco-British relationship during Heath's premiership and Pompidou's presidency. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the total or partial availability of official British and French sources has led to a more informed interest in the relations between Heath and Pompidou during the period 1970-1974.⁴⁰ More recently, specialized literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings about the function and consequences of the Franco-British negotiations over the period 1970-1971 in general, and of the Heath-Pompidou May 1971 Paris meetings in particular.⁴¹ This recent literature, which will be reviewed in more detail below, either specifically

³⁹ Frédéric Bozo, *La Politique Étrangère de la France depuis 1945* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997); Stephen George, *Britain and European Integration since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); John W. Young, *Britain and European Unity, 1945-1999* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993); Sean Greenwood, *Britain and European Cooperation since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Françoise de La Serre, Jacques Leruez, Helen Wallace (eds.), *Les Politiques Étrangères de la France et de la Grande-Bretagne depuis 1945: l'Inévitable Ajustement* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1990); Alex May, *Britain and Europe since 1945* (London: Longman, 1999); Hugo Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (London: Macmillan, 1998).

⁴⁰ British archives are more readily available than the French archives. For instance, de Gaulle's papers still are not fully accessible and access to Pompidou's archives required special derogations from the official availability dates set in 2024 and 2034.

⁴¹ Daniel Edwin Furby 'The Revival and Success of Britain's Second Application for Membership of the European Community, 1968-71', PhD Thesis (Queen Mary, University of London, 2010).

examines British entry in the global and domestic context of British European integration⁴², evaluates it with regard to the relationship with the United States⁴³, or gives it a tripartite dimension by adding Germany to the Franco-British elements of the negotiations⁴⁴.

Literature Review: Biographies and Political Portraits

According to Éric Roussel, since the posthumous publication in 1982 of Georges Pompidou's '*Pour Rétablir une Vérité*'⁴⁵, no specific literature about the second President of the Fifth Republic had been published, aside from his own authoritative biography of Georges Pompidou published in 1994⁴⁶. Even if somewhat excessive⁴⁷, Roussel's opinion rightly underlines the lack of scholarly interest in the issue of European construction, which is surprising given Pompidou's achievements, particularly in the European sphere.⁴⁸

The literature published during, and immediately after, British entry negotiations shows a predominance of well documented published primary sources and biographies. However, this kind of literature lacks the necessary 'distance' from the event and suffers from the superficiality of the

⁴² D. A. Gowland, Arthur Turner, Alex Wright, *Britain and European Integration since 1945: on the Sidelines* (London: Routledge, 2010).

⁴³ Catherine Hynes, *The Year That Never Was: Heath, the Nixon Administration and the Year of Europe* (Ireland (Eire): University College Dublin, 2009); Thomas Robb, 'Henry Kissinger, Great Britain and the "Year of Europe": The "Tangled Skein"', *Contemporary British History*, 24/3 (2010), pp. 297-318; Nikolas H. Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74* (Global Conflict and Security since 1945, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

⁴⁴ Daniel Möckli, *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009); Rücker-Guitelmacher, 'Le Triangle', op. cit.

⁴⁵ Georges Pompidou, *Pour Rétablir une Vérité* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982).

⁴⁶ Éric Roussel, *Georges Pompidou: 1911-1974* (2e édition, Paris: Lattès, 1994).

⁴⁷ Despite Roussel's assertion, a few commendable works, covering one or several facets of Pompidou's persona can be listed here:

Jean Pierre Corcelette, Frédéric Abadie, *Georges Pompidou: Le Désir Et Le Destin* (Paris: Éditions Balland, 1994); Charles Debbasch, *La France de Pompidou* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1974); Françoise Decaumont, *La Présidence De Georges Pompidou: Essai Sur Le Régime Présidentialiste Français* (Paris: Economica, 1979); Thierno Diallo, *La Politique Étrangère De Georges Pompidou* (Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1992); Bernard Esambert, *Pompidou, Capitaine D'industries* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1994); Stéphane Rials, *Les Idées Politiques du Président Georges Pompidou* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1977); Serge Berstein, Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La France de l'Expansion, 2 - L'Apogée Pompidou, 1969-1974* (Paris: Édition du Seuil, 1995).

⁴⁸ Alain Pompidou, Éric Roussel, *Georges Pompidou, Lettres, Notes et Portraits - 1928-1974*, (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 2012); Éric Roussel, *Georges Pompidou: Le Président D'avant La Crise* (Paris: Marabout, 1985).

analysis of the negotiation period, generally limited to a neutral reporting of events and tackled as an episodic aspect of government activity. A typical example of this is the analysis of Georges Pompidou's presidency offered by Charles Debbasch⁴⁹ which gives a valuable insight into Pompidou the politician, the statesman, the underestimated moderniser of the last years of France's '*Trente Glorieuses*'⁵⁰ but nevertheless barely touches (in common with the majority of the other Pompidou biographers and specialists) on the matter of European integration, and even less on his particular relationship with Heath. In Roussel's words, Pompidou is only seen as a '*figure of transition*', '*succeeding a historical giant*'⁵¹ during a period of economic transition.

Similarly, early biographies and narratives about Heath suffer from a lack of focus on the period studied in this thesis. They are more intent on describing his personal background, atypical for a Conservative leader, his political rise, his governmental and domestic achievements and especially failures, than on furthering the knowledge of his actual influence on Britain's European successes.⁵² Notable exceptions in Britain and in France in this literary genre are the biography of Pompidou by Roussel, and the authorised biography of Heath by Philip Ziegler.⁵³ The latter offers a very reliable account of Heath, based on primary sources, which brings information of great interest to this

⁴⁹ Debbasch, *La France*, op. cit.

⁵⁰ Berstein, Rioux, *La France*, op. cit.

⁵¹ Roussel, *Georges Pompidou, Prologue*. Translation of '*une figure de transition*', '*succédant à un géant de l'Histoire*'.

⁵² -John Campbell, *Edward Heath: a Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1993). The standard biography until Ziegler's publication, it covers the negotiations in just 4 pages and gives a description of Britain's problems to come with the EEC. It uses few primary sources except memoirs, private papers and articles written by E. Heath.

-Laing, Margaret, *Edward Heath: Prime minister* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1972): '*Materials gathered*' for the book indicate no archives, almost exclusively interviews and newspapers articles. Given the date of publication, the book covers mainly Heath's election.

-George Hutchinson, *Edward Heath: a Personal and Political Biography* (Harlow: Longmans, 1970), a biography up to Heath's access to leadership of the Tory Party.

-Andrew Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1972): the book is more a newspaper report than a scholarly research. Interesting prediction from de Gaulle quoted from the Sunday Time (29/08/1965): '*The Labour Party will come to power for a short a disastrous period, to be followed by the Conservatives, with Heath at their head. It is he who will enable Britain to enter Europe*', p. 168.

⁵³ Éric Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, op. cit.; Philip Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, op. cit.

Ziegler is also the author of a biography of Harold Wilson, *Wilson: The Authorised Life of Lord Wilson of Rievaulx* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1993).

study.⁵⁴ But even if used to show Heath at his best, or most controversial, his European achievements are only a fragment of the ground covered by the book.⁵⁵ Obviously limited to an Anglo-centric point of view, Ziegler's work does not offer much insight on Pompidou's attitude towards Heath, and focuses essentially on the sole merits of Heath in the success of Britain's application. Nevertheless, Ziegler has written the most complete synthesis to date of Edward Heath's political career based on released official sources and private papers to which he had privileged access.⁵⁶ Similarly, Roussel's authoritative biography of Pompidou gives a French echo to Ziegler's narrative based on the use of the *Archives du Quinquennat 1969-1974* which enriches the knowledge of the Paris meeting. But as with Ziegler, Roussel only brushes the surface⁵⁷ of the Paris summit discussions and of Britain's application and subsequent entry into the EEC.

These biographies of Heath and Pompidou are complemented by those of their close collaborators and direct entourage, and those of personalities more or less directly involved in the negotiation process, as for instance Hurd's and Douglas-Homes' for Heath, or Debré's and Jean-René Bernard's for Pompidou.⁵⁸ In addition, a more personality-focused narrative about the two leaders, tackling characters and private life, has been developed with more detail in recent biographies, notably by

⁵⁴ As, for instance, the consideration for Michel Jobert as '*Heath's secret weapon*' in the negotiations as Jobert had met Heath by chance in Spain in 1964 and developed a lasting friendly relationship with the future British Prime Minister, in Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 273. Michel Jobert, who also befriended Robert Armstrong, Heath's Private Secretary, clearly mentions this friendship in his book, Michel Jobert, *Mémoires d'Avenir* (Paris: Grasset, 1974), p. 202.

⁵⁵ Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, op. cit., pp. 271-297, i.e. 27 pages in a total of 654.

⁵⁶ Ziegler explains in his book that he had access to manuscript sources, '*still in Arundells, Heath's house in Salisbury*'. According to Ziegler, '*the papers are roughly catalogued on principles partly chronological, partly thematic, but many, including some of the most important, have escaped categorisation and are to be found in separate boxes. The catalogue numbers given in my reference notes will, anyway, be irrelevant once the papers have been deposited in their final home*', in Ziegler, *Edward Heath*, p. 627.

⁵⁷ Only 12 pages devoted by Roussel to the negotiations of entry over a total of 693.

⁵⁸ Such as, for instance, Peter Alexander Carrington, *Reflect on Things Past: The Memoirs of Lord Carrington*, (London: Collins, 1988); Douglas Hurd, *An End to Promises: Sketch of a Government, 1970-1974*, (London: Collins, 1979); Douglas Hurd, *Memoirs*, (London: Little, Brown, 2003); Alec Douglas-Home, *Our European Destiny* (London: The Conservative Group for Europe, 1971); Anthony Barber, *Taking the Tide: A Memoir*, (Norwich: Michael Russell, 1996); Michel Debré, *Entretiens*, op. cit.; Jean René Bernard, 'Témoignages', in Association Georges Pompidou sous la Direction d'Éric Bussièrre (ed.), *Georges Pompidou face à la Mutation Économique de l'Occident, 1969-1974* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), pp. 107-113; Anne Dulphy, Christine Manigand, 'Entretien avec Jean-René Bernard', *Histoire@Politique, Politique, Culture, Société*, 3/12 (2010), pp. 13-28.

Gidel and McManus⁵⁹ who based their work on witness' accounts, interviews, memoirs and personal papers and are of great interest for this study. A special mention should be made here of the official interpreters, Sir Michael Palliser and Prince Andronikof, who were the most direct and sole witnesses and note-takers of the Heath-Pompidou meetings, the best placed individuals to provide a wealth of detail on the *entente*, on the ambiance of the 1971 Summit and of the subsequent ones in 1972 and 1973, but who sadly never published relevant memoirs nor made available private papers to be researched.⁶⁰ The same could be said about Soames and Jobert who held a privileged place in the preparation of the Summit. The latter published memoirs which deal quite sparingly with the subject⁶¹ whilst the former seemingly never wrote any personal memoirs.⁶²

Literature Review: Background Literature - the 'Top-Down' reading

From its widest perspective, the literature under review includes a great number of studies with a relatively small degree of relevance to the research topic. Conversely, increasing levels of relevance to the theme of the study see the number of works diminish gradually and significantly to the point where literature becomes rare when dealing with the very core of the study's research topic, as in a 'funnel': from the wide 'top' of the Franco-British relationship over the last century(ies) to the narrow 'down' of the Paris summit in May 1971. The 'top-down' reading of the information provided by

⁵⁹ Notably, Henry Gidel, *Les Pompidou* (Paris: Le Grand Livre du Mois, 2014) and Michael McManus, *Edward Heath: A Singular Life* (London: Elliott & Thompson, 2016), as well as Alain Pompidou and Éric Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, op. cit.

Édouard Balladur, Secrétaire Général de la Présidence from April 1973 to April 1974, also delivered a personal and emotional account of the last months of the life of the French President in Édouard Balladur, *La Tragédie du Pouvoir: le Courage de Georges Pompidou* (Paris: Fayard, 2013).

⁶⁰ Andronikof's son published a book about his father providing little information on the object of this thesis, Marc Andronikof, *L'Oreille du Logos - In Memoriam Constantin Andronikof* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1999).

Sir Palliser mainly gave an extended interview during which, very surprisingly, he did not seem to recall even the date of the meetings: 'I think the back was broken by the visit that Ted Heath paid to Pompidou in 1971, I forget the precise date but it must have been in the spring of '71, and that visit had been very largely organised and orchestrated by Christopher Soames with Jobert, and in London by Robert Armstrong, who was Cabinet Secretary, and the Prime Minister', in British Diplomatic Oral History Program (BDOHP), *Interview with Michael Palliser by John Huston*, (Cambridge: British Diplomatic Oral History Programme, 1999), p. 23.

⁶¹ Michel Jobert, *Mémoires d'Avenir*, op. cit. and Michel Jobert, *L'Autre Regard* (Paris: Grasset, 1976).

⁶² The only references identified were not available anywhere: Christopher Soames, *Europe and the wider world* (Out of Print-Limited Availability edn., London: Conservative Political Centre, 1980) and Christopher Soames and John Emerson Harding Davies, *Three views of Europe* (edn., Publications; London, 1973).

scholarly works reveals a wealth of knowledge, facts and ideas but eventually fails to provide more information relevant to the core of this study.

From the 'top', the global and historical framework of Franco-British relations is abundantly covered by numerous scholarly works from both sides of the Channel.⁶³ They provide an excellent basis to understand the stakes and data of the Franco-British troubled relations on both the political, economic and military levels, setting the scene for the events of Britain's application for membership of the EEC.

A level down, numerous studies, principally in Britain, examine the wider context of France's and Britain's relationship to Europe, with a marked preference for the period 1945 to date.⁶⁴ They also investigate the nature and reality of the Franco-British divergences that hindered entry talks after Britain's first application. For instance, Alex May proposes rich and overarching information about the processes, discussions and political environment of Britain's European policy.⁶⁵ He adopts a topical and somewhat technical approach towards Britain's relationship with Europe by giving an exhaustive and high-level narrative of Franco-British European relations without attributing any particular place to the Heath-Pompidou period. Similarly, most French quality publications in this domain testify to a remarkably low level of interest in the Pompidou-Heath negotiation phase, and even reference studies tackle this period very briefly. Notable exceptions include all the works and publications produced by the Association Georges Pompidou which generally provide a rare and

⁶³ Antoine Capet, *Britain, France and the Entente Cordiale since 1904* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Philippe Chassaing, M.L. Dockrill, *Anglo-French Relations, 1898-1998: From Fashoda to Jospin* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002); Isabelle and Robert Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: The French and the British from the Sun King to the Present* (London: William Heinemann, 2006); Neville H. Waites (ed.), *Troubled Neighbours: Franco-British Relations in the Twentieth Century* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971). Special mention should also be made of Cogan's work on the difficulties of approaching traditional French negotiation patterns and customs, from an American point of view, in Charles G. Cogan, *French Negotiating Behavior: Dealing with La Grande Nation* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003).

⁶⁴ Oliver Daddow, *Britain and Europe since 1945: Historiographical Perspectives on Integration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); Gowland, Turner and Wright, *Britain and European Integration*, op. cit., Greenwood, *Britain*, op. cit.; de La Serre, Leruez and Wallace, *Les Politiques Étrangères*, op. cit.; Frédéric Bozo, *La Politique Étrangère*, op. cit.

⁶⁵ Alex May, *Britain*, op. cit.

detailed insight, exclusively French focused, of Pompidou's policy towards Europe⁶⁶, and a few individual scholars, such as Françoise de la Serre⁶⁷, who offers a precious detailed examination of the convergences and divergences of British and French European policies from 1945 to 1990 which points to some of the factors that this thesis will take up in detail.

Another level down, scholarly publications increase the quality of their relevance to the thesis' subject whilst reducing the scope of their analyses, as with Christopher Lord's *British Entry to the European Community under the Heath Government of 1970-4*⁶⁸. In this first study of the Heath government's policy towards the European Community, ahead of the opening of the archives, Lord delivers a political science analysis of the entry negotiations from the preceding events and setting-up, to the results and impacts. He argues that the British government under Heath '*failed to adapt to the real needs of community membership*'.⁶⁹ Lord's rather critical review of some of Heath's European achievements, especially with regard to his bilateral and intergovernmental approach to European affairs, potentially clashing with the multilateral Community's dialogue mode, will be of particular relevance to the ideas further developed in this study. Importantly for this thesis, Lord proposes an argument on Heath's European policy aims in relation to domestic plans which this thesis will endeavour to compare further with Pompidou's views on the subject.⁷⁰ However, Lord's book does not have any particular focus on the Heath-Pompidou entente despite the use of some primary material such as interviews with Heath and testimonies of civil servants.

⁶⁶ Association Georges Pompidou, *Georges Pompidou et L'Europe* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1995); and Éric Bussière, Émilie Willaert, *Un Projet Pour L'Europe: Georges Pompidou et La Construction Européenne*. (Collection Georges Pompidou Archives, Bruxelles, New York: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2010).

⁶⁷ de la Serre, *Les Politiques Étrangères*, op.cit.

⁶⁸ Christopher Lord, *British Entry to the European Community under the Heath Government of 1970-4* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1993).

⁶⁹ Ibid., review by John Young, *The English Historical Review*, vol. 112, no. 446, (1997), po. 547–547. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/578323.

⁷⁰ For instance, Kolodziej does provide partial but relevant and comparable analyses from the French side of the negotiations, in Edward A. Kolodziej, *French International Policy under De Gaulle and Pompidou: the Politics of Grandeur* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1974).

Similarly, John W. Young's contribution gives a critical assessment of the Heath government's policy and role in the entry to the EEC.⁷¹ Interestingly it adopts the '*contingency view*'⁷², i.e. the view that Heath's policies were greatly affected by changes of circumstance which made him deviate from his initial positions and subsequently fail, which is favourable to the argument in this thesis that Heath's European pledge during the 1970-1972 negotiations corresponded with his convictions of the time even if, in his interpretation, at the start of the Oil Crisis in 1973, he *demonstrated that he was prepared to sacrifice his wider European ambitions in order to secure a close relationship to Washington*⁷³.

One level closer to the specific theme of this study concerns the negotiations for Britain's entry into the EEC. A work of reference before the archives were opened is Uwe Kitzinger's *Diplomacy and Persuasion, How Britain Joined the Common Market*.⁷⁴ Quoted abundantly in specialised books, even the most recent ones, Kitzinger gives a very clear idea of the organization of the talks held from the start of the negotiation process. He clearly describes how the change in approach by Heath's government influenced the outcome of the negotiations (for example, dropping the Foreign Office doctrine of talking to the *Five*, and instead talking to France). Kitzinger's book is a brilliant map of the negotiation process and methodology, a real *coup de maître* when considering the year of publication (1973) and the lack of primary material available at the time. Remarkably, Kitzinger is among the very few authors to dedicate a large informative section to the Paris May 1971 summit and to give a first glance at the nature of the relationship between Heath and Pompidou, as well as an overview of the main points of contention discussed during the meetings.⁷⁵ His work, which is difficult to categorize given its quality and renown, despite its lack of scholarly apparatus, also

⁷¹ John W. Young, 'The Heath Government and British entry into the European Community', in Stuart Ball, and Anthony Seldon, *The Heath Government, 1970-1974: a Reappraisal* (London: Longman, 1996); Young, *Britain*, op. cit.

⁷² Ball, Seldon, *The Heath Government*, p. 2.

⁷³ Thomas Robb, 'The Power of Oil: Edward Heath, the "Year of Europe" and the Anglo-American "Special Relationship"', *Contemporary British History*, 26/1 (2012), pp. 73-96.

⁷⁴ Kitzinger, *Diplomacy*, op. cit.

⁷⁵ Simon Young's work also provides a detailed presentation of the main issues posed by Britain's entry into the EC, in Simon Young, *Terms of Entry: Britain's Negotiations with the European Community, 1970-1972* (London: Heinemann, 1973).

introduces the 'persuasion thematic', contending that the Paris May 1971 summit was the moment when Heath persuaded Pompidou to accept the principle of British entry to the EEC. This is construed by many scholars as defining the function and *raison d'être* of the Paris summit and will play a pivotal role in the argumentation of this thesis.

At the level closest to the themes specific to this study are two other types of work difficult to categorize because they provide rich background data, of an analytical and synthetic nature, on events in which their authors participated to various degrees. The first type refers to the extensive literature developed by participants in the overall Franco-British negotiation process, and which offers a detailed witness account, or government document-based view, of the proceedings, without being *aux premières loges* of the most relevant discussions. The hefty publications by Con O'Neill and Stephen Wall both fall into this category.⁷⁶ The latter proposes a sort of 'negotiation hand-book', describing the events from 1963 up until 1975. It gives, from a British official's point of view, a real insight into the negotiation process, focusing exclusively on the technical aspects and details of the negotiations in Brussels. O'Neill offers, as an insider privy to the overall negotiation process, an even closer view, even if one still remote from the very core of the Heath-Pompidou discussions. But both narratives, however rich in details and knowledge of the inner workings of large-scale negotiations happening in Brussels, lack any focus on the Heath-Pompidou relationship and on the May 1971 meetings in Paris. The second type refers to the theme-focused personal accounts of participants given, for instance, in the edited publication by the Association Georges Pompidou. In addition to Maurice Vaisse's pertinent analysis of the change and continuity of Pompidou's European policy compared to his predecessor's (which concludes that Pompidou pursued de Gaulle's '*global precepts*' even when practising '*an opening of France's policy*') the book presents succinct personal views and opinions on Pompidou's European policy by academics and diplomats, as for instance the

⁷⁶ Stephen Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community. Volume II, From Rejection to Referendum, 1963-1975* (London: Routledge, 2013); Con O'Neill, *Britain's Entry into the European Community: Report by Sir Con O'Neill on the Negotiations of 1970-1972* (Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Publications, London: Whitehall History Publishing in Association with Frank Cass, 2000).

historian Douglas Johnson⁷⁷ and the official interpreter Michael Palliser⁷⁸ on the British side, and by the technical advisor to the President, Jean-René Bernard⁷⁹, on the French side. Because of their proximity to the proceedings and crucial aspects of the Paris summit, the latter two offer the closest view yet of the personal and almost private aspects of the Heath-Pompidou discussions. Using their intimate knowledge of the Franco-British negotiations, they signal the existence and crucial influence of a particularly good relationship between the two leaders in the negotiations' success.

Literature Review: a literature in constant evolution

Writings on British European policy, and by extension, of the Franco-British relationship, have been influenced by questions linked to the availability and nature of primary sources, and also by factors related to the different perspectives of the communities involved: historiographers, politicians, officials, journalists, and professional historians and economists.

These different communities of writers have been divided by Oliver Daddow into three main 'schools'⁸⁰:

- the 'Orthodox', i.e. the original and primary writers who include Kitzinger, Beloff⁸¹ or Camps⁸², and who tended to use eyewitness accounts and whose analyses were related to arguments put forward in the political debate,

⁷⁷ Douglas Johnson, 'La Politique Européenne de Georges Pompidou vue de Grande Bretagne', in Association Georges Pompidou (ed.), *Georges Pompidou et l'Europe* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1995), pp. 217-225.

⁷⁸ Michael Palliser, 'L'Élargissement de la Communauté vu de Londres', in Association Georges Pompidou, *Georges Pompidou*, pp. 227-231.

⁷⁹ Jean-René Bernard, 'L'Élargissement de la Communauté vu de Paris', in Association Georges Pompidou, *Georges Pompidou*, pp. 237-252. Bernard, as Head of the *Secrétariat Général du Comité Interministériel pour les questions de Coopération Économique Européenne* (SGCI) and *Conseiller Technique auprès du Président de la République pour les Affaires Financières, Économiques et Monétaires et pour les Affaires Européennes*, was involved in all aspects of the negotiations during the whole Pompidou's presidency. His writings are extensively exploited in this study.

⁸⁰ Daddow, 'Rhetoric and Reality', op. cit.

⁸¹ Nora Beloff, *The General says No: Britain's Exclusion from Europe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963).

⁸² Miriam Camps, *Britain and the European Community, 1955-1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964).

- the *'Revisionists'*, including scholars like Piers Ludlow⁸³, Hugo Young⁸⁴, and John Young⁸⁵, who essentially used British primary sources, from the National Archives and from government records of the different political branches of government,
- the *'Post-revisionists'*, such as James Ellison⁸⁶ or Andrew Moravcsik⁸⁷, or French historians Éric Bussièrès⁸⁸ and Laurent Warlouzet⁸⁹, who used primary sources similar to those of the *'Revisionists'* but additionally employed national archives records from economic departments.

Interpretation of Britain's European policy has evolved over time from the *'Orthodox'* school's narrative based on the primacy of recounting events, 'face-value' analyses and policy-making discussions, to the historians' scholarly analyses of official British and French governmental archives. The last decade has given precedence to the prevailing view, amongst *'Revisionists'* and *'Post-revisionists'*, that an interpretation of British and French European policies was not satisfactorily achievable by the simple observation and review of measurable and verifiable facts and that, instead, a certain degree of insight and interpretation was required to understand events and decisions, not only from a global, international or political point of view, but also from a personal perspective. Focus has therefore shifted from 'explaining', and describing, emphasising facts and figures drawn from official primary sources, to 'understanding', by tackling historical events with a view to apprehending the intricacies of policy-making and decision-making. These approaches imply a wider scope of

⁸³ For instance, N. Piers Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain: the Six and the First UK Application to the EEC* (Cambridge Studies in International Relations, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); N. Piers Ludlow, *The European Community and the Crises of the 1960s: Negotiating the Gaullist Challenge* (Cold War History, London: Routledge, 2006).

⁸⁴ Hugo Young, *This Blessed Plot*, op. cit.

⁸⁵ John W. Young, *Britain*, op.cit.

⁸⁶ James Ellison, 'British Policy towards European Integration. The Proposal for a European Free Trade Area', PhD Thesis (University of Kent, 1997).

⁸⁷ Andrew Moravcsik, 'Le Grain et la Grandeur: les Origines Économiques de la Politique Européenne du Général de Gaulle (1ère et 2ème parties)', *Revue Française de Science Politique*, (1999), pp. 507-544 and (2000), pp. 73-124.

⁸⁸ Éric Bussièrès, 'Georges Pompidou et la Crise du Système Monétaire International, Solidarité Européenne et Enjeux Internationaux', in Association Georges Pompidou sous la Direction d'Éric Bussièrès (ed.), *Georges Pompidou face à la Mutation Économique de l'Occident, 1969-1974* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), pp. 69-106; Bussièrès and Willaert, *Un Projet pour l'Europe*, op. cit.

⁸⁹ Laurent Warlouzet, *Le Choix de la CEE par la France: l'Europe Économique en Débat de Mendès France à de Gaulle, 1955-1969* (Histoire Économique et Financière de la France, Paris: Comité pour l'Histoire Économique et Financière de la France, 2011) [eBook].

causes and effects, at personal, governmental or institutional levels. Advocates of this new approach include, among several others, Jacqueline Tratt⁹⁰, who undertook to explain policies and the failures of previous applications in the light of organizational flaws and limitations (for example *groupthink* also studied in detail by Janis Irving⁹¹) and David Gowland⁹² who provided an analysis of Macmillan's and Wilson's deeper motivations in putting forward Britain's application for entry⁹³.

This academic shift in focus has brought with it the questioning of the hitherto accepted interpretations of Britain's entry to the EEC made by scholars in the last three decades. Indeed recent scholarly literature has proposed works refuting, or analysing under a different perspective, themes and theses which have long dominated the fields of study of Franco-British European history. These include, for instance:

- the reality of '*de Gaulle's challenge*' stated and evaluated by Ludlow's analysis of the 1960s failed applications from a non-Gaullist point-of-view⁹⁴,
- de Gaulle's motivations to veto Britain's applications, based on economic and political considerations, as studied by Moravcsik⁹⁵,
- the thesis of Britain's '*missed opportunities*' joining the EEC in its infancy put forward in the works of Roy Denman⁹⁶, Gabriele Clemens⁹⁷ and Alan Milward⁹⁸,

⁹⁰ Jacqueline Tratt, *The Macmillan Government and Europe: A Study in the Process of Policy Development* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

⁹¹ Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos* (2nd edn.; Dallas; London: Houghton Mifflin, 1982).

⁹² Gowland, Turner and Wright, *Britain*, op. cit.

⁹³ A similar French narrative would include Warlouzet, *Le Choix de la CEE*, op. cit.; and Marion Gaillard, 'Georges Pompidou: une Conversion à l'Europe?', *France-Europe*, 2010, pp. 93-102.

⁹⁴ N. Piers Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain*, op. cit., and *The European Community*, op. cit. In his study, Ludlow questions the de Gaulle's challenge to the point of asserting that '*the Gaullist challenge appeared to be no more than a paper tiger*', p. 7.

⁹⁵ Andrew Moravcsik, 'Le Grain et la Grandeur', op. cit.

⁹⁶ Roy Denman, *Missed Chances: Britain and Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London: Cassell, 1996).

⁹⁷ Gabriele Clemens, 'A History of Failures and Miscalculations? Britain's Relationship to the European Communities in the Post-war Era (1945-1973)', *Contemporary European History*, 13/2 (2004), pp. 223-232.

⁹⁸ Alan Milward, *The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy, 1945-1963* (London: Whitehall History Publication in association with Frank Cass, 2002).

- the curse of Britain's Three Circle approach, revisited and reassessed by historians like Ross Christie⁹⁹,
- the absence of alternatives to joining the Community for Britain, the '*doomed to succeed*' theory re-visited by Alex May¹⁰⁰.

For this reason, the new focus on various subjects linked to Britain's European integration, moving away from the traditional limits of policy interpretation, has fostered the development of scholarly works aiming at rehabilitating the reputation and achievements of key actors, and at reconsidering their actual impact and influence on the turn of events in the two decades leading to Britain's entry into the community. From a strictly British point of view, until the 2000s, Macmillan, and more particularly Wilson, had received rather negative press from historians because of their failure to want and/or to succeed in joining the EEC. In the case of Macmillan, scholarly works have evolved in recent years from a slightly unfavourable political and ideological portrait of the politician¹⁰¹ to, more interestingly for this thesis, studies of his European endeavours from the angle of his personal relationship and comparison with de Gaulle¹⁰². As for Wilson, recent literature has revisited and drawn alternative conclusions on the results and actual merits of his European policy within the context of Britain's second application. Leading scholars in this domain are Oliver Daddow, who establishes an in-depth review of the environment and conditions of Britain's second application by reputed historians¹⁰³, Melissa Pine¹⁰⁴ who provides a rather anti-Gaullist and very 'Wilsonian' analysis of the build-up and results of the application, and Daniel Furby¹⁰⁵ who argues that Wilson

⁹⁹ Ross Christie, "'Britain's Crisis of Confidence": How Whitehall Planned Britain's Retreat from the Extra-European World', PhD Thesis (University of Stirling, 2004).

¹⁰⁰ Alex May, *Britain, the Commonwealth and Europe: The Commonwealth and Britain's Applications to Join the European Communities* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); Alex May, *Britain and Europe*, op.cit.

¹⁰¹ Deavin, 'Harold Macmillan', op. cit.

¹⁰² Peter Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

¹⁰³ Oliver J. Daddow (ed.) *Harold Wilson and European Integration: Britain's Second Application to Join the EEC* (London: Frank Cass, 2003) includes chapters written by Helen Parr, Anthony Addamthwaite, James Ellison, Philipp Alexander.

¹⁰⁴ Melissa Pine, *Harold Wilson and Europe: Pursuing Britain's Membership of the European Community* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007).

¹⁰⁵ Furby, 'The Revival', op. cit.

basically had done all the necessary work before Heath undertook to revive Britain's application. The latter's idea that Britain's second application was a 'successful failure', that it was 'left on the table', and that Wilson had made enough progress for Britain to gain entry as soon as de Gaulle left, whoever was Prime Minister (theories defended by Pine's and Furby's theses), will be reviewed and vigorously challenged in this study. This literature revisiting Wilson's role and influence has been increasingly complemented by a new literature about Wilson in general but in particular about the key Hague Conference held in December 1969, that had hitherto attracted little scholarly interest with the notable exceptions of Furby, Ludlow and Milward.¹⁰⁶ New knowledge of great relevance to this thesis has also emerged from works exploiting hitherto under-researched sources such as those in the Paris Embassy files (the book edited by Rogelia Pastor-Castro and John W. Young gives a very valuable insight on the views, actions and influence of the three British Ambassadors successively in office in France from the start of Britain's integration process¹⁰⁷) or those dealing with the Soames affair¹⁰⁸ and its consequences, usually from an angle more favourable to Wilson's Britain.

Very few scholars have attempted to review in greater detail the Heath-Pompidou May 1971 Paris meetings using the official minutes of the talks between Heath and Pompidou. These exceptions include Daniel Furby¹⁰⁹ and Katrin Rücker-Guitelmacher.¹¹⁰ Furby analyses the meetings in the light of Wilson's second application 'successful failure' as a challenge to Heath's determining role in the final success of the negotiations, considering the May summit as an appendage, if not an artifice, of

¹⁰⁶ Alan S. Milward, 'The Hague Conference of 1969 and the United Kingdom's Accession to the European Economic Community', *Journal of European Integration History*, 9/2, (2003), pp. 117-217; N. Piers Ludlow 'An opportunity or a threat? The European Commission and The Hague Council of December 1969', *Journal of European Integration History*, 9/2, (2003), pp. 11-26.

¹⁰⁷ Namely 'Pierson Dixon (1960-1965)' by James Ellison pp. 91-113, 'Patrick Reilly (1965-1968)' by Helen Parr, pp. 114-137, and 'Christopher Soames (1968-1972)' by Daniel Furby and Piers Ludlow, pp. 138-161, in Rogelia Pastor-Castro and John W. Young (eds.), *The Paris Embassy: British Ambassadors and Anglo-French Relations 1944-79* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Lasse Michael Boehm, 'Our Man in Paris: The British Embassy in Paris and the Second UK Application to Join the EEC, 1966-67', *Journal of European Integration History*, 10/2 (2004), pp. 43-58.

¹⁰⁸ In Britain, Melissa Pine, 'British Personal Diplomacy and Public Policy: The Soames Affair', *Journal of European Integration History*, 10/2, (2004), pp. 59-76; and in France, Claire Sanderson, *Perfide Albion ? L'Affaire Soames et les Arcanes de la Diplomatie Britannique* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011).

¹⁰⁹ Furby, 'The Revival', op. cit.

¹¹⁰ Rücker-Guitelmacher, 'Le Triangle', op. cit. Access to this unpublished thesis was enabled by the inter-library loan scheme between the University of Reading and Sciences Po's library in Paris.

the core negotiations effectively carried out in Brussels. Rücker-Guitelmacher delivers an analysis of the summit, whose scope largely extends to a tripartite focus on the United Kingdom-France-West Germany, with a view to stating the influence and role played by Chancellor Willy Brandt in the favourable conclusion of the enlargement process, using a variety of primary sources, some of which rely extensively on testimonies of and interviews with Jean Wahl, the Head of the *Poste d'Expansion Économique* in London. These last two theses develop themes close to the core of our subject. This fact explains their place in the 'down' portion of the literature review characterised by its closest relevance to this thesis subject, and its restriction to a very limited number of scholarly works. However, they suffer from limitations in their scope and approach. Their work relies heavily on a classical description of the ins-and-outs of the negotiation exchange and flows, based for Furby on an extensive use of primary sources from the National Archives in Kew and, to a lesser extent, of some sources found in the *Archives Nationales*. But, however interesting and challenging in their construction, these works are exercises of institutional history. They do not approach the May 1971 summit from the angle of the personal relationship between its actors. They have close to no interest in finding out the reasons and influence of the Heath-Pompidou entente. Their consideration for the summit is limited to official discussions and conversations from which they posit a quantifiable result that should arise from negotiation points in need of resolution. Their attention to 'summitry' in general, considered here in Dunn's framing as '*diplomacy at the highest level*'¹¹¹, is rather scant.

Multi-disciplinary concepts and research

There are to this date no identified studies of the Heath-Pompidou summit based on the two actors of the summit, on their interactions and relations, rather than on the technical details of the negotiations. The success of Britain's entry was undeniably the result of a shared endeavour on the part of two leaders, Heath and Pompidou, staged in a particular type of summit meetings. Yet no publication provides an analysis of facts and events from the personal perspective of this tandem of

¹¹¹ David H. Dunn (ed.), (1996), *Diplomacy at the Highest Level: the Evolution of International Summitry* (Studies in Diplomacy, Basingstoke: Palgrave).

leaders, nor analyses concomitantly the summity dimension in the characterisation of their relationship and entente. A remarkable exception is Roland Vogt's *'Personal Diplomacy in the EU'*¹¹² which can be uniquely credited with touching upon the study of the Heath-Pompidou summit with the dual focus¹¹³ of the personal dimension of the meetings and the summity which this thesis examines. Vogt's contention is that, when meeting on 20-21 May 1971, Heath and Pompidou undertook an exercise of *'personal diplomacy'* which he defines as *'a form of diplomatic encounters and interactions among individual leaders in which persuasion, personal chemistry, mutual trust, gestures, and convictions often play an important role'*¹¹⁴. However, only one chapter of his book is dedicated to the Heath-Pompidou summit, reviewed in the context of *'changes in leadership constellation, 1969-1973'*¹¹⁵ which also involves German Chancellor Brandt, and it presents a juxtaposition of the three leaders' general views on Europe without getting into the very core of a Heath-Pompidou comparison of their personalities and European values and conceptions. Nevertheless, Vogt's well-founded argument that the understanding of foreign policy is necessarily limited *'if we ignore who [the leaders] are, what they think and do, and how they interact'*¹¹⁶ is crucial for this thesis.

In fact, Vogt's approach touches upon a number of interwoven concepts and domains related to this study's theme and arguments, researched and exploited, in theory or empirically, by a number of academic disciplines including political science, international relations, European studies and diplomatic history. In effect, studying the Heath-Pompidou summit meetings with an actor-centred approach involves, in various degrees and depth of analysis, an understanding of summity, a consideration of the human factor in political leadership, an assessment of the role of emotions in

¹¹² Roland Vogt, *Personal Diplomacy in the EU: Political Leadership and Critical Junctures of European Integration* (Routledge Advances in European politics, Abingdon, 2017).

¹¹³ This dual focus is also the global theme of a recent publication which studies the importance of bilateral relations between Willy Brandt and Georges Pompidou, in Claudia Hiepel, *Willy Brandt et Georges Pompidou: La Politique Européenne de la France et de l'Allemagne entre Crise et Renouveau* (Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2017).

¹¹⁴ Vogt, *Personal Diplomacy*, p. 9.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. chapter 'Changes in leadership constellation, 1969-1973', pp. 94-135.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. ix.

the conduct of diplomacy, and an awareness of mechanisms of persuasion and trust. These key general elements relevant *inter alia* to political scientists, diplomatic historians, and European studies academics have generated a wide range of analyses and interpretations of general relevance to this study. Some of these leading approaches and concepts which particularly resonate with this study's line of enquiry are discussed here.

The study of summitry is a work in progress in many disciplines. The general acceptance of the term summit '*coined by Winston Churchill*'¹¹⁷, whose predilection was for direct diplomacy, based on his confident and persuasive character¹¹⁸, is that of a '*face-to-face encounter*', a '*conference at the highest level*'¹¹⁹, where political leadership and interpersonal relations play a crucial role. However, the scholarly definition and characteristics of summitry, explored in the case of the Paris May 1971 meetings in Chapter 5 below, poses some problems in that it has become '*so vague in meaning as to be not only useless but downright misleading*'¹²⁰. This probably explains, as suggested by the international historian Reynolds¹²¹, the '*little attention from diplomatic historians and political scientists*' in this genre, with, in his view, the notable exceptions of Dunn¹²² and Berridge¹²³. The contribution of political science, with Dunn's presentation of the '*first comprehensive analysis of the theory and practice of international summitry*'¹²⁴ based on the analysis of a wide range of case-studies of summits, and with Berridge's study of diplomacy proposing a classification of summits dependent on purpose and frequency, brings clear analytical answers to the definition and examination of summitry as a diplomatic genre.

¹¹⁷ David Reynolds, 'Summitry as Intercultural Communication', *International Affairs*, Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-, 85/1, (2009), p. 115.

¹¹⁸ Klaus Larres, *Churchill's Cold War: The Politics of Personal Diplomacy* (Yale University Press, 2002).

¹¹⁹ Reynolds, 'Summitry', p. 115.

¹²⁰ George Ball quoted in Costas M. Constantinou, Pauline Kerr, and Paul Sharp (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2016), p. 237.

¹²¹ Reynolds, 'Summitry', p. 115.

¹²² Dunn, *Diplomacy*, op. cit.; David H. Dunn, *The Lure of Summitry: International Dialogue at the Highest Level* (Leicester: Leicester University, Centre for the Study of Diplomacy, 1996).

¹²³ Geoff Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2005).

¹²⁴ Dunn, *Diplomacy*, op. cit.

Studying summitry induces a multifaceted questioning of diplomacy from the diverse angles of its conditions, its communication (between principals and to third parties - officials, public or media), its actors and their interactions. Summits, understood as face-to-face meetings of leaders, naturally bring dialogue, and therefore interpersonal relations, to the fore. During these exercises of direct communication, personality and leadership become preponderant elements in meetings where, depending on their objectives, personal beliefs and sincerity can elicit persuasion and trust.

Face-to-face summits, as in the case of the Heath-Pompidou May 1971 meetings, are '*moments of maximum communication*'¹²⁵, made possible by the discursive context of one-to-one meetings, and by simultaneous translation which, in Reynolds' opinion, set the conditions '*for the listener to connect to the speaker's words and body language – essential elements of a real conversation*'¹²⁶ particularly fruitful in the context of 'personal diplomacy'. In these conditions, and because of the resulting close interactions of the leaders¹²⁷, he suggests that summitry is '*rooted in perceptions and misperceptions*'¹²⁸ which are inherently sensitive to, and dependent on, cultural differences¹²⁹ and interpretations ("*culture matters*" in international negotiation'¹³⁰). But summits are not only intercultural acts by essence in which leaders' communication and interactions are key. They are also moments of external communication, i.e. communication with other agents, external to the direct participants in the summit (e.g. publics and other political leaders) principally through their '*theatricality [...] which constitutes an important technique for the conduct of global politics and diplomacy*'¹³¹, and is also an aspect of the '*visual of politics*'¹³². In this setting, Gaffney, whose work on political leadership develops an approach centred on the actors rather on the events, particularly

¹²⁵ Martin Wight quoted in Reynolds, 'Summitry', p. 115.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 127.

¹²⁷ Reynolds' article is built around the case-studies of historical tandems such as, for instance, Hitler and Chamberlain and, on a more positive and successful note, Reagan and Gorbachev.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 117.

¹²⁹ On this point see, for instance, Charles G. Cogan, *French Negotiating Behavior: Dealing with La Grande Nation* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003).

¹³⁰ Reynolds, 'Summitry', p. 117.

¹³¹ Carl Death, 'Summit Theatre: Exemplary Governmentality and Environmental Diplomacy in Johannesburg and Copenhagen', *Environmental Politics*, 20/1 (2011), pp. 1-19.

¹³² Helen Drake, 'Is France having a Moment? Emmanuel Macron and the Politics of Disruption', *The Political Quarterly*, 14 September 2018, URL: <https://politicalquarterly.blog/2018/09/14/is-france-having-a-moment-emmanuel-macron-and-the-politics-of-disruption/> [last accessed 11.07.2020].

in the case of the French presidents of the Fifth Republic¹³³, investigates the *'significance and consequences of the performing "celebrity" politician'*¹³⁴. In his view, this results in the leader being *'on stage permanently'*¹³⁵, more so for the French President because of the *'highly personalised nature of the Fifth Republic regime'*¹³⁶ which literally conditions him to *'take decisions on his own'*¹³⁷. Closer to the subject of this study, Gaffney's comments on Pompidou *'adding to the range of leadership style'*¹³⁸, relate to the study of Juliet Kaarbo¹³⁹ (whose research focuses on political psychology, leadership and decision making) on how the *'variations of leadership styles (the leader's work habits, how they relate to those around them, how they like to receive information and how they make up their mind)'*¹⁴⁰ have a determining influence in the conduct of foreign policy, and consequently of summits.

The examination of political leadership is key to an actor-centred approach to summitry. Its potential definition in European studies as *'a process in which an actor purposely seeks to influence and guide activities in a group towards collective goals, decisions and outcomes'*¹⁴¹, is subject to limitations expressed in other disciplines, indicating, in Grint's view, that there is *'no consensus as to its basic meaning'*¹⁴². Drake's contention that, for instance, *'France's relationship with the EU has been shaped, expressed and mediated by powerful individuals in the forefront of the political game'*¹⁴³ confirms the capacity of strong leadership to influence policies and decision-making. Nevertheless,

¹³³ John Gaffney, *Political Leadership in France*, op. cit.; but also David S. Bell, 'The Essence of Presidential Leadership in France: Pompidou, Giscard, Mitterrand and Chirac as Coalition Builders', *Politics & Policy*, 30/2 (2008), pp. 372-396.

¹³⁴ John Gaffney, 'Political Leadership and the Politics of Performance: France, Syria and the Chemical Weapons Crisis of 2013', *French Politics*, 12/3 (2014), p. 221.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 226.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 227.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 225.

¹³⁸ Gaffney, *Political Leadership in France*, p. 98.

¹³⁹ Juliet Kaarbo, 'Prime Minister Leadership Styles in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: a Framework for Research', *Political Psychology*, 18/3 (1997), pp. 553-581.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 553.

¹⁴¹ Lisbeth Aggestam and Adrian Hyde-Price, 'Learning to Lead? Germany and the Leadership Paradox in EU Foreign Policy', *German Politics*, 29/1 (2020), p. 10.

¹⁴² Keith Grint, *Leadership: A Very Short Introduction* (OUP Oxford, 2010), p.2.; Bernard M. Bass, 'Is There Universality in the Full Range Model of Leadership?', *International Journal of Public Administration*, 19/6 (1996), pp. 731-761.

¹⁴³ Helen Drake (ed.), *French Relations with the European Union* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), p. 2.

in her view, the analysis of political leadership should be considered with caution as *'personality traits and preferences are, indeed, the stock-in-trade of much analysis of political leadership and clearly there is a human dimension, which is what makes it hard to capture, by definition'*.¹⁴⁴ This implies that the definition and comprehension of political leadership necessarily engages with the human factor which is inherent to political leadership and that *'the human factor simply defies scientific rigour, however hard political scientists try to classify and categorise individual traits'*¹⁴⁵. This assertion draws attention to the difficulty of taking into consideration human emotions in appraising the influence and role of leadership in summitry. It relates to an examination of the impact and importance of personality and of the role of emotions, particularly in the case of dialogue in the context of EU diplomacy. In this field, Blanc provides some *'cutting edge insights on the role of emotions and persuasion in the conduct of diplomacy'* and on the connexion between dialogue and diplomacy¹⁴⁶, and points to the current limitations of international relations studies in the examination of inter-personal relations, trust and emotions in the context of political dialogue¹⁴⁷.

These themes are central to the developing concept of 'personal diplomacy' in scholarly literature in, for instance, international relations and diplomatic history, which is strongly linked to the *'growing practice of meetings between leaders'* who, *'when the political leader is confident about his/her ability to shape policies'*, can exert a more direct and effective influence in the shaping of state decisions, especially in situation of crises.¹⁴⁸ 'Personal diplomacy' events, understood broadly as face-to-face summits, are opportunities for a leader to see and judge, in person, his/her interlocutor's reactions. Leaders'/actors' interactions in face-to-face summits become a criterion for

¹⁴⁴ Helen Drake, 'Political Leadership in Contemporary France: the Case of Emmanuel Macron', in A. Horvath, A. Szokolczai and M. Marangudakis, (eds.), *Modern Leaders. In between Charisma and Trickery* (Routledge, 2020 (forthcoming)), p.4.

We wish to express our gratitude to Professor Drake for giving early access to a research project not yet published.

¹⁴⁵ Drake, 'Is France having a Moment?', op. cit.

¹⁴⁶ Emmanuelle Blanc, 'The EU as a "Dialogical Power"? The Case of the Transatlantic Inter-parliamentary Dialogue', *European Consortium for Political Research Graduate Conference* (University of Tartu, 2016).

¹⁴⁷ Blanc particularly identifies the reticence of the *'realist IR theorists, who argue that rational choice actors are immune from other psychological influences and by constructivists, who are too focused on the role that cognition plays in inter-personal and interstate relations'*, *ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁴⁸ Murat Ülgül, 'Erdoğan's Personal Diplomacy and Turkish Foreign Policy', *Insight Turkey*, 21/4 (2019), pp. 161-182.

assessing the effectiveness of their power to persuade and for appraising the level of trust in a given political dialogue. Consequently, they play a significant part in political decision-making or in orientating policy choices, based on personal impressions and judgements which are not necessarily dependent on cognition and rationality.

Because of this very human dimension of leadership in summitry, less obviously related academic disciplines have entered the debate, especially when dealing with the notions of persuasion, entente and trust. Psychology and neuroscience indeed bring additional knowledge to the exploration of 'personal diplomacy'. For instance, Hall and Yarhi-Milo argue that, in the conditions of direct communication enabled by summits, leaders '*rely to an important extent on their personal impressions of other leaders, taking these as credible indicators of sincerity*'¹⁴⁹. Built on '*recent research in the field of neuroscience regarding affective information*', their findings establish the desire and ability of world leaders to rely on their personal impressions, '*gathered from interactions with their counterparts*'¹⁵⁰, as a source of evidence of their sincerity, significantly influencing their decisions and choices. In this regard, Holmes contends that '*face-to-face diplomacy provides a signalling mechanism that increases the likelihood of cooperation*' to the extent that it allows individuals '*to transmit information and empathize with each other, thereby reducing uncertainty, even when they have strong incentives to distrust the other*'¹⁵¹, suggesting '*a mechanism of intention understanding*'¹⁵². In this respect, 'personal diplomacy', combined with a warm and sincere appreciation between leaders, can become a recipe for a mutually beneficial and durable entente.¹⁵³

All these insights and investigations, whether pertaining to the disciplines of political science, international relations, European or diplomatic studies, or to less obviously related scholarship in

¹⁴⁹ Todd Hall and Keren Yarhi-Milo, 'The Personal Touch: Leaders' Impressions, Costly Signalling, and Assessments of Sincerity in International Affairs', *International Studies Quarterly*, 56/3 (2012), p. 560.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Marcus Holmes, 'The Force of Face-to-Face Diplomacy: Mirror Neurons and the Problem of Intentions', *International Organization*, 67/4 (2013), p. 829.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 856.

¹⁵³ E. V. Niemeyer, 'Personal Diplomacy: Lyndon B. Johnson and Mexico, 1963-1968', *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 90/2 (1986), pp. 159-186.

psychology and neuroscience, resonate closely with the study of the Heath-Pompidou summit meetings explored in this thesis. They offer a valuable theoretical background for an actor-centred approach of Franco-British top-level summitry from 1971 to 1973.

It is this study's view that the concept of 'personal diplomacy' brings together the major themes in the extensive academic research in all these disciplines, as a foundation for a detailed study of the May 1971 Heath-Pompidou summit meetings, and their sequels in 1972 and 1973. Consequently, this study places itself in the unique perspective of diplomatic history, whilst utilising concepts and processes (e.g. political leadership, summitry) from other disciplines. In doing so, this study shows the importance of inter-disciplinary research and opens new vistas for future research along these lines, reviewed in the Conclusion below.

Literature Review conclusions

In summary, this literature review has shown that the Heath-Pompidou 20-21 May 1971 summit is neglected in the otherwise abundant literature about Britain's rich and troubled relationship with Europe and with France, in the context of the failures and success in joining the European Community. This fact results principally from the widespread lack of scholarly interest in the European achievements of Pompidou's presidency during what is deemed an uneventful 'normalisation' period. In parallel, Heath's negative reputation in terms of governance, political acumen, and even personal graciousness, has not only captivated the attention of analysts and researchers, but has also tarnished his European accomplishments. In constant evolution, this literature has tended to distance itself from the simple recounting of events based on a greater usage of archival sources available for research. Supplementary focus has been applied to the 'understanding' of events by opposition to the traditional 'explaining' perspective, which does not give prominence to personal relations and their impact on the holding and results of diplomatic summits. From these considerations, a knowledge gap can be identified in the literature hitherto produced and will be filled by the means and objectives defined in the next sections.

Knowledge Gap

The current literature, covering the historical spectrum going from Britain's relations with Europe in general, its relations with France, to the Heath-Pompidou Summit of May 1971, suffers from a lack of scholarly attention and depth observed in three main domains : the approach to the study of the May 1971 meetings, the summit's analysis, its context and follow-up, and the concomitant use of British and French primary sources.

The May 1971 summit questioning and enquiring has indeed mostly concerned the 'when' and 'what' without reflecting sufficiently on the 'who', 'why' and 'how' which, this thesis will argue, are paramount to consider when addressing the reasons for the success of the negotiations for Britain's membership, and vital to understand the development of political dialogue at the highest level within the Community.

Firstly, the main approach of existing literature has been classically institutional and political, concentrating on the ins-and-outs of the negotiations, the object and objectives of the discussions, and the flows of factual argument and viewpoints on the part of all protagonists in the Brussels negotiations. Nothing has been examined from the angle of the main actors of the negotiations, which is the approach this thesis chooses to adopt, as a greater focus on Heath's and Pompidou's personal interactions is required to understand the Heath-Pompidou entente witnessed in May 1971. In the same vein, despite the very nature of the summit bringing to the fore only two actors leading discussions in unusual circumstances and framework, no study has yet established a thorough thematic comparison of both Heath's and Pompidou's personalities, personal motivations, political background and objectives, convictions and vision on the European project as a whole, which could be at the source of their entente and might possibly explain the choice and success of a seemingly unexpected and secret tête-à-tête.

Secondly, studies of Britain's negotiations for entry have not dealt with the conditions, characteristics and legacy of the Heath-Pompidou May 1971 meetings. The existing accounts fail to tackle the wealth of information relating to the preparation for the meetings on the British and on

the French sides, whereas it enables a crucial insight into the content, the objectives, the tactical and negotiations advice provided by the retinue of governmental officials, civil servants and advisers involved in the negotiation process. They have not investigated the reasons for the May 1971 summit meetings' particular format with a view to explain their nature, challenges, conditions and outcome.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, all the existing academic works have considered the Heath-Pompidou meeting as a sort of 'one-off' that sparked the resolution of Britain's accession issues. None have examined this particular meeting in the context of the four additional Heath-Pompidou tête-à-tête of the same nature which took place in 1972 and 1973¹⁵⁵, denoting an unusual frequency and format which suggest a special relationship and a common inclination of the two leaders for this type of meeting, potentially setting a benchmark for European top-level discussions.

Thirdly, researchers have not tended to tackle the summit from a real dual Franco-British perspective, generally showing a partial use of available documents. On the one hand, existing research proceeds largely from an Anglo-centric approach, by choice and convenience of argumentation, and/or because of better availability and readability of British archival sources. On the other hand, less easily accessible French Governmental sources have been generally under-exploited or not considered at all. Moreover these sources are very seldom used in conjunction with British sources in order to compare and gauge the real differences and the similarities which this study aims at evaluating.

Therefore, an analysis of the Heath-Pompidou summit combining these three uncovered and unexploited angles (actor-centred approach, summitry focus, increased use of unexploited French and British sources) will contribute to a study of '*personal diplomacy*' history, reviewing '*the extent*

¹⁵⁴ As previously stated, the notable exception is Furby's approaching work which, this thesis will argue, adopts a different approach and draws the wrong conclusions as to what motivated the meetings.

¹⁵⁵ Meetings at Chequers 18-19 March 1972, in Paris 18 October 1972 and 21-22 May 1973 and again at Chequers 16-17 November 1973, with an additional (undocumented) meeting in Copenhagen on 14 December 1973, cf. Appendix - List and Details of Heath-Pompidou One-to-one Meetings.

to which the [European] integration process hinges not on institutions and norms but on the relations among leaders'¹⁵⁶.

Sources

In support of this approach, this study utilises new primary sources mainly held in the National Archives in Kew and in the *Archives Nationales* in Peyrefitte-sur-Seine. Reports of the Paris May 1971 meetings and pre-meeting negotiations in Brussels are sourced from the National Archives (largely from PREM, FCO and CAB). Heath's and Pompidou's speeches, memoirs and interviews, enabling the understanding of the two men's European stance and objectives, come from various sources including Hansard and especially the *Entretiens et Discours*¹⁵⁷ collection, as well as the rich online resources proposed by, for instance, UKPOL-Political Speech Archive (UKPOL), BritishPoliticalSpeech (Swansea University) or the Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe (CVCE, University of Luxemburg)¹⁵⁸. The specificity and originality of British sources used derive also from the Prime Minister's briefings detailing background, constraints, margins for negotiation, recommendations, tactics and the overall objectives of the meetings, briefings formulated by all British Government ministries and departments concerned. They originate too from the private papers of Baron Soames (Churchill Archive Centre, Cambridge) about the meeting's preparation, unfolding and aftermath, and from Cabinet and FCO secret debriefing reports and notes, presentation and argumentation. In addition, the thesis benefited from privileged, albeit limited, access to selected documents of the Edward Heath papers at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in advance of their public access planned in 2020 after completion of an official security review by the Cabinet Office.

On the French side, the preparation of President Pompidou, the unfolding of events, tactics and strategy of negotiations, as well as comments on the British and Friendly Five's positions, are sourced

¹⁵⁶ Vogt, *Personal Diplomacy*, p. viii.

¹⁵⁷ Georges Pompidou, *Entretiens et discours*, Vol. I, and Vol. II, op. cit.

¹⁵⁸ - UKPOL, URL: <http://www.ukpol.co.uk>, [last accessed 22.11.2019].

- BritishPoliticalSpeech, URL: <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/index.htm>, [last accessed 22.11.2019].

- CVCE, URL: <https://www.cvce.eu>, [last accessed 22.11.2019].

from the abundant notes, reports and advice of the *Conseils des Ministres*, the secret *Conseils restreints*, as recorded by Michel Jobert, as well as in the multiple advisory notes, reports, statements and information given by Jean-René Bernard, General Secretary of the Secrétariat Général du Comité Interministériel (SGCI) pour les questions de Coopération Économique Européenne, ‘*point de passage obligé*’, or nodal point, of all information flows between President Pompidou and the various French actors and agencies involved in the negotiations in Brussels. Documents from the Quai d’Orsay, the French Embassy and the *Poste d’Expansion Économique* in London, from the Ministry of Finance, from Raymond Barre (Vice President of the Commission) also contribute to a fresh view of the May 1971 meetings’ questions and stakes. The essential data on the Heath-Pompidou 1972 and 1973 summit meetings originate from the detailed and comprehensive verbatim records of the conversations between the leaders, established from the notes taken by Andronikof and, for their British counterparts, from Palliser’s official reports held in the National Archives. As regards the 1972 and 1973 summit meetings, it should be noted that the use of French sources is particularly important in this thesis as they reproduce the verbatim of the conversations. For that reason, they give a more discursive outlook on the ambiance of the one-to-ones, about the semantics and thematic of entente, appreciation and trust between Heath and Pompidou, than their more diplomatic, officially edited British equivalents, however precious in their punctilious and informative reporting. In general, this thesis endeavours to provide a more developed view of the French side of the argument, which has been either partially considered, or largely neglected by academics, in the interests of balance of the argumentation, and because of its contribution to the development of new lines of argumentation. This set of mostly unexploited British and French primary material is complemented by documents found in the Margaret Thatcher Foundation archives website or made available by the Association Georges Pompidou. It also includes interview transcripts with various major actors, and European sourced documents of diverse nature and content as, for instance, the Werner report, or *Ad Hoc* Group reports on the sterling issue (final report dated May 1971) crucial to understanding the questions on sterling raised by the French in February 1971.

Objectives, Research Questions and Plan

With the benefit of the academic added value of these original primary sources, this study sets out to demonstrate that Britain's entry into the EEC was largely determined at the Paris meetings, which settled the matter of French opposition to Britain's application through the personal entente between Heath and Pompidou. It intends to argue that the two statesmen's proximity of biographies and personae, the similarity of their European values and conceptions, created the unique conditions for France and Britain to overcome their historical and political divergences, albeit temporarily, and to surmount their economic and financial hesitations, resulting in the establishment of a genuine European Franco-British partnership which was not to outlast the two leaders' tenure in office.

In addition, this study seeks to demonstrate that the meetings' format, secretly prepared and held tête-à-tête, was the logical vehicle to carry out talks centred on the real issues at stake, in line with the two protagonists' personal approach to problem-solving, with respect to the potential susceptibilities of France's European partners, and in the conditions and mindset prevailing amongst the negotiating teams and the various agencies involved in Brussels, Paris and London.

Finally, the thesis sets out to argue that the entente-based success of the Paris meetings constituted for Heath and Pompidou a model of summitry, reproduced on four further occasions which was, for the duration of their common tenures, the marker of a Franco-British axis based on trust, appreciation and a general unity of views which would contribute to locating future discussions of the European Community's political development at the highest level.

Fulfilling these objectives will bring answers to the thesis' main questions: why this format of one-to-one meeting was adopted in the first place, despite being unusual in structure and objectives by contemporary European standards? What role personal diplomacy played in the negotiations? And what was the legacy of the meetings for Europe in general, and for Franco-British relations in particular?

The thesis seeks to answer this set of questions and fulfil its objectives by pursuing its analysis in the following way:

- Chapter 2 seeks to place the success of the Heath-Pompidou tandem within the timeline of Britain's integration history, by delivering an assessment of the adverse factors involved in formulating Britain's previous European policy, resulting in the failed application bids of Prime Ministers Macmillan and Wilson. These factors, which include such issues as traditional international positioning and status, organisational and structural problems, and leadership influence, raise questions about the nature of French opposition to entry and of British limitations and errors in the bidding process, tactics and strategy, and all provide Heath and Pompidou with elements of reflection on a better approach to the issues of Britain's entry discussions.
- Chapter 3 establishes a comparison between Heath and Pompidou, two new actors with a similarity of background and dispositions who, unlike their predecessors, not only talked about Europe but also talked about a Europe which seemed similar. The chapter examines the similarity in their personae, experience and characters, and analyses the resemblance between the views on Europe's fundamentals, values and objectives which Heath and Pompidou expressed publicly in speeches and interviews, with the intention of determining and justifying an entente between the two men.
- Chapter 4 investigates the reasons why May 1971 took place and why an atypical secret one-to-one top-level meeting format was espoused. It lists and reviews the diverse reasons for holding such meetings by presenting the highly sensitive issues which demanded secrecy in discussions, from both a French and British point of view. It assesses the difficulties Brussels and France's European partners posed to the resolution of issues and points to internal problems with key British and French agencies (FCO, Quai d'Orsay, civil service and governmental offices), and with political personalities who could potentially hamper the smooth running of the Franco-British discussions.

- Chapter 5 examines the nature, preparation and conduct of the Paris May 1971 summit meetings and how they developed into a model of meetings of a particular style, ambiance and content. It describes and assesses the continuing of a bilateral relationship between Heath and Pompidou through a series of one-to-one meetings in which principals and actors had a major role in setting the tone of the agenda, and in which entente, exchange and understanding seemed to be more important than results. More generally, it investigates the characteristics and impact of '*personal diplomacy*', and appraises the durability and viability of the Paris May 1971 model in the area of European top-level political discussions.

Original Contribution

In exploring this subject, this study aims to develop a variation in the diplomatic history of the European Community by revisiting a crucial event of its enlargement narrative through an actor-centred approach. Based on the combination of new British and French materials, this work will be the first in-depth investigation of the impact of '*personal diplomacy*' on the outcome of this particular phase of Franco-British negotiations for British membership of the Community. By providing evidence of the salient contribution of Heath and Pompidou to the success of the Community's enlargement to Britain, this thesis will hopefully participate in the re-evaluation of the crucial role and determining influence of these two forgotten men in the history of European integration and help to launch a renewed discussion on the merits and topicality of summitry and leadership.

Chapter 2. Britain's European Policy (1945-1969)

The attempt to play a separate power role - that is, a role apart from Europe, a role based on a 'special relationship' with the United States, a role being based on being the head of a 'commonwealth' which has no political structure, or unity, or strength, and enjoys a fragile and precarious economic relationship by means of the Sterling area and preferences in the British market - this role is about played out¹.

At the Messina Conference held on 1-3 June 1955, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (the Six) stated their intent to make '*further progress [...] towards the setting up of a united Europe by the development of common institutions, the gradual merging of national economies, the creation of a common market and the harmonisation of their social policies*'.² They agreed to further integration within the framework of the European project initiated four years earlier with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC Treaty signed in Paris on 18 April 1951³). Consequently, the Six set up the Spaak Committee⁴ to discuss the modalities of a new phase of European integration in line with the Messina resolution, which culminated with the signing, on 27 April 1957, of the Treaty of Rome⁵ establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom). Though officially invited to participate and attend the discussions in the Committee, Britain stayed '*on the sidelines*'.⁶

From the very start of the European project, the British Government's European position had not been in phase with the objectives of the six members, and was even less so with its key member

¹ American Secretary of State Dean Acheson about Britain's decline, quoted in Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 218.

² CVCE, La Conférence de Messine. URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/la_conference_de_messine-fr-1f8c3257-aa3e-4d15-99a6-eaa3dd82da0b.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

³ CVCE, Traité instituant la Communauté Européenne du Charbon et de l'Acier (Paris, 18 avril 1951), URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/traite_instituant_la_communaute_europeenne_du_charbon_et_de_l_acier_paris_18_avril_1951-fr-11a21305-941e-49d7-a171-ed5be548cd58.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

⁴ CVCE, the Spaak Committee, named after Belgium Foreign Affairs Minister Paul-Henry Spaak who chaired the Committee of Foreign Ministers from the Six. URL: https://www.cvce.eu/obj/le_comite_spaak-fr-2c330a16-0797-4e30-9a6b-d3c6de5ada0e.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

⁵ CVCE, Traité instituant la Communauté Économique Européenne (Rome, 25 mars 1957), URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/traite_instituant_la_communaute_economique_europeenne_rome_25_mars_1957-fr-cca6ba28-0bf3-4ce6-8a76-6b0b3252696e.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

⁶ Gowland, Turner and Wright, *Britain*, p. 301.

France on crucial economic development and related political issues.⁷ From the end of the Second World War until June 1970, when Edward Heath's Conservatives won the elections over Harold Wilson's Labour, British policy towards the EEC went through two distinct phases. During the period 1945-1959, the British approach to the European question changed from a benevolent indifference stemming from the assurance of a victorious country still possessing a large empire and not in the least keen 'to join a condominium of defeated, weak, frightened and impecunious second-rank nations'⁸, to active opposition to the European Union project characterized by the intention to create, from February 1957⁹, a free trade area (FTA), a commerce-focused association intended to both encompass and rival the 'Common Market'¹⁰. Britain's post-war aspirations to first-rank world status, shared with their powerful American Allies, did not incline British leaders to favour and participate in the development of an improbable economic union of continental powers including old rival France and a weakened Germany, perceived as seeking to re-establish its economic dominance over the European continent.¹¹ Splendid isolation in Europe therefore seemed a more attractive option to British leaders than a questionable participation in an aspiring supranationalist project.

In the following decade (1960-1969), Britain's position radically changed to that of actively seeking membership of the EEC, first with Macmillan's Conservative Government's August 1961 request for negotiations for entry, then with Harold Wilson's application in May 1967. During this period, Britain tried to convince the Six of the validity of its requests but was twice rebuffed by France. It was only with the surprise election of Edward Heath in June 1970 that discussions on entry took a more favourable turn.

⁷ Young, *Britain*, op. cit.

⁸ Luigi Giorgio Barzini, *The Impossible Europeans* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), p. 58.

⁹ CVCE Memorandum from the United Kingdom on the European Free Trade Area (February 1957), URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/memorandum_from_the_united_kingdom_on_the_european_free_trade_area_february_1957-en-750549e7-235d-4510-9a41-5e4a953cc739.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁰ Ellison, 'British Policy', op. cit.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.291.

This thesis aims to highlight the crucial impact of Heath and Pompidou, of their particular entente, and of the one-to-one summit meetings they held in Paris in May 1971. However, the two men's relations constitute one element within the broader framework of Britain's attempts to enter the Community. For this reason, the importance of the May 1971 Paris Summit, and of Heath's and Pompidou's roles in it, must be set within the context of the previous applications for membership initiated by Heath's predecessors Macmillan and Wilson. In order to understand what went right for Britain in May 1971, a knowledge of what happened before is necessary, and the Chapter will explore the relative constancy of Britain's historical and geo-political constraints and choices, the evolution of the economic and leadership circumstances conditioning its European aspirations, the nature of and reasons for French opposition to its entry, and the limitations and problems engendered by the British negotiating strategy and goals. This Chapter proposes a re-reading of Britain's European undertakings and policies, from the beginning of the European project to the resignation of General de Gaulle in April 1969, with a focus on Macmillan's premiership (January 1957 - October 1963) and Wilson's first premiership (October 1964 - June 1970). The proposed re-reading will avoid reductive approaches - de Gaulle as the nemesis of all Britain's applications, or Britain's supposed lack of European motivation. Instead, the Chapter seeks to appraise the nature and impact of the factors which prevented Britain from gaining entry into the EEC in the 1960s which, it will be argued, provided the context in which both Heath and Pompidou met and negotiated.

This Chapter will investigate four areas. Firstly, it will argue that Britain was caught in dilemmas and contradictions which prevented the development of a viable and convincing European policy. It will study the main obstacles to formulating such a policy, related to Britain's historical and traditional priorities, its policy-making processes, and the approach of its political class towards the issue of the EEC. Secondly, it will analyse the mechanics of change in Britain's relationships to Europe throughout the 1950s and 1960s, by reviewing the main stages and parameters of Britain's difficult '*transition from a world power to a European nation*'¹², and by examining internal resistance to this transition.

¹² Tratt, *The Macmillan*, p. 11.

Thirdly, France's perceived insurmountable opposition to Britain's entry into the EEC will be assessed by way of a re-examination of the reality of the '*Gaullist challenge*'¹³ to British membership. Finally, the chapter will address the limitations in Britain's negotiating capabilities and strategies.

By studying these four areas, the thesis seeks to draw a road map from the previous applications, indicating the critical milestones that would face Heath and Pompidou when they took command of Britain's discussions with the Community at the end of the 1960s. The Chapter acts as a foundation for the subsequent examination of the ways in which a Heath-Pompidou entente would come to play such a crucial role in the success of Britain's application. It represents a vital reflection on the pre Heath-Pompidou period, an interpretation of the applications by Macmillan and Wilson through a Heath-Pompidou filter, which will be mainly based on the numerous works, and related sources, which have supported the studies of pre-1970 Britain's relations with Europe and, more particularly, with France.¹⁴ In the later Chapters, research and analysis with primary sources will be mostly devoted to those original documents which have not yet been studied by scholars for the period 1969-1974, which encompasses Pompidou's presidency (20 June 1969 – 2 April 1974) and Heath's premiership (19 June 1970 – 4 March 1974).

Britain's fundamental dilemma: the difficulties in formulating a British European policy

Britain's European policies were conceived and decided in a particular context, by specific actors, and with the data and facts available at the time which demonstrated a number of persistent

¹³ Ludlow, *The European Community*, op. cit.

¹⁴ The extended period of Britain's first two applications was abundantly covered in scholars', journalists' and politicians' works using a vast quantity of primary sources mainly used for traditional and classical analyses as, for instance, Beloff, *The General says No*, op. cit.; Camps, *Britain*, op. cit.; Daddow, *Harold Wilson*, op. cit.; Françoise de La Serre, *La Grande-Bretagne et la Communauté Européenne* (Perspectives Internationales, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987); George, *Britain*, op. cit.; Stephen George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community* (3rd Edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Gowland, Turner and Wright, *Britain* op. cit., Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, op. cit.; May, *Britain*, op. cit.; Pine, *Harold Wilson* op. cit.; Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain*, op. cit.; Ludlow, *The European Community*, op. cit. And in PhD theses, among which: Ross Christie, "'Britain's Crisis of Confidence'", op. cit.; Deavin, 'Harold Macmillan', op. cit.; Ellison, 'British Policy', op. cit.

difficulties relating to historic status, to the initial lack of alternatives, to the complexity of designing a European policy, and to organisational impediments and indecision at the highest level.

The weight of history and empire

From the end of the Second World War to 1959, Britain had no intention of joining the EEC or any supranational institutions in continental Europe.¹⁵ There was, in the words of Jean Monnet, '*no need to exorcise history*'.¹⁶ Indeed Britain had ended the war a victorious nation, however an exhausted one, well aware of its limitations but unashamed and full of confidence in its new future. Britain had a rank in the world. Exponents of the '*missed opportunities*'¹⁷ interpretation have regarded Britain's position as over-confident, somewhat patronizing for continental European countries, and dismissive of any special relationship with European partners that could affect its partnership with the United States.¹⁸ In fact, this position was arguably the expression of a foreign policy based on tangible economic and geopolitical strengths. In the mid-1950s, Britain was one of only three nuclear powers¹⁹, it was still in possession of a large colonial empire, and enjoyed advantageous tariff conditions in its trade with the Commonwealth countries. Britain's 'special relationship' with the United States, its military forces, the financial pre-eminence of the City and of its currency, provided it with an international status and a position of influence in many parts of the world.²⁰ Post-WWII Britain was also more stable than France and richer than West Germany. France was crippled by endemic political instability ('*between 1946 and 1958, France under the Fourth Republic had fifteen Prime Ministers to Britain's four*'²¹) and West Germany, still under the shock of its recent past, was seen as a political dwarf '*willing to seek compromise on European matters*'²². Britain's trade with the Commonwealth exceeded by far the exchanges made with the founding members of the

¹⁵ Tratt, *The Macmillan*, p. 11.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ '*Great Britain might just have missed the chance to get on the bus in the 1950s*', Sir Con O'Neil quoted in Gabrielle Clemens, 'A History of Failures and Miscalculations? Britain's Relationship to the European Communities in the Post-war Era (1945-1973)', *Contemporary European History*, 13 (2), (2004), p. 223.

¹⁸ Roy Denman, *Missed Chances*, p. 182.

¹⁹ Britain tested its first nuclear bomb in October 1952, France in February 1960.

²⁰ Clemens, 'A History of Failures', p. 224.

²¹ Mangold, *The Impossible Ally*, p. 84.

²² Tratt, *The Macmillan*, p. 160.

Community²³, and co-operation with the United States in the domains of defence and foreign policy was essential to the defence of Western values in the Cold War bipolar world.

Winston Churchill's famous geopolitical metaphor placed Britain '*at the intersection of three overlapping circles: the English-speaking world (led by the Britain-USA partnership), the Commonwealth and Europe*'.²⁴ Any political choice taking Britain closer to Europe would thus have the disadvantage of taking Britain away from the two other components of the Three Circle positioning and would therefore damage the sought-after balance between the three poles of attraction and influence. On the one hand, members of the Commonwealth, '*one of the greatest achievements of Labour Governments*'²⁵, would view with concern any drifting away from them of the old imperial ruler and principal export outlet for their agricultural products, as well as guarantor of stability for the sterling area. On the other hand, any rapprochement with continental Europe would risk putting Britain in the same category of allies of the USA as France and Germany, unless it could hold a position of leadership within it. This would damage the 'special relationship' with the United States whose preservation was considered as '*the most basic of all [Britain's] interests*'.²⁶

The initial lack of alternatives

These factors were all the more influential in the early stages of Britain's European policy in that European construction could not provide an immediate viable alternative, equivalent to an efficient post-imperial cooperation system, and to a partnership with the USA. For Britain, it really was a case of measuring hard facts against theoretical prospects in the future.²⁷ The Treaty of Rome, conceived as a continuation of the successful ECSC, was merely a framework agreement which did not list in detail the agenda for developments such as institutions, membership and sector-specific policies like the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP).²⁸ Therefore, in the context of the 1950s, the European project

²³ Stephen Wall, *A Stranger in Europe*, p. 2.

²⁴ Kitzinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 23.

²⁵ Daddow, *Harold Wilson*, p. 244.

²⁶ Ross Christie, "'Britain's Crisis of Confidence'", p. 102.

²⁷ Pine, *Harold Wilson*, p. 8.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 6.

could not bring any clarity or vision as to what the future of Britain would be if it became a member of the Community, or how it would fit into its foreign and defence policy orientations, and how it could adapt to its economic and trade structures. Defining Britain's European policy in the years 1945-1959 amounted to choosing between a balanced and long-term exploitation of its *'intangible assets'* (*'Britain's leadership of the Commonwealth, a special relationship with the United States, and an association with the EEC'*²⁹) and an immediate *'leap in the dark'*³⁰ with partners engaged in a federalist project that did not attract Britain's political class and a public opinion that *'paid little attention to Europe'*³¹. At the June 1955 Messina Conference³², Britain demonstrated the low priority given to the nascent European project by sending an Under Secretary of the Board of Trade (Russell Bretherton) as British representative to join the Six's Foreign Ministers in the Spaak Committee's discussions on the *'definition of the contours of the future EEC and Euratom'*³³ (July 1955 - April 1956). Because extending discussions with cooperative European partners³⁴ would potentially take Britain on the path towards economic integration (in the form of a customs union with common external tariffs, conflicting with Commonwealth trade partnership, national industry preservation, and agricultural tariff-setting policy), Britain's participation was quickly officially withdrawn (November 1955). This decision did not especially affect the work of the Committee. After making overtures to soften British reservations, and potentially accommodating conditions for entry, its members went on to set the principles of the European Common Market finalized in the Treaty of Rome. This was an illustration of the fact that the initial lack of attractiveness of the European project to Britain also stemmed from the relative indifference of its prospective partners. For instance, Walter Hallstein,

²⁹ as stated in Section C of the Future Policy Study 1960-1970, a report set up at the request of Macmillan in 1959 in order to *'clarify how Britain's place in the world would change over the next ten years'* in Ross Christie, *"Britain's Crisis of Confidence"*, p. 72.

³⁰ Macmillan quoted in Walls, *A Stranger in Europe*, p. 2.

³¹ Tratt, *The Macmillan*, p. 40. In page 105, Tratt quotes a survey of public opinion carried out in March 1959 and showing that only *'54 per cent favoured Britain joining the countries of Europe "for the purpose of trade", whereas in May 1961 only 8 per cent thought that Britain should leave the "Outer Seven" [EFTA] and apply for membership of the European Common Market'*.

³² CVCE, Messina Conference: The Messina Conference stated that it was time *'to go a step further towards the construction of Europe ... first of all ... in the economic field'*.

³³ CVCE, Spaak Committee.

³⁴ Chris Gifford, *The Making of Eurosceptic Britain: Identity and Economy in a Post-Imperial State* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 35.

President of the first European Commission, saw '*no problem with two low-tariffs clubs in Europe*'³⁵ when addressing the issues of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), a more constructive version of Macmillan's initial '*Plan G*'³⁶, established by Britain at the Stockholm Convention (November 1959). Britain's attachment to its irrevocable sovereignty, to its leadership status and world influence, was seen by the Six as '*consistently acting as an impediment to supranationalism in Western Europe*'³⁷ making it the '*awkward partner*'³⁸ of the continental nations. Britain's arm's-length relationship with Europe prevented it from participating in the foundation negotiations which initiated the European project. Therefore it diminished its ability to influence the orientation of EEC policies. It also generated a backlog of issues and points of contention which had negative repercussions in the following decades, as Britain's initial strengths were to become a later handicap.

Paradoxes and double binds

A series of contradictions, paradoxes and double binds³⁹, all being different facets and consequences of the fundamental dilemma posed by the Three Circle approach, contributed to every stage of Britain's troubled relationship with the EEC. From the start of European construction, Britain's choice was either to stay isolated or to integrate within the Europe being built by the Six, with the knowledge that neither was actually possible given what the Foreign Office considered as the '*axiom of British policy*'⁴⁰, the Three Circle system. In effect, 'staying out' of Europe meant Britain could end up facing a more homogeneous group of nations, probably '*German-dominated*'⁴¹, and being

³⁵ According to Tratt: '*opposition to a British application to join the EEC existed ... in the highest reaches of the European Commission*', in Tratt, *The Macmillan*, p. 159.

³⁶ 'Plan G' was an attempt to set up a free trade area for all types of goods, with the notable exceptions of food products. It did not include the setting-up of institutions and external tariffs. It focused on British interests, Commonwealth trade and protection of the British agricultural sector. Negotiations on 'Plan G' were stopped by de Gaulle in November 1958. In reaction, Britain and six other non EEC members countries (Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland) later known as '*Outer Seven*' established the EFTA at the Stockholm Convention held in November 1959, in Greenwood, *Britain*, pp. 70-78.

³⁷ Daddow, *Harold Wilson*, p. 56.

³⁸ Stephen George, *An Awkward Partner*, op. cit.

³⁹ '*Double bind: a situation in which a person is confronted with two irreconcilable demands or a choice between two undesirable courses of action*', Oxford Dictionaries.
URL: https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/double_bind [last accessed 22.11.2019].

⁴⁰ Gowland, *Britain and European*, p. 257.

⁴¹ Which was feared by the British establishment, and most representatively by Macmillan, in Ellison, '*British Policy*', p. 291.

associated in a customs union likely to threaten British commercial exchanges with its individual members. 'Getting in' would not only involve Britain in a federalist themed union (although Britain '*saw no need to abandon its sovereignty to common institutions, whereas the Six [then] saw it as vital*'⁴²) but would also break Britain's quasi emotional bond with the Commonwealth. Britain could neither be in or out of Europe, a dilemma expressed by Peter Thorneycroft, then President of the Board of Trade: '*on any analysis, it seems clear that we cannot afford that the Common Market should either succeed, or fail, without us*'.⁴³ Another troubling double bind concerned America's view on Britain's policy towards Europe. The United States were fervent supporters and advocates of a united Western Europe in the context of the Cold War.⁴⁴ The US administration saw Britain's membership as an imperative for lasting stability in Western Europe and therefore bore a '*fundamental antipathy towards the British dominated EFTA*'⁴⁵, Macmillan's alternative to the Common Market. They were not impressed by Britain's aloofness from European integration to the point of considering Britain's refusal to join the ECSC as '*the greatest mistake of the post-war period*'⁴⁶. But for Britain, the 'special relationship' was felt to be impossible to maintain from within any European association which would potentially put Britain on the same level as other American allies, such as Germany or France. Britain's double bind was equally the product of the '*persistent ambiguity of United States' policy towards Europe*', oscillating between strong support for political integration that would create a '*bulwark against Communism*', and a concern for the creation of trade barriers to American products as a potential result of the developing custom union.⁴⁷

Britain's positioning in relation to the European project highlighted other contradictions, also originating from the initial fundamental dilemma. For instance, Harold Wilson's intention to improve the situation of Britain's industrial sector, key to Labour voters, through membership of the Common Market could, by the same token, pose problems to British agriculture and to its food-pricing model

⁴² Daddow, *Harold Wilson*. p. 8.

⁴³ Quoted in Gowland, *Britain and European*, p. 43.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Tratt, *The Macmillan*, p. 170.

⁴⁶ Secretary of State Dean Acheson quoted in Daddow, *Harold Wilson*, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Lord Beloff, *Britain and European Union: Dialogue of the Deaf* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 57.

because of entry conditions such as the '*préférence communautaire*'.⁴⁸ In fact, agricultural matters, predominant in the EEC project and all aspects of integration negotiations, had been a stumbling block from the start of Britain's discussions on membership⁴⁹, and posed a particular problem with France which, under de Gaulle, used the Common Market as a platform for the development of French industry and of its agricultural sector⁵⁰. Britain had stayed out of the EEC, *inter alia*, in order to protect its farmers and maintain its strategy of low-cost food, supplied primarily by the Commonwealth. And Britain was subsequently refused access to the EEC because of its request for special arrangements on its agricultural and food-pricing models⁵¹, a dichotomy which '*tended to prove that the adopted policy hitherto to stay out was flawed if not wrong*'⁵². Britain could not escape the contradictions of its decisions. Faced with two irreconcilable choices ('in' or 'out') at the time when the Spaak Committee was working on further integration, it first adopted a non-committal approach to European issues which amounted to a form of political immobility, relieving the British Government from making any irrevocable decisions, in the hope that the European project would fail before maturing into a valid and active union.

'Groupthink' and organisational impediments

The impossibility for British decision-making bodies to reach an optimum solution in the design of its European policy during the 1950s found a partial explanation in the political/sociological phenomenon described by experts as '*Groupthink*'⁵³. Because of the fundamental dilemmas referred to above, these bodies suffered from a type of decisional paralysis whose causes ranged from⁵⁴:

⁴⁸ The principle of '*préférence communautaire*' meant that a heavy taxation was imposed on non E.E.C. products, which would hurt Britain because of its dependency on large imports of low-priced food products from the Commonwealth.

⁴⁹ Lorena Ruano, 'Elites, Public Opinion and Pressure Groups: the British Position in Agriculture during Negotiations for Accession to the EC, 1961-1975', *Journal of European Integration History*, 5, (1999), pp. 11-16.

⁵⁰ Moravczik, *Le Grain et la Grandeur*, op. cit.

⁵¹ Milward, 'The Hague Conference', op. cit.

⁵² Daddow, *Britain*, op. cit.

⁵³ '*Groupthink is mostly found in decision-making bodies ... where there exists a marked degree of amiability and esprit de corps, where members are undergoing high stress from external threats of losses to be expected from whatever alternative is chosen*', in Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos* (2nd Edn.; Dallas; London: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), p. 175.

⁵⁴ '*Symptoms of Groupthink*', in Tratt, *The Macmillan Government*, pp. 71-73.

- *'an incomplete survey of alternatives'*, as no real serious thought was given to the EEC as an alternative by the political elite,
- *'an incomplete survey of objectives'*, since the policy of Britain's *grandeur* was not questioned in its fundamental principles,
- *'a failure to examine risks of preferred choices'*, characterised by a lack of questioning on the future of the Three circle approach at the time of EEC discussions,
- *'a failure to reappraise initially rejected alternatives'* inasmuch as a review of Britain's initial position to stay out of Europe was not envisaged until hard facts were to impose a foreign policy shift in the late 1950s,
- *'selective bias in processing information at hand'* epitomised by the control of Britain's 1950s European policy by Offices strongly linked to the Commonwealth, and thus unlikely to find the European project attractive,
- *'a failure to work contingency plans'* for, until Macmillan's application in 1961, the only existing contingency plan was FTA⁵⁵.

But *'Groupthink'* was not the only organisation-linked factor in the formulation of Britain's European policy. Indeed the sheer multiplicity of offices and governmental bodies, and the diversity of opinions and views about Europe within them, added to the complexity and confusion in setting Britain's European policy as well as in organising and holding negotiations with the Six. Throughout most of the 1950s and until the 1967 second application, no less than seven departments, ministries and offices were involved, or had direct interests, in the discussions with the EEC: the Western Department, the Economic Department and the Mutual Aid Department of the Foreign Office, the Treasury, the Board of Trade, the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Colonial Office.⁵⁶ Such a multiplicity of departments and offices led to open dissensions in Cabinet as to which policy Britain

⁵⁵ Ellison, *British Policy*, op. cit.

⁵⁶ Tratt, *The Macmillan Government*, p. 10.

should follow.⁵⁷ This explained the varying nature of Whitehall policies emphasising political, diplomatic or economic interests, or any combination thereof, depending on which governmental body had most influence, or leverage, at the particular time.⁵⁸ This contributed to blurring the readability of Britain's policy to outsiders. Also, the fissiparous policy-formulation process these conditions engendered added to Britain's fundamental political and economic quandaries. It had the effect of leaving the Prime Minister alone to take key leadership decisions, to settle the debate, thus emphasizing his personal capacity and will to make appropriate policy decisions in the domain of European integration.

Leadership indecision and irresolute motivations

The British leadership's personal capacity to make these decisions were themselves subject to impediments linked, for the most part, to uncertain Prime Ministerial motivations and inconsistent attitudes, observed in both Macmillan and Wilson. These characteristics were understandably the product of the continued evolution in both men's approaches to the question of Britain's membership, and were influenced by numerous interlocking factors which ranged from international and diplomatic changes and constraints, to domestic political considerations, and economic concerns. But they also reflected the difficulty the British leadership experienced in setting a coherent European policy. Uncertainty about the European convictions of Macmillan and Wilson persists today. In the case of Macmillan, the analyses of his European persona⁵⁹ cover the whole

⁵⁷ For instance, over the period 1959-1968, 'Whitehall departments held differing perspectives on what should constitute Britain's appropriate world role' ... The "economic" and "overseas" departments held fundamentally opposed views as to the importance of overseas commitments, the appropriate level of defence expenditure, and the best means of securing Britain's interests', in Christie, "Britain's Crisis of Confidence", p. 342.

⁵⁸ Milward, 'The Hague Conference', p. 122. Until 1967 when an inter-departmental global consensus began to form around the Foreign Office's position of seeking membership, Commonwealth related dissensions were also to be significantly attenuated with the merger in 1968 of the Foreign Affairs and the Commonwealth into a single department, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

⁵⁹ To list only a few, the estimates of Macmillan's personal European commitment paradoxically describe either a mild Europeanist with 'a certain and inherited natural insularity' (Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 78), seeing in the establishment of the EEC 'a repeat of the continental blockade', (Alain Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle* (Paris, Éditions de Fallois: Fayard, 1997), p. 332), 'not a conviction politician' but a man with 'a distaste for both the federal and the functional systems of European integration' who thought of 'trying to break the Common Market ... if there were no FTA' (Tratt, *The Macmillan Government*, pp. 13-16) but also a 'sincere ally of France' (Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires d'Espoir, Le Renouveau 1958-1962* (Paris: Plon, 1970),

spectrum of possible opinions⁶⁰, from doubtful and disdainful anti-European, open and active antagonist to the Union, lukewarm and ill-at-ease supporter of further involvement in the European project, to EEC enthusiast and even crypto-federalist '*establishing the Conservative party as a leading behind the scenes supporter and financier of the European federalist movement*'⁶¹. As for Wilson, his European policies are seen as demonstrating an acute sense of political opportunism and pragmatism, an intellect seeking to bring '*an empirical response to events serving the immediate end of political equilibrium maintenance*'⁶², and a disconcerting aptitude '*to say different things to different people and to conceal his feelings so that it is impossible to chart the course of his thinking with any confidence*'⁶³. Though the real reasons why Wilson '*became better disposed to the EEC*' remain unclear⁶⁴, there exists a consensus on his ad hoc strategy⁶⁵, and on his personal reticence to commit to the liberal and federalist agenda of the European project at the expense of a preferential link with the Commonwealth, since he was '*a Commonwealth man through and through*'⁶⁶. However, despite opposite political and philosophical views on British society, Macmillan and Wilson showed noteworthy similarities in relation to the evolution of their European beliefs. Both leaders went from opposition, or at best lack of interest in anything European, to advocacy of EEC membership in the course of their respective premierships. This deeper attraction to the Europe Circle found its main origins in changes and crises affecting Britain's relationship with the USA and with the Commonwealth. In that sense, it could be argued that Macmillan launched Britain's first application process with a view to '*secure the traditional goals*'⁶⁷ of British foreign policy as, following the 1956-

p. 237), keener on a European construction inclusive of Britain because it might prevent his almost obsessive fear of a '*German-dominated continental block*' (Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 78).

⁶⁰ Including a description of a '*naïve incompetent who believed in illusory, idealistic concepts, or merely a politically ambitious power-seeker?*' in Deavin, 'Harold Macmillan', p. 328.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 332.

⁶² David Walker, 'The First Wilson Governments', in Peter Hennessy and Anthony Seldon (eds.), *Ruling Performance: British Governments from Attlee to Thatcher* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 189.

⁶³ Ziegler, *Wilson*, p. 240.

⁶⁴ Young, *Britain*, p. 84.

⁶⁵ '*What emerges most strongly is the uncoordinated, almost haphazard, way in which Wilson's foreign policy was developed*', in Helen Parr, 'Gone native: the Foreign Office and Harold Wilson's policy towards the EEC, 1964-67', in Oliver J. Daddow (ed.), *Harold Wilson*, p. 75.

Even more critical, Daddow considers that consulted scholars '*have not found it possible to redeem Wilson's reputation*', in Daddow, *Harold Wilson*, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Denman, *Missed Opportunities*, p. 230.

⁶⁷ Pine, *Harold Wilson*, p. 8.

1957 Suez Crisis, the '*healing of the Anglo-American schism*'⁶⁸ became a priority under his leadership. On the other hand, Britain's standing, the Commonwealth and economic/monetary strength seemed to have been the guiding principles of Wilson's newly-found attraction to the Common Market which led to Britain's second application, though to the list of Wilson's '*main policy objectives*' could be added '*to keep his left wing quiet*'⁶⁹. Wilson's conversion originated in a variety of events: the fallout with the Commonwealth following damaging crises in Rhodesia and South Africa which undermined his belief in a Commonwealth united behind Britain⁷⁰, the cooling of Britain's relationship with the USA, linked to Wilson's lack of military support in the American war in Vietnam and to his decision to withdraw British troops from 'East of Suez', the 1967 devaluation of sterling, and to some extent the 1965 'empty chair' crisis which provided him with reassurance on his anti-federalist concerns about the EEC⁷¹. But a striking similarity was that, for both Macmillan and Wilson, joining Europe essentially was largely a way for Britain to maintain the difficult equilibrium of interests in the three interlinked circles Transatlantic Alliance-Commonwealth-Western Europe. In their view, each circle played a distinctive role in Britain's foreign policy: the UK-USA 'special relationship' was a motivational factor to join the Union, be it positive or negative, for Macmillan ('*you need us for ourselves, for Commonwealth, and as leaders of Europe*'⁷²) and for Wilson ('*the best way to influence the US ... was as leader of a unified Europe*'⁷³). The Atlantic Alliance and the Commonwealth were constants in the political equation of Macmillan and Wilson. Europe and its corollary, the potential joining of the EEC, were an adjustment variable to these two factors, a means to an end rather than an end in itself. In essence, both Prime Ministers' foreign policy priorities aimed at '*preserving the Anglo-American alliance and fortifying the unity of the Commonwealth*'⁷⁴. Neither had the intention to make Britain '*just another European country*'⁷⁵.

⁶⁸ Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, op. cit.

⁶⁹ Ziegler, *Harold Wilson*, p. 225.

⁷⁰ Philip Alexander, *From Imperial Power to Regional Powers: Commonwealth Crises and the Second Application*, in Daddow (ed.), *Harold Wilson*, pp. 188-210.

⁷¹ Young, *Britain*, p. 85.

⁷² Macmillan to Eisenhower quoted in Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 83.

⁷³ Pine, *Harold Wilson*, p. 55.

⁷⁴ Ziegler, *Harold Wilson*, p. 225.

⁷⁵ Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary in Clement Attlee's Labour government, quoted in Young, *Britain*, p. 12.

The Mechanics of change

Britain's European policy markedly evolved with Macmillan and Wilson under the combined effects of international crises and changing economic trends and financial crises. International crises underlined the limitations to a British policy of independence posited by post-war political and strategic orientations. The changing economic trends revealed the complex relationship between the Executive's gradual acknowledgement of irreversible economic change, and its actual translation in political terms and strategic choices. Nevertheless these shifts in British geopolitical and economic environments did not automatically break Britain's ingrained disinclination for full-on European integration, epitomising the resistance of the Three Circle approach to the European economic attractiveness.

The Suez crisis (July 1956 – April 1957)

Post-WWII British foreign policy had always assumed an equal partnership with the USA embodied in close military and defence cooperation. This assumption actually hid an imbalance between the two powers, '*implicit in America's towering economic superiority over Britain since 1945*'⁷⁶ which was crudely highlighted in diplomatic and economic terms during the Suez crisis. The 1956 Franco-British and Israeli expedition against President Nasser's Egypt following the nationalization of the Suez Canal on July 26, 1956 ended up in a diplomatic, economic and political fiasco that had dramatic and lasting repercussions in Britain and France. The common post-crisis assessment was stern: Britain and France were not great powers anymore⁷⁷, as the USA had proven they had the upper hand in all aspects of Western management of international affairs. But this general assessment hid the divergence of repercussions and conclusions drawn in London and in Paris. The '*first crack ... in British post-war self confidence*'⁷⁸ had also created a divide between France and Britain in their views on European integration. In the case of Britain, Suez forced a painful rethinking of the Commonwealth

⁷⁶ Sean Greenwood, *Britain*, p. 80.

⁷⁷ Jean Viot, 'La France et la Grande Bretagne devant les Crises Internationales', *Histoire, Économie et Société*, 1 (1994), p. 8.

⁷⁸ Kitzienger, *Diplomacy*, p. 27.

edifice⁷⁹, as a marker of international status and influence. It also paradoxically and surprisingly reinforced the need for a closer relationship with the United States, prioritising Macmillan's choice of the 'open sea' and of the preservation of sterling's security, damaged by American economic pressure applied to end the military expedition, over the interests of a diminished European partner. This choice was all the more surprising that conversely, for France, 'the Suez crisis was the catalyst' for further European integration, appearing to the Fourth Republic as a better outlet for international influence and the preservation of its vital interests.⁸⁰ Significantly, the Suez crisis left France with an impression of Britain's systematic siding with the Americans. For France, the timing of the signature of the Treaty of Rome coincided with the Suez crisis denouement⁸¹ marking, as Chancellor Adenauer put it, 'France's revenge'⁸². In this perspective, the Suez crisis revealed deep-seated differences regarding the attractiveness and relative importance of Europe. For post-Suez France, Europe was a solution. For Britain, however destabilizing and humiliating an experience Suez had been, Europe was still only an option to consider within the wider frame of its international strategy.

The reality of the economic dimension

The two decades following WWII witnessed significant changes in Britain's economic situation. These gave rise to a 'culture of 1960s declinism' which claimed that joining the economically more efficient Common Market was inevitable and highly preferable to its Commonwealth alternative.⁸³ The use of the word 'decline' to qualify the evolution of Britain's economy in the 1950s and 1960s is somewhat

⁷⁹ Miles Kahler, *Decolonization in Britain and France: the Domestic Consequences of International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁸⁰ Incidentally, the Suez crisis contributed to the downfall of the Fourth Republic. The perceived 'reculade' (climbdown) of the Fourth Republic's politicians was met by the French military with resentment and disillusionment with the regime. In the wake of the French Army's defeat in Indochina and subsequent determination to win the war in Algeria, these feelings constituted a challenge to the very existence of the regime with the ominous consequence, for British hopes of entry into the EEC, of de Gaulle's access to power in 1958.

⁸¹ Simon Serfaty, *France, de Gaulle and Europe: the Policy of the Fourth and Fifth Republics toward the Continent* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968).

⁸² The French resented in particular the unilateral demand for a cease-fire by Britain, which felt like a *fait accompli* rather than the result of an agreement between the parties to the military operation. Guy Mollet, the French *Président du Conseil*, turned his back on the Anglo-French *Entente* he had strongly supported and hastened the conclusion of an agreement on the European Treaty, in Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, pp. 81-82.

⁸³ Jim Tomlinson, 'The Decline of the Empire and the Economic 'Decline' of Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 14 (3), (2003), pp. 201-221.

misleading. In actual fact, Britain started the post-war period from a towering position. 1950s Britain was by far the most powerful economy in Europe. UK GNP per head was then twice as big as the Six considered as a whole (\$940 vs. \$477).⁸⁴ In 1950, an economic comparison between Britain and the Six was definitely to the former's advantage. The situation in 1970 differed considerably. It reflected the loss of preponderance of the Commonwealth and sterling area in Britain's trade, the gradual slowdown of British economic performance, and above all, the impressive development of the EEC. 1970s UK GNP per head was 15% lower than the combined figure of the Six. The GNP growth comparison in volume illustrated the far superior economic performance of the Six (from \$75 to \$485 billion for the EEC against an increase of \$47 to \$121 billion for Britain). Exports to the Commonwealth only represented 24.4% (25.9% of imports) and sterling investment went down to 38%.⁸⁵ However these snapshots of comparative economic performance do not reveal the whole picture of the gradual but substantive changes undergone by Britain over almost 20 years. Even if Britain's economy had lost out to the EEC in absolute and relative terms⁸⁶, the 1950s had been for the country years of growth, increased prosperity and dramatic rise in the standard of living. Nonetheless, from the mid-1950s onwards, Britain's economy was faced with a mounting threefold challenge: the change in the economic cohesion of the Commonwealth, the decrease (in absolute value and by comparison) of its industrial predominance⁸⁷, and a sharp increase in the Six's economies under the aegis of the EEC. In purely economic terms, these elements were likely to trigger a change in Britain's attitude to EEC membership. In the perspective of the Three Circle system, the Suez crisis had proven the fragility of Britain's position with regards to the economic and political power of the United States (first circle). New patterns in Britain's trade and economy showed the limitations of the Commonwealth for development and prosperity (second circle). At the

⁸⁴ Pine, *Harold Wilson*, p. 13, Kitzinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 29.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ 'In the period 1959-1964, while the British economy grew by 18%, the equivalent figures for Britain's European rivals were: 29% for Belgium, 31% for the Netherlands; and 32% for France, West Germany and Italy', in Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, 'From MacMillan to Home, 1959-1964' in Peter Hennessy and Anthony Seldon (eds.), *Ruling Performance: British Governments from Attlee to Thatcher* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 166.

⁸⁷ Britain's share of the world manufactured goods decreased from a staggering 25.5% in 1950 to 13.9% in 1965, when in the same period West Germany's share increased from 7.3% to 19.1%, in Pinto-Duschinsky, 'From MacMillan', p. 166.

beginning of the 1960s, the balance could have tilted in favour of Europe (third circle), with the case for EEC membership as a viable and distinctive alternative. However, neither Macmillan nor Wilson appeared convinced, at least in the first years of their respective premierships, of the necessity to re-evaluate relationships with the Commonwealth and the USA in favour of joining the EEC.

The resistance to change

In late 1959, the '*Future Policy Study, 1960-1970*'⁸⁸ report was submitted to Macmillan, at his request, by a committee of senior civil servants. It aimed at '*clarifying how Britain's place in the world would change over the next ten years*'. Section C of the report entitled '*The Main Objectives of the United Kingdom's Overseas and Strategic Policies*' underlined the continuing predominance of the Three Circle approach ('*the intangible assets*') in Britain's policy in a changing world where the growing economic importance and influence of the EEC was officially acknowledged. The report, which originated from high-level inter-departmental workgroups, contributed to shaping and consolidating Macmillan's view on Britain's strengths in the world. It renewed the British executive's belief in the primordial importance of the '*special relationship*' with the USA. It confirmed the permanence and value of the links with the Commonwealth. And remarkably, it did not mention Britain's membership of the EEC as an option for British policy in the 1960s.⁸⁹ A similarly unwavering attachment to the Commonwealth was prevalent in the first stages of Wilson's Premiership too, as expressed in the 1964 Labour manifesto's description of '*the first responsibility of the British Government*' as being the development of Commonwealth trade.⁹⁰ For comparable reasons, Macmillan and Wilson handled the dichotomy between their intrinsic lack of political attraction to EEC membership and the economic justification of this, by attempting to construct a similar '*association without integration*', with the EFTA organisation for Macmillan (combining the Six with

⁸⁸ Christie, "*Britain's Crisis of Confidence*", pp. 72-103.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁹⁰ '*The Labour Party is convinced that the first responsibility of a British Government is still to the Commonwealth*', 1964 Labour manifesto.
URL: <http://labourmanifesto.com/1964/1964-labour-manifesto.shtml> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

the FTA's 'Outer Seven'⁹¹) and, under Wilson, via the Kennedy Round⁹² which '*Labour saw ... as the precursor to British membership of the Community*'⁹³. Both attempts sought to benefit from the economic dynamism of the Common Market without taking part in it, and to preserve the interests of the Commonwealth, while finding a mutually acceptable trading framework with the USA. This formula was nevertheless short-lived since disillusion with EFTA and with Britain's Commonwealth partners forced Macmillan and Wilson to realize that there was no plausible alternative to Community membership.⁹⁴ In the first stage of their premierships, it seemed that Macmillan (period 1957-1959) and Wilson (period 1964-1966) paid little attention to signs indicating that EEC membership could be a potential answer to Britain's search for a stronger economy and influence.

Sterling and the illusion of grandeur

Macmillan was Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time of Suez when he could witness first hand the damages on the British economy, and consequently on sterling, resulting from American economic pressure.⁹⁵ Further economic turmoil, in the shape of high unemployment and uncontrolled trade deficits, precipitated a sterling crisis in 1961 which roughly coincided with the start of the first application process for membership of the EEC. Similarly, Wilson's apparent change of mind on EEC membership coincided with the sterling crisis of 1966 which resulted in the devaluation of 18 November 1967. Securing the maintenance of the value of sterling was at the root of Macmillan's choice to side with the USA despite the humiliation to which Britain had been subjected during the Suez episode. A similar objective brought about Wilson's momentous decision to retrench from 'East

⁹¹ Émile Benoit, *Europe at Sixes and Sevens: The Common Market, the Free Trade Association and the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); Mordechai E. Kreinin, 'The "Outer Seven" and European Integration', *The American Economic Review*, 50/3 (1960), pp. 370-386.

⁹² '*The sixth round of GATT negotiations, known as the Kennedy Round ... was put into effect on June 30, 1967*', in '*Protectionists Balk at Kennedy Round Tariff Cuts*', in *CQ Almanac 1967* (Congressional Quarterly (23rd ed., Washington, DC, 1968).

⁹³ Helen Parr, *Britain's Policy towards the European Community: Harold Wilson and Britain's World Role, 1964-1967* (British Foreign and Colonial Policy; Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp. 24-25.

⁹⁴ In 1960, Macmillan acknowledged the failure of the EFTA's attempt to negotiate the lowering of tariffs with the EEC with a view to prevent the formation of a grouping of economic interests potentially damageable to Britain's trade, in Pinto-Duschinsky, 'From Macmillan', p. 163.

Wilson fell out from these partnerships after the clashes with EFTA about import taxes he introduced in 1964 following his refusal to envisage a devaluation and because of the Commonwealth divisions on the problems of Rhodesia, in Parr, *Britain's Policy*, pp. 24-25.

⁹⁵ Pinto-Duschinsky, 'From Macmillan', p. 165.

of Suez' in July 1967, 'when the Labour government released its Supplemental White Paper on Defence, which stipulated that British forces in the Far East would be halved by 1970-71 and completely withdrawn by the mid-1970s'⁹⁶.

Suez and 'East of Suez' both marked the sensitivity of the issue of sterling associated with Britain's loss of world influence. Economic reality had caught up with political illusions of grandeur through sterling crises. For the Prime Ministers, sterling, 'the lifeblood for all British policies'⁹⁷, was a decisive triggering factor to change their European policies. Because of it, membership of the EEC had become the only viable conclusion, born out of constraint, or unavoidable realism, as noted in Macmillan's diary after de Gaulle's rejection of Britain's application: 'what is the alternative to the European Community? If we are honest, we must say there is nothing'.⁹⁸ This negative formulation suggested a sense of ineluctability of European integration, assumed to be to the detriment of the pursuit of status and influence, and displaying the inability of British leaders 'to let go of Britain's great-power aspirations'.⁹⁹ Macmillan's characterisation to the House of Commons of the start of negotiations as negotiations which 'were only about whether to negotiate'¹⁰⁰ translated the cautiousness characterised by the composition of Heath's negotiating team representing three 'overseas departments' (the Foreign Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Colonial Office). By the time of the second application in 1967, the British concept of "'Commonwealth alternative" was dead but the "Commonwealth problem" persisted'¹⁰¹ as shown in issues relating to New Zealand dairy products or Commonwealth Sugar discussed in Brussels from 1967 onwards.

This study of the mechanisms of change in Britain's European policy shows that both Macmillan and Wilson clung resolutely to the notions of world status that history and empire had conferred. They resisted the ominous changes in the relative weight of the Circles following the Suez crisis and the

⁹⁶ Christie, "'Britain's Crisis of Confidence'", p. 339.

⁹⁷ Ellison, 'British Policy', p. 117.

⁹⁸ Macmillan quoted in Christie, "'Britain's Crisis of Confidence'", p. 100.

⁹⁹ Parr, 'Gone Native', p. 76.

¹⁰⁰ Denman, *Missed Chances*, p. 215.

¹⁰¹ Philip Alexander, 'From Imperial Power to Regional Powers: Commonwealth Crises and the Second Application', in Oliver J. Daddow (ed.), *Harold Wilson and European Integration: Britain's Second Application to Join the EEC* (British Foreign and Colonial Policy, London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 188.

progressive and inexorable waning of the '*Commonwealth alternative*', until the realities of the economic situation became evident through worrying signs of sterling's vulnerability to these changes. This resistance put them at risk of being seen only as '*reluctant Europeans*'¹⁰² and of fragmenting the starting point of their negotiations with France.

The Reality of the 'de Gaulle's Challenge'

'Revisionists' and 'post-revisionists' studies¹⁰³, based on sources made available in the 2000s, particularly in Britain, and taking into account the economic dimension of European policies, suggest that France too was facing key challenges, making the General's response to British applications arguably related as much to pragmatic and economic issues, as to political visions. These studies also suggest that de Gaulle did not radically oppose entry but instead made genuine moves towards potential British integration, moves that British politicians failed or refused to acknowledge and act upon. These perspectives suggest the complexity of the encounter between diverging British and French national interests. They highlight the importance of understanding de Gaulle's leadership style which both Macmillan and Wilson arguably failed to comprehend. They underline the British lack of understanding of the French leader's tactics and methods of negotiation, as well as their limitations in terms of approaches to the negotiations.

The difficult reading of de Gaulle's plans

'Our greatest hereditary enemy was not Germany, it was England'.¹⁰⁴ This statement epitomizes de Gaulle's *état d'esprit* which, combined with a quasi-obsession about American intentions, seems predominant in France's relationship with Britain from 1958 to 1969. This mindset had two main origins: firstly the vexations and humiliations he felt he endured during WWII at the hands of the

¹⁰² David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *Reluctant Europeans: Britain and European Integration 1945-1998* (London & New York: Routledge, 2014).

¹⁰³ Daddow, 'Rhetoric and Reality', op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, p. 153: '*Notre plus grand ennemi héréditaire, ce n'était pas l'Allemagne, c'était l'Angleterre*'.

British and their American allies¹⁰⁵, and secondly his vision of the shared history of the two European powers¹⁰⁶. Whilst a certain degree of Anglophobia certainly drove his political thinking, the foundations of de Gaulle's European strategy rested on three fundamental elements advanced by traditionalist studies¹⁰⁷: '*nationalism, independence and military power*'.¹⁰⁸ These studies promote the idea that de Gaulle wanted to achieve *Grandeur* for France by giving the geopolitically overriding 'Nation State' its rank and standing by means of being a military power possessing nuclear capacities independent from the United States. In an alternative interpretation of de Gaulle's objectives, put forward by the '*revisionist*' and '*post-revisionist*' historians, the European Community was a means for de Gaulle to guarantee and protect the modernization and development of French agriculture considered as crucial during his presidency.¹⁰⁹ In this context, French industry would also benefit from the economic achievements of the EEC and would create an environment propitious to global economic development. The respective merits of both interpretations are clear and not mutually exclusive. They both emphasize the notion that, for de Gaulle, a certain idea of Europe, whether in the political sphere or in the economic domain, had to correspond to a '*certain idea of France*'¹¹⁰. In fact, the reality of his rationale probably resulted from a mix of both '*traditionalist*' and '*revisionist*' approaches¹¹¹. Indeed, even if pre-eminent in de Gaulle's ideology, *Grandeur* could not be convincingly, durably and rationally attained without the necessary component of economic

¹⁰⁵ Charles Cogan, *Alliés Eternels, Amis Ombrageux - les États-Unis et la France depuis 1940* (Histoires; Bruxelles, Paris: Bruylant 1999).

Lacouture also evokes '*intellectual processes in which the weight of the past, the bitterness, the ghosts of Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, and the sequels to Yalta and Potsdam play an important part*' (translated by Francis K. Price), in Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), p. 191.

¹⁰⁶ Robert and Isabelle Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: the French and the British from the Sun King to the Present* (London: William Heinemann, 2006).

¹⁰⁷ These would include: Maurice Vaïsse, *La Grandeur: Politique Étrangère du Général de Gaulle, 1958-1969* (Pour une Histoire du XXe siècle, Paris: Fayard, 1998); Philip G. Cerny, *The Politics of Grandeur: Ideological Aspects of de Gaulle's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Philip H. Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France: French Security Policy and the Gaullist Legacy* (Princeton, N.J.; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1993); Edward A. Kolodziej, *French International Policy under De Gaulle and Pompidou: the Politics of Grandeur* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1974); Jean Touchard, *Le Gaullisme, 1940-1969* (Collection Points. Série Histoire; Paris: Seuil, 1978).

¹⁰⁸ Moravcsik, 'Le Grain et la Grandeur (1ère partie)', p. 512.

¹⁰⁹ '*The future of our agriculture is, after the settlement of the Algerian affair, our biggest concern*' ('*Le sort de notre agriculture est désormais, après le règlement de l'affaire algérienne, notre plus grand problème*'), de Gaulle quoted in Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, p. 302.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 61, de Gaulle: '*you will note that I always advocated the union of Europe*' ('*vous constaterez que j'ai toujours préconisé l'union de l'Europe*').

¹¹¹ Ludlow, *The European Community*, p. 200.

prosperity¹¹², in other words '*Grandeur and economic underperformance were incompatible*'¹¹³. From France's point of view, British applications were an impediment to the fulfilment of either goal. In the case of *Grandeur*, Britain, once member of the EEC, would necessarily challenge France's intended leadership and, as a '*satellite of the Americans*'¹¹⁴, or at best a 'Trojan horse' of the USA, Britain's participation in the Community would conflict with France's desire for a '*European Europe*'¹¹⁵ free from American influence. In the case of an agriculture-oriented policy, Britain's membership could only be a hindrance to France's objectives because of its Commonwealth imports and agricultural specificities¹¹⁶, especially when considering the relative weight of agriculture in France and Britain (27% of the active population in France in 1951, against 4% in Britain) and the major difference in their national approaches to agriculture pricing (a low-priced food policy for Britain vs. agriculture protectionism in France¹¹⁷). From a British perspective, this alternative in interpreting de Gaulle's intrinsic motivations, complicated by the fact that some of his positions directly emanated from his predecessors of the Fourth Republic (such as, for instance, the '*close cooperation with West Germany, acquisition of a nuclear capability, a greater role in NATO*'¹¹⁸) made '*Élysée-ology*'¹¹⁹ under de Gaulle not an exact science. It was difficult for de Gaulle's British interlocutors to make sense of the French President's tactics and goals, and to tackle his personal methods of conducting negotiations.

¹¹² In de Gaulle's opinion, '*politics and economics are as closely linked as action and life*', quoted in Pinto-Duschinski, 'From MacMillan', p. 166.

¹¹³ Ludlow, *The European Community*, p. 203.

¹¹⁴ Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, p. 348: '*L'Angleterre n'est plus qu'un satellite des États-Unis*'.

¹¹⁵ Bozo, *La Politique Étrangère*, p. 85: '*une Europe européenne*'.

¹¹⁶ For Britain, to accede to the EEC meant to agree with the 'French designed' CAP. This implied the abandonment of the low-cost food policy based on subsidies to producers and low tariffs for imports from the Commonwealth. In addition it meant the adoption by Britain of a system by which the cost of subsidising agriculture switched from the taxpayers to the consumers, which was deeply unpopular with its public opinion, in Lorena Ruano, 'Élites, Public Opinion and Pressure Groups: the British Position in Agriculture during the Negotiations for Accession to the EC, 1961-1975', *Journal of European Integration History*, 1, (1999), pp. 7-22.

¹¹⁷ Edmund Neville-Rolfe, 'Les Politiques Agricoles Françaises et Britanniques: Origines et Différences', *Économie rurale*, (1988), pp. 71-74.

¹¹⁸ Andrew Moravcsik, 'Le Grain et la Grandeur (1ère partie)', p. 522, and Edgar S. Furniss, *France, Troubled Ally: De Gaulle's Heritage and Prospects* (London: Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 12: Furniss explains that '*but for the most part De Gaulle seeks to do what the ephemeral statesmen of the Fourth Republic also attempted ... The new leader takes up where his predecessors left off*'.

¹¹⁹ Term introduced by journalist Joseph Alsop, *New York Herald Tribune*, 1963.

The difficulties of negotiating with de Gaulle: personality and methods

Dealing with de Gaulle proved extraordinarily difficult for most British leaders in this phase of European construction. As a result, the focus of Britain was on the man's defects and exaggerations which obscured any rational thinking about ways to influence his political thought-processes, and led to neglecting the man's 'complexity and ambiguity'¹²⁰. In defence of the British leadership, de Gaulle's discourse did indeed reveal a psychological tendency to transform 'initially rational ideas into aggressive and dismissive stances.'¹²¹ Tactics, vanity and a definite propensity for over-dramatization were also implicit components of his behaviour: the political crises initiated by de Gaulle offered the double advantage of satisfying his predilection for conflictual situations over the routine exercise of power, and of giving him the opportunity to display his ability to orchestrate and control events.¹²² In response, Britain framed analyses at the personality level¹²³ which led to an over-personalization of negotiations which, understandably, responded to the personalization of presidential power in the Fifth Republic¹²⁴. In spite of superficially cordial high level discussions, the British appeared to be always in the dark as to what French intentions were.¹²⁵ De Gaulle's propensity to secrecy and to deciding on his own, without informing close advisers and collaborators alike in order to create surprises, was a major difficulty which the British leadership had to confront.¹²⁶ The problems around interpreting and anticipating de Gaulle's moves culminated in discrepancies between de Gaulle's public discourse and the reality of French positions actually defended in

¹²⁰ Julian Jackson, *A Certain Idea of France: The Life of Charles de Gaulle* (Penguin Books Limited, 2018).

¹²¹ Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, p. 191.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Judgments on de Gaulle's personality were harsh and expressed privately in rather un-diplomatic terms: 'He imbibed his Anglophobia with his mother's milk and from his father's lips': Reilly quoted in Helen Parr, 'Patrick Reilly, 1965-68', in Pastor-Castro, Young (eds.), *The Paris Embassy*, pp.114-137.

¹²⁴ Since 1958, French Foreign policy was exclusively under the responsibility of the French President ('*depuis 1958 la politique étrangère fait partie du domaine réservé du Président français*'), in Marie-Christine Kessler, *La Politique Étrangère de la France: Acteurs et Processus* (Références Inédits, France: Presses de Sciences Po, 1998), pp. 23-31.

¹²⁵ Even when the British broke the French diplomatic cipher enabling them to know the '*cable traffic between the French embassy in London and the Quai d'Orsay*', in Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 153.

¹²⁶ For example, de Gaulle authorised Peyrefitte to announce a press conference on 14 January 1963 but not to unveil its content. He laconically explained: '*je vais vider l'affaire de l'entrée de l'Angleterre dans le Marché Commun. Vider, vous voyez ce que je veux dire? Qu'après ça on n'en parle plus pour longtemps!*', in Peyrefitte (proposed translation: '*I am going to clean out this affair of Britain's entry in the Common Market. Clean out, you see what I mean? After that, no one will talk about it for a long time*'), in Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, p. 334.

Brussels.¹²⁷ Franco-British relations under de Gaulle developed into a '*French mystification*'¹²⁸ in response to the British equivocation in the nature of their intentions on EEC membership. But this state of affairs appeared counter-productive, especially because Britain's reaction to his challenge was to oppose and isolate him rather than actually deal with him.¹²⁹ Britain entered into a 'blame game', imputing the failure of the negotiations on Gaullist intransigence alone. But the blame was shared. De Gaulle's persona and calculated excesses had indeed created British resentment and a negative approach to Britain's dealings with France. A side effect of this negative perspective was that Britain's concentration on his radicalism *de façade* prevented it reflecting fully on how to formulate answers to the fundamental questions posed by its Three Circle approach to European policy design. This tendency, well understood on the French side, was summarised in de Gaulle's observation that:

*England ... does not know what it wants. It still clings on the dream of the Commonwealth ... And if we accept its conditions, it is not England who would get into the Common Market, it would be the Common Market which would get in the Commonwealth.*¹³⁰

Alternative readings of de Gaulle's vetoes

Scholarly studies attempting to explain de Gaulle's two successive 'Nos' involve in varying degrees the combination of complex political issues (high and low politics), and strategic and personal considerations. The press conferences held in January 14, 1963 and May 16, 1967 during which de Gaulle warned of the possibility of a French veto suggest that a slightly more nuanced interpretation

¹²⁷ N. Piers Ludlow, 'From Words to Actions: Reinterpreting de Gaulle's European Policy', in Christian Nünlist, Anna Locher, and Garret Martin, *Globalizing de Gaulle, International Perspectives on French Foreign Policies, 1958-1969* (online text, Lexington Books, 2010), pp. 83-106, URL: <http://lib.myilibrary.com?id=256134>. Ludlow describes this situation as '*a combination of talking loudly but not carrying a big stick*', p.102.

¹²⁸ Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 153.

¹²⁹ In the words of Pierson Dixon, British Ambassador to France (1960-1965) and eminent member of the 'degaullophobic' community: '*I believe that the history of these negotiations proves conclusively that it is quite impossible to reason with General de Gaulle and thus to achieve compromise with him.*' to which he added that '*General de Gaulle's purposes are not only inimical towards ourselves but nefarious and dangerous*', in Ellison, 'Pierson Dixon', pp. 91-113.

¹³⁰ Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, p. 335: '*L'Angleterre ... ne sait pas ce qu'elle veut. Elle s'accroche toujours au rêve du Commonwealth ... Mais si nous acceptons ses conditions, ce n'est pas elle qui entrerait dans le Marché Commun, c'est le Marché Commun qui entrerait dans le Commonwealth*'.

of his rebuttal might be in order.¹³¹ In these speeches, besides widely reported critiques of the British position, De Gaulle expressed a desire to see Britain ultimately join the EEC. His press conference on 14 January 1963 clearly stated that:

It is possible that, one day, England will sufficiently transform to belong to the European Community, without restrictions, without reserves, and in preference to anything, in which case the Six would open the door to England and France would not oppose it¹³²;

Similarly, in his address on 16 May 1967, de Gaulle confirmed that France expected from Britain:

first and foremost, and from its side, the desired deep economic and political transformation so that its joining the Six continentals would be possible,

and added, in a typical Gaullist exclamatory fashion, that:

if one day, it were to accomplish this transformation, how heartfelt a feeling it would be for France to welcome such historical conversion¹³³.

Certainly, the vetoes highlighted immediate and persistent concerns mainly about agriculture (first veto) and about Britain's monetary and economic situation (second veto).¹³⁴ But fundamentally, they also expressed a desire for Britain to make the choice it neither could nor wanted to make ('*One basic rule of British policy is clear: we must never allow ourselves to be put in a position where we*

¹³¹ CVCE, Conférence de presse de Charles de Gaulle (14 janvier 1963). URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/conference_de_presse_de_charles_de_gaulle_14_janvier_1963-fr-5b5d0d35-4266-49bc-b770-b24826858e1f.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

CVCE, Conférence de presse de Charles de Gaulle sur l'adhésion du Royaume-Uni aux Communautés Européennes (16 mai 1967). URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/conference_de_presse_de_charles_de_gaulle_sur_l_adhesion_du_royaume_uni_aux_communautes_europeennes_16_mai_1967-fr-646f41cc-dc02-46f2-9cce-2296c2d19a3e.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹³² CVCE, Conférence de presse de Charles de Gaulle (14 janvier 1963): '*Il est possible qu'un jour l'Angleterre vienne elle-même à se transformer suffisamment pour faire partie de la Communauté Européenne, sans restriction et sans réserve, et de préférence à quoi que ce soit, et dans ce cas la les Six lui ouvrirait la porte et la France n'y ferait pas obstacle*'.

¹³³ CVCE, Conférence de presse de Charles de Gaulle sur l'adhésion du Royaume-Uni aux Communautés Européennes (16 mai 1967): '*d'abord et de son côté, la profonde transformation économique et politique voulue pour que puisse être réalisée sa jonction aux six continentaux ... Si, un jour, elle en venait là, de quel cœur la France accueillerait cette historique conversion!*'

¹³⁴ Maurice Vaïsse, 'Changement et Continuité dans la Politique Européenne de la France', in Association Georges Pompidou, *Georges Pompidou et l'Europe* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1995), pp. 29-43.

*have to make a final choice between the United States and Europe*¹³⁵). For Britain, the vetoes could have been the signs that, from a French perspective, the choice of the Commonwealth and the 'special relationship' was the obstacle to entry. This reading of the 1963 and 1967 press conferences demonstrates de Gaulle's willingness to waive objections to British applications if Britain gave up its policy of the Three Circles. Clearly, de Gaulle's lexis indicated that there should be changes in Britain's traditional reflexes and policy-making objectives (*sufficiently transform*'), recommended putting aside the whole gamut of Britain's 'ifs' and 'buts' about the CAP and European tariffs derived from its wish to protect, *inter alia*, the Commonwealth interests (*without restrictions and without reserves*'), and invited Britain to make a firm choice for Europe rather than a balancing compromise with the Commonwealth and the United States (*in preference to anything*'). Whilst acknowledging some changes endorsed by Wilson, the May 1967 declaration still pointed to the same concerns, with an added condition: Britain had to accomplish the necessary paradigm changes, in reference to de Gaulle's concerns about the fragility of the British economy and about the sterling situation¹³⁶, before applying for membership (*first and foremost, and from its side, the desired deep economic and political transformation*'). In both declarations, de Gaulle had confirmed that the door to Britain's membership of the Community was not closed provided the set of conditions and prerequisites he announced were met. In fact, from WWII onwards, de Gaulle had pledged a common destiny, resulting in a common influence, for France and Britain.¹³⁷ The EEC was arguably an appropriate means to the fulfilment of this common destiny. A European rapprochement between Britain and France, even under de Gaulle's leadership, was always in the realm of possibilities.

¹³⁵ The *Future Policy Study 1960-1970*, established by the FCO at Macmillan's request (Section C), in Christie, *"Britain's Crisis of Confidence"*, p. 102.

¹³⁶ The Sterling devaluation, its status of international currency and the state of Britain's debt were covered *in extenso* during the press conference held on 27 Novembre 1967 which confirmed France's opposition to Britain's application, in CVCE, Conférence de presse de Charles de Gaulle: le second veto (27 novembre 1967), URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/conference_de_presse_de_charles_de_gaulle_le_second_veto_27_novembre_1967-fr-d47637f7-b66c-44a7-8cff-2b6b45c53424.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹³⁷ *'if England and France agree and act together in the rules of tomorrow, there is nothing that could happen that they have not accepted or decided'* (*que l'Angleterre et la France s'accordent et agissent ensemble dans les règles de demain, elles pèseront assez lourd pour que rien ne se fasse qu'elles n'aient elles-mêmes accepté ou décidé*): de Gaulle to Churchill in November 1944 quoted in Jolyon Howorth, 'Y a-t-il un Dialogue Franco-britannique sur l'Europe?', *Politique Étrangère*, 4 (2005), p. 823.

Macmillan himself acknowledged that the two countries shared values, visions and interests in Europe:

the tragedy of it all is that we agree on almost everything. We like the political Europe that de Gaulle likes ('union des patries' or 'union d'états'). We are anti-federalists, so is he. We are pragmatists in our economy, so is he. We fear German revival and have no desire to see a revived Germany. These are de Gaulle's thoughts too. We agree but his pride, his inherited hatred of England (since Joan of Arc), his bitter memories of the last war; above all, his intense 'vanity' for France – it must dominate – make him half welcome, half repel us with a strange 'love-hate' complex¹³⁸.

But this avowed proximity, based on similarities of views and conceptions about Europe, was never fully exploited by the British leadership as a result of an understandable resentment about de Gaulle's presumed attitude, exemplified by Macmillan's judgment that:

Sometimes when I am with him, I feel I have overcome it. But he goes back to his distrust and dislike like a dog to his vomit. I still feel he has not absolutely decided about our admission to the Economic Community. I am inclined to think that he will be more likely to yield to pressure than persuasion¹³⁹.

The missed opportunities to build Europe with de Gaulle – The Fouchet Plan

The failure of the *Fouchet plan*, and the imbroglio of the Soames affair were symptomatic of de Gaulle's recurring attempts to remodel the EEC institutionally and politically, a remodelling which could potentially have opened the door to Britain. The Fouchet plan corresponded to de Gaulle's initiative, taken in 1961, to embody his vision of a '*Europe des États*'¹⁴⁰ in which intergovernmental decisions of sovereign states would have primacy over European institutions in domains of crucial importance to the Community.¹⁴¹ The resulting political entity called '*Union des États*' was put

¹³⁸ Macmillan quoted in Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 166.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Incorrectly reported and translated as 'Europe of Nations', which evokes a notion of people and culture, more unity inclined than the starker 'Europe of States' evocative of governmental power and influence, and which marks a definite emphasis on sovereignty.

¹⁴¹ Bozo, *La Politique Étrangère*, pp. 79-83, Vaïsse, *La Grandeur*, pp. 175-191.

In de Gaulle's view, the Common Market, considered as a '*traité de commerce*', should be supplanted by a political organism in which France would play a leading role and would reduce the political weight of the supranational European Commission, in Vaïsse, *La Grandeur*, p. 175.

forward for discussion by France's five partners and was also addressed with Macmillan at the Château de Champs summit.¹⁴² During this summit, the British Prime Minister acknowledged de Gaulle's political union project. But Belgium and the Netherlands rejected the Fouchet plan in 1962 because they identified an incompatibility in principle between the '*Union des États*' and the federalism they strongly supported.¹⁴³ Rejection also stemmed from Dutch and Belgian concerns about any questioning of the Atlantic alliance which the Gaullist plan might entail.¹⁴⁴ From De Gaulle's point of view, this failure was a confirmation of the natural leaning of EEC members towards the Atlantic Alliance that Britain's membership would only reinforce. The fact that the Dutch and Belgians linked the furthering of discussions about political union with negotiations on Britain's entry certainly strengthened his resolve to adopt a harder stance on British membership.¹⁴⁵ In his view, the Five, like Britain, were neither ready nor willing to be fully independent from the United States, which contravened his belief that independence was '*the essence of a European entity*'¹⁴⁶. Incidentally, Britain, which showed tentative goodwill on the Gaullist project, found herself at the wrong end of the argument when it was considered by de Gaulle as a possible instigator of the Dutch and Belgian rejection. The Fouchet plan proposed by de Gaulle and its subsequent rejection by the Five firstly showed that de Gaulle was not necessarily attached to an existing Common Market which he considered he had inherited from the politicians of the Fourth Republic¹⁴⁷ (according to Macmillan, it was a case of de Gaulle wanting '*an English type of Europe but without the English!*'¹⁴⁸). Secondly, it emphasized de Gaulle's belief that Britain's membership of the EEC might change the

¹⁴² On 2-3 June 1962, Macmillan and de Gaulle held a bilateral summit seen by the former as the last chance to convince de Gaulle of '*the desirability of British membership*', in Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 170. This summit was followed by another meeting in Rambouillet, in mid-December 1962, during which de Gaulle reiterated his discontent with Britain's transatlantic links which proved, in his view, that '*même en matière de défense, la Grande Bretagne ne donne pas l'impression d'être européenne*' ('*even in defense matters, Great Britain does not act as a European*'), de Gaulle quoted in Françoise de la Serre, 'De Gaulle et la Candidature Britannique aux Communautés Européennes', *Histoire, Économie et Société*, 1 (1987), p. 135.

¹⁴³ Ludlow, 'From Words to Action', p. 85.

¹⁴⁴ Bozo, *La Politique Étrangère*, p. 83.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ De Gaulle quoted in Furby, 'The Revival', p. 51.

¹⁴⁷ N. Piers Ludlow, 'From Words to Action', pp. 83-85.

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Vaïsse, *La Grandeur*, p. 187.

nature of the Community and could not be achieved within the existing Treaty framework.¹⁴⁹ His 27 November 1967 Press conference confirmed this point, in a surprising approach to Wilson *inter alia*, on the necessity of (and the wish for) a review of current institutional arrangements, and even of the very nature of the Common Market:

*It is true that, whilst acknowledging the impossibility of letting England in the Common Market as it is, one may want to sacrifice the latter for an agreement with the former. In theory, the current economic system used by the Six is not necessarily the only one Europe could practice. One could imagine for instance a free trade zone covering the western part of our continent ... but that would mean that the Community would have first to be abolished and its institutions dismantled, and that, France is certainly not asking. However, if either one of its partners would make that request ... France would examine it with the other countries signatory to the Treaty of Rome.*¹⁵⁰

Thirdly, it revealed de Gaulle's wish for the establishment of a leading body in charge of directing the policies of the proposed new European political community. This body could take the shape of a *Directoire* (including France, Germany, Italy and Britain) which was not only discussed during the de Gaulle-Macmillan 1962 Chateau de Champs summit but also supposedly, during the de Gaulle-Soames meeting in February 1969.¹⁵¹ Finally, it highlighted the paradox of Britain's position on political union with the Six. On the one hand, Britain was on the side of the Five because of their shared attachment to the Atlantic Alliance, and was therefore aligned with opponents of political union. On the other hand, Britain sided with France in its own political union project which was

¹⁴⁹ de la Serre, 'De Gaulle', p. 141.

¹⁵⁰ 'Il est vrai que, tout en reconnaissant l'impossibilité de faire entrer l'Angleterre d'aujourd'hui dans le Marché commun tel qu'il existe, on peut vouloir tout de même sacrifier celui-ci à un accord avec celle-là. Théoriquement, en effet, le système économique qui est actuellement pratiqué par les Six, n'est pas nécessairement le seul que pourrait pratiquer l'Europe. On peut imaginer, par exemple, une zone de libre échange s'étendant à tout l'Occident de notre continent ... Mais, dans un cas comme dans l'autre, il faudrait d'abord abolir la Communauté et disperser ses institutions; et je dis que cela, la France ne le demande certainement pas. Pourtant, si tel ou tel de ses partenaires ... en faisait la proposition, elle l'examinerait avec les autres signataires du Traité de Rome'.

¹⁵¹ Churchill Archives Centre (henceforth CAC) SOAM 49-2 Soames notes on his appointment 28 March 1968, and CAC SOAM 49-3 letter Wilson to Soames 26 February 1968.

designed to restrict any supranational inclination championed by the very same Five.¹⁵² Consequently Britain was again caught in a double bind.

'Europe of States' vs. 'supranational Europe' and 'European Europe' vs. 'Atlanticist Europe' were the master themes of the Fouchet plan. In 1969 too, these themes formed the background of the de Gaulle-Soames-meeting and diplomatic row known as the Soames affair¹⁵³ which marked the further deterioration of Franco-British relationships at the end of de Gaulle's presidency.

The Soames Affair and its consequences

At Michel Debré's suggestion and Christopher Soames's initiative¹⁵⁴, de Gaulle met the British ambassador privately in order to explore possible ways of improving Franco-British relations left damaged by the 1967 veto. The discussion dealt with de Gaulle's view of the conditions that could govern the establishment of an economic and political European organisation which would both transform the Common Market and include Britain. De Gaulle reportedly suggested opening confidential bilateral Franco-British talks to exchange views and debate the matter, and apparently mentioned once more, the creation of a four-country Directorate to lead this new type of European cooperation.¹⁵⁵ Soames's report of his conversation generated intense discussions in Whitehall as to what the British response to de Gaulle should be: was it a real proposal potentially interesting to build on, or was it a trap laid by de Gaulle before Wilson's meeting with German Chancellor Kiesinger planned a few days later? The charge of the anti-de Gaulle camp was led by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Michael Stewart. Stewart's advice to Wilson was to leak de Gaulle's

¹⁵² De Gaulle evoked this paradox, applying to the Five as well, during a press conference on 15 May 1962. When asked about the rejection of the Fouchet plan, he retorted that '*it is true that France's proposals have raised two objections, perfectly contradictory though presented by the same opponents*' (*Il est vrai que les propositions de la France ont soulevé deux objections, d'ailleurs parfaitement contradictoires bien que présentées par les mêmes opposants*), in CVCE, URL:

https://www.cvce.eu/obj/conference_de_presse_de_charles_de_gaulle_paris_15_mai_1962-fr-98595c27-9bac-4b12-ab24-770b121b921d.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁵³ Daniel Edwin Furby and N. Piers Ludlow, 'Christopher Soames, 1968-1972', in Pastor-Castro, Young (eds.), *The Paris Embassy*, pp. 143-148.

¹⁵⁴ Michel Debré, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères* who succeeded Maurice Couve de Murville in 1968, was '*more favourable than his predecessor to Franco-British entente and was keen on the idea of Britain's membership to the EEC as an antidote to supranationality*' in Vaïsse, *La Grandeur* - 'L'affaire Soames', pp. 607-617.

¹⁵⁵ de la Serre, *De Gaulle*, pp. 139-141.

scheme to the Germans and their European partners. The diplomatic logic of this advice was to avoid being drawn into bilateral diplomacy with a departing president to the detriment of the relationship with Britain's supporters in the EEC. The covert aim was to embarrass a statesman who had inflicted frustrations on the British since 1958, and to muddy the waters between France and its partners. Wilson agreed to the FCO's proposal and to the communication to the Five of the confidential conversation between de Gaulle and Soames. A version of Soames's report was made public to the press, faithfully detailing the terms of the conversation according to the British, but, according to the French, falsifying de Gaulle's words and their anti-European and anti-American tone.¹⁵⁶ Wherever the truth lay, damage had been done. And the Franco-British relationship reached another low that would last until de Gaulle's resignation in April the same year. The diplomatic turmoil which ensued has given rise to conflicting scholarly interpretations opposing, as expected, proponents of Wilson's logical tactics and partisans of a Franco-centric analysis of the UK's diplomatic outrage¹⁵⁷: the former tending to support the thesis that Wilson definitely hesitated as to how he should handle de Gaulle's proposal, with Soames advocating pursuing the conversation with the French on the basis developed by de Gaulle, and the FCO on the other side insisting on isolating de Gaulle whilst enhancing the relationship with the Friendly Five¹⁵⁸, the latter supporting the thesis of a tactic organized by the anti-French, anti-de Gaulle faction of the Foreign Office, using all possible artifices, including false reporting of conversations, manipulation of the press and breaches of diplomatic confidentiality, in order to damage the President's reputation and Franco-German relations.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Vaisse mentions the controversy on the usage of the word '*Directoire*', not pronounced according to the French assessment of the French version, and clearly used according to the FCO press office, in Vaisse, *La Grandeur*, p. 611.

¹⁵⁷ For example Pine would count in the former and Sanderson in the latter, whilst Tachin reports the negative reactions of the French press, in:

- Melissa Pine, 'British Personal Diplomacy and Public Policy: The Soames Affair', *Journal of European Integration History*, 10/2 (2004), pp. 59-76,

- Claire Sanderson, *Perfide Albion? L'Affaire Soames et les Arcanes de la Diplomatie Britannique* (Publications de la Sorbonne, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011),

- Agnès Tachin, *Amie et Rivale: la Grande-Bretagne dans l'Imaginaire Français à l'Époque Gaullienne* (Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 375-378.

¹⁵⁸ Furby, Ludlow, *Christopher Soames*, pp. 146-148 and Furby, 'The Revival', pp. 51-63.

¹⁵⁹ Sanderson, *Perfide Albion?*, op. cit.

What matters in this study is not the exactitude in the reporting of the discussions by France or Britain, nor a debate on the precise wording used by de Gaulle, nor the veracity of the diverging reports of the conversation established by the French and the British, nor even the pros and cons of Wilson's real intent and personal involvement in this affair.¹⁶⁰ What is key are the side-effects and lessons that can be drawn from the diplomatic row rather than the whys and wherefores of the row itself. Firstly, there seems to be a Franco-British consensus that the affair was the result of Harold Wilson's desire to follow the policy recommended by the FCO.¹⁶¹ Secondly, the affair clearly illustrated Britain's official choice to befriend France's partners and isolate de Gaulle until he left power. The Friendly Five option was a driver of British European policy under Wilson, even if it had serious limitations as will be seen later in the Chapter. Thirdly, it showed that the deterioration in the Franco-British relationship had reached a point of no return with these particular actors.¹⁶² On the British side, de Gaulle was widely considered as an impediment to the success of Britain's application, a nemesis of its European ambitions, the presumption being that de Gaulle's disappearance from the political scene would be the only factor in unblocking the application negotiations. It clearly disregarded the permanence of France's national interests and the probable continuity of its European ambitions, even after de Gaulle. And in essence, it anticipated, optimistically or naively, the success of any post-de Gaulle Franco-British discussions. Fourthly, public communication of high level confidential conversations created a precedent, a unique occurrence in France's view, which would not encourage the French camp to trust the British diplomatic service in general or Wilson himself in particular. Wilson's image as a trustworthy and frank interlocutor suffered significantly and permanently from these events. Fifthly, the Soames affair demonstrated

¹⁶⁰ Furby, 'The Revival', pp. 51-63.

¹⁶¹ Kitzinger provided the most balanced account of the affair when commenting '*perhaps neither (de Gaulle and Wilson) felt they had come out of this affair in the best of all possible lights*', in Kitzinger, *Diplomacy*, pp. 45-58.

Adrian Fortescue, Soames's Private Secretary at the Embassy, suggested that Wilson was not completely accurate with his recount of facts and times and defended Soames's version of the content of conversation with de Gaulle seen as '*a genuine opening which could have been used to break the deadlock*', in CAC SOAM 49-5, Soames Affair, Brief, pp. 1-5.

¹⁶² Frustration, animosity and even hatred were mentioned to describe widespread feelings in the British political establishment. '*It is close to hatred*' ('*Cela frise la haine*'), Wormser to Couve de Murville, quoted in Vaïsse, *La Grandeur*, p. 610.

that Britain was a victim of its multilateral Friendly Five approach. Support from the Five had become so crucial in Wilson's chosen strategy that it could not be sacrificed for bilateral conversations with de Gaulle. Yet an association with France in the larger frame of political union as proposed by de Gaulle might have represented a plausible turn of events. Finally, Wilson's tactical manoeuvres and the diplomatic fuss that ensued turned Britain's attention, time and energy away from a constructive consideration and assessment of de Gaulle's proposal, away from exchanging with and understating the French leader. Official discussions on the core of the subject were rapidly abandoned.

De Gaulle's double 'No' to Britain was not motivated purely by Anglophobia or economic concerns. It also resulted from Britain's incapacity to question and change its own strategic choices in world and European affairs. Nevertheless, an entente was not entirely ruled out by de Gaulle. However any future Franco-British entente stumbled repeatedly on the self-dramatizing persona of the French President which blurred any British recognition of the real proximity of de Gaulle's ideas to those of Britain in terms of European principles. In effect, the ideology underlying his vetoes was a pointer to Britain's inability to forego its traditional foreign policy goals. It is a fact though that de Gaulle's pragmatic approach to agricultural and economic issues obliged Britain to question its own agricultural and financial models. And his anti-American, independence and status-driven precepts encouraged Britain to choose the Friendly Five alternative, although this was contradictory in terms of their supranational ideology. It is also true that de Gaulle's forceful and peremptory discourse ended up generating deep and lasting resentment which blinded the British executive to future possibilities of exploring existing common ground with the French President. Consequently, when de Gaulle appealed, in his own terms, for a political transformation of the EEC, in which Britain could potentially play a leading role with France, Britain declined and turned to his partners in the Community, demonstrating implicitly the impact of a lack of trust between the principals in this episode. De Gaulle assuredly frustrated Britain in its search for a European solution, but Britain's own errors and limitations also impeded the success of its endeavours to gain membership of the European Community.

Britain's limitations and mistakes

Reviewing Britain's limitations and errors in the conduct of its European integration policy is not intended to put the blame of the 1961 and 1967 application failures exclusively on Britain. In the perspective of this Chapter, it is a means of appraising the successful Heath-Pompidou meetings in the light of the limitations in negotiation strategy at the time of Macmillan's and Wilson's bids for entry. These included Britain's disadvantages, by comparison with France, in structural and political decision-making processes, and the British leadership's strategic misconceptions in conducting discussions. Errors can also be identified in the bidding process, and in the fields of intergovernmental discussions and interpersonal relations. Finally, the flaws in the Friendly Five approach will be discussed with a view to underlining the misconception of not tackling an issue at its source, of preferring indirect pressure to direct personal contact.

Britain's decision-making, organisational, structural and political disadvantages

Britain's dealings with de Gaulle revealed important differences in the decision-making processes of the two countries. Because of his forceful personality and status of national figure, De Gaulle's exercise of power appeared almost autocratic to many, including his English counterparts.¹⁶³ Well served by a presidential regime, *taillé à sa mesure* (shaped to accommodate him), he was a quasi 'emperor of the French' who could turn his ideology into national policies and his obsessions into negotiation cornerstones.¹⁶⁴ He could count on the faithful and unfaltering support of the 'Gaullistes'¹⁶⁵ who represented a wide range of political sensibilities in French society. He could rely on a state apparatus managed by a high quality civil service globally favourable to his cause¹⁶⁶, and on very skilled and talented individual negotiators¹⁶⁷. In the political arena, his electoral successes

¹⁶³ 'He is now an almost complete autocrat, taking no notice of any advice and indeed receiving little of independent value'. Macmillan's diary quoted in Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 165.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ François Audigier, Bernard Lachaise, Sébastien Lauren, *Les Gaullistes Hommes et Réseaux* (Paris: Nouveau Monde éd., 2013).

¹⁶⁶ Luc Rouban, 'Le Gaullisme des Hauts Fonctionnaires', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire*, 4 /116 (2012), pp. 37-51. The fact that high civil servants accounted for almost a third of de Gaulle's ministers (12% under the Fourth Republic) was illustrative of the strong link between the administrative and political worlds in the management of France's domestic and international affairs, in Adamswaithe, 'John bull', pp. 154-155.

¹⁶⁷ For instance Olivier Wormser, Directeur des Affaires Économiques et Financières au Quai d'Orsay in post from 1954 to 1966 recognised for his talents in France and in Britain, 'a polymath ... who was said to know

up to 1968 enabled him to keep a divided and fragmented opposition at bay and amounted to a tacit endorsement of his European policy by French public opinion. De Gaulle's European policy did not suffer from any major constraints imposed by the course of domestic politics. In the diplomatic arena, he benefited from the *Quai d'Orsay's* faithfulness to his precepts, and from its stability and continuity¹⁶⁸ owing to the fact that Couve de Murville headed the *Quai* from 1958 to 1968 in perfect symbiosis with the *Élysée*¹⁶⁹. Under de Gaulle, France officially spoke with only one voice.

Britain's situation was very different. Prime Ministers Macmillan and Wilson had to reckon with divided cabinets, ideologically opposed ministries and government departments, and with their own political parties being divided between *pro* and *anti* Europeans. On the diplomatic level, their premierships were marked by lack of trust between politicians and diplomats about the form and content of Britain's policy towards France and the EEC. The latter point is illustrated by a brief review of the positions held, and of some of the problems encountered by the British Ambassadors to France over the period 1958-1969.¹⁷⁰ The British ambassadors' task of maintaining and enhancing the Franco-British relationship was fundamentally difficult during the Gaullist era. But their role as a transmission belt of the General's moods and expressed intentions, and of Whitehall's plans and expectations, was essential since the '*key to the door to the EEC lay in the Élysée Palace*'¹⁷¹. In this context, Whitehall's failure to consult, and only partially listen to advice and warnings from their ambassadors in Paris would pose additional problems of efficiency and of credibility in dealings with France. Each British ambassador experienced mismatches between their observations and analyses of French leadership and policy, and the conclusions drawn by Whitehall, or the decisions made by their hierarchy. Gladwyn Jebb espoused the 'Europeanists' cause after Suez and advocated closer

almost instinctively what de Gaulle and Couve de Murville would allow him to do', according to British Officials quoted in Mangold, The Almost Impossible, p. 152.

¹⁶⁸ Laurent Warlouzet, *Le choix de la CEE*, p. 233.

During the same period, Britain had five Secretaries for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. This gave a distinctive advantage to French Foreign Affairs officials over their British counterparts.

¹⁶⁹ Vaïsse even mentioned '*an "ankylosis" of diplomatic reflection insofar as the impulse is generated at the Élysée where any dissidence is not tolerated*' ('*une "ankylose" de la réflexion diplomatique dans la mesure où l'impulsion vient de l'Élysée et où toute dissidence est écartée*'), in Vaïsse, *La Grandeur*, p. 312.

¹⁷⁰ The ambassadors were: Gladwyn Jebb (1954-1960), Pierson Dixon (1960-1965), Patrick Reilly (1965-1968) and Christopher Soames (1968-1972).

¹⁷¹ James Ellison, 'Pierson Dixon, 1960-65', in Pastor-Castro, Young (eds.), *The Paris Embassy*, p. 95.

relationships with France and the Six after the failure of EFTA, but failed to convince Macmillan to engage with de Gaulle.¹⁷² Jebb's successor, ambassador Dixon, warned that de Gaulle would veto Britain's application, but this was deemed '*interesting but not convincing*' by Macmillan.¹⁷³ The latter even wondered if Dixon '*was going mad too*'¹⁷⁴ because of his later insistence on isolating France while gathering support from the Five to counter de Gaulle's intransigence. His successor Patrick Reilly¹⁷⁵ was eventually dismissed following his disagreements with Wilson's Foreign Secretary George Brown (August 1966-March 1968). More than a result of Brown's personal drawbacks¹⁷⁶, their dispute stemmed from their stark disagreement on the '*timing and nature*' of Britain's second application, agreed to in principle by the two men. Reilly's warning of the exposure of a too early application to de Gaulle's veto conflicted with Brown's haste to apply in order to pull the rug out from under the Conservatives' electoral European pledge.¹⁷⁷ In addition, his suggestion for co-operation with France in order to prevent another veto did not fit into Brown's plan to 'outflank' the French through pressure from the Friendly Five¹⁷⁸. As far as Soames was concerned, his conviction that friendship between France and Britain should not be soured despite any disagreements between their respective governments¹⁷⁹ was gravely undermined by Wilson's and Stewart's manoeuvres in the eponymous affair. This last episode in particular did not encourage de Gaulle to believe that Britain was speaking with one voice as interpreted by the British ambassador. Even if the diplomatic brouhaha created by the affair rapidly quietened down after de Gaulle's resignation a few months later, a latent mistrust of Wilson's tactics persisted on the French side. French

¹⁷² Christopher Goldsmith, 'Gladwyn Jebb 1954-60', in Pastor-Castro, Young (eds.), *The Paris Embassy*, pp. 82-86. According to Goldsmith, Jebb was typically demonstrative of the '*nonchalance and scepticism about Europe amongst British policy-makers in the 1950s*'.

¹⁷³ James Ellison, 'Pierson Dixon 1960-65', in Pastor-Castro, Young (eds.), *The Paris Embassy*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁷⁵ Helen Parr, 'Patrick Reilly (1965-1968)', in Pastor-Castro, Young (eds.), *The Paris Embassy*, pp. 114-37.

¹⁷⁶ Historians' judgements on Brown are particularly unequivocal: '*Brown, habitually drunk, was more liability than asset, surely one of the worst Foreign Secretaries of the century*', in Adamthwaite, 'John Bull', p. 169.

¹⁷⁷ Boehm, 'Our Man in Paris', p. 46.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁷⁹ CAC SOAM-49-3, letter from Soames to Wilson, 26 February 1968, outlining Soames's understanding of the task to undertake in Paris on Wilson's request after his appointment.

confidence in the British position as expressed by the British diplomats could only be relative whereas French diplomats unquestioningly reflected their official line.

The British official line was somewhat difficult to define both for Macmillan and for Wilson. They had to fight and win their case for deeper European involvement within their own Cabinet and administration. The former had to face opposition from eminent members of his Cabinet and senior civil servants.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, Wilson had to contend with a split Cabinet and a Labour Party divided over the European question once he had distanced himself from Labour's original anti-European stance (from 1962 to 1964) and moved towards European integration.¹⁸¹ Opposition within the Labour Party came from its left-wing¹⁸² which challenged the EEC as a capitalist organisation jeopardizing the relationship with the Commonwealth, and preventing state planning of the economy. It also originated from the '*Economists*'¹⁸³, defenders of Britain's position in the '*wider world beyond Europe*' to enable free trade. Cabinet discussions opposed the latter, which did not see the advantages of EEC membership, to the '*Europeanists*' in favour of an application for entry.¹⁸⁴ European policy-making was therefore a more arduous task for the British Prime Ministers than for de Gaulle. The constraints of high and low politics obliged them not only to deal with *intra-party* divisions but also to manage *inter-party* challenges. The latter emerged from the prosaic constraints imposed by a *politique politicienne* (i.e. politics for politics' sake). For instance the pro-European Conservatives, led by Heath from July 1965 onwards, experienced difficulties in publicly criticizing

¹⁸⁰ For instance Heathcoat Amory, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the President of the Board of Trade, Reginald Maudling, for whom '*membership of the EEC did not make sense for a variety of reasons*', in Tratt, *The Macmillan*, pp.121-126.

¹⁸¹ Wilson's new-found conviction for joining followed a period of firm opposition to the Conservative Party's pro-European policy, characterised by the Labour Party's opposition to Macmillan's application in November 1962 by way of '*setting out five conditions for entry which amounted to rejection of the application*', in Gowland, *Britain*, p. 63. These were: '*Commonwealth safeguards, freedom to pursue one's own foreign policy, EFTA pledges, right to plan one's own economy, guarantees on British agriculture*' in Philip Lynch, 'The Conservatives and the Wilson Application', in Daddow (ed.), *Harold Wilson*, p. 72.

¹⁸² Anne Deighton, 'The Labour Party, Public opinion and "the Second Try" in 1967', in Daddow (ed.), *Harold Wilson*, pp. 39-55. According to Deighton: opponents within the Labour Party included Michael Foot (left-wing), and Hugh Gaitskell, James Callaghan, Richard Crossman described as '*global patriots*'.

¹⁸³ Opponents within the Cabinet, the '*Economists*', included Barbara Castle, Minister for Overseas Development, Denis Healey, Minister of Defence, Richard Crossman, Lord President of the Council, Fred Peart, Minister of Agriculture, Herbert Bowden, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, Douglas Jay, President of the Board of Trade, *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁸⁴ The '*Europeanists*' included George Brown, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Michael Stewart, Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, *Ibid.*

Wilson's 1966 bid, whereas Wilson was forced to perform ideological contortions and delicate political manoeuvres within the Labour Party to have his bid validated and implemented after his condemnation of Macmillan's 1961 application.¹⁸⁵

In addition, Macmillan and Wilson had to manage disparities in the European views of different Ministries and government offices. The Treasury and the Board of Trade, for instance, had the upper hand over the various Commonwealth related Departments and the Foreign Office on discussions about Britain's commitment *overseas* that led to the withdrawal 'East of Suez'.¹⁸⁶ However, they did not win the final argument on the EEC bid despite their opposition to the CAP financing, and concerns about its potential effects on the British balance of payments. The July 1966 sterling crisis encouraged Wilson to endorse the Foreign Office's conclusions that EEC membership was the only alternative for Britain, even if the Foreign Office's approach to the conditions of membership, the acceptance of the provisions of the Treaty of Rome, was not yet fully approved by Wilson.¹⁸⁷ The cumulative effect of dissonant voices in Whitehall and the Cabinet generated confusion and damaging hesitations in developing a clear European policy, most particularly in the case of a tepid European supporter like Wilson who would not face down divisions within his Cabinet on major subjects (EEC membership, East of Suez, sterling crisis). Dissensions, expressed 'behind the scene' or in public, interfered with Britain's ability to negotiate, which was further diminished by a series of mistakes and misjudgements.

Britain's strategic mistakes and misjudgements

Britain's initial disdain for the European project for political, economic and cultural reasons was the source of four strategic errors that brought heavy consequences for the entry negotiations with the Six. Firstly, Britain wrongly prioritized its commercial exchanges towards the Commonwealth and sterling zone areas. The post-WWII 'imperial' decision to favour trade with the Commonwealth and the sterling area was misjudged in purely commercial terms. In the two decades following WWII,

¹⁸⁵ Young, *Britain*, p. 84.

¹⁸⁶ Christie, "Britain's Crisis of Confidence", pp. 343-344.

¹⁸⁷ Parr, 'Gone Native', pp. 80-82 and pp. 87-90.

British exports to these markets developed less than the trade with Western Europe and other high development markets like the USA and Japan. Established at 37% of total British exports in 1938, sterling's 'overseas' trade recorded an increase in the post-war period (43% in 1953), followed by a downward trend from then on (41% in 1956, 36% in 1960 and 24% in 1968).¹⁸⁸ The import capacities of the 'imperial' areas grew in significantly smaller proportions than those of Western Europe and North America.¹⁸⁹ In addition, Britain's political and historic choice of favouring trade with the Commonwealth and the sterling zone prevented it from developing market share in Western Europe at a time when its export growth capacity lacked the dynamism demonstrated by its OEEC partners - for instance British exports grew by 49% over the period 1950-1958, and 53% over the period 1958-1967, in comparison with 123% and 139% for OEEC countries (excluding Britain).¹⁹⁰ Secondly, Britain fell victim, as did Gaullist France, to a *folie des grandeurs* (illusion of grandeur) which led to underestimating the economic implications of the European project, and prevented it from envisaging the possibility of an entente with the French.¹⁹¹ If France and Britain shared the same Great Powers illusions, their approach to economic matters diverged significantly.¹⁹² De Gaulle's grand design policy for France was accompanied by a timely and proactive handling of pressing economic issues (e.g. the 1958 Franc devaluation), whereas both Macmillan and Wilson hesitated to take similar measures which, in their view, would signal not only their failure to manage the country¹⁹³, but would also damage Britain's standing which they identified with the strength of sterling. The lack of prime-ministerial preparedness to confront immediate economic issues¹⁹⁴ contributed to Britain's bleaker economic prospects and modest achievements in the second part of the 1960s, and incidentally would provide ammunition for de Gaulle's veto. Thirdly, Britain

¹⁸⁸ Mario Lévi, 'La Grande-Bretagne et l'Europe', *Politique Étrangère*, (1969), pp. 289-316.

¹⁸⁹ For instance, over the period 1960-1967, exports from the USA and Western Europe to the Sterling 'overseas' zone grew by 42% in comparison with a 90% increase of trade with Western Europe. Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Adamthwaite, 'John Bull', p. 168.

¹⁹² Adamthwaite indicates that Macmillan's 1959-1963 memoirs 'only devote three out of thirty three chapters to economic questions', Ibid., p. 166.

¹⁹³ Pinto-Duschinsky, 'From Macmillan', p. 167.

¹⁹⁴ This included Wilson's determination to retain Sterling's parity with the US Dollar in spite of the relative weakness of the British economy, in Christie, "'Britain's Crisis of Confidence'", p. 346.

underestimated the reality¹⁹⁵, potential and progress of the EEC project which forced it to chase 'moving targets' from its first entry bid negotiation onwards. Bretherton's tirade when leaving the Spaak Committee epitomized Britain's wrong assessment of the feasibility and success of the Community:

*Messieurs, I have followed your work with interest and sympathetically. I have to tell you that the future Treaty which you are discussing has no chance of being agreed; if it were agreed, it would have no chance of being ratified; if it were ratified, it would have no chance of being applied. And please note that, if it were applied, it would be totally unacceptable to Britain. You speak of agriculture, which we don't like, of power over customs, which we take exception to, and of institutions, which horrifies us.*¹⁹⁶

Britain's lack of consideration for the EEC was shaken by the speed at which European integration evolved, going from a joint declaration of intent published in March 1956, to the coming into force of the European Treaty in January 1958, and the application of EEC's first tariff reductions in January 1959.¹⁹⁷ Self-exclusion from the initial and determining phases resulted in British objectives and constraints being *de facto* and durably out of phase with Community objectives and achievements. In fact, side lining of the European project for geopolitical reasons amounted to Britain building 'her own marginalization' in Europe.¹⁹⁸ The FTA proposal (June 1955-December 1958) illustrates the fourth strategic error made by Britain.¹⁹⁹ Initially intended as giving *the coup de grâce* to the Spaak Committee proposals, it evolved into a Britain-centric contingency plan to either propose an alternative to the Common Market in case Messina failed, or to secure British interests in an association with the EEC in case of success. But the FTA's final formulation as a '*OEEC FTA around*

¹⁹⁵ Commentators in Whitehall even doubted the possibility of a durable and sincere Franco-German entente, essential to EC functioning.

¹⁹⁶ Quoted in the interview (26 March 1997) of Jean-François Deniau, former member of the French delegation at the Organisation for European Economic, about Britain's position on the European integration process. CVCE, URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/interview_de_jean_francois_deniau_la_position_du_royaume_uni_bruelles_26_mars_1997-fr-3950f162-c0cd-46be-867f-83fd1f30f5a1.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁹⁷ Gowland, *Britain*, pp. 42-44.

¹⁹⁸ Greenwood, *Britain*, p. 76.

¹⁹⁹ Ellison, 'British Policy', op. cit.

*the kernel of the Six's Common Market*²⁰⁰ was strategically flawed because it pursued two divergent objectives: to maintain the status quo of the Three Circle approach, and to adapt to the increasing impact of the Common Market on Britain's political and commercial interests. The FTA's format was purpose-built for Britain and could not meet the diverse expectations of its intended partners.²⁰¹ In the context of the Suez crisis, the failure of FTA discussions contributed to widening the growing divide between France and Britain in European matters.²⁰² It also reinforced the opinion of Britain's detractors that it was trying again to get the best of both worlds: '*just another example of the British in their old game of organizing counter-coalitions*'.²⁰³ The Three Circles logic was at the very origin of the principal set of strategic errors made by Britain. It prevented decision-makers from envisaging a shared European destiny with France and the Six, and from accurately and timely assessing the respective economic merits and political advantages of each circle. In the 1960s entry discussions, these strategic errors persisted and were amplified by mistakes in the negotiation process, and misconceptions.

Britain's mistakes in the negotiation process

Heath's introductory statement²⁰⁴ at the Paris ministerial conference of the Six in October 1961 was remarkable for its pro-European tone and manner²⁰⁵, but also for a series of requests which proved unacceptable to the Six from the very start of the negotiations. The chief negotiator's bid laid down a number of conditions aimed at preserving economic and monetary relations with the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 289.

²⁰¹ The FTA proposal, set-up by the Board of Trade and the Treasury, was a mere tariff-free trading association for manufactured goods which excluded agricultural products. It did not provide for the setting of common external tariffs for non FTA countries, or of economic integration and trans-national institutions.

²⁰² Fourth Republic France, suspected of chasing both the FTA and the EEC leads, is thought to have made the decision to join the latter and reject the former in the context of the Suez Crisis which demonstrated the lack of British commitment to Europe after Macmillan's insistence of mending the 'special relationship' despite Britain's humiliation at the hand of the Americans. De Gaulle's rejection of the FTA in November 1958 also stemmed from the Macmillan's and Eisenhower's refusal of de Gaulle's tripartite directorate proposal in September 1958. Ellison, 'British Policy', op. cit.

²⁰³ Gowland, *Britain*, p. 51.

²⁰⁴ CVCE, Statement by Edward Heath (Paris, 10 October 1961), URL: https://www.cvce.eu/obj/declaration_d_edward_heath_paris_10_octobre_1961-fr-d990219a-8ad0-4758-946f-cb2ddd05b3c0.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

²⁰⁵ Heath '*circulated translations of his statement in the four official languages of the Community*', a first from the British, very well received by the Six's representatives, in Denman, *Missed Chances*, p. 216.

Commonwealth, including 'exemption from the common external tariffs for no less than 27 Commonwealth products'²⁰⁶, or 'transitional arrangements [transition period]... between twelve and fifteen years'²⁰⁷ before full application of the CAP. It proposed a specific handling of British agriculture-related issues, and it called for the creation of a wider trading area inclusive of the EC. This last condition effectively amounted to asking the Six for a merger of the EEC into a large free trade area with the rest of Western Europe and the Commonwealth. This statement of requests was of such an extent and inappropriateness at the opening of the discussions that it closed the door to any potential concessions by the Six, who at the time were not yet all convinced of the benefits of British membership. For the Six, if a transition period for Britain could be envisaged, a questioning of the very fundamentals of the customs union under construction was out of the question. Precious time was lost during the 1961-1962 negotiation rounds during which the Franco-British divide, particularly on agricultural matters, widened significantly. Britain had to subsequently revise its approach, and tone down its requests to more realistic levels. Tactically, Britain's first approach was flawed because the bid asked for 'too much too soon'.²⁰⁸ Politically, it showed the Six that, despite trumpeting true European convictions, Britain still wanted the best of both worlds. Diplomatically, it revealed a degree of misplaced and naïve arrogance from a country pleading for entry into a union it had initially disdained.²⁰⁹ As a result, the first bid failed over Britain's insistence on approaching the European issue from the angle of a great power nation with interests beyond the boundaries of the Community. However failure was certainly attributable in part to the lack of experience and the composition of the British negotiation team which had to manage a very complex task, demonstrating the difficulties and disadvantages of negotiating with an army of officials and advisers.²¹⁰ But above all, it resulted from Britain's misunderstanding of, or lack of consideration for,

²⁰⁶ Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 260 and Denman, *Missed Chances*, pp. 214-219.

²⁰⁷ CVCE Statement by Edward Heath (Paris, 10 October 1961).

²⁰⁸ Denman, *Missed Chances*, p. 224.

²⁰⁹ Britain was, 'not only to Gaullists, giving the impression of being a potential benefactor rather than a supplicant' - in Derek W. Urwin, *The Community of Europe: a History of European Integration since 1945* (Post-war World; London: Longman, 1991), p. 212.

²¹⁰ The Foreign Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Colonial Office were all represented in the team, showing a strong leaning to Commonwealth interests clearly perceptible in Heath's preliminary speech. Heath had to negotiate with six different parties who were themselves negotiating with each other

the *quid pro quo* which was a tacit but nevertheless crucial rule of European integration negotiations. Britain did not fully comprehend that the premise for a successful application was a full and unreserved acceptance of the Treaty's rules and regulations, leaving room for negotiation only on a transition period, limited in time and scope, which would precede the full exercise of rights and duties by the successful applicant.²¹¹ This was the basic and all-encompassing error of Macmillan's bid. Wilson consented to review and eventually rectify it from his 1966 application onwards, but not without vigorous political resistance to the Foreign Office's advice to accept the Treaty of Rome as a preamble to the opening of negotiations with the Six.²¹² At the time of Wilson's application, the *quid pro quo* meant that Britain had to unconditionally accept the fundamentals of the Community budget's financing structure and principles. It meant that Britain had to comply with the CAP 'as is', an obligation to which Britain could only reluctantly consent. This, in essence, created a new perspective and a radical change of focus in Britain's negotiations with the Six. The question asked to British policy-makers was, from then on, more about whether Britain could actually accept membership and its economic consequences, rather than whether Britain was ready for it.²¹³ Despite Wilson's late adaptation to the EEC negotiation process, his application and Macmillan's shared common shortcomings. Like Macmillan's application, Wilson's bid was marked by the continuation of '*great-power aspirations*'²¹⁴. It was motivated and eventually hindered by economic and monetary difficulties. Like Macmillan's, Wilson's bid suffered from the continental powers' uncertainties, especially that of France, about Britain's depth of conviction and genuineness of motives. Like that of Macmillan, Wilson's application stumbled over persisting CAP issues and more precisely over the corollary question of Britain's financial contribution.²¹⁵ And like Macmillan's, Wilson's bid was the

over the CAP. These discussions were conjointly held with other talks with the Commonwealth, EFTA members and the USA, in Denman, *Missed Chances*, op. cit.

²¹¹ Rucker-Guitelmacher, 'Le Triangle', p. 20.

²¹² Parr, 'Gone Native', p. 80.

²¹³ Milward, 'The Hague Conference', p. 119.

²¹⁴ Parr, 'Gone Native', p. 76.

²¹⁵ Following the decision taken by the Six to finance the Community budget by their 'own resources', there was a danger that Britain's bill would be extremely large. Furthermore, France called on Britain to pay its entire contribution, i.e. almost one fifth of the entire budget, as soon as it joined the E.E.C.

scene of personal errors of judgement and wrong assumptions about their capacity to deal with de Gaulle.

Britain's intergovernmental discussions and interpersonal relationships

Britain and France's common history is made up of a 'millenary intimacy-enmity'²¹⁶. This observation certainly appears valid in the Macmillan/Wilson-de Gaulle negotiations on Britain's place in Europe over the period 1958-1969. The old reflexes, mixing xenophobia, condescension and distrust, resurfaced on the many occasions provided by contentious discussions on sensitive topics linked to national pride and former glory. The opposite side was conveniently accused of being the source of all problems, a task far easier on the British side given the General's propensity to drama.²¹⁷ Nevertheless, the problem resided in the fact that the three men came from a world and time of entrenched national attitudes, imperial biases (the 'England of Kipling'²¹⁸), and pre-conceived ideas about other nationalities. They were not in phase with the demands and constraints of a polyglot and cosmopolitan enterprise like the European Community project as Denman humorously expressed it: 'imagine Wilson manoeuvring with ease and conviction in a polyglot continental grouping would have been tantamount to imagining General de Gaulle switching happily to a diet of warm beer, pork pie and HP sauce'.²¹⁹ But whilst these characteristics played a role in the souring of Franco-British relations, personal errors of judgement by Macmillan and Wilson diminished the chances of success in their negotiations with de Gaulle. The two Prime Ministers suffered from the same overrated vision of their capacities to convince. These characteristics proved a handicap in direct talks with the French President especially when combined with errors of understanding of their interlocutor's psychology. A telling example of these traits was Macmillan's 'penchant for

²¹⁶ Philippe Daudy quoted in Jean Viot, 'La France et la Grande Bretagne', p. 1: 'une intimité-inimitié millénaire'.

²¹⁷ Harsh judgements were not a prerogative of the British about de Gaulle and France. The French vision of the British easily competed in harshness, for instance with Michel Jobert: 'Harold Wilson, briefly met in 1965, 1971, 1973, trying to stay afloat in the flood submerging his country, shutting one by one the symbols of its former power and reigning by artifice on a dead star' ('Harold Wilson, aperçu en 1965, 1971, 1973, surnageant dans le flot qui emporte son pays, puis fermant une à une les vitrines de son ancienne puissance et régnant par artifice sur une étoile morte'), in Jobert, *Mémoires*, p. 17.

²¹⁸ 'The England of Kipling', which was 'dead' according to de Gaulle in his recounting of the discussions with Macmillan in Château de Champs in June 1962 ('l'Angleterre de Kipling est morte').

²¹⁹ Denman, *Missed Chances*, p. 231.

*wishful thinking*²²⁰ shown in his certainty that he had persuaded de Gaulle of Britain's genuine motivation to join the Common Market at the Château de Champs Summit (2-3 June 1962). The Prime Minister based this conviction on the fact that he had, in his view, established a positive relationship with de Gaulle as Minister Resident in Algiers from 1942 to 1944 when he provided important help in a time of deep crisis for the French leader.²²¹ Wilson drew the very same erroneous and far too optimistic conclusion after his talks with de Gaulle during the '*probe*'²²² he and Foreign Secretary Brown carried out in early 1967²²³. But despite his opinion to the contrary, Macmillan '*never mastered the art of getting the General to change his mind*'.²²⁴ And Wilson was never in a position to surmount his major handicap in de Gaulle's opinion of being a Socialist whose recent attitude towards Pompidou²²⁵ demonstrated the exact opposite of his public pro Europe stance.

In addition, both Prime Ministers underestimated de Gaulle's ruthlessness in high-stake discussions, and his relentless ability to unscrupulously exploit any weaknesses under the cover of cordial and enigmatic exchanges. As a matter of fact neither Macmillan nor Wilson properly grasped how emotionally charged de Gaulle's policies actually were. They lacked the necessary political empathy to perceive the significance for de Gaulle of the notion of independence (from the USA, for Europe, for the *force de frappe*). They did not comprehend that the tentative conciliatory steps they took towards him²²⁶ were, in de Gaulle's view, ineffective diversions and improbable gestures since, as

²²⁰ Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 157.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-74.

²²² '*Harold Wilson decided to embark on a probe of the European Community countries in October 1966 to see if the conditions existed for British membership of the EEC*', in Helen Parr, 'A Question of Leadership: July 1966 and Harold Wilson's European Decision', *Contemporary British History*, 19/4 (2005), pp. 437-458.

²²³ TNA CAB 129-128/0033, Memorandum by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary – The Approach to Europe, dated 16 March 1967. Wilson's report on his talks in Paris indicated that: '*we believe that, in Paris, we convinced General de Gaulle and his ministers not only that we were entirely serious in our determination to enter the Community, but also that the stock French excuses for obstructing our entry would no longer serve their purpose*'.

²²⁴ Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 71.

²²⁵ Pompidou, then de Gaulle's *Premier Ministre*, visited London in July 1966 and was discourteously snubbed on two occasions by Wilson who attended a debate in the Commons about Vietnam instead of the planned dinner given in his honour at the Embassy. This constituted for Pompidou a telling sign that '*Wilson would put at any stage the interests of the Commonwealth or the United States before those of his continental partners*', in Denman, *Missed Opportunities*, p. 232.

²²⁶ For instance when Macmillan made openings to a potential advanced Franco-British nuclear cooperation in Champs in 1962, or when Wilson attempted to woo the French President into a more conciliatory mood about Britain's entry with his 1966 proposal of a European Technological Community, in John W. Young, 'Technological Cooperation', pp. 95-114.

Jean Lacouture pointed out, '*he does not like gifts [...] and recognises only victories he himself has secured*'. In fact, most of the misunderstandings between Macmillan/Wilson and de Gaulle derived from the fact that they demonstrated a radically different approach in dealing with the question of inter-governmental negotiations and personal relations. The Prime Ministers were tactician politicians, politically and naturally inclined to seek alliances and find compromises within their Cabinet, their party, or with their powerful international partners. Conversely, de Gaulle was a strategy-focused individual, averse to compromise and predisposed to sacrificing the interests of partners and friends for the fulfilment of his grander goals for France. Furthermore, these personal inclinations and traits played an important role in the miscalculated tactics employed by the British with the Friendly Five, consisting in isolating the French President whom they thought could not be convinced in person, and in exerting pressure on his European endeavours with the help and support of France's five partners in the EEC.

Britain's tactical misjudgements: the flaws of the Friendly Five approach

After de Gaulle's 1963 veto, Ambassador Dixon recommended that Whitehall circumvent de Gaulle's supposedly irrevocable opposition to Britain's membership through diplomatic isolation and political pressure applied by enhancing amicable relations with Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, Belgium and the Netherlands (the Friendly Five), who were all deemed to be favourable to Britain's entry.²²⁷ This approach, adopted by Wilson, was actively promoted by successive Foreign Secretaries (Brown and Stewart), out of political calculation aimed at securing Britain's eventual entry (for the Europhile Brown), or out of resentment, and a desire to damage de Gaulle's reputation amongst his partners (for the anti-de Gaulle²²⁸ Stewart). The plan was to woo the Friendly Five and wait for de Gaulle to go.²²⁹ This tactical approach presupposed a genuine and lasting friendliness from the Five towards Britain's cause. It implied a trust in Britain's motives, and the concomitant acceptance of the consequences of Britain's membership on later EEC developments. It required from the Five the

²²⁷ Ellison, 'Pierson Dixon', p. 109.

²²⁸ In reference to the supposed 'francophobia' and even 'degaullophobia' existing in the FCO, quoted in Pine, *Harold Wilson*, p. 139.

²²⁹ This meant at the time to wait until the presidential elections of 1972.

political will and capability to face-up to de Gaulle's France, under the benevolent auspices of the Commission in Brussels. It also overlooked crucial facts which would eventually demonstrate its limitations.

Firstly, this approach presumed a unity of motives and objectives amongst the Five, in stark contrast to the disparities already existing between these countries in the political, economic and cultural domains. The long drawn-out discussions which took place within the Spaak Committee clearly testified to the difficulty in setting up a common position among the Six on many topics, and confirmed that the union-in-waiting was already the meeting point of diverging and conflicting national interests and ambitions. Therefore building an 'anti-de Gaulle front' based on these foundations would necessarily prove precarious. Besides, the Five had all moved, at different stages and for different reasons, from opposition or indifference to Britain's membership at the time of the first application to support of the principle at the second. But this did not mean all five countries shared the same sense of urgency and the ultimate aim of achieving enlargement to Britain. For instance, Britain's second bid could certainly count on the unwavering support of the '*Friendly Three*'²³⁰ (The Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium), and of the leaders won over to the cause of Britain's membership out of conviction or out of resentment of de Gaulle's policies, as was the case, for instance, of the Dutch Foreign Minister Joseph Luns who was a fierce opponent of de Gaulle's anti-supranational and anti-NATO stances. However, Germany's support for this approach was not guaranteed as Germany was not yet ready to confront France for Britain's sake and was '*definitely not keen on replacing French supremacy in the EEC with a British [supremacy]*'.²³¹ Secondly, the premise of this tactic was a global entente with the Five aimed at countering France's intransigence. But it was an error from British policy-makers to assume that the differences and divergences within

²³⁰ Piers Ludlow insists on the fragility of the anti-de Gaulle front and theorizes on the existence of the '*Friendly Three*' (The Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium) most favourable to Britain's entry because of their fear of France's hegemony and their wish to counterbalance the weight of the Franco-German alliance, or because of their reservations about the CAP (e.g. Italy), in Ludlow, *The European Community*, pp. 158-173.

²³¹ TNA CAB128/0033, Report on the visit in Bonn, p. 3.; Katharina Böhmer, "'We too mean business'", Germany and the Second British Application to the EEC, 1966-67', in Daddow (ed.), *Harold Wilson*, 211-226: Germany was not ready to confront France for Britain's sake and was '*definitely not keen on replacing French supremacy in the EEC with a British [supremacy]*'.

the Six or between the Six and Britain, in areas as distinct as energy or agriculture, would automatically disappear by virtue of Britain's entry and/or de Gaulle's departure.²³² The Friendly Five option was only a very short-term diplomatic tactic to outflank de Gaulle while he was in power. It did not constitute a common declaration of purpose and intent, aimed at solving all existing issues after he had gone. Thirdly, this approach underestimated de Gaulle, the 'adversary', and the influence he exerted on his partners, out of respect for a great statesman's achievements and stature, or even because of fear about his diplomatic *coups d'éclat*. This influence, puzzling to the British executive²³³, emanated mostly at this stage from the Five's reluctance to confront France after the deleterious episode of the 'empty chair crisis' in 1965, and from an aversion to any risk of damaging the unity of the EEC in a dispute over enlargement²³⁴. Fourthly, the Friendly Five approach amounted to giving precedence to multilateral diplomacy over bilateral discussions, and to linking the resolution of the problems of British entry with the departure of the French President, regardless of who might then take over the destiny of France. This miscalculation was typified by Britain's attitude during the Soames Affair. The British diplomatic tactic was then clear: it was too late and purposeless to engage in bilateral talks with de Gaulle, whose longevity in power was questioned, and it was counterproductive for their supporters in the enlargement dossier. But this assessment was mistaken for the very reason that, since the problem of Britain's entry was undoubtedly posed by France alone, its solution lay solely with France, whether led by de Gaulle or by anybody else. Fifthly, the Friendly Five multilateral approach exposed Britain to receiving multiple national input from its interlocutors, rendering its agenda setting for a second application more complex, and dependent on numerous and diverse conditions, suggestions and comments from the Friendly Five. Following Wilson's 'probe'²³⁵, Brown launched an 'Embassies probe' on 24 April 1967 to obtain local

²³² For instance, Italy's specific and traditional policy to import petrol from the Soviet Union would certainly clash with Britain's interests in the Middle-East as it did with France's provision of Algerian oil. In the case of agriculture, Britain's market seen as a potential outlet for continental surpluses would possibly die out because of the probable increase of British domestic supply developed under the protection of the CAP - Levi, 'La Grande Bretagne', pp. 312-314.

²³³ Macmillan observed that 'The Five are friendly but seem strangely mesmerized by the French', in Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 175.

²³⁴ Ludlow, *The European Community*, p. 140.

²³⁵ Pine, *Harold Wilson*, op. cit.

offices' assessments of the Six's opinion about the launch of an application, about the potential decision not to proceed with the question of membership, and about the chances of success for a membership bid²³⁶. Replies unanimously confirmed the Five's positive support. This support was though dependent on the quantity and nature of the conditions set by the application, should not be detrimental to the cohesion of the EEC, and ought to be devoid of any risk of confrontation with the French. The Five all pressed Britain to '*keep the momentum*' and avoid a damaging postponement: postponement of Britain's application would be construed as '*lasting for our generation*' (Luxembourg), as a decision to '*abandon hope of joining the Community*' (Brussels), as '*missing the last chance of bidding for membership*' and would be interpreted as a loss of interest in the EEC (The Hague), as reviving suspicions on Britain's motivations, and confirming the current trend of German policy's aligning with France (Bonn), as very '*near a betrayal*' which would make it '*very difficult if not impossible to rally Italian support for a third try later on*' (Rome), and with a '*scarcely disguised relief*' (Paris).²³⁷ This last point on postponement was expressed with such emphasis and emotion by the Five that Britain could not ignore the urgency to apply and, as a result, lost sole control of the agenda.²³⁸ In addition, the Five all predicted significant chances of success for a 'condition-free' application and did not anticipate any veto from de Gaulle. But five identical errors do not make one truth, and London's tactic of enhanced cooperation with the Five clouded its judgement to the point of ignoring the warnings in Whitehall, and from Ambassador Reilly, on the risk in '*timing and nature*' of Britain's second application, and its exposure to a possible de Gaulle refusal.

Finally this approach was an indication that Wilson and Brown were at a loss to know how to cope with de Gaulle's opposition, and also demonstrated a measure of wishful thinking in anticipating the French President's departure. At best, and without the benefit of hindsight, de Gaulle would not

²³⁶ TNA CAB 129/0018, Foreign Secretary's telegram of instructions to H.M. representatives in EEC posts and Washington, 24 April 1967.

²³⁷ TNA CAB 129/0018, Luxembourg telegram#65 25 April 1967, Brussels telegram#216 24 April 1967, The Hague telegram#156 25 April 1967, Bonn telegram#667 26 April 1967, Rome telegram#345 of 26 April 1967 and Paris telegram#363, 26 April 1967.

²³⁸ Britain officially applied for membership of the EEC two weeks later on 11 May 1967.

leave power before the next presidential elections in 1972, and his ceding to the Five's pressure was highly improbable.²³⁹ In all likelihood, de Gaulle would not give in because *'he had the power to do so'*²⁴⁰, because the EEC had already proved it could resist one veto without disintegrating, and probably could endure at least a second one, and because of his sense of Germany's lack of interest in confronting France. Thinking that the Five would constitute a homogeneous block willing to help Britain oppose and win over de Gaulle was naïve at best. France was indeed isolated, but not irremediably so. A combination of diplomatic-alliance manoeuvres, charm counter-offensive, and the fact that nothing could *'prevent the French from using the Brussels machinery skilfully'*²⁴¹ would help France redeem its place and influence with the Six. It meant that Britain had to eventually acknowledge that even if its entry had become both a Franco-British and a Community problem, only France held the keys to its resolution.

In the 1950s and 1960s Britain underwent difficulties in defining its policy and attitude towards the nascent and developing European Community. These decades witnessed a relative stasis of the influence and impact of Britain's post-WWII 'imperial' Three Circle approach. In addition, adverse organisational and political conditions, and unclear attitudes and convictions about Europe within the leadership, hindered the formulation of a readable British European policy in a changing international environment marked by a crisis of confidence, following the Suez fiasco, and by the diminution of the Commonwealth's relative political and economic weight. Despite these facts, counterbalanced by the positive outlook and potential offered by the European alternative, Prime Ministers Macmillan and Wilson proved reluctant candidates for European integration. They resisted the appeal of the evident European economic success, demonstrating a shared reluctance to allow Britain to go from a world to a regional power. De Gaulle's negative reactions to their respective bids

²³⁹ CAC SOAM 49-2, Christopher Soames's personal notes on his appointment, 28 March 1968. In his conversations with Wilson and Brown about his appointment as Ambassador in France, Soames clearly expressed his *'grave'* doubts on the chances of success of Brown's intention to *'force the hand of France'*, and predicted that Britain's best chance was a change of attitude from the French Government, after the Presidential Elections in 1972.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, Soames to Wilson and Brown.

²⁴¹ TNA CAB 129-129/0018, Bonn telegram#667, 26 April 1967.

for entry revealed pragmatic and economic concerns as well as political and personal reservations. Nevertheless, his firm stance also originated from concerns over Britain's Three Circle principle which, adding to an over-personalisation of relations with the French President, prevented the British leadership from considering de Gaulle's other apparent openings towards a model of Europe which might potentially be suitable for a future Franco-British tandem. These missed opportunities, together with errors by Macmillan and Wilson in the conduct of their applications for entry, revealed limitations, failings and insufficiencies at institutional, organisational and political levels, damaging for the success of their European endeavours. The flaws of their strategy and tactics in the management, *inter alia*, of the issue of de Gaulle's persona set the context for Franco-British European relations under Heath and Pompidou, and the importance of interpersonal relations between British and French leaders.

The analysis in this Chapter confirms that the events of the period 1945-1969 drew a road map of the facts and realities with which Heath, in particular, as well as Pompidou, would have to contend, adapt to, continue, correct or improve in order to reach their European goals. It goes without saying that both leaders would operate within a context of changing circumstances, and evolving geopolitical and economic parameters. It is also clear, from the reading of this road map, that neither Heath nor Pompidou could personally control every component in the process of Britain's application, or be entirely rid of all the previous problematic factors surrounding the negotiations (the will for grandeur, influence and status, the importance of the relations with the USA, or the connection with the Commonwealth and former colonies). Nevertheless what was arguably within their power was to change organisational and structural issues, personal approaches and control the number of actors involved. They could potentially modify their approach to discussions and issues, gain a better grasp of the environment and requirements of their negotiations, and adapt their strategy and tactics accordingly (later on demonstrated, for instance, in Heath's trust in and full reliance on ambassador Soames in the conduct of the May 1971 meetings' preparations). It is the contention of this thesis that, from 1970 onwards, the success of Britain's application for

membership of the European Community greatly depended on the relationship between these two men, a relationship related to their backgrounds and personal ideologies which will be the subject of the following Chapter.

Chapter 3. Two Close Leaders Who Talked About the Same Europe

Pompidou was a delightful man, and I always found him to be charming, cultured, beautifully spoken and with a splendid sense of humour far removed from the caustic wit often associated with the French... He and I always got on well together, at both personal and political levels ... There was no Franco-British love-hate relationship in his make-up. He admired the British enormously for our achievements but he was always quite sure the French could do just as well, given the right leadership.¹

Wilson est un politicien personnel et malin. Une sorte de Gaston Deferre. Mais Heath a une toute autre classe ... L'homme s'est fixé des objectifs, et il est convaincu qu'il les atteindra. Il agit avec obstination et gentillesse, bonne connaissance de ses dossiers et passion de l'Angleterre. J'estime quant à moi, que ce pays a la chance d'avoir à sa tête un homme qui pense pour lui et qui veut pour lui. Se maintiendra-t-il ? Je ne sais pas. Mais il est habile à utiliser les circonstances dans le cadre de sa vision d'avenir. Nous nous heurterons souvent, à coup sûr. Il n'en est pas moins, de tous les dirigeants que j'ai rencontrés, celui pour qui j'ai le plus d'estime.²

When asked about Pompidou's relation with Prime Minister Heath, Jean-René Bernard, the French President's close adviser on European affairs, responded that *'there was a real mutual coup de foudre'*³ between the two leaders during the crucial tête-à-tête meetings in Paris on 20, 21 May 1971 (he went on describing as *'idyllic'* the Heath-Pompidou one-to-one meeting held at Chequers the following year⁴). The May 1971 top-level meetings took place at the pinnacle of entry discussions started in the wake of the December 1969 Hague Conference that crowned Pompidou's formula⁵ of *'Achèvement'* (completion), meaning the adoption of measures ending the transition period to reach the final stage of the European Community including the adoption of definitive financial regulations, of *'Approfondissement'* (deepening) covering the Community's evolution perspectives, and *'Élargissement'* (enlargement) addressing membership applications. At the end of the Hague

¹ Edward Heath's about Georges Pompidou, Heath, *The Course*, pp. 371-372.

² Georges Pompidou about Edward Heath in Pompidou and Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, p. 489: *'Wilson is a self-centred and cunning politician, a sort of Gaston Deferre. But Heath is a whole different class ... He sets himself objectives and he is convinced he will reach them. He acts with obstinacy and kindness, a good knowledge of his dossier and a passion for his country. I do believe this country is lucky to have a leader who thinks for it and wants for it. Will he be re-elected? I do not know, but he is astute in using circumstances in the frame of his vision for the future. We will definitely clash many times. Nevertheless, out of all the leaders I have met, he is the one whom I most highly esteem'.*

³ *'Il y a eu un vrai coup de foudre réciproque'*, in Dulphy, Manigand, *'Entretien avec Jean-René Bernard'*, p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵ AN AG5(2)/644, Conférence de La Haye, discours du Président Pompidou, 1er décembre 1969.

Conference, the European leaders agreed on the opening of negotiations between the Community and the four applicant countries (Denmark, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Norway)⁶, marking in particular their desire to achieve Britain's membership after the resounding failures resulting from de Gaulle's vetoes of 1963 and 1967. In this perspective, the Conference proposed the holding of high-level multilateral discussions in Brussels between, *inter alia*, the British delegation and the representatives of the Community's Six member states and the European Commission. But after months of intense and disputed exchanges between these delegations, started under Harold Wilson's tenure and continued under Heath's after his surprise victory in June 1970, discussions appeared to be stalled largely over technical issues. The decision to break the seemingly unsolvable stalemate in Brussels came in the shape of surprise, secretly prepared meetings meant to take place at the Élysée Palace solely between the British Premier and French President. The stakes, contours and exact objectives of these one-to-one meetings were not clearly established for observers whom were not privy to their preparation and conduct. Expectations were nevertheless great on all sides for these tête-à-tête to unlock the situation as it was understood that the French President held the key to Britain's entry into the Community.

But the success of the meetings '*was not written in advance*' and it had largely depended on the '*electoral chance of the democratic process*'⁷ ('*lady luck*' in Bernard's words) which put in command of their countries, at the same time, two men who found out that :

*on a number of major issues, [their] points of view were similar and even identical and, on others, even if divergences or differences could exist, they did not constitute obstacles to cooperation, [their] opinion on the goal to reach being identical.*⁸

⁶ CVCE Final Communiqué of the Hague Summit (2 December 1969): item 13 '*They reaffirmed their agreement on the principle of the enlargement of the Community, as provided by Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome*'.

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/final_communique_of_the_hague_summit_2_december_1969-en-33078789-8030-49c8-b4e0-15d053834507.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

⁷ Jean-René Bernard, 'L'Entrée du Royaume Uni dans la Communauté Européenne' in Jacques Viot and Giles Radice (eds.), *L'Entente Cordiale Dans Le Siècle* (Paris: Odile Jacob 2004), pp. 200-215.

⁸ AN AG5(2)/676, Communiqué final du président Pompidou à la Presse, 21 mai 1971: '*Sur un certain nombre de grands problèmes, nous avons constaté que nos points de vues étaient analogues, et même identiques. Sur d'autres, nous avons pu également constater que si certaines divergences, différences pouvaient*

These considerations pose the question of the connection between the '*coup de foudre*' mentioned by Bernard and the similarity and apparent identity between the two leaders' points of view and ideas, potentially creating a '*climate of trust and mutual esteem*'⁹ as the basis of an exceptional entente between Heath and Pompidou. To a large extent therefore, any appraisal of the Heath-Pompidou meetings involves examining the personal sphere, the study of the '*personal feelings ... frequently under-estimated by historians*'.¹⁰

Whereas the real and complex reasons for choosing a secret one-to-one format, and the explanation of the exact nature and legacy of the Paris May 1971 meetings will be studied in the following two chapters, it is important to establish the mechanisms of the Heath-Pompidou entente. As a key part of the actor-centred approach adopted in this thesis, this Chapter will address the concomitant similarities of the personae of Heath and Pompidou, and their opinions about the European project, its foundation, nature and goals.

Concerning the similarities of their lives and personae, relevant to the study of the May 1971 Paris tête-à-tête, this Chapter will focus on key aspects of their experiences, their careers, and their psychological, social and political profiles, including their approach to personal relations, ambitions and attitudes towards work/life balance. In relation to their opinions about Europe, the Chapter will propose a comparison of Heath's and Pompidou's personal and publicly expressed views on the historical foundations and nature of the Community with regards to their own country's pasts, the Community's intended role, and its challenges, as well as its economic and political end goals.

On the basis of these assessments, this Chapter aims at proposing for the first time a thematic comparison of the respective opinions and official positions of Heath and Pompidou on Europe. By arguing that their respective opinions often mirrored one another on major Community matters and facts, the Chapter seeks to demonstrate the fact that Heath and Pompidou were leaders who not

subsister, elles ne faisaient aucunement obstacle à une coopération, l'identité de nos vues sur le but à atteindre étant complète'.

⁹ Bernard, 'L'Entrée du Royaume Uni', p. 211.

¹⁰ Ibid.

only talked about Europe, but who also talked about the same Europe. In parallel, this Chapter will suggest that Heath and Pompidou shared a number of personal, psychological and intellectual characteristics originating mainly from their life experiences, their social and political backgrounds, and their approach to work and leisure, including a common passion for culture. From these two lines of argument, it will argue that conditions were uniquely set for a possible entente¹¹ between the two men.

The first level of analysis will involve the study of the political background and ideas shared by the two men, of their particular profile within their own political family, their personal approach to governing, and their complex relations with their mentors in politics. A second level will consider personal traits: their passions, personal interests and approach to life, as well as intellectual and pragmatic features. The analysis will then provide a thematic comparison of Heath's and Pompidou's approaches to the European project's history, philosophy and ambition, to the Community's organisation, structure and goals, and to the Union's role and potential future. Lastly, the Chapter will argue that these similarities and common traits enabled the meetings to potentially avoid making the mistakes exhibited in the previous applications, especially in the sensitive domain of the relationships with the USA.

Sources for the two men's conceptions of Europe mainly originate from speeches and interviews given by Heath and Pompidou on the ground that what they said publicly is crucial to understanding their position as key actors in European integration history. Additional information is provided by their personal writings¹² and also by third party accounts including official documents drawn from PREM, FCO on the British side, and from the *Archives Nationales* on the French side. Witness accounts, the descriptions of major actors, and personal opinions on the leaders are derived from

¹¹ As defined in Chapter 1, p. 13, note#35.

¹² - Pompidou's personal memoirs are obviously missing because of his early death. Nevertheless, his son Alain's book gives access to a selection of private correspondence, personal notes and portraits from the President, in Pompidou and Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, op. cit.
- Edward Heath Private Papers are currently under review by the Cabinet Office and should be made available to the public in 2020. However, we were given exceptional early access to one box of documents at the Bodleian, before its availability to the public.

British and French biographies, or memoirs. In order to emphasize the personal and human dimensions of this approach, the Chapter will favour references to works essentially gathering individual and personal testimonies of collaborators, subordinates, friends and confidants as, for instance, Michael McManus' study which lists the personal accounts of '*sixty five people who knew [Heath] personally*'¹³, Philip Thody's repertoire of all French Presidents¹⁴ from diverse angles including their personalities or, on the French side, the compendium of personal descriptions of former French Ministers, politicians, advisers and diplomats gathered in the report of the Conference organised by Madame Pompidou in 1989¹⁵, or from Pompidou's personal biography by Henry Gidel¹⁶, unusually seen from the angle of his marriage to Claude Pompidou.

Similarities of biographies, of political status, ideas and influences

Connections between two people and the ensuing entente can stem from various elements: common character traits and life experience, comparable ways of thinking, similar social provenance and conduct, shared ideas, passions and interests, similar drive and ambitions.

A brief description of their biographies, personal experience and achievements gives the first indication of similarities. Pompidou was the son of primary school teachers and grandson of a farmer in the Cantal region, a perfect product of the French Republican meritocracy, who had risen to the top of the social ladder through work, tenacity and excellence. From 1945 onwards, he had been a faithful, close and indispensable collaborator of de Gaulle, who personally confided this '*newcomer, unknown to the public until his fifties ... with an unlimited burden*'.¹⁷ This was in itself a rather

¹³ McManus, *Edward Heath*, op. cit.

McManus was responsible for researching, drafting, and editing Sir Edward Heath's memoirs, '*The Course of My Life*'.

¹⁴ Philip Thody, *The Fifth French Republic: Presidents, Politics and Personalities* (London: Routledge, 1999).

¹⁵ Association Georges Pompidou, *Georges Pompidou Hier et Aujourd'hui: Témoignages*, (Neuilly-sur-Seine: Éditions Breet, 1990).

¹⁶ Henry Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, op. cit.

¹⁷ Original quote: '*voilà donc que ce néophyte du forum, inconnu dans l'opinion jusque dans la cinquantaine se voit soudain de mon fait et sans l'avoir cherché investi d'une charge illimitée*', de Gaulle about Pompidou's appointment as Premier Ministre, in Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires d'Espoir, Le Renouveau 1958-1962 / L'Effort 1962...* (Paris: Plon, 1970), p. 363.

untypical achievement for a man without impressive Resistance credentials¹⁸, although with a notable war record¹⁹. Intermittently²⁰, he had also been a very successful banking professional²¹ who climbed to the top of the Rothschild Bank²² in France thanks to his talent, intelligence and work ethics. By profession²³ and by taste, he was passionate about poetry, authoring an acclaimed *Anthologie de la Poésie Française*²⁴, and a knowledgeable lover of music and modern art²⁵. The British Prime Minister was also from a rather modest background. He was a carpenter's son, born in Broadstairs in Kent, a talented Grammar school boy and a Balliol College Oxford alumnus. He was described as a 'wartime soldier and peacetime statesman'.²⁶ He was a successful international yachtsman, 'the only British Prime Minister to have won a major international sporting trophy whilst in office'²⁷ and 'a good amateur musician ... without question the most multi-talented Prime Minister'²⁸. He too had a rather short banking experience which nevertheless 'provided him with valuable experience of the world of finance'.²⁹ He was however mainly a career politician who entered Parliament in 1950 as the MP for Bexley, and was later on 'elected the youngest Tory leader since Disraeli'³⁰, remarkably 'the first elected and first State-educated Leader of the Conservative

¹⁸ Pompidou never tried to join the Résistance because 'he did not have "l'esprit d'aventure"', in Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, p. 64.

¹⁹ Pompidou was 'brave au feu' and 'fought gallantly in the battle of France in May-June 1940 with his regiment as a lieutenant in the 141st regiment of Alpine infantry, "a roc per his colonel" always standing and sure of his luck and invulnerability', *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²⁰ Pompidou worked at Rothschild bank's during extended periods of time: from 1954 to 1958 until de Gaulle returned to power, from 1959 to 1962 when de Gaulle appointed him Prime Minister where his banking experience made 'him an expansionist in economic matters', in Thody, *The Fifth*, p. 45.

²¹ Guy De Rothschild, *Contre Bonne Fortune*, (Paris: J'ai lu, 1985).

²² Pompidou became *fondateur de pouvoir* of Guy de Rothschild, then *Directeur Général* of the bank. He developed a lifelong, trustful and friendly relation with the banker, being one of the rare ones to 'tutoyer' (be on familiar terms) Guy de Rothschild, in Debré, *Entretiens*, p. 14.

²³ 'Reçu premier à l'agrégation', École Normale Supérieure, then Professeur in Marseille, Versailles and Paris (Henry IV) until 1945 when he joined de Gaulle's services, in Roussel, *Pompidou*, pp. 36-62.

²⁴ Georges Pompidou, *Anthologie de la Poésie Française* (Paris: Hachette, 1961).

²⁵ Pompidou's great interest for modern art was shared by his wife Claude (*née* Cahours), herself an accomplished musician, in Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, p. 335.

²⁶ McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 10. Heath 'was mentioned in dispatches and awarded a military MBE'.

²⁷ In 1971, Heath 'captained the Great Britain Team for the Admiral's Cup and led the team to victory'. URL: <https://www.arundells.org/edward-heath-sailor/> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

²⁸ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. xv.

²⁹ Heath also occupied a junior position 'in the small merchant bank Brown Shipley & Co. Ltd', in Douglas Hurd (2009), 'Heath, Sir Edward Richard George (1916–2005)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biographies* (Online Edition Sept 2012 edn.: Oxford University Press).

URL: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/95228> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

³⁰ McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 54

*Party in 1965*³¹. So what were the connections between the two high achievers from rather modest origins? Between Pompidou the '*conscientious uncle*'³² and Heath the '*Renaissance Man*'³³?

A socio-psychological approach to the Heath-Pompidou entente calls attention to their capacity to reach the top from the lower layers of society through sheer merit, and to their surmounting of social, political, class and status disparities with their predecessors and peers. For instance, despite his distinctive and exceptional pedigree, Heath's social origins and historical background contrasted markedly with the traditional Tory leadership as '*in 1965, the four previous leaders had been successively a duke's nephew, the son of a seventh baronet, the son-in-law of another duke and a fourteenth earl*'³⁴. This lack of lineage were comparable to Pompidou's shortcomings within his own political clan. He could not pride himself on an illustrious WWII Resistance past, as *Gaullistes historiques* like Schumann, Chaban-Delmas, Messmer, de Courcel or Couve de Murville. Because of this, Pompidou was said to carry a '*wound that would never heal*'³⁵ since, for historic Gaullists, whose judgment was certainly tainted with a mix of arrogance and envy for his privileged position with the General, he would always be a '*pièce rapportée*'³⁶. Similarly, in the early stages of his political career, Heath suffered from a feeling of social rejection explaining the '*carapace he constructed around himself making it difficult for him to relate naturally to both his contemporaries and his juniors*'.³⁷ Even if these assumed origins generated a rightful pride in the two men's personal achievements, they were unlikely to completely cover an underlying level of frustration, and sometimes of insecurity³⁸, which framed their attitudes of reserve towards political contemporaries with whom they sometimes seemed to feel at odds. Heath and Pompidou did not entirely and easily fit into their

³¹ URL: <https://www.arundells.org/sir-edward-heath/> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

³² Thody, *The Fifth*, p. 37.

³³ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, Op. cit., p. xv: '*the British public has never understood Heath ... he is a veritable Renaissance Man*' yet, Campbell adds, '*in office he came across as a one-dimensional political robot*'.

³⁴ Ibid., p. xvi.

³⁵ Debré, *Entretiens*, p. 14.

³⁶ Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, p. 77. Possible English translation: 'not belonging'.

³⁷ D. R. Thorpe, *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2010), p. 599.

³⁸ Heath '*would never be rich enough, sufficiently well-respected or simply self-confident enough to feel that he was immune of the twists and turns of life, to changing economic circumstances or to the wider vagaries of fortune. That mattered to him. He always felt the need to prove himself, to justify himself, to demonstrate vigour and the power of argument*', in McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 312.

respective groups.³⁹ And both knew that of the other one, as indicated by Pompidou's acknowledgement that Heath was '*not an aristocrat and his party accepted his leadership only reluctantly*'⁴⁰, probably echoing his personal situation within the Gaullist clan. In that sense, Heath and Pompidou similarly broke '*the patrician mould*' of their party.⁴¹

This shared political profile was reinforced by their belonging to the same centre-right section of pragmatic leaders advocating economic expansion, wishing to reform and modernise their economy, and rise to the new challenges of a fast-developing world through a mixture of '*interventionism*' and '*emerging free market doctrines*'.⁴² For Pompidou, the *Grandeur* dear to the heart of his predecessor and mentor could only be possible through the development of a robust and powerful economy extending prosperity to most⁴³: in short, France's political weight depended on production and productivity⁴⁴. '*L'Impératif Industriel*'⁴⁵ was at the heart of his successful strategy⁴⁶ which aimed at putting France at the top of the European industrial nations by improving the competitiveness of French industry in the face of dominant American and Japanese companies. In addition, for the '*peasant*' he enjoyed claiming to be⁴⁷, agriculture, sacrosanct for the French, would benefit from this economic expansion, thereby raising farmers' living standards. Similarly, Heath's reforming objective was a '*Quiet Revolution*'⁴⁸ with a view to modernising Britain by '*aiming at the long term*' rather than counting on '*trivialities ... and gimmicks for immediate publicity*'⁴⁹ (doubtless a reference to his

³⁹ For instance, Heath, often the target of '*snobbish mockery*' (Campbell, *Heath*, xvi), '*certainly wasn't very clubbable*', Ken Clark's comment in McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 313.

⁴⁰ Pompidou and Roussel, *Lettres*, p. 488.

⁴¹ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. xiv.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. xix.

⁴³ Berstein, Rioux, *La France*, pp. 133-134.

⁴⁴ Maurice Schumann, *La Politique Étrangère de Georges Pompidou*, in Association Georges Pompidou (AGP), *Georges Pompidou Hier Et Aujourd'hui: Témoignages* (Neuilly-sur-Seine: Éditions Breet, 1990), p. 267.

⁴⁵ Lionel Stoléru, *L'Impératif Industriel* (Éditions du Seuil, 1969).

⁴⁶ '*Under [Pompidou's] leadership, France has known an unprecedented growth, an average of 6% a year (a third more), i.e. more than any country in Europe. The living standard increased by 25% to reach the level of Germany and 10% above the one of Britain which, ten year earlier, was superior to France's*', in Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Pompidou to Heath: '*Just remember that I am a peasant and my policy will always be to support the peasants*' in Heath, *The Course*, p. 367.

⁴⁸ Heath, *Leader's Speech*, Conservative Party Conference, Brighton, 1971, URL: <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=118> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

⁴⁹ 1970 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto, '*A Better Tomorrow*', Heath's Foreword. URL: <http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1970/1970-conservative-manifesto.shtml> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

opponent, Wilson), through institutional and legislative reforms, principally of companies, labour and trade unions. In contrast with Wilson's '*stop-go economic policies*', Heath chose the '*go-go policies*'⁵⁰ with the target of increasing the nation's global competitiveness but '*within the existing social framework*'⁵¹, somehow subverting the traditional Conservative leadership's supposed favouring of the '*rich and landed*' to the point of making him '*resemble not so much a British party politician as a French centre-right technocrat on the pattern of Raymond Barre or Edouard Balladur*'⁵², or indeed of Pompidou himself. The two leaders were both genuine and voluntarist reformers. They both wanted to adapt trade, industry and labour, through structural and organisational changes to the economy⁵³, and by increasing freedom for citizens and economic actors alike⁵⁴, with the objective of gaining efficiency and leverage in their respective countries' responses to the challenges of expanded worldwide competition. Under Pompidou's presidency, France experienced unequalled levels of economic progress and became the '*France de l'Expansion*'.⁵⁵ Heath, on the other hand, did not enjoy such progress, having to deal with a struggling economy challenged by social problems, economic rigidities and '*wildly inflationary wages demands*'.⁵⁶ In any case, Pompidou's objectives to '*guarantee social harmony through economic well-being*'⁵⁷ accorded with the fundamental premises of more liberal oriented policies, more generally adopted in Western Europe from the late 1970s onwards,

⁵⁰ Michael Cockerell, *Live from Number 10: The inside Story of Prime Ministers and Television* (London: Faber, 1988), p. 170.

⁵¹ Campbell, *Heath*, p. 203.

⁵² Ball, Seldon, *The Heath Government*, p. 5.

Raymond Barre and Edouard Balladur were respectively vice-President of the European Commission (1967-1973) in charge of economic and financial affairs and Georges Pompidou's last *Secrétaire Général de la Présidence* (Avril 1973 - Avril 1974). They both became Prime Ministers (Barre: August 1976 - May 1981, and Balladur: Mars 1993 - May 1995).

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 5: '*no premier since Lloyd George has been such an innovator in organisational reforms as Heath*'.

⁵⁴ '*The single most important service that I believe this Government can perform for the British people is to restore to them more and more freedom. But to do this the Government must first free itself ... The question now that we are in office is not what kind of government, but how much government. The answer, with which I know you agree, is that there must be less government, and of a better quality*', Heath, Leader's speech, Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, 1970.

URL: <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=117> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

⁵⁵ Berstein, Rioux, *La France*, p. 134: '*In the six years to 1973, France doubled its exports and increased its industrial output at a rate of 6.3% per year, the highest in Europe, standards of living grew by 25%, putting France on a par with Germany, ahead of Britain and just behind Japan*'.

⁵⁶ Denis MacShane, *Heath* (London: Haus, 2006), *Industrial Relations and the Economy 1970-4*, pp. 94-110.

⁵⁷ Berstein, Rioux, *La France*, p. 134: '*la garantie d'une harmonie sociale par le mieux-être économique*'.

and similarly espoused by Heath's call for '*greater freedom of opportunity, greater freedom of choice, greater freedom from government regulation and interference*'⁵⁸.

To establish these reforms and implement changes, both men drew on their recent professional banking experience, their apparently natural inclination for detail and pragmatism, and also their common businesslike approach to the economy and to government management. According to Pierre Messmer⁵⁹, Pompidou was atypical since his political course was marked by both his provincial origins and his banking CEO experience which taught him that success depended on '*work, initiative and energy*'⁶⁰. His perspective on work, as de Gaulle's aide and adviser, as *Chef de Cabinet*, Minister or Head of Government, mirrored Heath's '*managerialism*' and '*problem-solver*' approach, involving the sort of 'can-do' attitude of business people '*who try solutions until they succeed*, described in his case as '*businesslike efficiency, consistency of purpose and strategic vision*'.⁶¹ Such similar business-type mindsets would be, during the Paris 1971 meetings, essential to Heath, whose approach to tackling at length rather hermetic financial matters with the former Rothschild's CEO '*worked on Pompidou like a charm*'.⁶² Eventually, this type of approach was to become the norm of the following Heath-Pompidou meetings as, for instance Pompidou's confirmation that he '*regards his forthcoming meeting with the PM in a business like manner*'.⁶³

The rise of Heath and Pompidou from relative social anonymity to Heads of Government and State, their approach to society, and the role of the State also stemmed from the influence of their respective mentors, Macmillan and de Gaulle, two leaders whose entente and friendship, as far as de Gaulle could indeed be judged 'close' to any person, had not however proved sufficient to secure an agreement over Britain's entry.⁶⁴ Both Macmillan and de Gaulle constituted for them a reference

⁵⁸ 1970 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto, 'A Better Tomorrow', Heath's Foreword.

⁵⁹ Pierre Messmer, Premier Ministre of Pompidou's second Government (5 July 1972 – 27 May 1974).

⁶⁰ AGP, *Georges Pompidou*, p. 308.

⁶¹ John Cole, BBC political editor, quoted in McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 319.

⁶² Macshane, *Heath*, p. 89.

⁶³ TNA PREM15/1864, Prime Minister Visit to Paris, May 1973, Sir Edward Tomkins to FCO: '*The general impression I get from Jobert is that the President regards his forthcoming meeting with the PM in a business like manner*'.

⁶⁴ Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, pp. 168-175.

for both good and bad decisions in their European policy and approach to Community enlargement, models to equal and even surpass. Pompidou, noticed by de Gaulle in 1945, gradually became irreplaceable to the General who trusted him over the period 1945-1968 with numerous crucial official, informal and personal missions.⁶⁵ For the General, Pompidou was subservient '*neither to the Résistance intérieure nor to the extérieure and not to any pre-war scorned parties*' and therefore was '*independent enough to remain lucid*'.⁶⁶ In his view, Pompidou's main attributes were, beyond his great intellect and culture '*which enabled him to tackle any ideas*'⁶⁷, his predominantly pragmatic nature and innate caution, combined with his excellence at assessing situations in detail, drawing the right conclusions, and then proposing relevant solutions⁶⁸. For these reasons, de Gaulle maintained Pompidou as Head of his Government '*longer than any head of Government in a century*'.⁶⁹ Correspondingly, Heath was crucial to Macmillan's premiership as he was very much a '*Macmillan man*'⁷⁰, a faithful supporter and aide since their common Oxford years in the late 1930s (both were Balliol College Oxford graduates). Heath's rise typified Macmillan's *One Nation* Conservatism meritocratic mantra⁷¹, and demonstrated the latter's belief in '*exploiting all talents, no matter the background*'⁷². Heath's high work rate, sometimes said to be related to his bachelor lifestyle, his reliability, his intelligence and the '*bonus*' of a '*a good war*' and of being a '*Balliol man*', were key to making him an indispensable collaborator, '*a good foil*' or the '*man of detail that could bring him back to reality*'.⁷³

⁶⁵ Pompidou occupied many essential functions for de Gaulle: from the very personal appointment as Treasurer of the *Fondation Anne de Gaulle*, read proofing his memoirs and negotiating their publication, executioner of his will; or linked to his political activities as *chargé de mission*, *chef de cabinet* during his *Traversée du désert*, special envoy and negotiator in the first secret peace talks with the Algerian FLN, in Thody, *The Fifth*, p. 44.

⁶⁶ Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, p. 77.

⁶⁷ De Gaulle, *Mémoires D'espoir*, p. 363: '*qui le mettent à la hauteur de toutes les idées*'.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 364: for de Gaulle, Pompidou's many qualities included '*the faculty to understand, the tendency to doubt, the talent to expose and the taste for silence, the desire to solve and the art to temporise*'.

⁷⁰ Andrew Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1972), pp. 112-113.

⁷¹ Campbell, *Edward Heath*, p. 577.

⁷² Roth, *Heath*, op. cit.

⁷³ Thorpe, *Supermac*, p. 372.

These judgements on the part of their illustrious predecessors emphasized the comparability of Heath and Pompidou: a relentless pragmatism and down-to-earth approach, combined with high intelligence applied, through hard work, to problem solving. In addition, because of their political and personal proximity to their political mentors, both Heath and Pompidou had to live with the ambiguity of measuring up to their political legacy, as well as dissociating themselves from their achievements, or lack of, in the matter of European enlargement. They both followed a similar trajectory: from respective protégés of Macmillan and de Gaulle, to being their heir apparent, and then operating as questioning successors. Although Pompidou made it clear, in a very Gaullist fashion, that he was not a successor (*'I am not a successor of de Gaulle, one does not succeed to de Gaulle'*⁷⁴) but rather a continuation of his policies in changed and propitious circumstances, he nevertheless harboured reservations about the methodology the General had employed with Britain, and aimed rather at asking Britain to prove it could be a *'loyal European partner'* instead of *'denying it the capacity to be one'*.⁷⁵ Heath drew similar negative conclusions on his own mentor's endeavours to interact with de Gaulle, for example Macmillan's failure to clearly perceive all the issues at play, like the *'French paranoia about the supposed dominance of the Anglo-Saxon nations'*⁷⁶, during the June 1962 summit with the French President in Château de Champs and in Rambouillet in December 1962⁷⁷. Whereas Macmillan saw them as the *'last opportunity to convince de Gaulle of the desirability of British membership'*⁷⁸, Heath considered that *'during the 1961-1963 negotiations, Macmillan's two summit meetings with de Gaulle had served only to complicate matters further'*⁷⁹. So when Heath and Pompidou met in Paris in May 1971, the portents of the Macmillan-de Gaulle meetings in Champs and Rambouillet would potentially cast menacing shadows on the proceedings. In a sense, Heath and Pompidou might have had in common a desire to surpass their mentors, to succeed where

⁷⁴ *'Je ne suis pas un successeur, on ne succède pas au général de Gaulle'*, in Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, p. 301.

⁷⁵ Jobert, *L'Autre Regard*, p. 118.

⁷⁶ Mangold, *The Almost Impossible*, p. 170.

⁷⁷ CVCE Comptes rendus. Entretiens entre le général de Gaulle et M. Macmillan à Rambouillet (15-16 décembre 1962), URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/compte_rendu_des_entretiens_entre_le_general_de_gaulle_et_harold_macmillan_rambouillet_15_decembre_1962-fr-90656072-8af5-49ae-9230-b34bbb032a15.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

⁷⁸ McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 38.

⁷⁹ Heath, *The Course*, p. 366.

they had failed. This was all the more important in that both Heath and Pompidou had grievances about the behaviour and decisions of Macmillan and de Gaulle towards the end of their respective tenures: the former for not being considered by Macmillan for Tory leadership after the failed 1961-1963 negotiations, the latter after the May 1968 Baden-Baden episode when de Gaulle seemed to have abandoned office, and, more personally, because of the General's perfunctory response to the Markovic affair⁸⁰ which caused Pompidou deep resentment.

The biography, goals and backgrounds of the two politicians were not the only common features of the Heath-Pompidou tandem. As individuals, they shared similar traits in their personal approach to life and private interests, and from an intellectual perspective, in terms of mindset, characteristics and approach to work and relationships.

A similarity of minds and a compatibility of characters

Another facet of the two men that played a role in their closeness was their shared and marked interest in culture, and their desire to balance their official strenuous political activities with a fulfilled private life of leisure and pleasure. Pompidou had a passion for culture (*'la culture avait pénétré sa vie'*⁸¹). He and his wife Claude, whom Heath described as *'charming, elegant and totally au fait with contemporary music and painting'*⁸², were friends of many artists, painters like Ernst, Vasarely, sculptors like Hadju or musicians like Pierre Boulez, and spent regular family time with the Malrauxs. In Pompidou's view, art was linked to a sense of happiness, adding an emotional dimension to his social and political achievements.⁸³ Their familiarity with the Rothschilds made them members of the *Tout-Paris*, attracted to the couple's knowledge and culture, and rich and famous *carnet d'adresse*. A couple like this would arguably find much in common with a multi-talented Prime Minister like Heath who, like Claude Pompidou⁸⁴, was passionate about classical

⁸⁰ Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, pp. 265-289.

⁸¹ André Bettancourt, 'La Politique Culturelle de Georges Pompidou', CNRS, *Georges Pompidou*, p. 186.

⁸² Heath, *The Course*, p. 369.

⁸³ Bettancourt, 'La Politique Culturelle', p. 187.

⁸⁴ Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, p. 335.

music (*'music touched this man; it touched his soul'*⁸⁵), could lead an orchestra, and was an accomplished piano player (unusually he moved his Steinway piano into No.10⁸⁶) and who, *'in his good humour'*, was the first person to play the white piano installed in one of the Élysée Palace's rooms, redecorated by Claude Pompidou to showcase France's decorative modern art⁸⁷. The same place was given to culture at the Élysée Palace and at Number 10: *'the cultural profile of Number 10 was also enhanced by Heath's periodical musical evenings, at which celebrated musicians would perform'*.⁸⁸ This excellent relationship based on a shared passion for art and music lasted during both men's tenures⁸⁹ and outlasted Pompidou's life and Heath's premiership. *'Several Times Madame Pompidou, widow of the former French President, would be present'*, when Heath entertained at Arundells, the house he bought in 1985.⁹⁰ This sign of a lifelong friendship, going beyond mere diplomatic entertainment and conventional socializing, was also witnessed by members of Pompidou's closest circle as, for instance Jean-René Bernard recalling seeing, in 2000, the former PM at a lunch hosted by Claude Pompidou, Quai de Béthune, the couple's Parisian private residence.⁹¹

A similarity between the two leaders was also noticeable in their choice of having *jardins secrets* (happy places), to enjoy a balanced private life regardless of the social constraints and official norms of exercising power at the highest level. The two men's comparable approach to a life burdened with the highest responsibilities often surprised or generated discontent. De Gaulle's irritation at Pompidou's refusal to live in the Hotel Matignon (when Prime Minister), seen as a *'lack of commitment to the nation'*⁹², suggested his inclination to keep moments for himself, as with sailing

⁸⁵ McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 336.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

⁸⁷ Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, p. 315.

⁸⁸ Ball, Seldon, *The Heath Government*, p. 50.

⁸⁹ AN AG5(2)/108: comments made at the end of meeting at Chequers on 21 May 1973 show that, beyond diplomatic niceties, Heath had particular and personal attention for the presidential couple when declaring that *'you and your wife will always be welcome at Chequers'*, in a hand-written post-scriptum to his official letter.

⁹⁰ Per Robert Key, Heath's Private Parliamentary Secretary who found Heath's first owned house, Arundells, in Salisbury, in McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 219.

⁹¹ Dulphy, Manigand, 'Entretien avec Jean-René Bernard', p. 8.

⁹² Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, p. 196.

in the case of Heath (*'a refreshment that temporarily took his mind off his political preoccupations'*⁹³). Pompidou sought comfort from the solitary exercise of power in free time with his wife and close family, epitomised by the *cri du coeur*: *'our lifeline is the Wednesdays'*⁹⁴, the days when Claude and Georges Pompidou used to 'sneak out' of the Élysée Palace, since, as he confided to his wife, *'he felt like a prisoner at the Élysée, making his family his only refuge'*. For Heath, it was the weekend, as he *'always tried to keep at least one day free every weekend, for some sort of recreation'*.⁹⁵ His habit included *'leaving Number 10 on Friday afternoon either to go to Chequers or down to Cowes'*, and, sometimes causing unease with his aides, *'he would not be seen again until Sunday evening'*.⁹⁶ Heath's routine, which could appear surprising for a Premier, especially when compared to other PMs' workaholic lifestyles, included waking up, rather late, at 7.45 a.m., and in the evening *'trying to go swimming at about 6 or 7 p.m.'* Heath himself summarised his approach to the work / life balance when declaring: *'as well as trying to organise a Government properly, I ought to organise my own life properly and that is why I deliberately take recreation'*.⁹⁷ This common attitude and approach was epitomised during the Chequers one-to-ones in March 1972 when Pompidou, refusing invitations to a post-meeting work session with his staff, suggested to Heath he would do *'just whatever [Heath did] on a Saturday afternoon'*, with Heath's reply: *'then we will go for a walk along the top of the Chilterns'*.⁹⁸

Beyond these clear marks of similarity in life choices and interests, the closeness between Heath and Pompidou also stemmed from their intellectual mindset which played a fundamental part in the preparation and conduct of their meetings at the highest level. Numerous descriptions of Heath's and Pompidou by scholars, biographers, collaborators or friends suggest qualities and shortcomings specific to each man, but there are however crucial similarities. Édouard Balladur's dithyrambic

⁹³ Comments of Robert Armstrong, the PM's Principal Private Secretary, and *'surely his closest and certainly his most appreciated friend'* in McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 107 and p. 308.

⁹⁴ *'Notre salut c'est le mercredi'*, in Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, p. 346.

⁹⁵ Heath, *The Course*, p. 273.

⁹⁶ Per Robert Armstrong, also quoted to say *'he would not take boxes when on the boat and regarded that as a wholly leisure time'* in Ball, Seldon, *The Heath Government*, pp. 49-50.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Heath, *The Course*, p. 369.

description of Georges Pompidou relates key qualities and capacities of the statesman, beyond the *'exceptional faculties of the mind: intuition, quickness and agility of the mind, memory and precision in analysis'*⁹⁹, which were to be at play during the meetings with Heath. Firstly, Pompidou was a man of common sense, even the *'prince of common sense'* according to Schumann.¹⁰⁰ This meant that he had an aptitude for extracting the substantive matter from any complex issue and posing it in simple and clear terms¹⁰¹ as, for instance, framing the complexity of Britain's entry in the simple requirement for a declaration of intention, of a European *profession de foi* from Heath, a fact well understood by the latter. Secondly, and this is crucial to understanding the format and conduct of the Heath-Pompidou one-to-ones, Pompidou had a marked preference for direct contact with his interlocutor(s): he *'had a taste for discussion, for contact and the need to explain'* combined with a *'preference for men with a strong personality, who take risks and assert themselves'*.¹⁰² These personality characteristics undoubtedly played a part in his agreement to hold a one-to-one defining meeting with Heath, a man he considered *'confident and very sure of himself'*, a trait Pompidou repeated five times in his personal portrayal of the Prime Minister:

*he is sure of himself and of his country ... He was sure of his victory few people expected. I have negotiated with him Britain's entry into the Community. He was sure of himself and ready to sacrifice the interests of the Commonwealth. I saw him again at Chequers: he was sure of himself and placid, at last contended of being in the EEC. I saw him again in Paris: he was still sure of himself despite or because of the floating of sterling.*¹⁰³

Thirdly, Pompidou was easily approachable, straight to the point with his interlocutor, willing to meet and to understand, as demonstrated by his role as jovial host casually and informally strolling in the

⁹⁹ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, avant-propos d'Édouard Balladur, pp. 11-21.

¹⁰⁰ Schumann, 'La Politique Étrangère', p. 267.

¹⁰¹ Balladur in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, p. 12.

¹⁰² *'une préférence pour les hommes dotés d'une forte personnalité qui prennent leurs risques et savent s'affirmer'*, *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *'Il est sûr de lui et sûr de son pays ... Il était sûr de lui et de sa victoire, que peu de gens attendait. J'ai négocié avec lui l'entrée de l'Angleterre dans la Communauté: il était sûr de lui et prêt à sacrifier les intérêts du Commonwealth. Je l'ai revu aux Chequers: il était sûr de lui et placide, enfin dans la place. Je l'ai revu à Paris: il était toujours sûr de lui malgré ou à cause du flottement de la Livre'*, in Pompidou and Roussel, *Lettres*, p. 488.

Élysée gardens with the Prime Minister¹⁰⁴, or the accommodating guest going for a walk in the countryside with his host, delivering personal considerations and comments, yet still working towards the resolution of official matters at hand. Lastly, Pompidou was a '*man of compromise*', who compensated for de Gaulle's incapacity to be so.¹⁰⁵ He was a pragmatic politician with a deep sense of realities, attracted to conciliation, but intransigent when the essential was at stake, all features which would be fundamental to analysing the situation created by Britain's application for entry and related top-level Franco-British meetings.

As to the British premier, beyond the intellectual qualities, pragmatic orientation and work capacity he shared with Pompidou, Heath presented personality traits quite appropriate to Pompidou's expectations for a discussion partner. Heath was undisputedly considered as a man of resolve, a self-reliant politician who, both in his public and private life, was prone to confrontation and plain-spoken discussion, a man inclined to confront problems directly.¹⁰⁶ Pompidou's view that Heath had '*set himself objectives he [was] certain to reach, acting with obstinacy and kindness, good knowledge of his dossiers and passion for Britain*'¹⁰⁷, was the description of an interlocutor mirroring the President's values and expectations in terms of leadership behaviour. For the French President who could not stand subterfuge and dishonesty (Pompidou rarely got angry and was seldom '*abrupt*' or '*authoritative*'; when he did, it was because he loathed it when somebody tried to '*pull the wool over his eyes*'¹⁰⁸), the Prime Minister's openness, and directness appeared as signal advantages in comparison with any other potential British counterpart, past or present, in entry discussions:

He is the man who says what he means and who does what he says he will do. It is the opposite of those hooded ironic faces that have become so much part of the political scenery; the languid Macmillan, the drooping Butler, Home looking down his half-spectacles, Wilson with his darting, half shut eyes, Jenkins

¹⁰⁴ 'I have been greatly encouraged by the informal atmosphere in which we have been able to talk together today', TNA PREM15/2241, Heath's dinner speech annotations, Paris 20 May 1971.

¹⁰⁵ Alain Pompidou about his father in Pompidou, in Pompidou and Roussel, *Lettres*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ AN AG5(2)/76, Fonds Michel Jobert: translation requested in preparation of the Heath-Pompidou talks of the 17 May 1971 Observer Review's article entitled '*When Teddy has become Ted*'.

¹⁰⁷ Pompidou and Roussel, *Lettres*, p. 488.

¹⁰⁸ Proposed translation of '*prendre des vessies pour des lanternes*', in Corcelette, Abadie, *Georges Pompidou*, p. 73.

*with his clever grin and enormous glasses. Heath's eyes are big and open, without wink or flickers; they advertise a public man without private contradictions.*¹⁰⁹

Strangely, Pompidou's genuine appreciation of Heath's demeanour was in stark contrast with the latter's reputation for an extended list of *'shortcomings (and there were quite a few including abruptness, intolerance of fools, a total disregard for punctuality and a reluctance to pursue tasks that did not interest him)*'.¹¹⁰ Heath was indeed often *'dismissed as a dry technocrat'* and also *'gained an unfortunate reputation for being appallingly rude and tactless'*.¹¹¹ The terms *'socially difficult', 'monosyllabic', 'dull', 'aloof'* were scarcely indicative of traits fit for a charm offensive with the French President.¹¹² Heath's *'Easter Island' face*¹¹³, his propensity for unsettling lengthy silences in his conversations, or *'rows of dots'*¹¹⁴ as put by Lord Victor Rothschild, made him a Prime Minister rather *'painful to work with'* unless one could painstakingly *'decode him'* over time¹¹⁵. The list was extended by some historians, even more unforgiving in their judgment of Heath, describing his leadership as indecisive, weak, and lacking the necessary political courage to confront opposition or political adversities.¹¹⁶ But, despite these widespread harsh judgments, Heath was also said to reveal, under his armour of *'intellectual arrogance and social diffidence'*¹¹⁷, a *'really rather shy man'*¹¹⁸ hiding a charming personality and an attractive humorous wit reserved for a rather close circle of esteemed friends and personal acquaintances.

The notes taken from the tête-à-tête show no evidence of socially difficult behaviour. There were no signs of *'rows of dots'* in the lively and respectful conversations reported by Andronikof and Palliser

¹⁰⁹ NA AG(2)/76, Fonds Michel Jobert. Newspaper's article translated for Jobert of the Observer review, 'The unknown prime minister', 25 April 1971.

¹¹⁰ Peter Luff, Heath's Private Secretary (from 1979 onwards), in McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 195.

¹¹¹ Hynes, *The Year*, p. 2.

¹¹² Hurd, *Memoirs*, p. 171.

¹¹³ Ball, Seldon *The Heath Government*, p. 50.

¹¹⁴ Lord Victor Rothschild description of his first interview with Heath for his appointment as Head of the "Think Tank" (Central Policy Review Staff) during which Heath revealed a propensity to punctuate his conversations with lengthy silences provoking surprise and unease with his interlocutors, in Campbell, *Heath*, p. 318.

¹¹⁵ Ball, Seldon, *The Heath Government*, op. cit.

¹¹⁶ Langlois, 'Edward Heath', p. 238, Martin Holmes, *The Failure of the Heath Government* (2nd edn.; Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

¹¹⁷ Nigel Fisher, MP Cons., in McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 315.

¹¹⁸ Peter Luff's comment, *Ibid.*, p. 195.

(cf. Chapters 4 and 5), but rather a series of affable exchanges between equals, surprisingly close in form and substance, showing ease of expression. All confidants and close witnesses confirm that the two men appeared to have a positive relationship right from the beginning. Jobert, prior to the meetings, had expressed the certainty that *'knowing the two men ... not only they would not confront each other but instead would establish between them as much trust and friendship their difficult functions could allow'*.¹¹⁹ In his view, Heath and Pompidou showed *'indulgence for each other, which is a rare occurrence, and enough respect to have frank and straightforward conversations'*¹²⁰, which revealed the *'impressive'* personalities of these two *'remarkable men'* and their crucial impact, even for an experienced diplomat like Palliser¹²¹.

Discussing Britain's entry into Europe with Pompidou was an agreeable exercise for Heath, and consequently for Pompidou. It was a subject very dear to Heath, his *cause célèbre*.¹²² Jobert, who had known Heath personally since 1964¹²³, held the view, duly reported to President Pompidou, that *'Heath's European convictions were better than political, they were sentimental'*¹²⁴. This appraisal was confirmed by Heath himself in his preamble declaration during the first session of 20 May 1971 when announcing that the occasion was not only of historic importance but also of *'particular personal importance since throughout his 20-year political life he had worked for the concept of a wider Europe as the one proposed by Pompidou at The Hague in December 1969'*.¹²⁵ With this declaration, Heath touched upon the other domain of similarity with Pompidou: their conception and vision of Europe, a subject both leaders had publicly expressed in detail in the course of their political careers.

¹¹⁹ Jobert, *L'Autre Regard*, p. 177: *'Les connaissant tous les deux, j'étais convaincu non seulement qu'ils ne se heurteraient pas. Mais que s'établiraient entre eux autant de confiance et d'amitié que ces rudes fonctions permettent d'en témoigner'*.

¹²⁰ Ibid.: *'Je crois qu'ils eurent l'un pour l'autre de l'indulgence, ce qui est rare et assez de respect pour dépouiller leurs conversations d'artifices'*.

¹²¹ Palliser, 'L'Élargissement', pp. 227-231.

¹²² McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 319.

¹²³ Jobert, *Mémoires d'Avenir*, p. 202. Jobert indicates that, having met by chance privately Heath while on holidays in Spain in 1964, he developed a distant relationship with him, mainly epistolary.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 204: *'Edward Heath, dont les convictions européennes étaient, mieux que politiques, sentimentales'*.

¹²⁵ Margaret Thatcher Foundation (henceforth MTF), 710520 - Records of conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic, Paris 10 a.m. on Thursday 20 May 1971.

Two leaders who talked about Europe, the same Europe

In his dinner speech, on the evening of the first day of meetings, Heath declared: *'it has been heartening for me to discover in my talks with the president how close are our ideas and our aspirations'*.¹²⁶ This declaration meant more than a simple acknowledgment of the similarity of views concerning any potential resolution of the immediate problem at hand: lifting French objections to Britain's access to the European Community. It was Heath's acknowledgement that he and Pompidou had comparable and compatible visions of the European project and of the places of Britain and France within it. Before the May 1971 meetings, during their secret preparation phase, the two men had already sent each other positive signals about their overall agreement on Europe by asserting they *'had no doubts that they were both in harmony over the political aspects'* of their discussions'.¹²⁷ And before that, in concert, but quite separately, Heath and Pompidou had also publicly expressed, in speeches or via interviews and press articles, very similar positions as to what the European enterprise meant for them and for their respective countries.

This section of the Chapter aims to show the complementarity of their views on the European project by comparing their publicly expressed positions on major themes such as the nature, object and influence of Europe, British and French interests and roles within it, and its limits and goals. It will argue that Heath and Pompidou held common deeply rooted European values: they agreed on key principles relating to Europe, and consequently adopted comparable approaches to the development of the European project.

It is important to note that the Heath materials used in this section cover the period 1950-1988, spanning his maiden speech up to the proceedings of a lecture he gave at Oxford University¹²⁸ after his premiership. They include political speeches, leader's speeches at Conservative Party conferences (1965-1973), and prime-ministerial addresses to the House of Commons or interventions during

¹²⁶ TNA PREM15/2241, Prime Minister Heath annotated dinner speech, 20 May 1971.

¹²⁷ TNA PREM15/1498, Christopher Soames' audience with Pompidou conversations report: Pompidou's views on Europe, 25 February 1971. Indication that *'no note takers present'* emphasizing the confidentiality of the conveyed information.

¹²⁸ Edward Heath, 'One World: The Challenge Ahead', *RSA Journal*, 136/5387 (1988), pp. 777-790.

European Conferences. Their comparison with Pompidou's presidential speeches, press-conferences, interviews and addresses over the period 1968-1974 is not chronological but rather thematic. The methodology used is that of close reading which examines the potential coincidence of expressions and lexis, and which concentrates on their broad visions of Europe, and the roles of their respective countries in Europe.

When announcing to his hosts at the Élysée Palace on the evening of 20 May 1971 that '*throughout my political life, I believed in and worked for the ideal of a United Europe, of which my own country should be part*'¹²⁹, Heath was reminding his audience that, from the very beginning of his political career, he had firmly believed in and steadily advocated Britain's participation in the European project initiated by Robert Schuman's Declaration of 9 May 1950¹³⁰. Heath's maiden speech in the House of Commons on 26th June 1950 concluded with an appeal to the Government '*to go into the Schuman Plan to develop Europe and to co-ordinate it in the way suggested*'¹³¹, and with an insightful warning that:

by standing aside from the discussions [Schuman plan], we may be taking a very great risk with our economy in the coming years - a very great risk indeed. He [the Chancellor of the Exchequers] said it would also be a great risk if we went in and then withdrew. We regard it as a greater risk to stand aside altogether at this stage.

His '*sentimental*'¹³² attachment to the European project was reiterated many times, including and tellingly at the beginning (1961), and at the end (1963), of Britain's first application process, abruptly terminated by de Gaulle's veto, during which, as British negotiator and Lord Privy Seal, Heath had declared to the Six, repeating the exact same words in 1961 and 1963, that '*we desire to become full,*

¹²⁹ TNA PREM15/2241, Heath, Dinner speech on Thursday 20 May 1971.

¹³⁰ CVCE, The Schuman Declaration (Paris, 9 May 1950), made in the *Salon de l'Horloge* at the French Foreign Ministry by the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman.
URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_schuman_declaration_paris_9_may_1950-en-9cc6ac38-32f5-4c0a-a337-9a8ae4d5740f.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹³¹ UKPOL, Edward Heath 1950 Maiden Speech in the House of Commons, 26 June 1950.
<http://www.ukpol.co.uk/edward-heath-1950-maiden-speech-in-the-house-of-commons/> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹³² Jobert, *Mémoires d'Avenir*, op. cit.

whole-hearted and active members of the EC in its widest sense and to go forward with you in the building of a new Europe'.¹³³

If Heath's intentions were clearly stated from the start of his political career, Pompidou's personal views on Europe were less publicised before his presidency. In truth, it would have been a delicate matter for him to officially communicate them before, especially in his capacity as de Gaulle's Prime Minister from April 1962 to July 1968, because France's sole voice on and in Europe was the General's until he left the political arena in April 1969. It was only then that President Pompidou could communicate any personal interest in European matters. Significantly, his first international relations initiative was to call for the organisation of the Hague Conference in December 1969, *'of which outcome will condition not only the future of the Community but of all the member states and, at least, of France'*.¹³⁴ From then on, both Pompidou and Heath continued talking about Europe. They did so on many occasions and for various purposes, often using identical terms and expressions, and always putting across ideas and considerations about Europe which demonstrated common conceptions (the vision of Europe), similar pragmatism (the end objectives of the European project, its organisation, the approach to it), and their steadfast intent to achieve *'balancing the ideal against the practical'*¹³⁵.

Firstly, from a conceptual standpoint, the views of Heath and Pompidou about the European Community project were generational. They represented the reflections of two men who had

¹³³ CVCE, Statement by the Rt. Honourable Edward Heath, M.P. Lord Privy Seal, Leader of the United Kingdom Delegation, at the meeting in Paris on 10th October, 1961.
URL: https://www.cvce.eu/obj/statement_by_edward_heath_paris_10_october_1961-en-d990219a-8ad0-4758-946f-cb2ddd05b3c0.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

CVCE, Address given by Edward Heath (Brussels, 29 January 1963) at the 17th ministerial meeting between the Member States of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the United Kingdom.
URL: https://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_given_by_edward_heath_brussels_29_january_1963-en-d6b554fe-bb82-4499-85fa-02b2407adc65.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹³⁴ AN AG5(2)/644, Conférence de La Haye, discours du Président Pompidou, 1^{er} décembre 1969: *'j'ai pris l'initiative de cette Conférence dont l'issue conditionnera non seulement l'avenir de la Communauté mais la politique future des nations ici réunies et, en tout cas, de la France'*.

¹³⁵ CVCE, Address given by Edward Heath when presenting the seventh annual report of the Council of Western European Union (London, June 1962). URL: https://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_given_by_edward_heath_when_presenting_the_seventh_annual_report_of_the_council_london_5_june_1962-en-efb8be16-ea85-469f-973d-d7bd8922f918.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

personally experienced, and were left marked by, the painful memories of the violence which had torn Europe apart in the first half of the 20th century. For both men, the only means to *'put an end once and for all to the nationalist rivalry and to internecine warfare'*¹³⁶ (Heath) and to bring *'peace to our continent'*¹³⁷ (Pompidou) was to promote and achieve unity on which *'depended the survival of the people of Western Europe'*¹³⁸. This peace-guaranteeing unity was seen by both as key to a European identity, *'an identity of culture and civilisation'*.¹³⁹ On both the historical and philosophical levels, Heath's European conceptions coincided with Pompidou's: the European Community was the manifestation of a former historically and culturally dominant civilisation that had uniquely contributed to the world's development, and of which Britain and France were essential components. Europe was for the two leaders a matter of culture and civilisation. For them, the countries composing the Community had in common *'the same tradition of civilisation, both Christian and rationalist, even if each of them have input their own particular mark'*¹⁴⁰ (Pompidou), and were *de facto* grouped into a *'fundamentally Christian Democratic Europe'*¹⁴¹ (Heath). These countries generated the *'European man'*¹⁴² (Pompidou) who *'dominated the 19th century and who is the father of the scientific and technical revolution'*¹⁴³, the *'post-Renaissance man'* whose actions marked European progress in many domains *'be it national statehood, scientific endeavour, economic expansion or worldwide discovery'*¹⁴⁴ (Heath). No countries had made more of a mark on history and European civilisation than the *'two oldest European nations'*¹⁴⁵ which have *'shaped the*

¹³⁶ Edward Heath, 'Old World, New Horizons: Britain, the Common Market and the Atlantic Alliance', *The Godkin Lectures at Harvard University* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 11.

¹³⁷ Pompidou, Allocution prononcée lors du dîner offert à S.M. la Reine Élisabeth II au Grand Trianon, 15 mai 1972, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, p. 135.

¹³⁸ Heath, *Old World, New Horizons*, p. 84.

¹³⁹ Bussière and Willaert, *Un Projet pour l'Europe*, p. 33.

¹⁴⁰ Pompidou, Conférence de Presse tenue à l'Élysée, 16 mars 1972, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, p. 145: *'une même tradition de civilisation à la fois chrétienne et rationaliste, même si chacun y a mis sa marque particulière'*.

¹⁴¹ Heath, *Old World, New Horizons*, p. 20.

¹⁴² Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit.: *'L'homme européen'*.

¹⁴³ Pompidou, Déclaration faite au siège de l'UNESCO à Paris, 4 novembre 1971, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, p. 92: *'qui domina le XIX siècle et qui est le père de la révolution scientifique et technique'*.

¹⁴⁴ UKPOL, Edward Heath's speech to Conservative Party Conference, October 1972. URL: <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/edward-heath-1972-speech-to-conservative-party-conference/> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁴⁵ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit. p. 132: *'ces deux plus vieilles nations Européennes'*.

history of humanity for the past five hundred years'¹⁴⁶ (Pompidou), and 'profoundly influenced' Western culture and the 'contemporary world'¹⁴⁷ (Heath). For the two leaders it was a case of two nations, unified and 'existing as such since a millennium'¹⁴⁸ (Pompidou), always 'at the forefront of the European political stage for centuries'¹⁴⁹ (Heath), 'two old peoples which, each in its turn, were the first in the world'¹⁵⁰ (Pompidou), two nations which shared a common heritage and both aspired to a 'European destiny'¹⁵¹ (Heath). Both men accepted that many times in history, these two nations had opposed each other. But Britain and France, 'only separated by a narrow strip of sea but at the same time opposed and passionately attracted to each other'¹⁵² (Pompidou), and whose 'points of views alas rarely met'¹⁵³ (Heath), now had an opportunity to unite in the European project. Despite or because of their countries' tumultuous common past¹⁵⁴, both leaders foresaw the essential and leading roles that Britain and France could play in this new enterprise. To Heath's claim that: 'in this new partnership we have a chance as a great people, as a formidable nation, as a shaper and moulder of the modern world, to get back into action, to take up a part which I believe we have a unique capacity to fill'¹⁵⁵, Pompidou responded with a perception that the Community's enlargement to Britain would create 'greater possibilities for Europe to make itself heard and to mark its own

¹⁴⁶ Pompidou, Entretien Radiotélévisé avec M. Ferniot (O.R.T.F.), 24 juin 1972, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, p. 127: 'qui ont fait l'histoire de l'humanité'.

¹⁴⁷ UKPOL, Conservative Party Conference, October 1972, op. cit.: 'This contemporary world of ours is, after all, the world which Britain in the last four hundred years has profoundly influenced'.

¹⁴⁸ Pompidou, Entretien accordé à la revue *Réalités*, 14 avril 1970, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et discours*, Vol. I, pp. 65-66: 'la France ... unifiée depuis un millénaire ... l'Angleterre ... a derrière elle presque un millénaire'.

¹⁴⁹ TNA PREM15/2241, May 1971 statement by the Prime Minister Edward Heath to the O.R.T.F.: 'La France et la Grande Bretagne sont au premier rang de la scène politique européenne depuis des siècles'.

¹⁵⁰ Pompidou, Discours prononcé à l'occasion du centenaire de l'École Libre des Sciences Politiques, 8 décembre 1972, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, p. 98: 'regroupement de vieux peuples qui furent chacun à son tour les premiers du monde'.

¹⁵¹ UKPOL, Edward Heath's speech in Brussels, UK Delegation's signature of the Treaty of Accession to the EEC, 2 January 1972. URL: <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/edward-heath-1972-speech-in-brussels/> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁵² Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol.II, op. cit. p. 132: 'séparées par un étroit bras de mer mais tout à la fois dressées l'une contre l'autre et passionnément attirées l'une par l'autre'.

¹⁵³ TNA PREM15/2241, May 1971 statement by Prime Minister Edward Heath to the O.R.T.F.: '...mais ce n'est que rarement hélas que leurs points de vue se sont rejoints'.

¹⁵⁴ Robert Tombs and Isabelle Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: the French and the British from the Sun King to the Present* (London: William Heinemann, 2006).

¹⁵⁵ Heath, Leader's speech Conservative Party Conference, October 1972, op. cit.

identity'¹⁵⁶. Only through membership of a united Europe could Britain and France retrieve what they saw as their rightful place which would make them uniquely able to work towards the continent's future and to confront the challenges of their contemporary worlds, namely to make the '*Old World*' meet the challenges in the '*New horizons*'¹⁵⁷.

In that sense, Heath and Pompidou both envisaged Europe as being a new vector of influence in world affairs. This was a preoccupation reflected in Heath's question as to '*how can Britain continue to exert in the world a strong and constant influence - in defence of its own interests, certainly, but also in the interests of common sense and of humanity?*'¹⁵⁸, mirrored by Pompidou's question: '*if [the current facts of the situation] discourage us from any type of claim to domination, do they necessarily constrain our ability to influence?*'¹⁵⁹. Both Pompidou and Heath looked beyond their nations' former colonial pasts, turning instead to potential roles of influence within a European community of sovereign states. Thus Heath, arguing that he was leading a '*nation with a claim to greatness*'¹⁶⁰ did not think in terms of an '*Age of Imperialism, now past*'¹⁶¹, and rejected other fora as not in themselves sufficient: '*neither our membership of the United Nations, nor our membership of the Commonwealth, nor our natural relationship with the United States, has provided us with that leverage in world affairs*'¹⁶². For both men, the European Community was the vector of influence: for France already playing a leading role in the grouping of nations, and for Britain, without which Europe could not assume its '*true dimensions*'¹⁶³. Heath and Pompidou jointly espoused a European ideal

¹⁵⁶ Pompidou, Message aux lecteurs du *Times* à l'occasion de l'élargissement de la Communauté Européenne, 3 janvier 1973, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, p. 137: '*des possibilités accrues de se faire entendre, et de marquer son identité propre*'.

¹⁵⁷ Edward Heath, *Old World, New Horizons*, op. cit.

¹⁵⁸ CVCE, Address given by Edward Heath to the House of Commons, London, 21 July 1971. URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_given_by_edward_heath_london_21_july_1971-en-5bcaae41-e8a0-49cf-ac57-fa71f411a198.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁵⁹ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 133: '*si [les faits] nous découragent de toute prétention à la domination, suppriment-ils pour autant nos possibilités d'influence?*'

¹⁶⁰ Heath, speech to Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, October 1972, op. cit.

¹⁶¹ CVCE, speech by Edward Heath in Brussels, 22 January 1972, on the day when the United Kingdom Delegation signed the Treaty of Accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) in Brussels. URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/speech_by_edward_heath_brussels_22_january_1972-en-45bb74bd-554c-49d4-8212-9144ce2e8c1d.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁶² Heath, address to the House of Commons, London, 21 July 1971, op. cit.

¹⁶³ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 144: '*ses véritables dimensions*'.

which encouraged Britain and France *'to bring together [their] efforts instead of opposing them'*¹⁶⁴ because *'our common interests are bigger than our divergent interests'*¹⁶⁵. For both leaders, it was a case of finding an alternative to their former imperial history, *'to build on the past, but ... not to be strangled by it'*.¹⁶⁶ And only the positive contributions to culture and civilisation from British and French colonial eras should be retained as vectors of influence, including *'the lasting and creative effects of the spread of language and of culture, of commerce and of administration by people from Europe across land and sea to the other continents of the world. These are the essential ties which today bind Europe in friendship with the rest of mankind'*¹⁶⁷. As Heath declared to his Party in 1972, and in conformity with Pompidou's own view of France's renewed influence in the world, Britain wanted to enter *'a new epoch of British service and influence on the whole society of man'*¹⁶⁸.

Another point of convergence between Heath and Pompidou was their pragmatic approach to the potential British membership of the Community. Even in the worst of times, Heath had been consistently positive about the European project. After the *'bitter blow'*¹⁶⁹ of de Gaulle's 1963 veto, he argued that: *'we in Britain are not going to turn our backs on the mainland of Europe or on the countries of the Community. We are a part of Europe; by geography, tradition, history, culture and civilisation'*.¹⁷⁰ This optimistic and assertive comment in the face of French rejections justified Pompidou's confident observation, after the May 1971 tête-à-tête, that *'the explanations and views provided by Mr. Heath correspond to France's conception of the future of Europe, and moreover they conform to what Mr. Heath has said for the past twenty years'*¹⁷¹. This was an acknowledgement by

¹⁶⁴ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 133: *'nous incitant à conjuguer nos efforts au lieu de les opposer'*.

¹⁶⁵ Pompidou, Entretien accordé à la revue *Réalités*, 14 avril 1970, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, p. 66: *'nos intérêts communs sont plus grands que nos intérêts divergents'*.

¹⁶⁶ Heath, speech, Conservative Party Conference, October 1972, op. cit.

¹⁶⁷ Heath, speech in Brussels, 22 January 1972, op. cit.

¹⁶⁸ Heath, speech to Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, October 1972, op. cit.

¹⁶⁹ CVCE, Edward Heath: *'Britain has never been able to opt out of Europe, and this has never been truer'*, article *The Guardian*, 9 May 1975. URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/britain_has_never_been_able_to_opt_out_of_europe_and_this_has_never_been_truer_from_the_guardian_9_may_1975-en-3f2cb84e-0f87-4545-af46-e07b147c3911.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁷⁰ Heath, address given in Brussels, 29 January 1963, op. cit.

¹⁷¹ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 128: *'les explications et les vues de M. Heath sont conformes à la conception qu'a la France de l'avenir de l'Europe, et d'ailleurs sont conformes à ce que M. Heath a dit publiquement depuis vingt ans'*.

Pompidou of Heath's life- long dedication to Europe, echoed by Heath's own acknowledgment that *'it [was] well known that I have had the vision of a Britain in a united Europe'*¹⁷².

Britain's membership made all the more sense in that it shared social values with France, particularly the *'British and French ways of thinking [which have] always given primacy to the individual and to Freedom, with diverse modalities'*¹⁷³: *'a certain conception of civilisation and way of life'*¹⁷⁴ for Pompidou, *'our common European heritage'*¹⁷⁵ based on *'enterprise, personal freedom and social responsibility'*¹⁷⁶ for Heath. Also, for both, Britain's membership of Europe would strengthen the Community, with Pompidou's claim that *'at the time of emergence of new power centres in our world, enlargement gives Europe increased capacities to be heard and to mark its own identity'*¹⁷⁷, and Heath's request for a *'decision whether we should join with others in working out a European policy which would give Europe an effective voice in these overwhelming developments which vitally affect its future'*¹⁷⁸.

A remarkable fact is that, in semantic terms, the public declarations by Heath and Pompidou about Europe and about enlargement reveal a recurring common usage of words and expressions ('identity', 'nation', 'civilisation', 'culture', 'heritage', 'influence', 'people/*peuple*') which have conceptual, historical and intellectual connotations. This indicates that their shared conceptions of Europe were firstly of a conceptual and ideological nature, and then secondly of practical and economic substance, as indicated by the less frequent use of words like, 'economy', 'interests', 'markets', and 'competition'.

However, both men shared similar practical concerns about the future process and conduct of the European project, and were equally aware of the difficulties of the task ahead, and of its challenges.

¹⁷² Edward Heath, speech to the House of Commons, 28 October 1971 in 'Britain and Europe in Ten Speeches', URL:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/resource/static/files/publications_ressources/ep_speeches_dps_final.pdf [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁷³ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 134: *'La pensée britannique et la pensée française ont toujours, avec des modalités diverses, donné la primauté à l'individu et à la liberté'*.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.: *'une certaine conception de la civilisation et du mode de vie'*.

¹⁷⁵ Heath, speech in Brussels, 22 January 1972, op. cit.

¹⁷⁶ Heath, speech to Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, October 1972, op. cit.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.: *'Au moment où apparaissent dans le monde de nouveaux centres de puissance, l'élargissement donne à l'Europe des possibilités accrues de se faire entendre et de marquer son identité propre'*.

¹⁷⁸ Heath, address to the House of Commons, London 21 July 1971, op. cit.

When Pompidou mentioned *'Europe [as] our most difficult external relation undertaking'*, he nevertheless saw the Community's enlargement as *'both a challenge and the promise of a common achievement'*.¹⁷⁹ Correspondingly, Heath referred to *'immense problems'* in which he saw *'a deep and satisfying challenge to carry on the work of world building in which Britain in the past has played so great a part'*.¹⁸⁰ They were both conscious of the difficulty and high stakes in enlargement, and they communicated to their fellow citizens accordingly, posing the alternative as *'indifference or action, resignation or hope'*¹⁸¹ for Pompidou, or as *'our own courage and our own farsightedness'*¹⁸² for Heath. For the choice of Europe by Heath and Pompidou was not a *pis-aller*, a second best solution. Promoting the idea of Britain's membership of the EEC by Pompidou was not a wish to *'make a virtue out of necessity'*.¹⁸³ Equally, enlargement was not a lesser evil for Heath who rejected the idea that Britain was seeking *'shelter in the Community from the storm of the outside world'*¹⁸⁴, supporting Pompidou's vision of it as a *'positive act'*. Refusing Britain's entry would condemn Europe *'to wither away with a disease of languor'*¹⁸⁵ for Pompidou, whilst Heath reciprocally declared that *'there could be no Europe without France'*.¹⁸⁶

On the day of the signature of the treaty of Accession to the EEC in Brussels (22 January 1972), Heath explained that the design he sought for the *'New Europe'* had to be:

a Europe which is strong and confident within itself. A Europe in which we shall be working for the progressive relaxation and elimination of East/West tensions. A Europe conscious of the interests of its friends and partners. A Europe alive to its great responsibilities in the common struggle of humanity for a better life. Thus this ceremony marks an end and a beginning. An end to divisions which have

¹⁷⁹ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, op. cit.: *'l'Europe est de nos entreprises extérieures la plus difficile'*.

¹⁸⁰ Heath, Leader's speech, Conservative Conference, Blackpool October 1972, op. cit.

¹⁸¹ Déclaration du Président de la République exposant les motifs du projet de loi soumis à référendum (avril 1972), in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, p. 149: *'l'indifférence ou l'action, la résignation ou l'espérance'*.

¹⁸² Heath, address to the House of Commons, London 21 July 1971, op. cit.

¹⁸³ Jean-René Bernard in Association Georges Pompidou (ed.), *Georges Pompidou et l'Europe: Colloque, 25 et 26 Novembre 1993* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1995), p. 240: *'un acte positif' ... 'faire de nécessité vertu'*.

¹⁸⁴ Heath, speech to the British Chamber of Commerce, Boulogne, 6 May 1970, reported in Hurd, *An End to Promises*, p. 59.

¹⁸⁵ Allocution télévisée, 21 avril 1972, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, p. 153: *'à dépérir d'une maladie de languueur'*.

¹⁸⁶ Heath, speech to the British Chamber of Commerce, Boulogne, 6 May 1970, op. cit., p. 59.

*stricken Europe for centuries. A beginning of another stage in the construction of a new and greater Europe. This is the task for our generation in Europe.*¹⁸⁷

Pompidou's communiqué at the end of the Hague Conference on 2 December 1969 stated the Six Heads of State or Government:

*shared conviction that a Europe grouping states keen on their national diversities but united in their essential interests, assured of its own cohesion, faithful to their external friendships, conscious of its role in facilitating international détente and rapprochement of all the peoples, first of which the whole European continent's, is indispensable to safeguarding an exceptional source for development, progress and culture, indispensable to world balance and protection of peace.*¹⁸⁸

These landmark declarations introduced, through complementary lexis, other domains relating to practical or international matters:

- * 'peace' and 'unity' (Pompidou's defining vocabulary: '*shared conviction ... united ... own cohesion... rapprochement of all the peoples ... the whole European continent Protection of peace*' - Heath's: '*elimination of East/West tensions ... facilitating international détente ... end to divisions*'),
- as well as 'status' and 'influence' (Pompidou: '*indispensable to safeguarding ... exceptional source for development, progress and culture ... indispensable to world balance*' - Heath: '*strong and confident Europe ... great responsibilities ... a greater Europe*').
- They scarcely made any reference to the 'economy' (Pompidou: '*essential interests*' though the term is encompassing enough to cover other domains - Heath: no precise mention of the subject besides '*interests*' which could here refer to Commonwealth and American interests, diplomatic,

¹⁸⁷ Heath, speech in Brussels, 22 January 1972.

¹⁸⁸ AN AG5(2)/676, Communiqué, Conférence de La Haye, 2 décembre 1969: '*une commune conviction qu'une Europe regroupant des États attachés à leurs diversités nationales, mais unis dans leurs intérêts essentiels, assurée de sa propre cohésion, fidèles à ses amitiés extérieures, consciente du rôle qui lui appartient de faciliter la détente internationale et le rapprochement de tous les peuples et d'abord entre ceux du continent Européen tout entier, est indispensable à la sauvegarde d'un foyer exceptionnel de développement, de progrès et de culture, à l'équilibre du monde et à la protection de la paix*'.

military and political as well as economic) putting economic matters, however vital, in the background.

- They mentioned 'East/West relations' (Pompidou: '*international détente*' - Heath: '*relaxation and elimination of East/West tensions*') with a probable reference to recent tensions heightening by the 1968 Soviet invasion triggered by the Prague Spring,
- and 'Aid and Development' (Pompidou: '*faithful to their external friendships ... development*' - Heath: '*responsibilities in the common struggle of humanity for a better life*') denoting their sense, as former leading colonial powers, of debts owed towards former colonies and dominions.

On all these points, Heath and Pompidou had made declarations showing similar intentions and comparable standpoints of what Europe was for them. They also publicly communicated in like manner what they thought Europe was not. In the domain of the 'economy' for instance, Heath and Pompidou shared broadly the same economic conception of Europe, but neither one wanted the economy to be the only dimension and sole purpose of the European project. In this regard, Pompidou pointed to the British and French '*consciousness of national identities, asserted for centuries, that we do not want to see dissolved into a purely economic or technical conglomerate*'.¹⁸⁹ He went on to warn that '*Europe should not lose itself in a vague free-trade area*'.¹⁹⁰ The strength of his conviction led him to declare that, if he had believed the community could eventually be dissolved into a free-trade zone, he '*would not have accepted Community enlargement*'.¹⁹¹ Pompidou's unequivocal assertions were precisely matched by Heath's affirmation that '*the Community is not - it must not be - simply a mercantile arrangement designed to profit its individual members*'.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 134: '*la conscience enracinée de nos identités nationales, affirmées depuis des siècles et que nous n'entendons pas laisser se dissoudre dans un conglomérat purement économique ou technique*'.

¹⁹⁰ Pompidou, Entretien radiotélévisé avec M. Zitronne (O.R.T.F.), 22 décembre 1971, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, p. 90: '*l'Europe ne doit pas se perdre dans une vague zone de libre-échange*'.

¹⁹¹ Pompidou, Interview accordée au Times, 12 mai 1972, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, p. 93: '*si j'avais cru une telle évolution inéluctable, je n'aurais pas accepté l'élargissement de la Communauté*'.

¹⁹² PREM15/895, Paris Conference 19 and 20 October 1972, Speech by the Prime Minister on Thursday 19 October 1972.

Critically for Heath, Europe was '*much more than a market, [it was] a Community*'¹⁹³, a '*means of harnessing the talents and the genius of our peoples*'¹⁹⁴. The same '*genius each member state will bring ... doubtlessly with a particularly fertile contribution from Great Britain*' in Pompidou's opinion.¹⁹⁵ But whereas Heath and Pompidou expressed the same restrictions on the interpretation of Europe's nature in economic terms, they also agreed on the need for an economic union enabling Europe to face '*the big blocks, relying on space, population mass, economic power ... [as it was] the case of the United States of America, the Soviet Union and China*'¹⁹⁶; an analysis that Heath made in identical terms when acknowledging that the Europeans then lived '*in a world of two great superpowers USA and Soviet Union and before the end of the century China would probably have become the third*'¹⁹⁷.

On a political level too, Heath and Pompidou publicly agreed on what Europe was not, in particular in relation to the confederation/federation issue. Pompidou was convinced that their actions consisted in '*making Europe but on one condition ... to respect the personality of the nations which will form it, otherwise the whole affair will go belly-up*'.¹⁹⁸ This all-important notion of personality of the nations, a sign of Pompidou's '*quasi physiological*'¹⁹⁹ conception of the nation, played an even more crucial role in the case of Europe's enlargement with Britain. The principle of sovereignty, and Heath's position opposing federalism ('*we agreed that joining the Community does not entail a loss of national identity or an erosion of essential national sovereignty*'²⁰⁰) were key to Pompidou's view that Britain's entry would help frustrate the federalist tendencies of other member states. In his view, Britain's membership would amount to uniting '*with a people which is, maybe more than any*

¹⁹³ Heath, 'Old World, New Horizons', p. 30.

¹⁹⁴ PREM15/895, Paris Conference 19 and 20 October 1972, Speech by the Prime Minister on Thursday 19 October 1972.

¹⁹⁵ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 137: '*chaque état membre y apportera son génie propre et nous ne doutons pas que l'apport de la Grande-Bretagne sera particulièrement fécond*'.

¹⁹⁶ Pompidou, *Entretiens Vol. II*, op. cit., p. 142: '*d'énormes ensembles fondés sur l'étendue, la masse de la population, la puissance économique ... c'est le cas des États-Unis, de l'Union Soviétique, de la Chine*'.

¹⁹⁷ Heath, speech to the House of Commons, 28 October 1971, Op. cit.

¹⁹⁸ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 143: '*Il s'agit donc de faire l'Europe à condition ... de respecter la personnalité des nations qui la composeront, faute de quoi l'affaire capotera*'.

¹⁹⁹ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 64-65: '*j'ai une conception quasi physiologique de la nation ... je crois qu'une nation c'est comme un corps vivant*'.

²⁰⁰ Heath, speech to the House of Commons, 24 May 1971, op. cit.

other in the world, concerned with keeping its national identity; it is also making the choice for Europe of a formula which will preserve the personality of the nations composing it'.²⁰¹ Heath's stance on the subject sounded somewhat milder than Pompidou's more emotional approach, but it revealed the same thought processes as Pompidou's, particularly given that a section of British public opinion was fearful of a 'Europe ... which will destroy British institutions or imprison us in an alien pattern of life'.²⁰² Heath's public speaking on this subject sounded very close to Pompidou's utterances. When calling for his European counterparts in Brussels on 22 January 1972 to have '*clear thinking and imagination*', Heath argued that '*each of us within the Community will remain proudly attached to our national identity and to the achievements of our national history and tradition*'.²⁰³ Imagination was needed '*to develop institutions which respect the traditions and the individuality of the Member States*'. Both leaders aimed at the eventual establishment of a '*confederation of States, each of whom must have the firm intention of harmonising their policies and integrating their economies*'²⁰⁴ (later on, Pompidou regretted using the term 'confederation'²⁰⁵, as being ambiguous and sounding too close to 'federation', and preferred to use the more encompassing term 'union', perhaps in reference to his likening of Europe to a '*marriage, but a marriage of six or ten!*'²⁰⁶). Such a confederation, requiring a step-by-step approach, otherwise '*risking killing the process*'²⁰⁷, was far from being achieved²⁰⁸. But, for both Heath and Pompidou, it represented the ultimate goal for '*the*

²⁰¹ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 144: '*S'unir à un peuple qui a peut-être plus que tout autre au monde le souci de garder son identité nationale, c'est aussi faire le choix pour l'Europe d'une formule qui préservera la personnalité des nations qui la composent*'.

²⁰² Heath, Leader's speech, Conservative Party Conference, Brighton, 1969, op. cit.

²⁰³ Heath, speech in Brussels, 22 January 1972, op. cit.

²⁰⁴ TNA FCO33/1377, Monsieur Pompidou's Press Conference - reply to the question by Mr. Altschuler (Europe 1), 21 January 1971 (FCO translation).

²⁰⁵ i.e. during his Conférence de Presse tenue à l'Élysée, 2 juillet 1970, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, p. 79: '*I believe it possible and desirable to achieving a European confederation*' ('*je crois possible et souhaitable de parvenir à une confédération européenne*').

²⁰⁶ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 67. In his marriage metaphor, Pompidou wanted to characterise the European Union as '*creating a new entity without however losing one's own substance ; this substance has only been modified, adapted and to some extent often enriched ... Europe is like a marriage, but a marriage of six or ten!*' ('*créer une entité nouvelle et néanmoins chacun est resté lui-même et n'a pas perdu sa propre substance ; il l'a simplement modifiée, adaptée, et dans une certaine mesure souvent enrichie*').

²⁰⁷ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit. p. 79.: '*the best way to kill it is not to go about it step-by-step*' ('*le meilleur moyen de la tuer, c'est de vouloir brûler les étapes*').

²⁰⁸ Conférence de Presse tenue à l'Élysée, 2 juillet 1970, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, p. 79.

unity of Europe', only achievable through *'European governments forming the habit of working together'*²⁰⁹, with the objective of shaping *'Europe's contributions to a sane and civilised world'*²¹⁰.

Approaches to the challenge of Europe's relationship with other parties, whether the then new power centres, or British and French former colonies and dominions, also demonstrate some proximity of view between Heath and Pompidou, as expressed publicly in speeches and interviews. In the case of East/West relations, the two never intended to suggest that Europe was a *'threat'*²¹¹ (Heath) or a *'bloc'*²¹² (Pompidou) for the Soviet Union and other Communist countries of Eastern Europe, but rather represented it as a *'powerful instrument for liaison, for détente and cooperation'*²¹³ (Pompidou), a *'Europe in which we shall be working for the progressive relaxation and elimination of East / West tensions'*²¹⁴ (Heath). There was also some similarity of vision on the relations with the Eastern Bloc between the *'pompidolian'*²¹⁵ concept of *'Europe des Équilibres'*²¹⁶ guaranteeing security on the continent, coupled with the Gaullist doxa of *'détente, entente, coopération'*²¹⁷, and that of Heath's idea that there was *'more to Europe than Western Europe alone'*²¹⁸. Clearly both men agreed that there were *'no contradictions between our work of consolidation and economic progress and the improvement of relations between the East and the West of Europe'*.²¹⁹

²⁰⁹ Edward Heath, 'Realism in British Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, 48/1 (1969), p. 42.

²¹⁰ BL shelf mark EH 2/4/10A, Edward Heath Papers, speech in Zurich, 17 September 1971.

²¹¹ Ibid. or a *'defensive alliance against external threat'*, Heath, speech House of Commons, 24 May 1971.

²¹² Pompidou, Discours à Strasbourg, 27 juin 1970, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, p. 331: *'pas comme un bloc'*.

²¹³ Ibid.: *'un instrument puissant de liaison, de détente et de coopération ... avec l'Est de notre continent'*.

²¹⁴ Heath, speech in Brussels, 22 January 1972.

²¹⁵ Pompidou apologised to the journalist asking about the comparison with Gaullism saying: that *'he regretted his surname did not fit adjectives really well'* (*'je regrette que mon nom se prête mal aux adjectifs'*), Conférence de Presse tenue à l'Élysée, 27 septembre 1973) in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, p. 32.

²¹⁶ Allocution prononcée à l'occasion du diner offert à l'Élysée en l'honneur de M. Willy Brandt, 25 January 1971, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 158.

²¹⁷ Allocution prononcée lors du diner offert au Kremlin au cours du voyage en U.R.S.S., 6 octobre 1973, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 174.

²¹⁸ Heath, speech in Brussels, 22 January 1972, op. cit.

²¹⁹ PREM15/895, Paris Conference 19 and 20 October 1972, speech by the Prime Minister on Thursday 19 October 1972.

The Heath-Pompidou similarity of discourse was also discernible in their wish for Europe to be at the forefront of aid to developing countries. Indeed, both men expressed humanitarian values which they promoted with passion on many public occasions: for instance, Heath's plea for bringing '*hope and betterment to the two-thirds of humanity who live in poverty*'²²⁰ mirrored Pompidou's call '*to increase Europe's aid to the least privileged part of mankind*'²²¹. It was also a matter of common historical and cultural heritage, as well as responsibilities of post decolonisation. For Pompidou, welcoming Britain, which '*like France had been a colonial power and kept from it a particular interest for certain developing countries*', meant that Europe could and should adopt towards these countries a '*clever policy, a generous policy*'.²²² In this domain, '*France and Britain [had] by far the greatest interests*'²²³, and were linked within a Community which provided '*special arrangements of a unique and remarkable kind for the countries which once formed part of the colonial empires of its members*'²²⁴. Europe was the ideal platform for aid and development through its international conventions which associated a '*great majority of states [which had] formerly been connected with either France or [Britain]*'.²²⁵ Both men shared a common interest in ensuring that '*the position of these countries in particular as raw material producers [was] safeguarded*', prefiguring the intense discussions which would take place in Brussels on the integration of the Commonwealth countries in the aid and development programmes proposed by the French inspired Yaoundé Convention.

However it is in their views of Europe's relation with the United States, and more particularly Britain's relationship with the USA, that the potential for a similarity of views might have been tested. The US/Great Britain relationship had been the main bone of contention between Britain and France under de Gaulle's tenure as regards Britain's application for entry. France had always seen Britain's 'special relationship' with the United States as a potential threat to its independence and *grandeur*,

²²⁰ Heath, speech to Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, October 1972, op. cit.

²²¹ PREM15/895, Paris Conference 19 and 20 October 1972, Opening speech by President Pompidou on Thursday 19 October 1972 (EEC translation).

²²² Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 144.

²²³ Heath, address to the House of Commons given by Edward Heath, London, 21 July 1971.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

as a sign of Britain's lack of genuine dedication to the European project, and as a potential political and cultural encroachment on Europe's identity, as well as being a fierce economic competitor.

It appears that the two men shared a vision of their countries' relations with the United States which was neither ideological, nor inherited from their immediate past. Pompidou was not anti-American per se but he definitely considered that, whereas France was an irrevocable component of the Western world, it was not likely, in the purely Gaullist tradition, to systematically rally behind the Americans.²²⁶ Pompidou's somewhat lukewarm estimate of the United States, potentially stemming from the Chicago incident²²⁷ on 28 February 1970, whose repercussions made him '*never wish to go back to the United States*'²²⁸, was somehow compensated by his good relations with President Nixon²²⁹. In fact, Pompidou shared with de Gaulle an ambivalent attitude towards the USA: on the one hand, hostility and frustration about the meddling superpower threatening the independence of France (more on monetary and economic issues, for Pompidou, than on status and independence, for de Gaulle), and apparently the sole rival to France's cultural universalism²³⁰. On the other hand, an admiration and faithfulness towards an undoubted ally behind which de Gaulle, and Pompidou, inevitably rallied in times of serious and dangerous world crises. However, whereas Gaullist reservations on the USA addressed issues from a purely national standpoint, Pompidou's rested on a vision of their interactions with the European Community and its future development. This distinction came partly from the fact that de Gaulle viewed France as an independent nation inside a group of European nations, whereas Pompidou viewed it as a member state, with its own identity to be forcefully respected and maintained, but with the same cultural roots as the other members of the Community, especially Britain.

²²⁶ CNRS, *Georges Pompidou Hier*, p. 277.

²²⁷ Gidel, *Les Pompidou*, p. 337: during an official visit to USA, Georges and Claude Pompidou were threatened, without appropriate police protection, by an irate crowd of Jewish supporters demonstrating against the contentious sales by France to Ghaddafi of advanced weaponry and jetfighter *Mirages*. This incident '*profoundly shocked*' President Pompidou and especially his wife, still emotionally fragile following the smear campaign of the Markovic affair.

²²⁸ Jobert, *L'Autre Regard*, p. 138.

²²⁹ Pompidou and Roussel, *Lettres*, p. 487 '*I believe I inspired him with trust and esteem*' ('*je crois que je lui ai inspiré confiance et estime*').

²³⁰ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 70.

Pompidou's concerns were above all European: the American ascendancy in the global economy, and particularly in the international monetary system, was a threat to the solidity and solidarity of Europe; the diplomatic and geo-political potency of America might prevent the free expression of the *'European personality'*²³¹; and American cultural influence could be a threat to European identity, values and civilisation. For these reasons, Pompidou wanted Europe to set itself apart from America, otherwise *'we shall be Americans, and we do not want to be Americans, we want to be Europeans'*.²³² He was convinced that there was a *'crisis of civilisation'* which stemmed in a *'form of industrial development which is specifically American'*²³³, an American mode which, if imitated (*'way of life, general conceptions about life, clothing, advertising, etc.'*), amounted to creating *'a different form of civilisation'*, at odds with Europe's humanist past and values²³⁴.

Heath, surprisingly for a British Prime Minister, seemed to be relatively distant from the United States perhaps because of his natural Eurocentric dispositions. His stance on American hegemony lacked the almost *'instinctive pro-Americanism of his post-war predecessors'*.²³⁵ The *'special relationship'* was for him simply a *'natural relationship'*, made of *'innumerable links drawn from the past and the present, links of language, of law, and of countless individual connections and loyalties'*.²³⁶ His rapport with Nixon was a significant change *'not only from Macmillan's intimacies with John, F. Kennedy but from Wilson's cringing submission to Lyndon Johnson'* in Young's opinion.²³⁷ Heath's overriding European ambitions superseded the usual and expected British Premier's propensity to prioritise the link with the United States, which made Kissinger declare that the US *'faced in Heath the more benign British version of de Gaulle'*.²³⁸ A version of Pompidou would

²³¹ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 19. Balladur's avant propos: *'la personnalité européenne'*.

²³² Pompidou, Conférence de Presse à Bruxelles, 26 mai 1971, in Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, p. 83: *'Quant aux États-Unis, nous devons nous en distinguer parce que, si nous ne nous distinguons pas, nous serons américains, or nous ne voulons pas être américains, nous voulons être européens'*.

²³³ Ibid., p. 84: *'cette crise de civilisation qui trouve sa racine dans une forme de développement industriel qui est spécifiquement américaine, dont l'Amérique a montré les voies'*.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 84.

²³⁵ Hynes, *The Year*, p. 4.

²³⁶ BL shelf mark EH 2/4/10A, Edward Heath Papers, speech in Zurich, 17 September 1971.

²³⁷ Young quoted in MacShane, *Heath*, p. 76.

²³⁸ Möckli, *European Foreign Policy*, p. 47.

be a more accurate description, as it was demonstrated by Heath's declaration that "*we in the United Kingdom have got an enormous responsibility. Our place is in Europe. Our policy must be European. We are friends and allies of the United States as Europeans, and that is basic. But we must no longer try to ride both horses at the same time*"²³⁹, supplementing Pompidou's Gaullist truism that '*if Europe is not European, it will not be Europe*'²⁴⁰.

Both Heath and Pompidou demonstrated a desire to learn from past errors in order to foster understanding of their interlocutor's position and background. For Pompidou, that meant distancing himself from de Gaulle's anti-American quasi obsession since, as he put it, '*the world clock did not stop in April 1969*'²⁴¹. This led to his public and conciliatory acknowledgment that Europe's '*link with this great country, the world's foremost economic power, with which eight of our countries are united within the Atlantic alliance, are so close that it would be absurd to conceive of a Europe constructed in opposition to it*'²⁴², even if he clearly refused any form of '*vassalage*'²⁴³. Similarly, before the 1972 French referendum on enlargement, Pompidou declared that the doors of Europe should be opened to Britain because '*it has now accepted all the community rules*'.²⁴⁴ It was a response to Heath's clear public announcement, as early as 1966, in his Leader's speech to the Conservative Party Conference, that Britain would '*have to accept the European Economic Community as it is for itself*'²⁴⁵ to obtain membership. They showed a common intellectual desire to search for the real causes of distrust and rejection in their former relationship. These efforts led Heath to claim that the main British mistake in the first two applications was essentially a lack of understanding of the real nature of the Community, defined as '*the sort of community they [i.e. the Six] want and the sort of Community*

²³⁹ Heath, 'European Unity', op. cit., p. 207.

²⁴⁰ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 82: '*le gaullisme consiste à répéter des évidences ... si l'Europe n'est pas Européenne, elle ne sera pas l'Europe*'.

²⁴¹ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 32: '*l'horloge mondiale ne s'est pas arrêtée en avril 1969*' (date when de Gaulle left power).

²⁴² TNA PREM15/895 Pompidou's opening speech Pompidou, Paris Conference, 19 October 1972 (EEC translation).

²⁴³ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 98.

²⁴⁴ Pompidou, 21 April 1972 in Pompidou, *Entretiens*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 153: '*L'Angleterre a maintenant accepté toutes les règles communautaires*'.

²⁴⁵ Heath, Leader's speech, Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, 15 October 1966.

they want to keep'.²⁴⁶ Therefore, any British request to 'influence the Community from its outside in its basic beliefs and its basic organisation', namely 'the Treaty of Rome, the common tariff, the agricultural policy, and the institutions', could only lead to failure.²⁴⁷ As regards Pompidou, his history-oriented analysis of Britain's initial mindset on the European project compared the latter to the Napoleonic Continental Blockade. In his opinion, Europeans could not understand the UK/EC complex relationship and the British reservations about the European project, if they did not realise that the frontiers of the EEC were 'exactly the same as those of Napoleon's Empire in 1811, including the separation of Germany'²⁴⁸, generating natural distrust and concerns from traditional British leaders. As early as 1966, Heath had grasped the mechanics of enlargement. He already understood that the EEC would not necessarily change its course or its major political and economic orientations to satisfy Britain's distinct interests. This appraisal differed considerably from the Wilsonian approach²⁴⁹ which appeared more centred on national economic and political necessities rather than any clear understanding of the European project, hence Heath's comment that there was 'no use any longer Mr. Brown and his friends asking for special privileges in the European Economic Community'²⁵⁰. In Heath's doubtless prejudiced view, the rejection of the second application was only a 'minor curiosity of European diplomatic history'²⁵¹ which resoundingly marked the failure of Wilson's tactics of *contournement* (bypassing), consisting in isolating the French from the Friendly Five to pressure the former into accepting Britain's candidacy. Heath's dismissal of this methodology resulted in his antagonising the Foreign Office, strong supporter and co-initiator of Wilson's Friendly Five approach²⁵², which had called Pompidou's remarks that the EEC was like a 'fortified town' which

²⁴⁶ Heath, *Old World*, p. 29.

²⁴⁷ Heath, Leader's speech, Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, 15 October 1966.

²⁴⁸ Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 75: 'je ne sais pas si beaucoup de gens ont réfléchi à ce fait que les limites de la Communauté économique sont exactement les limites de l'Empire napoléonien en 1811, y compris la coupure de l'Allemagne'.

²⁴⁹ Harold Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964-1970: a Personal Record* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson: Joseph, 1971).

²⁵⁰ Heath, Leader's speech, Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, 15 October 1966.

²⁵¹ Heath quoted by Jean-René Bernard, 'L'Entrée', p. 206

²⁵² Hurd, *Memoirs*, p. 198.

to be entered required one to *'go through the gates, not to breach the defensive walls'*²⁵³. Contrary to Wilson, whom Pompidou considered *'a sly and wily politician'*²⁵⁴, Heath clearly and passionately talked about Europe. For him *'there has never been anything like it before in the world, and there is nothing like it now in the world'*.²⁵⁵

Heath and Pompidou, this Chapter has argued, had similar personal backgrounds and experiences, shared cultural tastes, and demonstrated similar political ideas and visions. Their public and official discourse highlighted the prevalence of an ideal over the pragmatic, and linked this to their common understanding of the future challenges and historic responsibilities of their two nations. The discourse of the two men demonstrated recurring and similar terms in which to envision Europe, giving an unusual impression of an interchangeability of ideas and of expression. This impression of interchangeability clearly fitted Bernard's confession that *'when reading the report of the Heath-Pompidou 1971 meetings, and because of the identity of the two leaders points of view, I had been forced several times to check which one of the two was talking'*.²⁵⁶ It was reinforced by the closeness of background and character which this Chapter has uncovered. All this provided the personal basis for a future one-to-one meeting between Heath and Pompidou, the reasons for which will be explored in the following Chapter.

²⁵³ AN AG5(2)/1014, Entretiens Pompidou-Soames, Paris, 10 octobre 1969. *'Le marché commun est comme une ville fortifiée ... pour y rentrer il faut passer par la porte et non pas s'efforcer d'ouvrir des brèches dans la muraille'*.

²⁵⁴ Pompidou and Roussel, *Lettres*, p. 478: *'Harold Wilson, politicien sournois et retors'*.

²⁵⁵ Heath, 'European Unity', p. 2.

²⁵⁶ Jean-René Bernard, 'L'Entrée du Royaume-Uni dans la Communauté Européenne' in Jacques Viot and Giles H. Radice (eds.), *L'Entente Cordiale dans Le Siècle* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004), p. 211: *'De façon générale, ce qui est vraiment frappant lorsqu'on lit le compte rendu des entretiens Heath-Pompidou de 1971, c'est le sentiment d'une très grande identité des points de vue des deux hommes d'état, à telle enseigne que j'ai été forcé, plusieurs fois, de vérifier quel était celui des deux qui s'exprimait'*.

Chapter 4. The Reasons for Franco-British Secret Tête-à-tête in May 1971

The President of the French Republic and the Prime Minister consider that a meeting to discuss matters of common interests would now be useful. The President of the Republic has accordingly invited the Prime Minister to visit Paris on 20 and 21 May and the Prime Minister has accepted this invitation with pleasure.¹

The announcement, on Saturday 8 May 1971, that a one-to-one meeting between Prime Minister Edward Heath and President Georges Pompidou would be held in Paris less than a fortnight later came as a surprise to all observers of European affairs on both sides of the Channel. This announcement initiated a period of *'total euphoria'* in official and diplomatic circles contributing to a welcome *'atmosphere of détente'*.² The top-level meeting planned for the 20th and 21st of May had been extensively discussed and prepared during the past months in absolute secrecy by Michel Jobert and Christopher Soames. No information had filtered through to the French and British agencies involved in the negotiations in London, Paris and Brussels (except to a very restricted 'need-to-know' list of ministers and advisers) from the many meetings of Heath's and Pompidou's trusted collaborators. To this day, there are no French or British sources that could confirm clearly when the process of working on a secret top-level meeting effectively started. It seems however that the possibility of such a meeting might have been discussed during the brief private conversation between Heath and Pompidou which took place at de Gaulle's funeral.³ This cursory discussion, reported on the day to the FCO by Heath⁴, was mentioned succinctly in his preamble remarks during the first discussion session on 20 May 1971 stating that *'when they had last met in November, they had undertaken to have a subsequent discussion in order to examine in depth the whole position*

¹ TNA PREM15/371, Press notice, 10 Downing Street, including the mention: *'Not to be published or broadcast or used on club tapes before 16.00 hours on Saturday 8 May 1971'*. *'Ambassadors of the other "Five" countries will be told at 3.00 pm'*.

² AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil Restreint sur la Négociation Anglaise du vendredi 14 mai 1971, note Ambassadeur de France à Londres à Michel Jobert du 13 mai 1971.

³ AN AG5(2)/108 - Entretiens Heath Pompidou, Paris le 12 Novembre 1970, 16h20-16h45. The report of this 25 minute conversation does not mention a discussion on a potential meeting.

⁴ TNA PREM15/32, Secret, Personal for Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary from Prime Minister, undated. Heath reported a *'ten-minute conversation'*.

*concerning enlargement*⁵. Tellingly, on the French side, the secret was so well kept that the dates of the meeting coincided with a confirmed official visit of Maurice Schumann to the Prime Minister in London that had to be hurriedly cancelled on the day of the announcement of the Heath-Pompidou meetings.⁶ Remarkably, no specific mention of it was made either during the normal *Conseils des Ministres* held over the period January-May 1971.⁷

After the prosaic announcement of the meeting, qualified by Soames as '*a delightfully bland formula to describe so momentous a decision*'⁸, the Brussels negotiations between the Six and Britain, which had been centre stage since June 1970 but had shown worrying signs of stalling since the beginning of 1971, were relegated to the background of European affairs in the eyes of observers and decision-makers. The future of the European Community seemed to be hanging on a particular choice of meeting which, in appearance, symbolised a replacement of the official and institutionalised multilateral discussions between the Six and the four candidates for entry by bilateral talks. Furthermore, the meeting was scheduled to take place only between the Prime Minister and the French President, assisted by their official translators Sir Michael Palliser and Prince Andronikof, without the retinue of Ministers, advisers and civil servants such an occasion would normally entail given the complexity and multiplicity of issues at hand.

The theatrics and suspense of the Heath-Pompidou meetings, from their secret preparation, their unwitnessed unfolding, to the final, momentous though laconic, press announcement in the *Salle des Fêtes* at the Élysée, underlined the very particular nature of the meetings within the global framework of European integration discussions. Because they did not follow the rules of habitual European discussions, and because they temporarily supplanted the Brussels negotiations between

⁵ Margaret Thatcher Foundation (henceforth 'MTF') - 710520 Pompidou-Heath Summit (Session 1 10h00-12h55), p. 1.

⁶ TNA PREM15/371, secret Telex 358 Douglas-Home to European British Ambassadors, 8 May 1971: '*In consequence, Schuman's visit on those days [20-21 May 1971] has been postponed*'.

⁷ AN AG5(2)/45, Avant-projet de Conseil des Ministres, 27 janvier/11 mai 1971. Matters discussed remarkably only treated various laws projects, amendments and appointments but nothing on Europe over the whole period.

AN 89AJ(10) Notes manuscrites Michel Jobert, Conseils des Ministres 1er Semestre 1971: first mention of the meeting in Conseil des Ministres held 11 May 1971.

⁸ TNA FCO33/1378, Diplomatic Report, Soames, 9 June 1971.

the Six and the British negotiation team carried out since mid-1970, the Heath-Pompidou talks in May 1971 raise the pivotal question as to why secret bilateral Franco-British one-to-one meetings were chosen at that point in order to resolve issues related to Britain's application. Therefore, this Chapter aims to provide answers to the following questions:

- what were the actual problems that required such an exclusive Franco-British management for their potential resolution?
- Why was the secret one-to-one format chosen for the summit in preference to the more conventional publicised top-level summits, involving political leaders as well as specialist civil servants and advisers?

This Chapter does not propose to adopt the traditional approach followed in studies dealing with the same theme, period and events such as, for instance, those by Furby and Rücker-Guitelmacher.⁹ These works largely consist in a broadly chronological analysis, from Britain's second bid for entry, taking a Franco-British, or a tripartite Franco-British-German perspective, of leaders' conversations, the interactions of negotiating parties and technical discussions as they unfolded. This Chapter is not seeking to develop a narrative about the progress of the negotiations by enumerating details of all the proposals and counter-proposals on the various contentious items discussed by the teams in Brussels over the period June 1970-June 1971. The Chapter is also not intended to offer a descriptive account of the meetings themselves, nor to pinpoint which party initiated the summit and when, or describe extensively the voluminous diplomatic exchanges generated.

Rather, the Chapter seeks to concentrate on the core problematics and key characteristics of the Heath-Pompidou May 1971 Paris meetings by demonstrating that they followed a specific rationale which contradicts Furby's main contention that these meetings resulted from a French manipulation tactic which relied on an '*Impasse préméditée*'¹⁰ in the Brussels negotiations, thereby justifying a Franco-British meeting in which Pompidou could obtain last minute concessions from the British

⁹ Furby, 'The Revival', op. cit., Rücker-Guitelmacher, 'Le Triangle', op. cit.

¹⁰ Furby, 'The Revival', p. 198. Wording in French.

Prime Minister. It also intends to demonstrate that the Paris meetings had an exclusively Franco-British dimension, in opposition to Rücker-Guitelmacher's strong advocacy of a tripartite approach which gives an important role to Chancellor Brandt's intervention. Indeed it is this study's contention that the May 1971 sessions were the end-product of a set of political, diplomatic and economic factors, and of deeply felt concerns on the part of the principal actors, Heath and especially Pompidou, where trust and confidence of the latter in the former's ability to act on issues were considered of crucial and almost emotional importance, questions which could not be solved by any sort of technical agreement to be announced publicly.

In order to explain and understand the May 1971 top-level one-to-one meeting, this Chapter will firstly outline the existence of a context in which strategic considerations, timing issues and the personal dispositions of the actors militated in favour of holding this kind of summit. As a means of demonstrating both the need to hold a top-level meeting between the Prime Minister and the French President, and the desire to keep its preparation, deliberations and conclusions secret, the Chapter will then establish the hierarchy of negotiation priorities for the French (and British considerations and responses to them), in relation to the main items hitherto debated by Britain and the Six in Brussels, particularly the special status of sterling and all-important related monetary issues. The fact that monetary issues played a predominant part in Pompidou's personal considerations both on Britain's entry and on projections into the future development of Europe will be used to underline the personal dimension of these meetings. It will also give credence to the 'persuasion thematic': persuasion was required from Heath, in these special circumstances, in order to create the desired atmosphere based on trust and entente between the two leaders which would be key in attaining a positive outcome. Finally, the requirement for secrecy will be addressed in an analysis of the exogenous and endogenous factors, specific to France in general, and Pompidou in particular, including: France's ingrained distrust of its Five partners in the Community, its mistrust of European institutional bodies such as the Commission, the French negotiation team's fatigue and

demotivation, Pompidou's suspicion about the Quai d'Orsay officials, and his unease about the influence and nuisance value of the '*alliance de l'arche gaulliste*'¹¹.

To support the hypothesis of this Chapter, the study draws mainly on British and French primary sources. The French primary sources used will be the notes and reports of the *Conseils des Ministres*, with a focus on the reports of the *Conseils Restreints* for the negotiations in Brussels and in Paris, SGCI advisory and analytic documents communicated to President Pompidou, and the advisors' personal archives, notes and memoirs (mainly those of Jean-René Bernard and Michel Jobert¹²) found at the *Archives Nationales*. On the British side, primary sources referred to come largely from the National Archives (PREM, FCO, CAB), with an emphasis on the October 1970 Strategic Review documents, the April 1971 Bernard-Galsworthy discussions, and the all-important PM's Briefs prepared for the visit to President Pompidou in Paris.

A context and favourable factors for Franco-British meetings

The 8 May 1971 announcement of the summit might have taken the press and most of the European establishment by surprise but it should not have been really a bolt from the blue for the British leadership and negotiating team. In fact, there were a number of precursory contextual signs to suggest the likelihood of such meetings. A first level of analysis reveals that the possibility of a Heath-Pompidou meeting had been part of the British strategy from the onset of the negotiations, as this meeting was considered a logical and unavoidable conclusion to the lengthy and argumentative multilateral discussions. Predicted as far back as October 1970 in the Strategic Review¹³ (which gives tremendous insight into Britain's negotiation strategy as well as the possible routes for the

¹¹ Translated quote used in *The Economist's* article communicated to Jobert in AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, 14 mai 1971.

¹² All the more important that Jobert, the General Secretary of the Élysée, '*centralised, organised and controlled all the activities of the President's collaborators*' including Bernard '*on whom Jobert counted for all the technical aspects of the negotiations*' and fulfilled his role consisting in '*filtering and instructing*' and '*warning*' the President, in Sabrina Tricaud, *L'Entourage de Georges Pompidou (1962-1974). Institutions, Hommes et Pratiques*' (Collection Georges Pompidou - Études; Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2014), pp. 171-172.

¹³ TNA PREM15/062, The EEC Negotiations - Strategic Review, 23rd October 1970 - The need for a negotiation strategy and programme to July 1971.

negotiations, and also comments and judgements on France's position and expected actions/reactions), it was also a personally preferred method of meeting for Edward Heath. The secret document for the attention of the Prime Minister, which underlined the '*need for a negotiating strategy and programme to July 1971*', envisaged the potential closure of Brussels negotiations in July 1971, as the first '*realistic date by which the negotiations might be brought to either a conclusion or within clear sight of it*'. Setting this date denoted a sense of urgency in reaching an agreement with Brussels, which stemmed from several factors, linked to domestic and international constraints, as well as to negotiating techniques. In the British political agenda, negotiations should in principle have come to fruition during the first semester of 1971, i.e. before the resumption of the 1971/1972 Parliamentary session after the summer holidays, and before '*the time of the Conservative Party Conference*'. From an international point of view, the document proposed the conclusion of the negotiations with the Six before the Singapore Conference for the renewal of the Basle Agreements on the sterling balances (sterling area's central bank holdings) which was due to expire in September 1971, and before the June 1971 European Ministerial Summit envisaged by the French¹⁴ '*in their capacity of Chairman of the Six from January 1971*' for the next six months. A secret memo to the Prime Minister prepared by William Nield, the Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary, mentioned the need to '*break the back of the negotiations by July*' [1971] and suggested the idea that:

*if Rippon [did] not make any progress then suggestion [would be made] to turn the May [ministerial] meeting into a meeting of Heads of Government for the dual purpose of getting the necessary political agreement to resume progress and to establish guiding principles for resolution of the main issues in the negotiations.*¹⁵

¹⁴ TNA PREM15/062, secret and personal note FCO to Peter Thornton, Cabinet Office, Permanent Secretary, 11 November 1970. This letter includes deleted and retained passages, '*under section 3(4)*', as they possibly suggest the existence of an informer in Brandt's entourage, p. 13.

¹⁵ TNA PREM15/062, "EEC Negotiations", secret memo to the Prime Minister, 30 December 1970, Nield to Heath.

Strategically, setting a deadline for reaching an agreement necessarily implied holding a top-level meeting, whose format and principal agenda were yet to be discussed, in order to *'break the deadlock in the negotiations arising from French intransigence'* witnessed in Brussels.

The April/May timeframe was mirrored, without any possible coordination, with Jobert¹⁶ who agreed with Rippon in November 1970, that both Britain and France had interests in achieving success *'in the next six months'*. According to Jobert, the French were *'not intent on dragging their feet. He agreed that neither side should get bogged down in details but thought it hard to "deprive the negotiators of their fun"'* almost making, in November 1970, the announcement that agreement between Britain and France was reachable and that negotiations were just a sort of *passage obligé* (mandatory route). Both parties seemed to have an interest in concluding negotiations, before the end of the first semester of 1971. Moreover, according to Britain's strategy, speeding negotiations by setting a deadline which would eventually require a top-level meeting was paramount. It meant that the less negotiation time Britain would get, the less time there would be for the EEC to develop new common policies Britain would eventually have to *'either accept or negotiate on'*¹⁷. The Strategic Review also emphasised that *'it would be remarkable if Britain got into the Community without some bilateral exchanges with France'*¹⁸, acknowledging therefore the need to deal directly and specifically with France, and considering that the risk of potentially angering the Five was favourably balanced by any potential improvement in France's attitude towards Britain in the enlargement process. Such bilateral exchanges might take the form of *'consultations, culminating in a top-level meeting, aimed at reducing wherever possible the differences of attitudes'* before the major crunch of the EEC negotiations.¹⁹

British strategy clearly pointed to a meeting between Heath and Pompidou aiming at levelling the obstacles and at convincing rather than concluding, this being the object and prerogatives of

¹⁶ TNA CAB164/771, Meeting 9th November 1970: 17h00 - Michel Jobert and Geoffrey Rippon.

¹⁷ TNA PREM15/062, The EEC Negotiations - Strategic Review, 23rd October 1970, p. 2.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁹ Considered by the British, at the time, to be the Community Finances question until the French raised the issue of sterling with the 'Boegner coup'.

multilateral EEC discussions.²⁰ Moreover, the singularity and importance of a Franco-British top-level meeting was reinforced by the opinion that its equivalent with the German Chancellor, however possibly desired or needed, might be of lesser interest given that Brandt was seen then as '*more preoccupied with the Ostpolitik and its shaky internal position to pay more than intermittent attention at the highest levels to the negotiations*' for Britain's entry.²¹

Meeting bilaterally with the French President was therefore considered a uniquely important option outweighing in interest and purpose any consideration for similar meetings and consultations with the Friendly Five. Italy was '*distracted by internal divisions*' so a top-level meeting was not necessary '*unless they suggested it*', Dutch traditional siding with Britain was expected to wane as their Foreign Minister Joseph Luns, '*Britain's most fervent supporter*', was to retire in July 1971, and Belgium, with its '*constant tendency to manoeuvre somewhat capriciously between Britain and the Five*', could not really be counted on. Furthermore, meeting with the French President alone was a necessity, beyond the obvious reasons linked to both France's double refusal of Britain's applications, and to the general ambiance among the Five, then more favourably inclined towards Britain's entry since Wilson's previous application.²² Pompidou was widely seen as '*l'homme avec qui il faut compter*'²³, the man who had the power to grant or refuse Britain access to membership of the Community.

This strategic assertion of the desirability of closer bilateral consultations with the French, and to a far lesser extent with the Germans, leading to a top-level meeting before the final deadline of the negotiations would clearly suit a Prime Minister who was a strong adherent of top-level summits.

²⁰ '*If asked it will be a purpose of the Prime Minister's meeting with President Pompidou to agree the details of entry terms in particular fields, you should say that this is not the case, these matters are for collective discussion in Brussels. But a general understanding on the main issues between Paris and London is likely to facilitate a successful conclusion to negotiations in Brussels*': Douglas-Home secret note to Bonn, Washington, Rome, Hague, Brussels, Luxemburg, Wellington ambassadors in TNA PREM 15/371, 8 May 1971.

²¹ TNA PREM15/062, The EEC Negotiations - Strategic Review, 23rd October 1970.

²² Pine, *Harold Wilson*, op. cit.

²³ AN AG5(2)/76 - Conseils restraints sur la négociation Anglaise: '*l'Homme avec qui il faut compter*' ('*the man we have to count on*'), Title of article in *The Economist* dated 20 February 1971.

John Young's study²⁴ contends that summits²⁵ were Edward Heath's '*natural way*' to carry out international discussions. Young assessed that '*summits were the most numerous meetings that Heath had with visiting political figures during his premiership*'²⁶ counting, for the year 1971 alone, thirty-one summits mainly hosted in Britain with Heads of State and Government or Heads of international organisations.²⁷ Heath's tendency to hold summits at the highest level '*in personal and political affairs denoted his penchant for discussion and confrontation and his inclination to confront problems directly*'.²⁸ This propensity of Heath found a positive echo in Pompidou's personal approach to problem-solving based on a constant '*wish to meet and understand*'²⁹. This similarity of approach motivated Heath's suggestion, when meeting President Pompidou on 5 May 1970 as leader of the opposition, to study matters of contention firstly at a bilateral '*Franco-British level*'.³⁰ Heath then already clearly asked his interlocutor whether '*he thought they should first further the study of political questions between themselves, to deal with them at the European level in a second stage*'.³¹ Pompidou diplomatically declined the then leader of the Opposition's suggestion since, in his view, it could raise '*concerns with the others who could believe [Heath and Pompidou] were trying to solve issues behind their back*'.³² This proposal seemed though to have found a more positive echo with Pompidou a few months later in Heath's exercise of '*funeral diplomacy*'³³ during General de Gaulle's

²⁴ Young, 'A Case Study', pp. 261-293.

²⁵ The term 'summit' is to be understood here in the sense defined by Dunn as '*diplomacy at the highest level*', in David H. Dunn (ed.), (1996), *Diplomacy at the Highest Level: the Evolution of International Summitry* (Studies in Diplomacy, Basingstoke: Palgrave). A further comparative study of the Heath-Pompidou meetings in May 1971, focusing on semantics and nature of the summit is proposed in the next Chapter.

²⁶ Young, 'A Case Study', p. 265.

²⁷ Ibid.: Thirty five in 1972 and twenty nine '*visiting leaders*' in 1973; a third of whom were leaders of the Commonwealth. These meetings though were neither necessarily one-to-ones nor secret.

²⁸ AN AG(2)/76, Fonds Michel Jobert. Translation for Jobert of the observer Review's article 'When Teddy became Ted', 25 April 1971.

²⁹ Balladur's description of Pompidou's personality in Pompidou, '*Entretiens et discours*, Vol. I, pp. 12-13: '*désireux de rencontrer et de comprendre*'.

³⁰ AN AG5(2)/108, Audience accordée par le Président de la République à Mr. Heath, 5 mai 1970, 16H30-17H40, when Heath reminded Pompidou '*when we met a few years ago in Matignon*' ('*Lorsque je vous ai rencontré la dernière fois il y a quelques années à l'Hôtel Matignon*'), possibly in the context of Britain's first application.

³¹ Ibid.: '*Pensez-vous qu'il faudrait d'abord approfondir ces questions entre nous, ces questions d'ordre politique, j'entends, pour les traiter ensuite dans le contexte européen?*'.

³² Ibid.: '*je pense que non, ne serait-ce parce que cela risquerait d'inquiéter les autres qui pourraient penser que nous sommes en train de régler ces problèmes sur leur dos, ce qui n'est pas le cas, lorsqu'on est ensemble, on est tous ensemble*'.

³³ Dunn, *Diplomacy*, p. 7.

funeral on 12 November 1970. In the course of the ten/twenty-five minute conversation that *'could not be prolonged due to the exigencies of protocol'*, Pompidou replied favourably to Heath's invitation to further talks and expressed his hopes for *'an opportunity for a fuller discussion before long'*.³⁴

Through this very personal one-to-one contact, the stage for a future meetings between the Prime Minister and the French President had been set. All the more so in that Heath indicated he had perceived, on this occasion, a clear change in Pompidou's frame of mind and approach that made a top-level meeting an apparently shared positive prospect. As Heath reported, Pompidou's endorsement of his positive remarks and his pleasure that France and Britain were visibly beginning to work together on the European level signified that, *'although this was a brief encounter, [Heath] was struck by the change in President Pompidou's demeanour'* insofar as *'there was none of the scepticism that [he] had noticed when [they] last met'* (i.e. on 5 May 1970), adding satisfyingly that *'at one point, he acknowledged the European orientation of our policies'*.³⁵

This personal, one-to-one conversation held all the necessary components (openness and frankness), and some of the themes (e.g. the relationship with the USA³⁶), for a potentially fruitful bilateral Franco-British top-level summit based on an already perceptible entente, and one which required secrecy from the very start. This latter point was confirmed by Heath's indication to Douglas-Home that *'we have agreed with the Élysée that nothing should be disclosed publicly about our discussion*

³⁴ TNA PREM15/32, Secret - Personal for Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary from Prime Minister, 12 November 1970.

³⁵ Ibid., indeed Pompidou reportedly told Heath that *'our Foreign Ministers get along very well. France is ready to cooperate in all areas with Britain which is becoming European'* (*'nos deux ministres s'entendent très bien, la France est prête à coopérer dans tous les domaines avec la Grande Bretagne qui devient européenne'*) in AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Heath Pompidou, Paris le 12 novembre 1970, 16h20-16h45.

³⁶ PREM15/370, Secret Telegram PM to FCO, 12 November 1970. Heath reported that Pompidou took the time to show him a *'today's copy of Le Monde, opened at a page bearing an advertisement by "votre BOAC" headlined "America begins in London on board a VC 10 BOAC"'*, jokingly underlining his concern with Britain's links to the USA he had already expressed during their conversation on 5 May 1970: *We do not feel yet that Great Britain really has the will to have its own policy or a truly European policy. It seems to me, and I say it frankly, that Britain will not distinguish itself from the Americans in the current context'* (*'Nous n'avons pas encore le sentiment que la Grande Bretagne ait réellement la volonté d'avoir sa propre politique ou une politique réellement Européenne. Il me semble, et je vous parle très franchement, qu'elle ne choisira pas dans le contexte actuel de se séparer des Américains'*).

except that it took place'.³⁷ On this crucial occasion, Pompidou had sent Heath signals that he was indeed better disposed to envisaging a bilateral meeting which, it should be noted here, he had personally refused Wilson the previous year.³⁸

This was the potential risk for Heath, clearly identified by Young³⁹, and emphasized by Soames' comment that '*this [was] a card that can only be played once - for success or failure*'⁴⁰: planning for a meeting with Pompidou to alleviate the difficulties posed by France to Britain's entry and, in the spirit of the Strategic Review, somehow making it a condition for a successful negotiation, could have proven disastrous if the French President had refused to meet with him, or if the meeting ended in failure.

In this context, once the principle of a top-level meeting was agreed, the risk of its failure due to leaders' misunderstandings or disagreements on vital issues would have a greater chance of being averted by the opening of a secret channel of communication between the Élysée and Number 10 in the shape of secret meetings between two trusted men, Soames and Jobert. In actual fact, several secret meetings took place in the first months of 1971, culminating in the period March-May 1971 during which several principle-setting discussions were held at the Élysée Palace.⁴¹ In Jobert's view, Soames and he should be the only ones to '*pilot the preparations for the meeting*'.⁴² Jobert set himself the additional task to ensure '*the Quai should not get wind of it at this stage ... because it would create many difficulties*'.⁴³ Soames and Jobert would negotiate differences and tackle the all-important details of the meetings in terms of dates, timing, duration, conditions, content and

³⁷ TNA PREM 15/32, Prime Minister for Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, 12 November 1970.

³⁸ NA AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969-1970, Compte Rendu sur le Conseil des Ministres sur les Affaires Européennes du mardi 21 octobre 1969, Préparation du sommet de la Haye.

³⁹ Young, 'A case Study', p. 274.

⁴⁰ TNA FCO33/1376, Paris Embassy note to Denis Greenhill, 21 April 1971.

⁴¹ TNA PREM15/369, PREM15/370, PREM 15/371, Soames reports to the PM and FCO of meetings held 6 March, 16 March, 27 March, 2 April, 3 and 4 May (non exhaustive list as all meetings were not necessarily reported, recorded).

⁴² TNA PREM15/369, Soames secret note to PM 'A meeting between the Prime Minister and the French President', dated 10 March 1971. Report to the Prime Minister of meetings held 6 March 1971.

⁴³ Ibid.

objectives.⁴⁴ They were the communication vectors for confidential exchanges between the two leaders⁴⁵, freed from the burden of diplomatic convolutions and from interference from Brussels, London or Paris⁴⁶.

From a British point of view, a potential failure of the meeting could be averted by an express intent to persuade Pompidou of Britain's European *bona fide* visible in a close study of all Whitehall's Prime Minister's briefs for the May 1971 meetings.⁴⁷ From a personal point of view, Heath's apparent certainty of success not only emanated from the change in attitude he personally perceived in Pompidou between May and November 1970, but also rested on the assurance that vetoing Britain's application was not clearly envisaged, as expressed by Pompidou himself on several occasions to Soames⁴⁸ or during *Conseils Restreints*⁴⁹ which had a very limited attendance⁵⁰. It was also founded on the British assumption that the possibility of a third French veto was remote⁵¹ and that such a veto would, in the view of Pompidou himself, certainly equate to the '*death of the Common Market*'.⁵² Risks existed nevertheless, as underlined by Soames '*there were, and are, risks for us in*

⁴⁴ TNA PREM15/370, Soames secret report to Heath and Douglas-Home on his meeting with Jobert, 27 March 1971.

⁴⁵ TNA PREM15/370, Draft Message Heath to Pompidou, 8 April 1971: '*Christopher Soames has reported to me his talks with M. Jobert and I thought I should now let you know about my own thinking*'.

⁴⁶ For instance:

- open communication on hesitation about the timing of the visit: '*I told Jobert, on instructions, that the PM was still considering the best possible timing for a possible meeting with Pompidou*' in FCO33/1376, telegram Soames to Greenhill, 19 April 1971;

- or discussion on a suggested announcement communique: '*Jobert ... did not wish to give the impression to the Five that there had been in the past some secret dialogue between the President and the Prime Minister*', in FCO33/1376 secret telegram Soames to FCO, 6 May 1971.

⁴⁷ TNA FCO33/1377. All Briefs' preambles and objective definitions begin with the words '*persuade*', '*re-assure*' or '*convince*' President Pompidou of Britain's European intentions.

⁴⁸ AN AG5(2)/108, Audience accordée par le président à Soames, vendredi 10 octobre 1969. Pompidou to Soames: '*I do not think of a veto, I will not express a veto*' ('*En un mot je n'ai pas d'idée de veto, je ne formulerai pas de veto*').

⁴⁹ AN AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969-1970, Compte Rendu sur le Conseil des Ministres sur les Affaires Européennes du mardi 21 octobre 1969 - Préparation du sommet de la Haye. Pompidou's view: '*We have to show our good will and good faith, there is no question of a veto*' ('*Il s'agit d'autre part de montrer notre bonne volonté et notre bonne foi. Il n'est pas question d'un veto même dissimulé*').

⁵⁰ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseils Restreints sur la Négociation Anglaise and AN 89AJ(10) Notes manuscrites Michel Jobert, Conseils des Ministres 1er Semestre 1971. Usually, besides Pompidou, attendance included Schuman, Jobert and Bernard and limited interventions of Giscard d'Estaing or Boegner.

⁵¹ TNA FCO33/1376, Paris Embassy, PM's Briefs on 'Situation in France', Christopher Soames, 21 April 1971: '*public opinion is not expecting another veto and the present French Government does not give the impression of having any stomach for one*'.

⁵² AN AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969-1970, Compte Rendu sur le Conseil des Ministres sur les Affaires Européennes du mardi 21 octobre 1969, Préparation du sommet de La Haye.

*this method of work*⁵³, particularly with regard to the effect the announcement of the meetings could have on the Friendly Five. But as *'informed opinions among the Five that success in Brussels was likely to depend finally on agreement between Britain and France'*⁵⁴, some degree of comfort could be drawn from the relative diplomatic silence of France's partners in the Community. The Five's tacit agreement on the principle of a meeting consequently left Heath and Pompidou free rein to meet as long as they respected the official discussion procedure that had to take place in Brussels on 20-21 June 1971. Tellingly, implicit concessions from the core of the federalist-inclined members of the Six opened the way to a *rencontre* that would have the benefit of unlocking the frustratingly stalled negotiations in Brussels. As Douglas-Home pointed out: *'although the Dutch have always been the most enthusiastic integrationists in the EEC, they have regarded the successful outcome ... as more important for the present than their hopes for swifter and more far reaching integration in the Community'*⁵⁵; a fact which confirmed that even staunch federalists could get along, be it temporarily, with bilateral meetings which broke the codes of European institutional multilateral discussions. Equally, the Belgians saw the meeting as an opportunity to *'put the British argument at Pompidou directly at prime minister/president level'*⁵⁶ in order to ease their perceived hardening of the French position on conflictual issues already discussed, such as the transitional period and Community finance. The British opinion was that no opposition should come either from the

Full quote from Pompidou: *'le refus de la discussion avec les Britanniques, renouvelé à deux reprises, est devenu insoutenable sauf si nous acceptons la fin du Marché Commun. Le MC est rentré l'an dernier dans une sorte de crise profonde. Les pays qui se disaient les plus attachés au MC se demandent si d'autres formules plus simples ne seraient pas préférables pour eux et on a pu penser que c'était une affaire plus ou moins moribonde. Néanmoins personne ne veut jouer le rôle d'assassin. Si nous maintenons notre refus systématique, on irait vers une sorte de mort du MC'* (*'refusing to discuss with the British has become untenable unless we accept the end of the Common Market. The CM has entered into a deep crisis. The countries which declared themselves the most attached to the CM now wonder if simpler formulas might not be preferable and one could have thought the whole thing was dying. Nevertheless, nobody wants to play the part of the assassin, if we maintain our systematic refusal, we will go towards the death of the Common Market'*).

⁵³ TNA FCO33/1378, Diplomatic Report, Soames, 9 June 1971.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ TNA FCO13/1378, titled "Background notes", undated, file of Douglas Home comments and letters about the Paris meetings. Douglas-Home added: *'When HM Ambassador called on the Dutch Prime Minister to give him the PM's message about the Paris talks, Mr. de Jong made no reference to Federal Europe'* in

⁵⁶ TNA PREM15/369, N.J. Barrington, Private Secretary, to PM, 'Belgian Views on Europe', 10 March 1971 report of conversation with Vicomte Davignon following the Prime Minister's discussion with Mr. Harmel, Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister on 10 March 1971.

Germans, nor from 'France's other partners in the Community' who all 'clearly approved the idea of a meeting'.⁵⁷ This conviction, which stemmed from the positive signals sent by the German Chancellor about the bilateral meetings, was founded on Heath's reporting to Pompidou that his mention to Brandt that 'he was hoping to have a chance of meeting with [Pompidou] was warmly welcomed'.⁵⁸

Lastly, a parameter to consider in explaining Heath's positive views on the advantages of meeting with Pompidou was his 'personal acquaintance'⁵⁹ with Jean Monnet, reflected by their numerous private meetings.⁶⁰ Monnet was the 'invisible'⁶¹ yet influential actor (privy to the arrangements, seemingly in advance of most Cabinet and Government members, given the dates of his meetings with Heath) who played a crucial part in the Prime Minister's reflections on the approach to the May 1971 meetings.⁶² Up to this point, and before they actually met, the personal dimension and personality-driven characteristics of the meetings had already played a determining role in the conclusion of events for a series of reasons:

- this type of meeting was clearly something with which Heath felt comfortable, and was endorsed as a valid option through the Prime Minister's private and personal contacts with the influential Monnet.

⁵⁷ TNA PREM15/370, Secret memo to PM titled 'The EEC Negotiations and a Meeting between the Prime Minister and President Pompidou' appended to letter from Barrington to Armstrong, 21 April 1971 setting out 'the advantages of the various alternative courses and methods of approach, which could be taken at the meeting'.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Young, 'A Case Study', p. 265.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Young's estimates that no less than seven one-to-one Monnet-Heath meetings took place over the period June 1970-December 1973.

⁶¹ Maria Grazia Merlchionni in Gérard Bossuat, 'Jean Monnet, l'Europe et les Chemins de la Paix: Actes du Colloque de Paris du 29 au 31 mai 1997' (Séries Internationales, Volume 57: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999), p. 250.

⁶² TNA PREM15/370, Moon record of the call of M. Monnet on the Prime Minister on the evening of the 31 March 1971, about which Moon noted: 'The Prime Minister saw him alone ... On the question of the Prime Minister going to Paris to see President Pompidou, M. Monnet suggested that one possible course might be to tell the French that the Prime Minister was ready to do so if President Pompidou would like him to come and felt that a talk could advance matters. This would put the onus on President Pompidou. In fact the instructions which have recently been sent to Mr Soames come fairly close to this line'.

- It resulted from Pompidou's express '*wish to handle this himself*'⁶³, from his personal appreciation of Heath's determination, and possibly from his personal appreciation of Heath's eulogy at de Gaulle's funeral⁶⁴ and his public expressions of sympathy⁶⁵.
- It largely depended on the qualitative progress of the crucial Soames/Jobert meetings which could not have been productive without some personal sympathy.⁶⁶
- It was also supported by the opportunistic use of personal initiatives to make matters progress, such as Soames' insistence on having Jobert meet directly and privately with Heath because of their '*confident relationship*'⁶⁷ (as they had met by chance in Spain during holidays a few years before).

In conclusion, the holding of a bilateral Franco-British meeting whose dates and expected content were unknown at least until the 8 May 1971 announcement, was accepted in principle by Britain, France and the Five by April 1971. Whether resulting from British strategic considerations and domestic policy deadlines, from Heath's preferential mode of diplomatic exchange, from a change in approach on the part of Pompidou, or from tactical considerations from the Five's point of view, the bilateral May 1971 meeting reflected the convictions of all parties that the resolution of Europe's enlargement to Britain depended on convincing France directly of the need to unblock the Brussels negotiation stalemate. In the words of Pompidou himself, France found herself '*the object of strange manoeuvres since our partners [were] putting pressure on us to conclude bilaterally a Community negotiation*'.⁶⁸

⁶³ TNA PREM15/37, Minutes of Heath, Douglas-Home, Soames meeting, 29 March 1971.

⁶⁴ TNA PREM15/370, Telegram 1142 From Prime Minister to FCO 12 Novembre 1970: '[Pompidou] *made a complimentary reference to the tribute I had paid to the late General de Gaulle on French television*'..

⁶⁵ TNA PREM15/32 Heath's ORTF address and comments from Soames, Chaban-Delmas and anonymous French.

⁶⁶ Young, *A Case Study*, p. 274.

⁶⁷ TNA PREM15/369, Soames to Armstrong, 12 March 1971: '*what I had in mind and what doubtless Jobert understood, was that [Jobert] and the Prime Minister knew each other and had a confident relationship*'.

⁶⁸ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise. Pompidou's comments recorded by Bernard after the Conseil of 10 May 1971: '*Nous faisons actuellement si l'on y réfléchit un peu, l'objet de manœuvres assez étranges puisque nos partenaires nous pressent de conclure bilatéralement une négociation communautaire*'.

Nevertheless these considerations which explain the need for a top-level meeting between Pompidou and Heath do not satisfactorily answer the question of what the May 1971 meetings were exactly aimed at resolving. Neither do they provide answers to the question about the format chosen for the summit (a secretly prepared and held one-to-one meeting) which will be addressed in the following sections.

The overriding importance of sterling

In the context of Britain's third application for membership of the EEC, the 8 May 1971 Heath/Pompidou meeting's official communication notably established the shift from multilateral discussions in Brussels to bilateral talks '*at the highest level*' between the British Prime Minister and the French President. The lack of explicit opposition from the chancelleries of the Five implied an unofficial European endorsement of the key importance of French objections and issues as opposed to the globally discussed matters in Brussels in the applicant/Six framework agreed after the Hague Conference in December 1969.⁶⁹ The latter's final communiqué ratified the start of membership application discussions between Britain, and the other three applicants, and the Six as a whole, unanimity of the Conseil being required for the validation of enlargement to candidate states.

The list of topics to be discussed between Britain and the Six had evolved post Hague, whether handled by Wilson's or Heath's Cabinets. Seemingly close to resolution in early 1971, the discussions, in line with both sides' intention to wrap up negotiations by mid-year were suddenly, halted, or clearly slowed down⁷⁰, by the emergence of an apparently new issue following the 'Boegner coup'

⁶⁹ AN AG5(2)/644, Communiqué Conférence de La Haye, 2 décembre 1969. Article 13: '*ils ont réaffirmés leur accord sur le principe de l'élargissement de la Communauté tel qu'il est prévu par l'Article 237 du Traité de Rome ([member states] confirmed their agreement on the enlargement of the Community as set out in Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome)* ... *Les Chefs d'État et de Gouvernement ont marqué leur accord pour l'ouverture d'une négociation entre la Communauté d'une part et les États candidats d'autre part*' ('*the Heads of State or Government agreed to the opening of negotiations between the Community and the candidates*).

⁷⁰ AN AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969-1970, Télégramme AFP transmis à Édouard Balladur sur le MC: '*Pas d'accord entre les Six et la Grande Bretagne du 16 mars 1971*': '*La conférence ministérielle entre les Six (conduits par M. Schumann) et la délégation Britannique (Rippon) a été brève (2 heures à peine) et n'a abouti à aucun résultat concret ainsi qu'on pouvait le prévoir ... seule décision [qu'ils ont] prise: de prévoir un programme de travail intensif pour le mois de Mai ... la session du 21 juin devant marquer "l'heure de vérité". Pour le reste, c'est le petit jeu des esquives qui continue*' ('*The Council of Ministers, under the*

on 18 March 1971. That day, the French Permanent Representative had raised, with emphasis and firmness, the impending problem caused by sterling, its reserve status and the consequential sterling balances, which all addressed the background issue of the state of the British economy, and had been relegated to a secondary role in the detailed discussions taking place in Brussels.

This clear shift in French negotiating priorities has given rise to conspiracy theories implying that these were tactical motives to force a meeting in which Pompidou could obtain last minute concessions from the British Prime Minister (as advanced by Furby's thesis). These theories largely minimize the very real danger that the sterling issues represented for the French and especially for Pompidou. This section of the Chapter will thus endeavour to show that this shift in priorities on the part of the French was not in fact a new issue on the list of matters to resolve by the Five and Britain, and that sterling related issues were at the very heart of French concerns about the impact of Britain's integration on the future of the European Community, and on its planning for monetary policy. Above all, it will argue that sterling was a very personal issue for Pompidou because of the risk it posed to his deeply rooted conception of international monetary affairs, and to his personal vision of the future of European Monetary Union. The reasons why the Heath-Pompidou meetings should take place in this secret one-to-one format was related, the Chapter will now argue, to the 'persuasion thematic' and Britain's reluctance to discuss the sterling question.

Understanding the nature, reality and relative importance of entry negotiation issues

The rather late involvement of Edward Heath's government in the negotiations in the year 1970 (*'having reached power unexpectedly and being unprepared to exercise its new responsibilities'*⁷¹)

chairmanship of Schumann, and the British delegation, led by Rippon, has been very brief, only two hours, and as expected did not result in anything tangible ... only decision made: an intensive work program for May ... the 21 June session should be the "moment of truth". As far as the rest is concerned, it is the same dodging game being played on').

⁷¹ AN AG5(2)/76, Notes Ambassade de Grande Bretagne, Jean Wahl, Poste d'Expansion Économique à Michel Jobert, période 29 octobre 1970 - 12 mai 1971.

Meeting 27 October 1970, Wahl and Sir William Nield: Nield confirmed the point of view shared by many observers: 'Heath's Government has not yet taken care of the negotiations! ... First Heath went on holidays. He then formed his Government, faced the dockers strike. In September his attention was monopolised by air highjacks, local council employees' strike and above all the revision of governmental expenditures. It is only now that Heath has time to devote to the negotiation' as demonstrated by this meeting with Nield, planned only for the 28 October 1970.

brought with it a more assertive British role in the resolution of topics, raised and discussed in Brussels and, in essence, unequivocally shared by the Six. From the point of view of the Six, the common basis of negotiations, as validated by the Council of Ministers of the Community, consisted of eight points jointly agreed at the end of The Hague Conference as being the most relevant to the enlargement negotiations.⁷² According to the summary established by the French *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*, these were:

- the *Transition Period* in which the solution to problems of adaptation of candidates to Community regulations would be found in the establishment of temporary measures rather than modification of existing rules.
- The potential adaptation of the *financial regulations* aimed at resolving, via transitional measures, problems encountered by the applicants in complying with Community financing rules, i.e. own resources and CAP financing (the main negotiations tackled percentages and amounts)
- The *European Institutions* which dealt with the agreements reached on majority rules, distribution of votes in the Council, and the composition of the Commission with fourteen members, two of whom were from Britain and France (no anticipated problems of negotiations).
- *Negotiation Procedure*: crucially, the Six had decided that the Community as a whole would be the unique interlocutor of the candidates and that the *Council of the European Communities* (representative of each of the Six member states at ministerial level for a given policy area under discussion) would have an exclusive responsibility for the negotiations, the Commission's tasks being restricted to a *porte-parole* (spokesman) role and to carrying out '*exploratory missions*'⁷³ on demand.

⁷² AN AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969/1970, note du Ministre des Affaires Étrangères pour le Président de la République, Préparation du Conseil Restreint du 16 juillet 1970 (Document joint à la note de Jean-René Bernard du 9 juillet 1970) intitulé «Résumé de la position des Six ».

⁷³ Ibid.: '*missions exploratoires*'.

- *ECSC and Euratom*, dealing with the necessary adaptation of candidate countries' conditions and practices to the Paris Agreement for the ECSC (pricing, competition, transport) and granting a right of access to *acquis communautaires* to new entrants in nuclear matters.
- *Commonwealth* issues dealing mainly with the Six's attitude towards territories and countries benefiting from a special relationship with Britain whose economies and output could compete unfavourably with the Community, or with France's dependants in Africa or in the West Indies.
- *Financial and Economic Prospects of Britain* mainly dealing with Britain's balance of payments issues (including level of debt, disparity of growth rates within the Community, evolution and prospects), as well as related concerns about sterling's international status.
- Treatment of members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) who were not candidates for Community membership in terms of convergence of policies, and the establishment of commercial agreements in phase with candidate countries' treaties.

This list accurately identified the points of contention which would slow down discussions in the ensuing sessions taking place from the second part of 1970, and which led to a stalemate in the first quarter of 1971, marked by the fact that *'progress had been accomplished only on issues of secondary importance or on topics in which Britain's and the Six's positions were already close'*.⁷⁴ Surprisingly, the item *'Negotiation Procedure'* crucially underlined the difficulty of holding a bilateral Franco-British discussion, as the procedure theoretically prevented any individual state from carrying out negotiations on its own, thus rendering inapplicable for the EEC authorities any decision taken by the tandem Heath/Pompidou during bilateral discussions. This fact had a key influence on communications about the summit and on the secrecy in its preparations and outcomes. In addition, the list included key issues that would be still the subject of Franco-British conflict in the first months of 1971. These issues had already been clearly identified by the October 1970 Strategic review as

⁷⁴ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil Restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, note SGCI (Bernard) au Premier Ministre, 3 février 1971: 'rapport sur le Conseil des Communautés Européennes du 1er février 1971 et Conférence avec le Royaume Uni du 2 février 1971'.

'the only three issues for negotiation whose importance and difficulty were such that they could conceivably be, if not breaking points, at least major obstacles', namely New Zealand dairy products, Commonwealth sugar and Community financing (or 'Community budget', or 'contribution').

On the British side, the only 'no go' area and potential deal-breaker of the negotiations considered by the Strategic Review was the major issue of Community financing, considered contentious enough to encourage Britain to refuse the terms of entry in order to protect its interests, as it was deemed that Britain could not *'afford to sign a blank cheque for whatever the cost might turn out to be'*.⁷⁵ In addition, on the eve of the May 1971 meeting, discussions were still taking place about the *transition period's* timeframe, duration, and the extent to which it would determine the time granted to each candidate country to fully adopt and implement all the decisions.

France's views of essential problems to resolve, at least the ones expressed in Brussels until the 'Boegner coup' of March 1971, were along the same lines as the British, as summarised in the note to Pompidou prepared by Jean-René Bernard late April 1971⁷⁶ which tackled precisely the key issues identified by the British. Besides setting the tactics for the coming Council of Ministers meetings (*'Boegner does not take any initiative during the Permanent Representatives Committees before 10 May, to have some element of surprise'*), Bernard's list of topics mirrored its British equivalent with, for instance, a reflection on what to propose to the Five and Britain in terms of *transition period* (*'Schumann is thinking about an extension of the transition period'*). It also mentioned yet another version of a French proposal regarding the *Community Budget* put forward by Giscard d'Estaing (*'agreement on presentation of a method applying to new members the financial settlement defined by the Six'*), noted no particular progress on Schumann's side about *New Zealand butter* (*'no proposal*

⁷⁵ TNA PREM15/062, The EEC Negotiations - Strategic Review 23rd October 1970, p.5.

⁷⁶ AN AG5(2)/76, Jean-René Bernard to Pompidou, Conseil Restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, 23 avril 1971, pour arrêter notre position pour le Conseil des Ministres des 6 et 10 mai et pour la conférence entre la Grande Bretagne et la Communauté, 10 et 11 Mai 1971.

Bernard also commented *'the preparation will have to take into account the possibility of a Franco-British meeting such as, for instance, the one already planned between Mr. Heath and Mr. Schumann in London on 20, 21 May'* (*'La préparation devra tenir compte de l'éventualité d'une rencontre franco-anglaise telle, par exemple, que celle qui est d'ores et déjà prévue entre MM Heath et Schuman à Londres les 20 et 21 mai'*), showing that Bernard either did not know then about the meeting, or played along with the then current agenda to keep the meeting secret and not to raise suspicions.

from Schumann about New Zealand butter'), and recorded Boegner's position on *Commonwealth sugar* which deemed unnecessary the conclusion of anything specific since the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement was supposed to end on 31 December 1974, i.e. at the same date as the Yaoundé Agreements.⁷⁷

However, the facade of Franco-British unity in defining the themes of negotiations in the Brussels arena did not find an echo with the member states who expressed a variety of opinions and options that could not be easily reconciled during the European Councils of Ministers. For instance, on the Community Finance issue, the Six were divided, their position complicated by the intervention of the Commission, which proposed 7 or 8 percent as the first year British budget contribution, whereas 'Schuman seemed a bit above 10 percent, Scheel (the German Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs) was at 8 or 9 percent, Luxemburg at 5 percent and the Italians at 6 percent'.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Brussels multilateral discussions were rendered even more complex by the tactical introduction by British negotiators of a 'shopping list'⁷⁹, designed to offer potential points of agreement targeted at the French in order to compensate for the lack of consensus on other vital matters or, more colloquially in Pompidou's view, designed to 'lure the French'⁸⁰. These included, as listed by Bernard, points not necessarily linked to the acceptance by Britain of the terms of the Treaty of Rome, such as the location of European institutions, the use of the French language, the specific consideration for France's African and Madagascan partners, and even openings in terms of military and nuclear cooperation; and 'any other item that could be added at anyone's fancy'⁸¹.

⁷⁷ Translations of:

- 'Boegner ne prend aucune initiative au cours des comités des Représentants Permanents avant le 10 mai pour garder un effet de surprise',
- 'Schumann réfléchit à allonger la période de transition',
- 'accord sur la présentation d'une méthode consistant à appliquer aux nouveaux membres le règlement financier tel que défini entre les Six',
- 'pas de proposition de Schumann sur le beurre Néo-Zélandais'.

⁷⁸ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, note Bernard à Jobert: 'Négociations avec la Grande Bretagne - note relative aux éléments d'un compromis sur le règlement financier', 12 janvier 1971.

⁷⁹ Ibid.: 'ce que les Anglais appellent la "shopping list"' ('what the British call the "shopping list"')

⁸⁰ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, 10 mai 1971: 'Les Anglais voudront peut-être nous appâter'.

⁸¹ Ibid.: 'liste non limitative pouvant varier au gré de l'imagination et de la fantaisie de chacun'.

Topics for multilateral discussions in the Brussels forum had therefore been determined, and generally agreed, until Boegner's intervention which was initiated and sanctioned by the Élysée.⁸² This event seemed to mark a shift in French negotiating priorities characterised by the fact that the usual negotiation issues would then play second fiddle to, or even disappear, from all the *Ordres du jour* of the *Conseils Restreints* held between April and early May 1971.⁸³

Shift in French negotiation priorities: the reality of key issues

On 18 March 1971, Jean-Marc Boegner delivered a speech to the Committee of Permanent Representatives intended to pose, unilaterally and without the Five's prior agreement, the problems raised for the Community by sterling which required Britain's specific attention and precise answers on three main issues: *'the contradiction between sterling as a reserve currency and the progress towards monetary economic union in Europe; [the request] for a progressive reduction of the sterling balances during the transition period after accession to the Community; and [the necessary] ending of discrimination in capital flows'*.⁸⁴

This volte-face might have served as a convenient diversion from the weakening of the French negotiating position in Brussels over the 'usual' topics. And maybe it constituted a retorsion for the 'brutal' turn of discussions with Rippon⁸⁵, and demonstrated the growing irritation of the French with their partners in the community (in this context, Schumann's comments at the 17 March 1971 *Conseil des Ministres* were quite revealing of the mood in the negotiations from the French perspective: *'in Brussels, we have a crisis but nobody says it too loud, the problem with butter is a joke, concerning sugar we are somehow put on trial, slight progress on Community Finance, nobody talks about*

⁸² Confirmation by Deniau (French Commissioner External Relations) to O'Neill (24 March 1971) that Bernard *'had been told to draw up instruction that night [17 March 1971] to Boegner the next day'* in TNA PREM15/369, Deniau, Pompidou and the conclusions of the negotiations.

⁸³ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, premier semestre 1971.

⁸⁴ Catherine R. Schenk, *The Decline of sterling: Managing the Retreat of an International Currency, 1945-1992* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 143.

⁸⁵ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, note Bernard to Pompidou, 8 février 1971, 'Limitation des compétences institutionnelles des candidats au cours de la période de transition': *'Cela ne sera sans doute pas facile, non seulement parce que Rippon a indiqué avec brutalité que la GB ne saurait adhérer à la Communauté avec des droits en quoi que ce soit réduits'*. ('it will not be easy, not only because Rippon has indicated with brutality that Britain could not adhere to the Community with diminished rights').

*numbers anymore*⁸⁶). But assuredly, it confirmed the real nature of the French negotiation priorities which questioned the importance and relevance of the issues hitherto discussed in Brussels.

In fact, for the French, the '*monetary issues*'⁸⁷ were the key subject of the negotiations. All other issues were considered to have a '*minor importance*'⁸⁸ and, in Jobert's view, they should not constitute '*an insurmountable obstacle*'⁸⁹. Bernard equally argued that it was time to put France's stamp on the matter of the sterling balances which was '*a far more serious challenge*'⁹⁰ as '*the core of the problem was the evolution of the sterling balances*'⁹¹. These internal considerations on the actual order of priorities of the negotiations issues emerged with force in the Brussels discussions when Boegner put the sterling related concerns squarely on the European stage. On this occasion, Britain and France's partners were '*visibly stunned*'⁹² as none had apparently suspected that France would raise the sterling issue at this point in the negotiations. There was surprise about both the style and content of the French statement. On style, the perceived harshness and surprise effect of Boegner's declaration generated irritation and astonishment among the Five and with Britain. On content, its suddenness, in a time of acute differences in negotiating positions, inevitably raised questions from France's partners about the real motivation of the French manoeuvres.

These questions on the timing and reasons for Boegner's intervention have opened an academic debate as to the possibility of '*an impasse monitored by Pompidou to exert pressure upon Britain and the Five, the purpose being to strengthen France's bargaining position but also to demonstrate*

⁸⁶ Ibid., notes manuscrites Michel Jobert *Conseils des Ministres* 24 mars 1971: '*Bruxelles ("c'est la crise mais personne ne le dit trop fort", problème sur le beurre ("c'est un canular"), sur le sucre ("on instruit une sorte de procès contre nous"), contribution financière ("léger progrès: on renonce aux hypothèses chiffrées")*).

⁸⁷ '*problèmes monétaires*' in AN AG5(2)/76 Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise. Note de Préparation de Bernard pour Pompidou du 24 avril 1971: '*pour arrêter notre position pour le Conseil des Ministres des 6 et 10 mai et pour la conférence entre la Grande Bretagne et la Communauté des 10 et 11 mai*' ('to settle our position for the Council of Ministers on 6 and 12 May and for the conference between Great Britain and the Community on May 10 and 11').

⁸⁸ Ibid.: Bernard's comments: '*elles ont un caractère mineur*'.

⁸⁹ AN AG5(2)/76, réponse de Jobert à de Courcel, 26 février 1971: '*le beurre de Nouvelle Zélande et le sucre ne constituaient pas des obstacles insurmontables*'.

⁹⁰ Ibid.: Bernard's comments: '*autrement plus sérieux*'.

⁹¹ Ibid.: '*le centre du problème a trait avec l'évolution des balances sterling*'.

⁹² AN AG5(2)/76 Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, note Bernard à Pompidou, 1er mars 1971, about Pompidou's meeting with Schumann about '*monetary issues*' ('problèmes monétaires'): '*Nos partenaires ont été visiblement stupéfaits*'.

*publicly the need for a summit between himself and Heath*⁹³ in order to obtain last minute concessions. But this type of interpretation does not withstand the study of the actual reactions of Rippon and Barber, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Their communications to a surprised and slightly irritated Heath demonstrated a clear conviction that, for Barber, *'the tone of the French statement was [neither] unreasonable nor hostile'*, and that their questions about sterling *'were ones which we [had] known throughout we should have to answer'*.⁹⁴ On this subject, Rippon contended that, *'questions of procedures apart, we were not unduly disturbed by the substance of Boegner's speech'*⁹⁵ since *'the French [had] to make their position on sterling clear if they [were] to do it at all'*⁹⁶. This confirmed Barber's conviction that there were no *'evidence that the French [had] introduced these questions in order to disrupt or delay the negotiations'*.⁹⁷ As for Heath's irritation about the leak in the press⁹⁸ of Boegner's questions which he considered little short of a *'hostile act'*⁹⁹, Rippon, not necessarily known for his sympathy for the French, declared that *'this time the leak did not come from them'*, untypically pushing for moderation in British reactions, and adopting a *'relaxed line'*.¹⁰⁰ On their side, the French showed signs of wanting to tone down the malaise created by Boegner. French Ambassador de Courcel claimed that *'the French were not trying to be unhelpful'*¹⁰¹ whilst Bernard conceded that Boegner's handling of affairs *'had not been particularly delicate'*, and *'regretted very much that fact'*, adding candidly that *'it was the first time for months that M. Boegner had received instructions with some guts in them and he had had a field day'*¹⁰².

⁹³ Furby, 'The Revival', p. 201.

⁹⁴ TNA PREM15/369, Barber to Heath, 24 March 1971.

⁹⁵ TNA PREM15/369, Rippon report to FCO of conversation with French Ambassador de Courcel, 26 March 1971.

⁹⁶ TNA PREM15/369, Rippon to Heath, 26 March 1971. Besides, Rippon made a clear statement to Signor Manzini, Italian Ambassador (25 March 1971) that: *'the public's response to the French statement on sterling had been an over-reaction. It had always been expected that the French would raise sterling. The way it was done was perhaps unfortunate'*.

⁹⁷ TNA PREM15/369, Barber to Heath, 24 March 1971.

⁹⁸ *The Times'* article about France wanting to stop the Basle agreements renewal based on unknown sources.

⁹⁹ TNA PREM15/369, Armstrong to Barber, 25 March 1971.

¹⁰⁰ TNA PREM15/369, Rippon to Heath, 26 March 1971.

¹⁰¹ TNA PREM15/369, Rippon report to FCO of conversation with French Ambassador de Courcel, 26 March 1971.

¹⁰² TNA PREM15/371, Tickell to Moon, 29 April 1971 about Galsworthy's secret conversations (Minister for European Economic Affairs at the Paris Embassy) with Bernard and Cuvillier in Maurice Schumann's office on 19 April 1971.

The *soufflé* of the 'Boegner coup' had collapsed. For the French, raising the sterling issue was neither a negotiation trick nor a way of forcing Heath's hand to talk directly to Pompidou.¹⁰³ It was not '*an attempt to instrumentalize sterling by the French delegation on 18 March 1971*'.¹⁰⁴ On the French side, there had been surprise at the shock resulting from the 'outing' of the sterling question. For the French, the sterling issues that Britain's entry would exacerbate were '*old and immutable*'.¹⁰⁵ They had already been referred to as a showstopper for Britain's European membership by de Gaulle in his speech announcing the second French veto on 27 November 1967.¹⁰⁶ And Pompidou's personal views on this issue had already been detailed, and communicated to the British in November 1970 by his diplomatic and European/economic advisers Raymond and Bernard.¹⁰⁷ As Soames reported, the talk he had had with Pompidou in November 1970 '*provided a useful opening for [Britain] to explore in some depth what was at the root of M. Pompidou's thought about this problem*'.¹⁰⁸ This extremely valuable insight was communicated directly to Heath by Nield, who confirmed to the Prime Minister that this expression of the French position on sterling '*indeed repeated the line Pompidou took in Paris in 1967*'.¹⁰⁹ Therefore the British could hardly have been surprised in March 1971 by the French raising once again the sterling issue.

¹⁰³ No sources were found in the *Fonds Pompidou* at the *Archives Nationales* that would confirm Furby's conclusion that it was a Pompidou's manoeuvre to use '*the created deadlock at multilateral level to try to gain an advantage from a direct approach by E. Heath*', in Furby, 'The Revival', p. 201.

¹⁰⁴ Rücker-Guitelmacher, 'Le Triangle', p. 419.

¹⁰⁵ AN AG5(2)/89, Communication Relative aux problèmes économiques et financiers de l'adhésion faite par M. Barre- Vice-Président de la Commission aux Représentants Permanents, vendredi 22 mai 1970, in which Barre reminded that the Commission had already given its opinion to the European Council in September 1967 and October 1969.

¹⁰⁶ De Gaulle mentioned that '*the state of the pound sterling, also, that, combined with the character of an international currency which is that of the pound, and the enormous external liabilities weighing on it, would not permit Britain to belong, at this time*' to the European Community, in CVCE, Conférence de presse du Général de Gaulle tenue à l'Élysée (27 novembre 1967), (CVCE translation) URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/press_conference_held_by_general_de_gaulle_at_the_elyse_e_27_novembre_1967-en-fe79955c-ef62-4b76-9677-dce44151be53.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁰⁷ TNA PREM15/062, Soames to O'Neill, 'E.E.C. and sterling', 30 November 1970.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ TNA PREM15/062, Nield to Moon, 3 December 1970 - for the Prime Minister to read (transmitted to Heath 4 December 1970).

In this context, Heath's assessment of the French move as '*enigmatic*'¹¹⁰ and the contention by both Soames¹¹¹ and Nield¹¹² that the French did not have '*a clear understanding of how the sterling area functioned*'¹¹³ pose a series of determining questions: what was the French comprehension of and approach to the sterling issues? What was the actual origin of their deeply felt apprehension on this matter? How did Heath and his team perceive these misgivings? How did they intend to reply and react to them in the wider framework of entry negotiations? A study of hitherto unexploited French and British governmental sources will provide answers to these questions and will contribute to the understanding of the nature and format of the Heath/Pompidou May 1971 meetings.

The sterling issue for the French: economic, Community and political problems

As already discussed, early in the negotiation process, there had been political, strategic and personality-related signs, on both sides of the Channel that the Heath/Pompidou meetings were expected to happen, with the tacit assent of France's partners in the Community, and in the context of a reassessment of French negotiation priorities. An analysis of top-level discussions and expert reports drawn up for Pompidou¹¹⁴, and the various *Conseils restreints* discussing French tactics in the context of the discussions on Britain's entry provide first-hand 'insider's' information on the real importance of the sterling matters for the French. In addition, the analysis of the briefs to the Prime Minister for the May 1971 meetings offers an insight into Britain's intentions, capacity to react, and reactions to the French moves. This combined Franco-British documentation will help understand the 'why' of the meetings and of their format.

¹¹⁰ TNA PREM15/062, Heath's comments communicated by Armstrong to Barber, 25 March 1971.

¹¹¹ TNA PREM15/062, Soames to O'Neill, 'E.E.C. and sterling', 30 November 1970: '*I realise that this anxiety might stem in part from a continuing lack of understanding -even amongst so-called experts here- of how the sterling area has, in fact, worked in the past*'.

¹¹² TNA PREM15/062, Nield to Moon, 3 December 1970: '*my reason for advocating a summit with the French has been precisely the lack of understanding of how sterling area functions*'.

¹¹³ Jobert shared Soames' point of view that: '*there were not many people in Britain who knew the full ramifications of the problems of the sterling area, let alone on the continent*' in PREM15/370, Soames to Heath and Douglas-Home, report on his visit to Jobert, 27 March 1971.

¹¹⁴ Jean-René Bernard's notes and documents to Pompidou are considered crucial here as they give a unique view of information fed to Pompidou's to support his reflection and decision-making. Equally important are Jobert's handwritten notes of numerous *Conseils* and conversations involving President Pompidou and his first circle.

France's approach to the sterling issues was based on two perspectives: on the one hand, the economic consequences of Britain's entry, taking into consideration the international status of sterling and the sterling balances (foreign claims on Great Britain), and on the other hand, the effects of the sterling question on Pompidou's personal monetary conceptions and on his vision of the development of the European Community.

According to Boegner's statement, France's challenge was threefold. Firstly, France took exception to the status of sterling as a reserve currency. It took the view that there was a contradiction between Britain belonging to the Community, *'especially as the latter is moving towards economic and monetary union'*, and the management of international reserve currencies making Britain the *'centre of extra European monetary areas'*. Secondly, considering that its role of reserve currency had generated an accumulation of sterling balances (i.e. the *'substantial external debts payable on demand'*¹¹⁵), France challenged the very existence of these sterling balances which could make Britain's monetary, and consequently economic, position particularly vulnerable, and especially liable to be affected by *'developments which [did] not originate in the British isles'*. Indeed, if there were sterling exchange problems due to the conversion of sterling balances once Britain was a member of the EEC, this would mean that, by virtue of France's interpretation of the provisions of Articles 108 of the Rome Treaty¹¹⁶, other member states could be faced with the prospect of having to *'use the Community machinery'* to assist Britain in solving monetary issues generated by developments beyond the EEC's reach and control. As a gesture of goodwill, France was nevertheless

¹¹⁵ *'Member States of the so-called "British sterling area" loaned Britain money during World War II by accepting sterling as payments for imports and re-investing them in London; these debts were the so-called sterling Balances. The Bretton-Wood system gave the sterling area a chance of survival vital for the British economy. Sterling could continue to function as a reserve currency within the whole system. This required sterling to have a stable value. This was threatened by inflation which would make sterling less valuable in relation to the Dollar which had a fixed price in gold ... Likewise the position of the City as a financial centre depended on the attractiveness of sterling. As long as Britain was doing well and its balance of payments did not go into deficit this was under control'*, in Rossbach, Heath, Nixon, p. 45.

¹¹⁶ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, Note Bernard à Pompidou, 8 février 1971: the French interpretation of Article 108 was that *'the Article 108 enables the Council and the Commission to take practically all measures in case of difficulties or serious challenges to the balance of payment of a member state'*.

ready to envisage participating in the Basle Agreement¹¹⁷, should Britain become a member of the Community and seek help, in case of exchange issues, from *'appropriate international actions'*. Thirdly, France demanded the *'suppression of discriminatory measures which favour the "white" [sic] Commonwealth in comparison with the Members of the Community'*. Indeed, France took issue with the fact that Britain *'discriminated against the EEC in favour of the developed Commonwealth countries on international capital movements'*¹¹⁸ which, from a French point of view, was incompatible with the principle of equality of treatment within the Community.

On the first aspect of France's contention, French experts and decision-makers alike had always been adamant that the status of sterling as an international reserve currency and the existence of sterling balances would *'limit Britain's freedom of manoeuvre in economic and monetary matters'*.¹¹⁹ It would also prevent Britain from abiding by the financial and monetary discipline imposed by European membership. In the French experts' view, Britain's membership of the Community would increase the volatility of European balances of payments, potentially creating economic and financial instability impacting all member states. The sterling related issues would also underline the incompatibility of objectives and priorities between one country (Britain) which could have its deficit of balances of payments¹²⁰ financed by the sterling area, and the other members which, lacking a reserve currency, would be obliged to adjust their deficits to comply with the imperatives of financial and economic equilibrium. It would further exacerbate divergences between the economic and monetary policies of the countries of the enlarged Community, Britain being uniquely constrained within the specific obligations of managing a reserve currency. This meant that, through the

¹¹⁷ *'Conversions of particularly large amounts of sterling balances took place on several occasions, notably after the 1967 sterling devaluation. The Basle Agreement, signed in September 1968 and valid for a period of three years, essentially aimed at avoiding the repetition of these crises by putting at Britain's disposal a 2\$bn line of credit to enable it to face potential private and institutional sterling balances conversions detained in the "British sterling area", in CVCE Europe. Documents. Agence internationale d'information pour la presse. Directeur de publication Lodovico RICCARDI, Rédacteur en Chef Emmanuele GAZZO, 21 mai 1971, n° 623. Bruxelles. "Rapport du Groupe Ad hoc sur le problème de la Livre (mai 1971)", pp. 1-8.*

¹¹⁸ D. Ikemoto, *European Monetary Integration 1970-79: British and French Experiences* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), p. 54.

¹¹⁹ Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Minister of Economy and Finance in *Le Monde*, "Le statut de la livre" 21 mai 1971.

¹²⁰ The balance of payments is the record of all international trade and financial transactions made by a country's residents.

mechanisms of financial solidarity in Articles 108 and 109 of the Treaty of Rome, the other members of the Community could potentially be obliged to support Britain in any difficulties arising from the international reserve status of sterling or from variations in sterling balances. This would inevitably make sterling a *'vehicular currency'*¹²¹ and progressively a *de facto 'reserve currency of the Community'*¹²². All the more so in that, in the French view, sterling would be called upon to play a greater role, as enlargement would necessarily generate an increase in commercial exchanges with Britain (and with the Nordic countries which also financed part of their exchanges with third parties in sterling) and because of the dominant role of the City of London.

Moreover, the situation of sterling carried another very specific risk for France which would become, in Bernard's view, particularly sensitive within the first six months of 1971 as the renewal of the Basle Agreement¹²³ would be then discussed without France, *'the only country that did not participate in the agreement'*. In effect, in the wake of Britain's entry, France could potentially be requested to contribute to supporting sterling, through the Community's solidarity rules, without having a say in its decision, orientation and volume at the international level of the Basle Agreement framework. Also, the status of sterling and sterling balances posed, in turn, the problem of Britain's balance of payments. An opinion particularly expressed by the French was that the *'frequent difficulties of Britain's balance of payments'*¹²⁴ constituted a specific characteristic of Britain's economy in comparison with the economies of the Six. These difficulties were considered as closely interlinked with Britain's lower growth rates over the past twenty years, the scarcity of its exchange reserves, and the large volume of long-term capital exports resulting directly from Britain's privileged links with the countries of the sterling area which held important sterling reserves.¹²⁵ Thus, from a purely economic and financial standpoint, the special status of Britain's currency, the sterling balances and

¹²¹ AN AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969/1970, Communication relative aux problèmes économiques et financiers de l'adhésion faite par M. Barre, Vice-Président de la Commission aux Représentants Permanents, 22 mai 1970: *'monnaie d'intervention'*.

¹²² Ibid.: *'monnaie de réserve de la Communauté'*.

¹²³ Renewal planned for September 1971, i.e. three years after its initial acceptance in September 1968, a date clashing with the official and targeted European negotiations agenda, including a conclusion of negotiations towards the end of the first semester for 1971.

¹²⁴ CVCE, *Rapport du Groupe Ad hoc sur le problème de la Livre (mai 1971)*.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

their consequences on the British balance of payments, constituted for the French '*more or less an unsurmountable obstacle to Britain's entry into the Common Market*'.¹²⁶ The French rejected in principle the need for all members of the Community to accommodate the specificities of Britain's economy and currency since it would create, in their opinion, unacceptable conditions with regard to the fundamental principle of equality between Community members. In addition, at a more political level, it could potentially jeopardise France's economic and political status within the Community.

Concerning the principle of equality, France was faced with a delicate situation. Its demands relating to discrimination (the call for equality of treatment of member states within the Community) did not rest on any article in the Treaty of Rome (which did not include any most-favoured nation treatment,) but rather on '*the spirit of European construction*' and '*on a reference to the disposition of the "droit d'établissement"*'¹²⁷ (which imposed on each member state the obligation to grant all the other members the same treatment). Concerning France's position in the Community, Britain's monetary exceptionalism provoked some apprehension, conveyed via Bernard's briefs to Pompidou, that the monetary issues generated by Britain's membership could possibly result in '*the industrial dominance of Germany, the financial dominance of Britain, whilst ensuring France of some dominance in the agricultural domain*'¹²⁸, or worse, might create an opportunity for Britain to find a '*second colonial empire*'¹²⁹.

Concerns and passions ran high in the French camp in the debate about the sterling question. Their expression, forcibly made clear to Britain and the Five in March 1971, opened up a serious debate that led to the setting-up, by decision of the Council on 30 March 1971, of an Ad Hoc Group in charge of examining the economic, financial and monetary problems potentially posed by Britain's

¹²⁶ AN AG5(2)/89 Affaires Européennes 1969/1970, Note Bernard à Pompidou, 9 juillet 1970: '*Selon M. Barre, le problème de la balance des paiements britanniques serait un obstacle à peu près insurmontable à l'entrée de la Grande Bretagne dans le Marché Commun*'.

¹²⁷ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, Résultats des travaux du groupe ad hoc Pierre Brossolette sur la Livre sterling, note Bernard à Pompidou, 9 mai 1971.

¹²⁸ AN AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969/1970, Note Bernard à Pompidou, 9 juillet 1970.

¹²⁹ AN AG5(2)/76, note Bernard à Pompidou, 9 mai 1971, Présentation de la position Française à la suite des travaux du groupe ad hoc.

membership of the Community. The conclusions of the Ad hoc Group¹³⁰, reported on 10 May 1971, did not close the debate, but instead worsened the situation by highlighting the dissensions between France and its Five partners on the real nature of the sterling issues and on the validity of the solutions proposed by the French. This contributed to underline the isolation of the French on the sterling issues, which was aggravated by the conclusions drawn on the negative impact of sterling on the establishment of the European Monetary Union (EMU) by the 'Werner Plan'¹³¹. The report analysed the French perspective on resolving the sterling issues, expressed in three demands:

- on joining the EEC, Britain should put an end to preferential mechanisms with the most developed members of the Sterling Area to end the discrimination against other members of the Community;
- Britain should reduce its long-term private capital exports responsible for deficits in its balance of payments and for the subsequent increase in its debt;
- Britain should stabilize the sterling balances during the transition period and should reduce them progressively.

On these points, the Ad Hoc Group, despite the use of diplomatic language to describe the opposing parties¹³², actually revealed the stark opposition between the French and the Five who were more open to British membership on the base of the then current international status of sterling and did not adhere to the French position on the seriousness of the problems caused by sterling. Particularly in the case of the sterling balances, tensions between France and the Five were further heightened by the report's suggestion that the existence of sterling balances did not raise major issues for the functioning of the Community insofar as a massive conversion of these balances was limited by

¹³⁰ CVCE, *Rapport du Groupe Ad hoc sur le problème de la Livre (Mai 1971)*.

¹³¹ PREM FCO30/789, Foreign Office, 9 November 1970. At The Hague, the Six had decided to set-up a plan, during the course of 1970, on the basis of the 'Barre Proposals' to study the creation of an economic and monetary union. The conception and design of the plan by a special committee headed by M. Werner, the Luxemburg Prime Minister, was completed and reported to the Council of Ministers on 15 October 1970.

¹³² Ibid.: the report only mentioned '*certain members*' and '*other members*' without naming France and the Five.

international arrangements (Basle Agreements). This fact contributed to the emergence of a sense of isolation on the French side characterised by the fact that *'France's partners had refused to have the report mention a common analysis of the problems posed to the EEC by the existence of sterling'*.¹³³ That sense of isolation added to the growing frustration and disappointment in the French camp about the Five's lack of understanding and acceptance of their concerns. Despite the view that France was only working towards reducing the *'squinting strabismus of Britain'*¹³⁴ in the Community's best interests, Bernard suggested that the monetary issues should be broached with some prudence so that France would not appear to be waging a *'holy war'* in monetary affairs, or give the impression that it was *'defending personal interests'* in the matter. Pompidou concurred with this analysis when declaring that *'France [did] not defend egoistic interests in this matter'*¹³⁵, adding that it was *'the Community and its future that [France] defended'*, and when granting that *'compromises [would] be required but not to the detriment of the future of Europe'*. A similar view expressed by Michel Debré, then Minister of Defence in Chaban-Delmas' government, with a tinge of the traditional style that had marked de Gaulle's era, summarized France's approach to sterling: *'our conception of Europe [was] different than that of our partners'* and France's leadership *'should show [its] position [was] the most logical, the most honest and right'*.¹³⁶

Discrepancies in approaching the sterling issue notably widened the breach of confidence between the Five and France over negotiations in Brussels. Nevertheless, there existed one sterling-related point of contention with Britain that united the Six: it was the incompatibility between the

¹³³ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, Bernard to Pompidou, 9 mai 1971: *'Nos partenaires se sont refusés à faire figurer dans le rapport une analyse commune des problèmes posés à la CEE par l'existence du sterling'*.

¹³⁴ AN AG5(2)/76, note Bernard to Pompidou, 10 mai 1971: *'nous considérons qu'il y a un intérêt commun réel à ce que le strabisme divergent de la Grande Bretagne soit réduit'*. Bernard added: *'en obtenant une déclaration telle que nous puissions nous targuer d'un succès raisonnable et de bon aloi dans une matière difficile à comprendre pour l'opinion publique'* ('by obtaining such a declaration that we could boast of a reasonable and genuine success in matters difficult for the public opinion to understand').

¹³⁵ AN AG5(2)/76, President Pompidou's annotations on West Germany Chancellor Brant's letter dated 18 mars 1971. This letter intended to put pressure on Pompidou to make definite progress on the matter of enlargement and called for a spirit of compromise on matters disputed in Brussels.

¹³⁶ AN 89AJ(10), Notes manuscrites Michel Jobert, Conseils des Ministres 1er Semestre 1971. Conseils des Ministres, 11 mai 1971: *'Il faut montrer combien notre position est la plus logique, la plus honnête et la plus droite'*.

international status of sterling and the achievement of a European Monetary Union (EMU) which was one of the main agreements at the Hague conference in December 1969.¹³⁷ In several *Conseils restreints*, the opinion prevailed that, even if France's partners were reluctant to subscribe to the French analysis about sterling, they nevertheless acknowledged, in the perspective of the EMU, the incompatibility of a national currency retaining the role of a reserve currency.¹³⁸ The French found comfort in the conviction that this '*accord de principe*'¹³⁹ was key insofar as it showed that the Five, '*even if they did not want to admit to it, saw the dangers for the enlarged Community of the development of sterling balances*'.

Nevertheless, finding a potential solution to their concerns about sterling in the context of a growing isolation from their Community partners, left the French with the prospect of having to fight a solitary, hard and complex battle against united enemies. It also faced them with the unattractive alternative of failing to reach an agreement they had sought for the last 18 months (i.e. since the Hague Conference which validated the process of enlargement¹⁴⁰). Nothing could realistically be expected from the Five given their opposition, latent or active, to French initiatives. A potential solution would only come from their British counterparts, and from their ability to acknowledge, if not understand, the French point of view, and provide reassurance, if not commitment, that sterling would not stand in the way of the bilateral cooperation which was necessary in order to reach a multilateral agreement in Brussels. In these conditions, the *Conseil restreint* held on 14 May 1971¹⁴¹, just a week before the Heath-Pompidou meetings, concluded that Britain's acceptance of the three points listed by the Ad Hoc Group was the only viable solution and constituted a test of its will to effectively re-orientate the whole of its policies towards Europe. Therefore, a positive outcome on sterling depended on Britain's capacity to persuade the French of their commitment to help solve sterling matters and, consequently, re-assure them of their

¹³⁷ AN AG5(2)/644, Communiqué Conférence de La Haye, 2 décembre 1969. Article 8 detailed the '*decision to set-up the Werner's Plan to elaborate the necessary steps to achieve an Economic and Monetary Union*'.

¹³⁸ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, Présentation de la position Française à la suite des travaux du Groupe Ad Hoc, 9 mai 1971.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ AN AG5(2)/644, Communiqué Conférence de La Haye, 2 décembre 1969. Article 13.

¹⁴¹ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, 14 mai 1971.

genuine European intentions. Assessing this capacity involved understanding the nature of British views about these issues, the type of compromise they might be ready to make, and the sort of commitments they were willing to fulfil.

The British side of the argument and the need for secrecy

*'The French statement could have been worse'*¹⁴² was the preliminary comment on the substance of Boegner's statement made by the Financial Policy and Aid Department (FPAD) to Rippon and the British delegation. The ad-lib analysis of the French *'familiar view'* that there was a contradiction between membership of the Community and Britain's management of an international reserve currency was seen as subject to the caveat that the EMU was *'years away'*, thus leaving Britain the time to make necessary adjustments. However, French requirements for a progressive diminution of sterling balances would prove arduous, since it would come at a time when the cost of entry would seriously increase their volume, potentially necessitating negotiations with the Six to stop the increase in the balances during the transition period. Furthermore, the French preference for an international *'underpinning of sterling balances'* rather than a Community driven one, was confirmed as a *'weak position'* (i.e. the French contention that Articles 108 and 109 should not apply if a country's difficulties arose from factors external to its economy). But it represented, *'as a matter of common sense'*, a rational wish to limit the Community's liability for the sterling balances. The *'rather curious proposition'* from the French to participate in the Basle arrangements, considered a *'worthless offer'* if only proposed for the period to September 1973, was judged to present some interest for Britain if extended after this date. Finally, French recriminations about discrimination of capital exchanges between Britain and the sterling area, *'as against those to members of the Community'*, were considered as *'not technically difficult'* even if preferably not envisaged.

¹⁴² TNA PREM15/369, Watson, Financial Policy and Aid Department, to Rippon, 19 March 1971, 'French views on sterling'.

This impromptu commentary, showing a pragmatic, conciliatory and cooperative attitude from the British, was later reflected in all the briefs prepared by the FCO, the Treasury, the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Department of Trade and Industry.¹⁴³ Remarkably all the briefs advanced a thesis that this study would qualify as ‘persuasion compromise’, in the sense that they were designed to inform the Prime Minister, and offer him the capacity to have a fruitful interview with the French President by confirming that Britain was a ‘good European pupil’ whose views were, in all aspects, close to those of the French. In this regard, the preamble of the briefs listed unequivocally as the main objective:

*to show Pompidou that we accept the community system and future objectives, that as members our loyalty will lie with our European partners, that we have chosen Europe, and that Britain has the same instinct as France on the way Europe will develop towards unity.*¹⁴⁴

However, on the particular point of sterling, the briefs, designed to respond to Pompidou’s monetary concerns, opted for a more argumentative, more defensive, and at times hostile commitment-free position.¹⁴⁵ In the preamble, the Treasury’s document downplayed the relative importance of sterling in the International Monetary System since the end of the War.¹⁴⁶ It also confessed to Britain’s lack of control on the day-to-day use of the reserve assets of the sterling Area countries and subtly committed to envisaging the possibility of reducing the sterling balances post-entry (*‘after entry as member of community, we should be willing to discuss an internationally acceptable means of bringing this about’*), while insisting that this could not be made unilaterally since it required three essential conditions to be fulfilled: *‘the interests of sterling holders, the taking into account of the*

¹⁴³ TNA FCO33/1377, PM Briefings list, London 19 May 1971, including 15 items of which: *‘1-Heath-Pompidou vision of role of enlarged European Community, 2-institutional development and majority voting, 3-future of sterling, 4-future of French language ... 15-Communist Threat in Italy’*.

¹⁴⁴ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)1, 14 May 1971, FCO Briefs on Heath / Pompidou vision of Role of Enlarged community.

¹⁴⁵ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)3, 18 May 1971, Treasury Prime Minister’s Brief on Future of sterling I.

¹⁴⁶ At the end of 1970, total sterling balances totalled 4.25bn of which 2.25bn of officials reserves of central banks of the sterling area, i.e. 44% of total sterling reserves of sterling area countries down from 63% in June 1967 ‘and falling’. Ibid.

burden of conversion to another asset, and the respecting the consistency with International Monetary System'.

But most importantly, in the view of the Treasury, what deeply concerned the British in the matter of sterling was secrecy. On this point, the briefs suggested Heath use a scripted wording with Pompidou on the lines of '*I hope that anything I say on this subject will be strictly as [sic] between ourselves*' (which were the words used by Heath during his first session meeting with Pompidou on Thursday 20 May 1971¹⁴⁷). The Treasury suggested further wording if the President continued to press and if the Prime Minister judged that it would be of decisive benefit to go further:

*I would be willing during the period before we enter the community to take specific action with a view to stabilising official sterling balances at about their present level but I must emphasize again that it is vital this possibility should be treated as confidential since any disclosure could upset our negotiations and disturb the markets.*¹⁴⁸

This statement indicated clearly that, in the view of the Treasury, Britain could not respond favourably to French demands and appease their concerns about the sterling balances, not because of a lack of political will, but rather because of their inability to settle alone an issue that involved several other actors dealt with individually (Basle Agreements signatories). Conversely, the British understandably wanted the French to commit to the strictest secrecy because of the potential impact of leaks on discussions about renewing the Basle Agreement. In the knowledge that sterling related issues would indubitably represent the bulk of the discussions to take place in May 1971, these Treasury inspired recommendations provided a striking argument for holding a secretly prepared one-to-one meeting, with a carefully controlled communication of the talks' results. In effect, Heath was not in a position to offer Pompidou much tangible reassurance. This was indicated in the Treasury's second brief¹⁴⁹, less focused on providing a discussion guide than on giving the Prime Minister a clear view from the Treasury of British interests in the monetary discussions to be

¹⁴⁷ MTF 710520, Pompidou-Heath Summit, Record of a Conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic in the Élysée Palace, Paris at 10.00 AM on Thursday 20 May 1971.

¹⁴⁸ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)3, 18 May 1971, Treasury Prime Minister's Brief on Future of sterling I.

¹⁴⁹ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)3 - Treasury Prime Minister's Brief on Future of sterling II, 13 May 1971.

held with Pompidou. This document, couched in a less conciliatory tone, suggested Heath adopt a more restrictive step-by-step concession approach aiming at considering *'how far we could meet points raised by the French on sterling if this appeared decisive for the negotiations'*, with the knowledge that the French had *'little or no support from the rest of the Six on these matters'*¹⁵⁰. This brief provided a catalogue of ready-made conditional arguments Heath could use, if needed, to adopt a more defensive attitude or provide a less compromising solution.

The tone of the Treasury's brief hardened when considering French misgivings about Article 108, commenting that Britain had complied fully with all Community directives and complaining that *'it [was] not easy for us to understand why we should be asked to do more'*. The positioning hardened even further on the discrimination issue about which, *'If the French press the non-discrimination point, there would be grave difficulties in meeting them. It would therefore involve very great cost and for that reason alone is unthinkable'*. This was a complete U-turn, without technically-based justification, from the FPAD's initial reaction (*'not technically difficult'*). Also, these defensive notes insisted that their understanding was that *'neither the Treaty nor the Directives at present require a common community policy towards third countries'*. Nevertheless, everything advised by the Treasury should be taken with circumspection as the Treasury *'had had an historic reluctance to join the EEC on grounds that it doubted the benefits of membership on the British economy'*¹⁵¹ to the point that Heath had called on Anthony Barber, a close and loyal supporter, to be Chancellor of the Exchequer in order to keep the Treasury under control as negotiations continued. This fact would also play a part in the various reasons why Heath wanted to meet Pompidou on his own, i.e. not accompanied by potentially challenging Treasury representatives.

But crucially on this last point, whereas a slightly reluctant Treasury advised Heath not to go beyond the existing British proposal which granted the end of discrimination at the end of the transition period in the knowledge that Britain *'fully accepted the principle of non-discrimination'*, the brief

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon*, p. 45.

suggested that the Prime Minister concede a move from this position if the French themselves insisted on ending discrimination by the end of the transition period. For the Treasury, this would depend:

greatly on the relation of confidence and discretion established in the talks and President Pompidou's willingness to accept that the matter will be difficult to manage both technically and politically. If these conditions are satisfied the best line might be to give the assurance (not for publication) that we understand the central importance of non-discrimination to the French.

The Treasury's brief continued with a warning about the dangers of any leak from the conversation as *'it could promote forestalling capital movements by both the United Kingdom residents and sterling area holders which might well force our hand in a disorderly situation and so reinforce political opposition to [Britain's] entry'*. The utter importance of secrecy, and related conditions of trust from the French President and in the French President, on matters that could have had, if publicly known, a damaging ripple effect on the value of sterling was key in the Prime Minister's decision to take conciliatory steps towards the French position. This secrecy should be based on trust and confidence, considered as crucial even by reluctant Treasury officials.

On monetary matters, the European-reluctant Treasury's warnings added to the FCO's strong reticence about the conclusions of the Werner Report on EMU insofar as the plan for monetary union commissioned by the Six *'raised many profound questions about sovereignty, both in Europe and at home'*.¹⁵² For the Treasury and the FCO, the plan had revolutionary long-term implications, both economic and political, that *'could imply the ultimate creation of a European Federal State with a single currency'*. The FCO deemed the Werner Report's long-term objectives *'very far-reaching'* as it would result in the interlocking of the members' economies which would raise many complex issues, including the specific management of Britain's balance of payments. British misgivings about the abandonment of sovereignty that such an objective would imply were nevertheless moderated by a *'far-fetched'* implementation date (1980) that *'may well prove fanciful'*, and by the prospect of

¹⁵² TNA FCO30/789, Foreign Office memorandum on 'Economic and Monetary Union', 9 November 1970.

having the capacity to influence its progress from the inside, once Britain's membership was acted. This was all the more vital for Britain since, at the final stage of the Werner Plan, *'economic sovereignty would to all intents and purpose disappear at the national level and the Community would itself be the master of overall economic policy'*. In the face of such complex and uncertain developments, with serious consequences for British sovereignty over its economy, the FCO pleaded for a 'wait and see' approach based on the expectation of taking part in discussions on the future of the Werner Plan as a full member of the Community. Interestingly, the FCO's analysis, which noted that the report had been generally welcomed by the Germans, the Italians, the Belgians and the Dutch, exhibited greater difficulties in assessing the overall French position. In their view, some members of the Government were enthusiastic (like the Minister of Finance Valéry Giscard d'Estaing), others more tepid supporters (among whom was a *'more cautious'* President Pompidou), or still others who were opponents like Maurice Schumann (who stated that *'the transfer to the Community of national powers over "currency and credit" was unacceptable to France'*).

From a British point of view, and knowing that France lacked support from the Five for its requests on the sterling balance, nothing very precise nor overly committing needed to be granted to France after entry. Britain could, and was willing to concede limited and targeted commitments only to the extent that the vital secrecy demanded by the complexities of the international role and status of sterling¹⁵³ was ensured. Thus reaching any sort of settlement on this premise could only occur through a secretly prepared bilateral meeting of which content and potential results should not be divulged to the two countries' public opinions (for fear that failure to agree would hurt them politically), to the Five (so that they would not be overly concerned by the bilateralism of the meetings and would not interfere in the debate), and to the holders of significant sterling reserves (for fear of triggering uncontrolled exchange movements on the sterling markets, potentially damaging for Britain's economy).

¹⁵³ Topic called *'Future of sterling'* in the British briefs and *'Role of sterling'* in the French briefs.

Moreover, as the principle of a bilateral meeting had already been accepted, the Prime Minister's incentive to discuss these issues, and to communicate cooperative intentions, would crucially depend on the trust and confidence established directly with the French President, as the Treasury had pointed out. This requirement for trust and confidence necessarily introduced a personal dimension to the forthcoming bilateral meetings. And this personal dimension meant that the quality of exchanges, the capacity to persuade on one side, and the readiness to be convinced on the other, would depend a great deal on the entente established between the two leaders. But, whereas the path was clear on Heath's side as to the overall objectives of a *rencontre* with the French, Pompidou's behaviour and approach as shown in the sterling chronicle was still deemed unfathomable by the British Prime Minister and his team. The actual personal views of Pompidou would thus be of major importance.

The personal dimension of the monetary issues for Pompidou

*'The President wishes to handle this himself'*¹⁵⁴: Soames' 29 March 1971 comment to Heath accurately depicted the French President's wish to get involved personally and to be the sole decision-maker in the then 'recently raised' issue by Boegner of sterling status and balances. It also underlined Pompidou's keen intellectual and personal interest in all matters monetary, characterised by firmly held beliefs about the management of the international monetary system. For Pompidou, there was a strong and complex link between the sterling issues raised by the perspective of enlargement to Britain and the turmoil in monetary affairs experienced in the recent years, described as:

the Dollar erratic flows and the questioning of the fixed parity system of Bretton Woods [which] generated monetary instability responsible for the French Francs crisis post May 1968, [forcing] the British Government to devalue the Pound in October 1967 and [putting] some currencies, like the

¹⁵⁴ TNA PREM15/370, Minutes of Heath, Douglas-Home, Soames meeting on the question of meeting with Pompidou, 29 March 1971.

*Deutsche mark, under strong pressure to be re-evaluated, as they were considered more and more like refuge currencies.*¹⁵⁵

These tensions culminated with West Germany Chancellor Brandt's decision to let the Deutschmark (DM) float on 10 May 1971¹⁵⁶, followed three months later by United States President Nixon's decision, the so-called 'Nixon shock', to unilaterally put an end to the Dollar convertibility to gold for the world central banks, thus rendering virtually ineffective the Bretton-Woods system¹⁵⁷ (of fixed parity regime) established in 1944. The German decision touched on particular views held by Pompidou about monetary orthodoxy, affected his core European solidarity principles, and confirmed his almost visceral fear of Germany's increasing influence and diplomatic emancipation.

Georges Pompidou was a '*former banker, with a keen interest in monetary matters, which was quite a rare occurrence in the political personnel of the time*'¹⁵⁸, so it was not surprising that the French President would take a special interest in discussions on sterling¹⁵⁹. Nevertheless, the rather uncharacteristic presidential involvement from the start of the discussion process on these particular matters, as well as the meeting with Heath in May 1971, revealed deeper motivations. These related to his geopolitical assessment of the international monetary system, to his analysis of the monetary situation in turmoil from the onset of the negotiations on 30 June 1970, and to his vision of the influence and leverage currency policies provided in the economic and political life of France and Europe.

¹⁵⁵ Bussière, 'Georges Pompidou', p. 69.

¹⁵⁶ This move was a first step towards the abandonment of the regime of European currencies fixed parity with the Dollar, generating intense speculation against the Dollar as well as revaluation pressure on the Deutschmark. Bonn had proposed to its Community partners to let their currencies float, the Netherlands and Belgium accepted, but France and Italy refused. Historically, the *nouveau franc*, which had been circulated in January 1960, and the West-German Deutschmark were both valued at a fixed parity with the American Dollar and therefore were linked by a fixed parity.

¹⁵⁷ '*Under the Bretton Woods system, the external values of foreign currencies were fixed in relation to the U.S. Dollar, whose value was in turn expressed in gold at the congressionally-set price of \$35 per ounce*', in *Nixon and the End of the Bretton Woods System, 1971–1973*, Office of the Historian.

URL: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/nixon-shock> [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹⁵⁸ Debré, *Entretiens*, p. 81.

¹⁵⁹ Bernard, 'Témoignages', p. 109.

According to Bernard, Pompidou's closest collaborator and adviser on all European matters¹⁶⁰, the French President's interest in monetary affairs did not waver during his five-year tenure. His personal involvement in all monetary discussions from the early stages of his presidency, starting from the Hague Conference in December 1969, was demonstrated by the many exchanges on this subject with his adviser.¹⁶¹ For Bernard, Pompidou's attachment to the fixed parity regime was based on a '*quasi metaphysical, quasi mystical*' belief¹⁶², confirming the very personal dimension (and strength) of the monetary question for the President. In Pompidou's opinion: '*there [was] no valid international monetary system without fixed parities, and there [were] fixed parities only in comparison with something immutable and immune to manipulations, that is to say gold*'.¹⁶³ In fact the preoccupation with the fixed parities regime also proceeded from then common contemporary conceptions as European countries, and particularly Pompidou's France, had relied and still depended on the Bretton-Wood's system adopted in 1944 for the stability of their currencies and the performance and protection of their economies. In this context, West Germany's proposal on 8 May 1971 to let the French Franc also float and abandon the fixed parities between the French Franc and the Deutschmark (which France, and later Italy, refused) amounted at the time, in Bernard's words, to nothing short of an '*absolute sin*'.¹⁶⁴ The latter's repeated usage of a language of belief, of conviction, and almost of faith, suggested the utmost importance played by monetary issues in Pompidou's core thinking on economic and financial issues, and therefore on all matters concerning sterling.

Indeed, it was Pompidou's fundamental belief that fixed parities guaranteed monetary stability and, therefore, were an essential factor in the smooth functioning of the Common Market's industry and agriculture, and an assurance of fair competition within it between member states.¹⁶⁵ Currency was, in this period, a very strong '*incarnation of national sovereignty*'¹⁶⁶ which was at the forefront of

¹⁶⁰ Tricaud, *L'Entourage*, p. 371.

¹⁶¹ AN AG5(2)/76 boxes: notes, reports and *Conseils restreints* preparations.

¹⁶² Jean René Bernard, 'Les Réactions de Georges Pompidou à l'Effondrement du Système de Bretton Woods', in Comité pour l'Histoire Économique et Financière de la France, *La France et les Institutions de Bretton Woods, 1944-1994* (CHEFF, 1998), p. 125.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 123, quote of Pompidou's press conference, 23 September 1971.

¹⁶⁴ Bernard, 'Témoignages', p. 108.

¹⁶⁵ Bussière, 'Georges Pompidou', p. 72.

¹⁶⁶ Bernard, 'Témoignages', p. 109.

Pompidou's preoccupations. So its management necessitated stability and control over fluctuations and rates of exchange. Fixed parities also had a political importance on the European level insofar as they were irrevocably factored into the planned implementation of the EMU initiated by France in the Hague in 1969 and later validated at the 1972 Paris Summit under the chairmanship of Pompidou. Finally, in the international area, they guaranteed a fair and stable environment based on '*equal rights and obligations*'¹⁶⁷ for all participants in the system.

These considerations determined Pompidou's insistence on preserving, at least temporarily, the unsatisfactory, but nevertheless necessary, reliance on the international reserve status of the US Dollar (the Dollar standard) which was the other pillar of the Bretton-Wood's system. Pompidou's deeply-rooted pragmatism made him reject antagonising the monetary supremacy of the US Dollar ('*we must not go to war against the Americans and against the Dollar because we will lose*'¹⁶⁸) as it was, in his express view, '*the only one currency which genuinely functioned as a reserve currency*'¹⁶⁹. In addition, the unilateral decision by Brandt's Germany to let the Deutschmark float (followed suit by the Netherlands and Belgium) on 10 May 1971, made him fear the establishment of a *de facto* Deutschmark reserve currency leading, in the long-run, to France's loss of control over its economic and financial policies, and thus of its political sovereignty. Pompidou's private comments at the 11 May 1971 *Conseil des Ministres* that '*the monetary affair [had] awaken everyone, including [himself]*', and that '*the strength of Germany [had] appeared visibly, and the value of [France's] currency too*'¹⁷⁰, tellingly showed his assessment of German power and French weakness to counteract it. In that sense, the Deutschmark and sterling issues converged because of their similarities in relation to France's status and balance of power within the Community, to the stability of member states' economies, and to the design and implementation of the future EMU.

¹⁶⁷ Pompidou quoted in Bernard, 'Les Réactions', p. 125.

¹⁶⁸ AN 89AJ(10), Notes manuscrites Michel Jobert, Conseil des Ministres du 11 mai 1971: '*Il ne faut pas faire la guerre aux USA et au Dollar car nous la perdrons*'.

¹⁶⁹ TNA PREM15/062 Soames to Douglas-Home, secret memo 'E.E.C. and sterling' 30 November 1970.

¹⁷⁰ AN 89AJ(10), Notes manuscrites Michel Jobert, Conseils des Ministres 11 mai 1971, full quote: '*L'affaire monétaire a réveillé tout le monde y compris moi-même – moins que Monsieur Brandt dont j'ai reçu une lettre fort aimable dont on verra ce qu'il faut faire. La force de l'Allemagne est apparue pleinement et la valeur de notre monnaie aussi*'.

Nevertheless, enlargement to Britain, with its cohort of sterling related questions, represented the best option for Pompidou to counterbalance Germany's growing influence. The inclusion of sterling in the basket of European currencies certainly complicated the development and management of the EMU and the smooth running of the Community from a monetary point of view. But it minimised the Deutschmark issue because of the weight and impact of its extra-European components, and also because it might offer better prospects of resolution given the positive noises coming from the British camp about the potential winding down of sterling balances, and the phasing-out of the reserve role of sterling.¹⁷¹ Conversely, Germany's then recent monetary developments were deemed '*anti-communautaires*'¹⁷² by Pompidou. The move towards floating currency was declared '*most unhealthy*' by Chaban-Delmas who confided to Heath that '*if this continued for any length of time it might prove most serious for the future of the Community*', therefore necessitating that all monetary affairs '*should be put in order before Britain's entry otherwise [France] could expect nothing from [Britain] but pity*'.¹⁷³

Sterling and Deutschmark issues, their existing or potential international or Community reserve roles, their marking of Britain's and Germany's financial and economic powers, troubled Pompidou's geopolitical and geo-economic beliefs. They also challenged his notion of monetary orthodoxy which he had put forward, in person or through the intervention of trusted collaborators, on all major occasions since the relaunch of negotiations for Britain's entry into the EEC. Since the Hague Conference in December 1969, at the beginning of the enlargement negotiations in June 1970, on the occasion of the 'Boegner coup' in March 1971, in the heat of the stalling Brussels negotiations, and in the wake of the surprise Deutschmark crisis a fortnight before his meeting with Heath in May 1971 – at all these moments Pompidou had communicated, with conviction and constancy, a very personal concern about the impact of monetary problems in the running of international regulatory

¹⁷¹ TNA PREM15/062, Soames to Sir Con O'Neill, 30 November 1970, '*E.E.C. and sterling*'.

¹⁷² Bussière and Willaert, *Un Projet pour l'Europe*, p. 146.

¹⁷³ TNA PREM15/2241, Records of conversation between the Prime Minister and M. Chaban-Delmas, after the last session with Pompidou on 20 May 1971, '*the PM spent about three quarter of an hour with M. Chaban-Delmas, also present were M. Simon Nora, M. de la Fournière and the Baron de Courcel*'.

systems, in the design of tools for further European integration (EMU, The European currency snake), and in the protection and promotion of France's national interests and status.

These very personal conceptions were not necessarily shared by his partners and counterparts, as proved by Germany's unilateral decision to float its currency, or by the 'multiple choice' conclusions of the Ad hoc Group demonstrating the disagreement between the French and the Five on how to handle sterling issues. For Pompidou, this meant he had to get personally involved with Heath, in the most appropriate forum (i.e. not in the '*Brussels marketplace atmosphere*'¹⁷⁴), to discuss his very personal misgivings on sterling.

The French President evidently possessed the qualities and competence to handle the complexity and intricacies of these subjects. He was also helped, in dealing with the profuse information and the financial complexities, mainly by Bernard and Jobert and, more widely, by his government agencies, ministers and experts. It would have made sense to meet with Heath in the company of these experts and ministers (as Heath had done the previous month with Chancellor Brandt) and without imperilling the secrecy required by the subject. So this raises the question why Pompidou did not opt to meet Heath together with Jobert and Bernard, or in a more official and diplomatic capacity, by including Giscard, Schumann and Boegner, as all three were deeply involved with the Brussels negotiations, and their financial, economic, and diplomatic aspects?

This study has set out the reasons for a bilateral meeting to take place, and for the secrecy required in its preparation and unfolding. It has not yet however broached the issue of the format of the meeting. Why did it take the form of a tête-à-tête between the two leaders? What were the reasons for Heath and Pompidou to choose a one-to-one meeting to discuss matters that would have logically required the presence of experts and officials, in a format that could have respected the required secrecy?

¹⁷⁴ TNA PREM15/062, Soames to O'neill, 30 April 1970, 'E.E.C. and sterling'.

A tête-à-tête as a sign of distrust of European partners, institutions and collaborators

It is this study's contention that there were additional reasons to hold one-to-one Heath-Pompidou meetings besides the secrecy required to handle monetary issues in the context of the Basle Agreement renewal. These other reasons, mainly on Pompidou's side, related to facts which, if made public, would be potentially detrimental to reaching the agreement the French desired, and were not avowable publicly, between member states, or even within the French state apparatus. These reasons arose, on the one hand, from tensions and antagonisms perceived amongst those actors negotiating in the Brussels arena, and on the other hand, from the political and European enmities and personality clashes within the palaces of the Republic.

The sources used to support this assertion comprise notes taken in a number of meetings and *Conseils* by Bernard and especially by Jobert¹⁷⁵ which all give a valuable insight into the 'off-the-record' conversations held in confidence by Pompidou and members of his closest circle. They also derive from British governmental archives which bring together reports, notes and analyses of discussions with the French officials and with the Five, with whom British representatives maintained, at the time, privileged and seemingly trustful and open relationships (in comparison to the ones between the Five and the French).

The analysis of the reasons for a Heath/Pompidou summit without other attendees can be discussed on three different levels: at the European/Brussels level, with regards to concerns about the troubled relations between the French, the Five and the European Commission, at the negotiating team level, with regards to the personal enmities and criticisms between the French delegates and ministers involved in the negotiations and their European partners, and finally, at a domestic/political level

¹⁷⁵ TNA PREM15/372 Soames to Armstrong, 6 May 1971. Jobert's description by Soames in preparation for the meeting was telling of his importance and indispensableness: *'Jobert is supremely well equipped, he is experienced, highly intelligent and imperturbable the best kind of "grand commis de l'État". He is totally discreet (though he can be indiscreet if required). His loyalty to M. Pompidou in good times and bad times gives him both a great deal of personal authority and a privileged position of intimacy with the President which bridges their official and personal relationship'*.

with regards to the Élysée's endemic distrust for the Quai d'Orsay's position and political stand, underlined by the President's disagreement with arch-Gaullists and centrist ministers.

Lack of Trust in the Five and disregard for the Commission

Michel Jobert's hand-written notes provide a unique view¹⁷⁶ of the debates and deliberations in the *Conseils des Ministres* (which included personalities with conflicting political affinities such as the Gaullist Schumann and Debré, or the centrist Giscard d'Estaing and Chaban-Delmas¹⁷⁷), without technocratic or diplomatic amendments or rewriting. They shed a light, in particular, on Pompidou's stark views, at times, on his partners in the Community.

Pompidou was intransigent and frustrated with Germany's critical stance vis-à-vis France, with its 'naughty'¹⁷⁸ behaviour and foreign policy contradictions, complaining that 'Germany tended to have its own policy but not always the appropriate one'¹⁷⁹, that 'they always tried to put us in the wrong', continuing with a personal criticism of Brandt 'who reaffirmed the unity of the German nation but could not reconcile this with his European stance'. It was a fact that Pompidou's view of German policies under Brandt was blurred by his lack of appreciation for the personality of Chancellor Brandt¹⁸⁰ and, above all, by his mistrust of, and reticence towards, Brandt's Ostpolitik¹⁸¹, and more recently, by his anger at the Deutschmark floatation. In the same vein, Pompidou was fiercely critical of the lack of European perspectives and ambitions on the part of the Italians viewed as only interested in economic development and, in his opinion, in a 'vague free-trade zone to be amicable

¹⁷⁶ The General Secretary of the Élysée, is the 'only person authorised to take notes during the Conseil des Ministres ... Ministers can only take notes on subjects related to their activities in order to keep the deliberations secret', in Tricaud, *L'Entourage*, p. 168.

¹⁷⁷ Respectively *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Ministre de la Défense, Ministre de l'Économie et des Finances, Premier Ministre*.

¹⁷⁸ TNA PREM15/2241, Records of conversation between the Prime Minister and M. Chaban-Delmas, after the last session with Pompidou on 20 May 1971, quoting Chaban-Delmas' comment to Heath: 'Germans have been very naughty in taking the decision that they had'.

¹⁷⁹ AN 89AJ(10), notes manuscrites Michel Jobert, *Conseils des Ministres 1er Semestre 1971, Conseil des Ministres du 20 janvier 1971*.

¹⁸⁰ Among many similar accounts, Mr. Falkenburger's, German interpreter to Pompidou, who stated that the President was not 'a great fan' of Chancellor Brandt in AGP, *Georges Pompidou*, p. 279, or Jobert describing the Brandt-Pompidou relation, contrary to the relation Heath-Pompidou, as lacking intimacy despite an appetite for all things European, in Jobert, *L'Autre Regard*, p. 116.

¹⁸¹ Kissinger quoted to say: 'every conversation with Pompidou, no matter how it begins, always ends-up by involving the German problem', in Gowland and Turner, *Reluctant Europeans*, p. 170.

with the Americans'.¹⁸² The Italians were, in Pompidou's words, '*incapable of solving their problems*'.¹⁸³ In addition, Pompidou was exasperated by the Benelux countries' fondness for the subject of political integration and supranationalism and was '*tired of hearing about political integration from the Benelux, which was meaningless and did not make any progress*'.¹⁸⁴ Generally speaking, Pompidou was irritated by the lack of solidarity demonstrated by his five partners in what he believed was an altruistic and realistic struggle for the Community's economic stability and progress ('*We [French] defend the community and its future*'¹⁸⁵). His annoyance even went as far as reproaching some of the Five for having succumbed to the '*Anglo-Saxon and Atlantic*' attraction of "*exaltation du grand large*", perceptible in Germany, Italy and the Netherlands'¹⁸⁶, a real capital sin in the Gaullist lexicon. These were of course instant pictures taken by Jobert of debates held in particular circumstances, in the intimacy and confidentiality of the *Conseils des Ministres*. Nevertheless they serve as fragmentary testimonies of a general ambiance and *état d'esprit*. Pompidou's frustrations found their justification in the behaviour and positioning of the Five, especially in times of tension with the British chief negotiator Lord Rippon, when the Five were deemed to act as a virtual anti-French/pro-Britain ensemble on matters of importance for their French partners. This contributed to creating in the French camp a 'them and us' frame of mind at the top of the French executive which influenced the reading of the positionings of all parties.

It appears that French distrust of the Five was to some extent justified when considering confidential reports to the FCO and to Heath of their positioning in heated discussions about, for instance, Community Finance. On this point, the Minister for Enlargement Negotiations in the Netherland's

¹⁸² AN 89AJ(10), notes manuscrites Michel Jobert Conseils des Ministres, Conseil des Ministres du 20 janvier 1971: '*mais les tendances vont plutôt vers une vague zone de libre échange pour être aimables avec les USA*'.

¹⁸³ AN 89AJ(10), notes manuscrites Michel Jobert Conseils des Ministres 1er Semestre 1971, Conseil des Ministres du 10 mars 1971: '*mais sur les Italiens, laissons les tomber. Ils sont incapables à dominer leurs problèmes*'.

¹⁸⁴ AN 89AJ(10), notes manuscrites Michel Jobert Conseils des Ministres 1er Semestre 1971, Conseil des Ministres du 20 janvier 1971: '*fatigué d'entendre parler de l'intégration politique par le Benelux, qui n'a aucun sens et qui ne fait aucun progrès*' ... '*je crains qu'il y ait dans tout cela la volonté de ne rien faire. Personne ne croit aux commissions supranationales, Mr Luns le premier*'.

¹⁸⁵ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise (annotation of Pompidou on Brandt's letter), 18 mars 1971.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

Permanent Representation, M. Huitbregtse, told the British Delegation that the Dutch, German, Italian and Belgian Permanent Representations *'were agreed that they must have a common position in face of the French at the Council on 10 April and that the proposals [on percentage and timing of payment of Community Budget] commended themselves to all the four delegations'*.¹⁸⁷ On such an important matter, there existed a 'united front' against the French, bringing together the Five who had devised, exchanged, and agreed a common position on the matter¹⁸⁸, communicated in advance to the British, not only without the knowledge of the French Representation, but in preparation of a challenge to the expected French position, whatever it might have been. The 'Four's' tactics were determined with a view to respond to any type of French proposals, as proven by the indication that the German Permanent Representation's point of view (*'which the Dutch, Italian and Belgium Representations shared'*) was to be presented *'after the French had come forward with whatever proposal they intended to make'*.¹⁸⁹ There was a certain mockery about the French habit of launching seemingly French-centred negotiation points in Brussels without prior consultation, as on the occasion of the Boegner's statement. This led the Five to propose helping to counter France, or making its negotiation stance difficult to sustain as, for instance, Luns' offer (*'what could we do to help?'*) to Rippon *'to put the French on the spot'* on their proposal for Britain's percentage of the Community budget¹⁹⁰, as he *'was always ready to speak toughly if this helped'*¹⁹¹. Resentment with the French culminated in derogatory comments of the sort made by the Belgian European Commissioner Vicomte Davignon, sharing the very negative views of Belgians about Pompidou with his British counterparts: a *'small trader who wishes to sell his overcoat for as much as possible'*.¹⁹² A consequence of these developments was that the Community's (i.e. the Five's) *'irritation and*

¹⁸⁷ TNA PREM15/371, telegram to FCO, 29 April 1971, reporting conversation with the Minister for Enlargement Negotiations in the Dutch Permanent Representation, M. Huitbregse.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., Huitbregse also announced that: *'the Germans had consulted the Dutch, Italian and Belgian delegations and said that all three of them agreed on the substance of the draft proposal [about community Finance]'*.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ TNA PREM15/370, Report to Heath of meeting Rippon with Luns, 20 April 1971. In this conversation Luns really showed his cards, his anti-French stance and avowed/blind loyalty to the British when declaring: *'even if the British decided to side with the French against the Five, they would have full Dutch sympathy'*.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² TNA PREM15/369, Barrington to Noon, 10 March 1971, 'Belgian Views on Europe'.

impatience' was considered by the British delegation as a '*help to give any passage to [Britain's] proposal to try to reach agreement on the main issue*'.¹⁹³ Nevertheless, this was not an indication that the Five were ready to accept anything from Britain without negotiation. It was a fact though that, because most French positions '*were regarded as unreasonable by all its partners*', the Five were more attentive to Britain's case and more inclined to set principles for entry that could be reviewed once Britain gained membership. As a result, the French were '*more or less completely isolated*'¹⁹⁴ in Brussels.

The frequent collusion of the Five against France in 1971 was nevertheless no news to the French side, neither naïve nor blind to the Five's concerted manoeuvres to soften or oppose French proposals to the British. At the very same time of discussions on Community Finance, '*France had its position but the other four delegations [were] closer to the one of the British*' to such an extent that Bernard acidly and accurately (as seen above) commented that '*though differently exposed, the other delegations' proposals seemed so close they could have been inspired by the same source*'.¹⁹⁵ These comments and recriminations were indicative of the state of mind of front line French negotiators who thought they were waging a solitary fight against united opponents, keen on deriding French 'exaggerations' and a deemed anti-British stubbornness which could be considered as a lasting side-effect of de Gaulle's decade long intransigence.

In addition, France could not expect, and did not wish for, any assistance from the Commission to balance the recalcitrant attitude of the Five towards her. Pompidou always had a very set view on the role and remit of the Commission (actually similar to the definition of the Treaty of Rome), and did not hesitate to make it known in restricted circles. Typically, his assertion that '*the Commission is not an executive power, it is an executive agent*'¹⁹⁶ denoted a principled refusal of any intervention

¹⁹³ TNA PREM15/369, Rippon to Heath.

¹⁹⁴ TNA PREM15/369, O'Neill to FCO, 'Enlargement negotiations EEC Council', 15 March 1971.

¹⁹⁵ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, note du 3 février 1971: '*elles ont d'ailleurs exposé des systèmes si voisins les uns des autres que bien qu'ils aient été remises dans des termes différents on pouvait s'imaginer qu'ils relevaient d'une même inspiration*'.

¹⁹⁶ AN 89AJ(7), notes manuscrites Michel Jobert, Conseil des Ministres 3 décembre 1969: '*La Commission n'est pas un exécutif mais un agent d'exécution*'.

by the Commission in discussions between the Six and Britain. In this context, the offer made by the Commission, presided over by the Italian Franco Maria Malfatti, to help the negotiating teams *'extricate themselves from reciprocal trial and errors'* was forcibly rebuked by Schuman who reminded the Commission that its role was *'not to referee the debates but to protect the Community's interests'*¹⁹⁷.

These facts contributed to the need for a bilateral Heath-Pompidou meeting, with Pompidou doubting his European partners, mistrusting their motivations and judgement, and questioning their sense of Community solidarity. A meeting involving, in various forms or capacities, other Heads of State or Government, or the Commission, would have added difficulties for Pompidou as he would have been prevented the direct access to Heath he needed, free from political and diplomatic interferences from deemed untrustworthy partners. In addition, their lack of positive feedback to his misgivings on the sterling issue had been a clear sign that he had to find out for himself, without the Five's input, the extent to which the British Prime Minister wanted to resolve this very personal concern. Also, the presence in the planned meeting of ministers and/or experts would have risked giving hints to the Five about the subjects and expectations of the summit, and multiplied the chances of leaks in Brussels or in the press, thus generating further discussions and undesired involvement from the Five and increasing British concerns for secrecy. Consequently, a complete black-out on the arrangements, agenda and result of the summit was key to a 'Five-free' subject-focused tête-a-tête with the British incumbent.

In addition, Pompidou's assessment, through his closest advisers, was that the French negotiating teams were not up to the task anymore, whether because of negotiation fatigue, or expectations out of line with the core objectives of the negotiations.

¹⁹⁷ AN AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969-1970, Compte Rendu de l'entretien du Ministre des Affaires Étrangères avec M. Malfatti - Président de la Commission des Communautés Européennes, Paris 5 février 1971: *'la Commission ne peut jouer le rôle d'arbitre entre le Royaume Uni et les Six mais doit défendre l'intérêt communautaire'*.

Fear of isolation, negotiation fatigue, defeatism and pro-English 'snobbery'

These factors were not directly linked *per se* to the initial choice of a two-day one-to-one secret meeting between Heath and Pompidou, in the sense that the one-to-one process would have been chosen even with performing negotiating teams. But they demonstrated the increasing fragility of France's negotiating capacity which required a personal control from Pompidou if he wanted to keep his credibility and achieve his goals. They justified the Head of State's bypassing of the usual and traditional negotiation process as it was in danger of quietly collapsing due to lack of motivation, fatigue or internal dissension. There was a deteriorating ambiance and loss of focus which would have inevitably been interpreted as signs of weakness, as a lack of determination in the French camp after years of frontal opposition and cunningly operated manoeuvres in Brussels. Finally problems in the French negotiating team could be possibly interpreted as marks of internal dissension, undermining Pompidou's negotiating position.

A gloomy and alarmist assessment by Bernard warned the President of negative changes in the attitude and psychological predispositions of the French negotiating teams whether in Brussels or at different levels of the state apparatus.¹⁹⁸ Early in 1971, Bernard reported that the negotiation had entered a zone of turbulence, at both international and domestic levels, created by the slow progress of negotiations, generating an increased sense of isolation of the French within the Community. At the international level, French isolation was underlined by the initiative taken by the Conservative Party and by Jean Monnet's *Mouvement Européen* (possibly connected with the regular and private meetings between Heath and Monnet alluded to above) designed to revive the British public's desire for membership. Domestically, or '*administratively*' as Bernard put it, the tendency was towards '*agitation and abandonment*'¹⁹⁹ since, in his opinion, all ministers involved in the discussions were becoming nervous and '*everyone would like ... to be the first one to yield*'²⁰⁰. Bernard further reported that the general mood was not leaning towards firmness and that, '*even France's Permanent*

¹⁹⁸ AN AG5(2)/76, Conseil restreint sur la négociation Anglaise, note Bernard à Jobert, Négociations avec la Grande Bretagne, relative aux éléments d'un compromis sur le règlement financier, 12 février 1971.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.: '*Quant au climat administratif français il va dans le sens de l'agitation et de l'abandon*'.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.: '*Chacun voudrait, je crois, être le premier à céder*'.

Representation in Brussels, for the first time in ten years, was embarrassed to find itself isolated'. This clearly meant that the French teams in Brussels were showing signs of negotiation fatigue, probably resulting from years of firm and often solitary opposition in Community debates, originally accepted as purposeful and fair (for the French), but now, with a potential failure of enlargement negotiations, deemed questionable given the general ambiance in favour of Britain's entry. *'In short, this whole business is unravelling'*²⁰¹ was Bernard's conclusion.

This sentiment of isolation, and the ensuing despondency had been brewing since the end of 1970. By that time, the French had begun to feel the impact of being constantly at loggerheads with their European partners on almost all matters (especially about Community Finance and agricultural exceptions), creating a genuine feeling of battling alone. A typical example was the report communicated to Pompidou of the *'very disappointing'* discussion about the EMU in December 1970²⁰², during which the French negotiation team's *'feeling of isolation, from a psychological point of view, only came second to the very antagonistic intensity of the debate with their German partners'*²⁰³. This example appeared as a confirmation, a few months apart, of the already generally negative assessment by Schumann, Boegner and Pompidou²⁰⁴ that enlargement discussions were both encouraging and worrying, as the seemingly positive progress in the negotiations was already then counterbalanced by the certainty that France would find herself quickly isolated within the Community.

In addition, there existed, according to Bernard, a 'pro-British' faction within the French teams continuously posing problems to the negotiating process because of their propensity to call for bilateral contacts at ministerial level, demonstrating a damaging *'snobbery, France's worst enemy*

²⁰¹ Ibid.: *'Bref toute cette affaire s'effiloche'*.

²⁰² AN AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969-1970, note pour le Président de la République, Conseil des Ministres des Communautés du 14 décembre 1970: institution par étapes d'une Union Économique et Monétaire.

²⁰³ Ibid.: *'La délégation française a pratiquement été constamment isolée mais, sur un plan psychologique, cet isolement est passé au second plan en raison du caractère très vif de l'antagonisme qui a séparé pendant toute la durée des débats nos positions de celles de la délégation allemande'*.

²⁰⁴ AN AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969-1970, projet de Compte Rendu du Conseil Interministériel sur les Questions Européennes du Jeudi 12 mars 1970.

then', consisting of an immoderate '*love to speak English and to speak to the English*'²⁰⁵. In the overall deterioration of the French team's position, these elements competed with the open, and presumably publicly expressed, disagreement with their principal's instructions. This inevitably led the opposite side to note the incoherence of the French tactics, detected by Rippon and reported to his hierarchy in March 1971 in such terms as '*some of the French delegation were not happy with their position*'²⁰⁶.

If there was no immediate risk of seeing France's negotiation capacity collapse dramatically, there was nonetheless a possibility that this could seriously undermine the overall strength and coherence of the arguments put forward by Pompidou's team and by the President himself. Moreover, these misgivings were a potential hindrance to the whole negotiation process, given its approaching completion target (planned for the end of the first semester of 1971), which put added pressure on all parties to come rapidly to an acceptable agreement. From this perspective, Bernard's observations to Pompidou constituted a proof of the growing tensions, political disunity, and psychological unease in the French ranks. These tensions were the result of the growing demotivation of French officials, involved in the negotiations at various levels, who were both resentful of their evident and damaging isolation, and openly questioning the official line defended in Brussels. Disunity in the French camp was the effect of unsanctioned discussions by certain French officials with their British counterparts, deeply uncharacteristic of the traditionally centralised French negotiating process, and detrimental to its coherence and positioning. An example of this tendency was French *Commissaire* Jean-Francois Deniau's heart-to-heart conversation with Soames which was surprisingly informative about the reigning *état d'esprit* at the Élysée, and which willingly offered an insider's view of the French negotiators.²⁰⁷ Psychological unease was the mark of the

²⁰⁵ AN AG5(2)/89, Affaires Européennes 1969/1970, 'Généralités sur les négociations entre la CE et les pays candidats à l'adhésion', note Bernard revue par Balladur, 28 juin 1970, Négociations entre la CEE et les pays candidats à l'adhésion: '*le snobisme est dans cette affaire notre pire ennemi dans la mesure où nombreux sont ceux qui aiment parler aux Anglais et parler Anglais*'.

²⁰⁶ TNA PREM15/369, Rippon to Heath, 17 March 1971, 'E.E.C. negotiations and your visit to Bonn'.

²⁰⁷ TNA PREM15/369, Soames to O'Neill, secret report of conversation, 24 March 1971, 'Deniau Pompidou and the conclusion of negotiations', mentioning French *Commissaire* in charge of enlargement negotiations coordination Deniau's indiscretion about his meeting with Pompidou on the pretence of beating the guard

waning resolve felt at administrative and ministerial levels, balanced with a more resolved and rigid attitude towards opponents of the French theses. In this instance, feedback from the teams on the ground in Brussels²⁰⁸ conveyed the idea that discussions had reached an impasse requiring, more and more pressingly, higher-level intervention, ministerial or presidential, to unblock the negotiations, which appeared more and more as a rear-guard struggle rather than a productive confrontation of ideas and positions leading to mutually satisfactory compromises.

In this context, the potential loss of control was a crucial element in Pompidou's desire to take matters in hand, personally, with the least possible political, and diplomatic interference. This assessment was all the more valid in that these conflicts were indicative of frictions emanating both from the French administration's groupthink, and from influential political opponents or detractors.

The problem with the Quai d'Orsay and the Schumann case

A possible alternative axis of reflection, to explain and justify Pompidou's choice for a secret one-to-one meeting, would be to envisage whom would have attended a meeting designed to unblock the Brussels stalemate, if neither Heath nor Pompidou had wished to meet in a tête-à-tête. The first option would have been a meeting with the Heads of State and Government of the Five, including the President of the Commission. This Chapter has demonstrated that such an option could not be adopted by Pompidou as it would have entailed the participation of France's partners, either united in opposition or, at best, timidly conciliatory. It would have been a case of a meeting of Britain and the Five on the one hand, and France on the other. This could not be acceptable from the French point of view. Such an event could only have confirmed France's 'splendid isolation' witnessed in Brussels over the past ten months. The second option would have been to hold a Heath-Pompidou meeting with the direct or occasional assistance of experts and advisers, like those that Heath had brought with him to Paris in May 1971 and who, in reality, had stayed discreetly on the fringes of the

of Bernard and Jobert, and referring on several occasions to a '*friend*' providing insider's information to the British Ambassador (passages deleted and retained under section 3(4)).

²⁰⁸ AN AG5(2)/76, Adhésion de la Grande Bretagne, Proposition pour le règlement financier, note du Directeur du Budget, R. de la Genière, au Ministre des Finances Giscard d'Estaing, 12 février 1971.

Élysée Palace discussions. This option was suggested as undesirable by Jobert to Soames on 6 May 1971²⁰⁹, and would have made the top-level *rencontre* a mere technical discussion, based on specialist arguments and counterarguments on all subjects. Such an option would have offered nothing different from the customary discussions already held in Brussels, but with the additional risk of directly and personally imputing any failure to the British Prime Minister and the French President. In any case, a secret preparatory meeting gathering Heath's and Pompidou's close advisers and experts²¹⁰ had already taken place before the *rencontre* on 15 May at the Élysée to '*prepare the meeting, not to discuss*'²¹¹ as per Heath's instructions.

The last hypothetical option would have involved first line ministers directly concerned by, and actively participating in, the resolution of the issues listed on the agenda.²¹² This classic summitry solution would have undoubtedly brought in on the French side (and their counterparts on the British side, including British Ambassador Christopher Soames) the Minister for Foreign Affairs Maurice Schumann, the Minister of Economy and Finance, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and potentially, the Minister for Agriculture, Jacques Duhamel, as well as other 'specialist subjects' ministers as the case arose, and of course the Premier Ministre, Jacques Chaban-Delmas.²¹³ This option would have presented the French President with obstacles created by the personalities, political orientations and views about Europe of the potential main participants (particularly Schumann and Giscard d'Estaing), whose attendance at the meeting would have had a political and psychological significance for Pompidou and for his interlocutor. As far as Giscard d'Estaing was concerned, his positive approach to enlargement was not a problem *per se* for Pompidou, despite the former's resolute positivity

²⁰⁹ TNA PREM15/371, Soames to FCO and 10 Downing Street, report of his secret meeting with Jobert, 6 May 1971.

²¹⁰ TNA PREM15/372, on 15 May 1971, Jobert, Bernard and Raimond on the French side, and Armstrong, Hurd, Palliser, and Thornton on the British side, held secret and confidential '*preparatory meetings*' to brush all the topics to be discussed between Heath and Pompidou.

²¹¹ TNA PREM15/372, 13 May 1971, Instructions to preparatory mission: '*the mission is not intended to negotiate or reach agreement on any of the matters on the agenda for the meeting between the President and the Prime Minister*'.

²¹² i.e. the remaining points included Community Finance, New Zealand Dairy, and sterling, plus an added reference to the needs of arrangements on fisheries.

²¹³ TNA PREM15/372, 18 May 1971, Soames to Armstrong recommending acceptance of Chaban-Delmas' invitation to Hotel Matignon.

about the EMU and more tolerant consideration of the acute nature of the sterling issue. In fact, Pompidou's concerns had more to do with the domestic political challenge Giscard posed, and with the limited trust Pompidou had in the minister's willingness to defend Pompidou's theses. On the first point, a successful meeting with Heath could also reflect positively on Giscard, whose presence in the government was partly a product of the requirements of political alliances. Any potentially positive consequence in favour of Giscard was politically problematic for Pompidou as Giscard nurtured plans to challenge him in the next presidential elections. The success of enlargement had to be exclusively owned by Pompidou, and not jointly with Giscard whom '*he wished he could sack if only he were certain that it would make Giscard go away hunting in Africa*'.²¹⁴ Moreover Giscard was, in Pompidou's opinion, untrustworthy given that he considered his Finance Minister '*completely worn out*'²¹⁵ and '*lost*'²¹⁶ when dealing with the all-important monetary matters.

Schumann, the Foreign Minister, posed a different type of problem to Pompidou in the sense that his presence at the meeting, which would have been inevitable if any ministers were invited, would have been negatively interpreted by the British in the wake of the Minister's bad press in Brussels and London. This problem appeared clearly during Pompidou's discussion with Soames in November 1970 when the former was asked by the latter about the feasibility of the rapid completion of negotiations, particularly when Schumann would be holding the Chair of the Council of Ministers for six months from January 1971 onwards. Pompidou declared that '*he too was willing to go quick and*

²¹⁴ Debré, *Entretiens*, p. 183: '*Ah si j'étais sûr qu'en le mettant à la porte du Gouvernement il se contenterait d'aller chasser en Afrique, comme je le mettrais à la porte*', in reference to Giscard well-known big game hunting passion, nevertheless a comment to be taken with caution as Debré was not particularly on friendly terms with Giscard d'Estaing.

²¹⁵ Debré, *Entretiens*, p. 172: full quote '*Quant à Giscard, comme ministre des finances il est usé, archivé. Il montre la corde ... on m'a enterré trop vite. Alors Giscard, Chaban se sont vus Président de la République. Giscard sera battu, Chaban sera battu. C'est Mitterrand ou moi: voilà la vérité et il n'y a rien d'autre*' ('*as far as Giscard is concerned, he is tired out, completely worn out ... I have been counted out too quickly. So Giscard and Chaban saw themselves as President of the Republic. Giscard will be defeated, so will Chaban. It is either Mitterrand or me: that is the simple truth*').

²¹⁶ Bussière and Willaert, *Un Projet pour l'Europe*, p. 179. Annotation de Pompidou sur la note Bernard pour Pompidou, 28 Juin 1970: '*Mr Bernard, toute la partie monétaire est capitale. J'en ai parlé à M. Giscard d'Estaing mais je crains qu'il ne s'égaré volontiers*' ('*M. Bernard, all the monetary question is essential. I have talk about it to Giscard but I fear he might get lost*').

that serious matters should be broached before December 31st to avoid a Franco-British duel'.²¹⁷ This was from Pompidou a barely subtle acknowledgement that Schumann was on a mission to be tough with Britain, a fact Pompidou disapproved of but could not necessarily influence. This comment incidentally demonstrated Pompidou's lack of control over his minister, confirmed by the Italian Ambassador to Rippon who commented that *'problems were political and no longer economic'*²¹⁸ for the French President, and that *'several of the older Gaullists were perhaps presenting a political problem to M. Pompidou who did not have the same authority as General de Gaulle'*²¹⁹. Schumann's firmness, if not intransigence, in his exchanges with Britain's officials, indeed posed a serious problem to the establishment of positive and fruitful relationships. His 9 November 1970 conversation with Rippon, marked by cold exchanges, was characteristic of a certain rigidity, and a tendency to overestimate the difficulty of reaching any agreement. On this occasion, Schumann significantly declared that his own approach to the problem was somewhat uncomfortable since the French felt:

*more strongly than ever for all conceivable political reasons - I speak from the heart - that enlargement should take place as soon as possible but there was a long way to go [...] The stumbling blocks were high and the bones of contention were big.*²²⁰

Schumann's traditional Gaullist attitude, offering a mixture of tepid support for enlargement and technical argument-based reticence, was also denounced in Brussels where there was certainly no love lost on the Five's side. Rippon's report of the *'renewed criticisms of Schumann's partisan chairmanship'*²²¹ summed up in the refusal of the Dutch, Italian and German Foreign Ministers to attend a meeting *'to demonstrate their dislike of Schumann's position and attitude'*, was symptomatic of the crystallisation of the Five's irritation and impatience towards the French in the

²¹⁷ AN AG5(2)/108, Audience de Christopher Soames auprès de Georges Pompidou le 20 novembre 1970: *'il faut que les questions sérieuses soient abordées avant le 31 décembre pour éviter un duel Franco-Britannique'*. Assertion reproduced in Soames report to FCO in TNA PREM15062 My call on President Pompidou on 20 November 1970, as *'one thing he was determined not to happen was for the negotiations to become a battle between Britain and France'*.

²¹⁸ TNA PREM15/369, Record of talks between Manzini and Rippon, 25 March 1971.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ TNA CAB164/771, Record of conversation between Rippon and Schumann, Paris 9 November 1970.

²²¹ TNA PREM15/369, Rippon to Heath, 17 March 1971.

very person of the Foreign Minister. Unsurprisingly, Schumann was kept in ignorance of the Heath-Pompidou meeting until its public announcement on 8 May. Pompidou's firm instructions to that effect were clearly conveyed by Jobert to Heath via Soames on several occasions: Schumann was not to be informed, and all precautions should be taken on both the British and French sides to ensure that secrecy would apply unreservedly.²²² Consequently, Soames recommended that nothing should be said (about the meeting) in London to *'anyone outside a very limited circle in the FCO and Whitehall and, of course, nothing should be said to anyone in the French Embassy'*.²²³

This last comment touches on another aspect of the difficulties of President Pompidou which further explained the need for a secret one-to-one meeting with the British Prime Minister. Representatives of the Quai d'Orsay, the French Foreign Ministry, mirrored their minister's approach to the negotiations, shedding a light, in Soames' opinion, on the *'anti-British, and sometimes pro-Soviet, bias of parts of the Quai d'Orsay, especially the economic directorate headed by Brunet (who plays a leading part in our negotiations) which explains the generally unhelpful if not actually hostile attitude adopted by the French negotiators in Brussels'*.²²⁴ Soames' comments on the prejudices *'entrenched in the Quai'* confirmed the opinion shared by Bernard, Jobert and Pompidou that the role played by the Quai should be reduced to a minimum, as it diverged from the line held by the Élysée on the May meetings. On this very point, the successive 19 and 20 April 1971 conversations of John Galsworthy, Minister for European Economic Affairs at the Embassy in Paris, with Jean-René Bernard of the Élysée, and Philippe Cuvillier, from the Cabinet of Maurice Schumann, were symptomatic, if not symbolic, of the divide and divergences between the Élysée and the Quai on crucial matters related to the negotiations and to the May meetings. Regarding the object of the Heath-Pompidou meetings, Cuvilliers reflected his minister's view that it could only be a *'crowning of an agreement not a prelude to one'*²²⁵, that is to say the exact opposite of the Élysée's view. The opinion stated was that

²²² TNA PREM15/369, Soames to Greenhill, 10 March 1971.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ TNA FCO33-1376, Paris Embassy - Soames Prime Minister's Briefs on 'Situation in France', 21 April 1971.

²²⁵ TNA PREM15/371, FCO Galsworthy's conversation with Cuvillier of the Quai d'Orsay, 20 April 1971, and TNA PREM15/371, FCO Galsworthy's conversation with Bernard, 19 April 1971.

Schumann's visit to London, planned for May 20 (thus proving they had no precise knowledge of the Heath/Pompidou meeting to come), should be *'one of substance and not just an introduction to a visit by the Prime Minister to the President'*, in contradiction of the President's desire to take control of the discussions. The Élysée/Quai dichotomy was also evident in the communication and relational attitude of Bernard and Cuvillier, marking a visible difference of *'emphasis and approach'* between the Élysée and the Quai. Whereas the former was presented as *'warmer and more self-assured'*²²⁶, the latter appeared *'harder and more defensive'*, not prone to mutually beneficial compromise. When Bernard congratulated Galsworthy for the *'one hundred percent European budget'* presented by Heath's Government (*'in striking contrast with the philosophy of the Labour Party ... regarded as profoundly un-European'*), Cuvillier complained about the Five's lack of assertiveness in conveying to Rippon their criticisms of the British proposal for Community Finance (*'on the grounds that it would make it too difficult for him at home'*). When Bernard apologised for Boegner's *'field day'* declaration (which in truth Bernard had actually personally suggested), and confirmed that France had no wish to frustrate the renewal of the Basle agreement, Cuvillier underlined the *'heavily negative attitude'* reflected in several opinion polls on Britain's entry which cast a doubt on the reality of the British conversion to Europe. And, when reminded that the French successive vetoes might have played a role in this, Cuvillier argued that, though the French had been blamed for the rejection of Wilson's application in 1967, he should *'look where he stood on Europe now'*, in reference to the former Prime Minister's fluctuating pro-Europe credentials. This report, crucial in that it gave valuable insight into the Élysée/Quai opposition from an external point of view, directly communicated to Heath²²⁷, confirmed that, even at an advanced stage of the discussions on entry, the Quai representatives were miles apart from the Élysée. They presented a stern, uncompromising and somewhat negative view of the French, in stark opposition to the pleasantness and spirit of cooperation expressed by Jobert

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ TNA PREM15/371, FCO to Cabinet Office, 3 May 1971, Tickell, FCO: Thank you letter dated 3 May 1971 confirmed that Galsworthy's report of his meeting with Cuvillier *'had been read by the Prime Minister'*, a confirmation that the variance Élysée/Quai was necessarily known to Heath.

and Bernard, the only officials who had been taken into the confidence about the meeting and knew about Pompidou's actual state of mind on the negotiations .

A further divide of great importance, given Pompidou's personal preoccupations with monetary matters, was revealed in Bernard's unequivocal reply to Galsworthy's remark about his impression that the Quai did not seem to share Bernard's assertion that France did not, could not, exert an influence on the renewal of the Basle Agreement: *'the Quai knew nothing about monetary questions and would quite definitely have no responsibility for them'*. Symptomatically, at this occasion, Cuvillier also tried, unsuccessfully, to *'draw out on the subject of the Heath/Pompidou meeting'* proving that the Quai, intentionally kept out of the loop by the Élysée, was actively, and almost desperately, in search of information about the rencontre. This fact, further confirmed by the *'poor and scarce'*²²⁸ content of the Quai's archives about the meeting, testified to its lack of involvement and knowledge throughout the whole process. The near desperation to be in the know and communicate accordingly was epitomised by French Ambassador de Courcel's quasi plea for information from Jobert. The description of his *'fear of finding himself again ignorant of the President's communication'* with Soames, that made him *'beyond his desolation of being kept out of the loop, obviously traumatised, after so many years spent in London, to have never had to make a single positive communication to the British government'*²²⁹, certainly explaining Tickell's caustic

²²⁸ Rücker-Guitelmacher, *Le Triangle*, p. 434. Rücker-Guitelmacher's extensive research of the French diplomatic archives revealed their *'poor and scarce'* content.

²²⁹ AN AG5(2)/76 lettre manuscrite de Courcel à Jobert, 25 février 1971, asking for information about the Pompidou/Soames discussions before his meeting with Rippon: *'c'est vous dire pourquoi je redoute tant de me retrouver à nouveau dans l'ignorance des propos tenus par le chef de l'état ... N'y voyez pas un simple dépit d'être en dehors du circuit, bien que je sois naturellement traumatisé après tant d'années à Londres de n'avoir jamais eu une seule communication positive à faire au Gouvernement britannique'*.

Adding: *'je voudrais que le Président n'oublie pas que je pourrais être un interprète plus fidèle de sa pensée que M. Soames et que j'ai toujours entretenu d'excellentes relations personnelles avec le PM britannique actuel. Malheureusement l'usage en Angleterre étant que le PM ne reçoit les ambassadeurs étrangers que lorsqu'ils ont un message à lui transmettre de la part de leur chef d'état, je ne puis solliciter d'audience à Downing street de mon propre chef comme peut le faire l'ambassade d'Angleterre à l'Élysée'* (*'I would like the President to consider that I would be a more faithful interpreter of his thoughts than Mr Soames and that I have always had excellent personal relations with the current British PM. Sadly it is customary for the PM to see foreign ambassadors only when they have a message to convey from their Head of State. Therefore I cannot ask for a meeting with Downing street from my own initiative, as the British Ambassador seems to be able to do at the Élysée'*). This comment was indicative of the fact that the French Embassy was not the most practical vector to carry out discussions on the meeting.

comment that, during his meeting with Rippon, de Courcel had '*radiated his habitual gloom*'²³⁰. For these reasons, Pompidou could not hold a meeting with Heath in the company of any Quai representatives, first and foremost Schumann, since their approach, unfavourable and even hostile to the British, would have run counter to his overall positive message.

Heath for his part concurred with Pompidou's judgement in accordance with, *inter alia*, Soames's detailed briefs on the Quai's '*prejudices*'²³¹, and with the FCO's advice to consider any Quai interventions with caution and, as regards Ambassador de Courcel, '*not to let his own ideas for what he is to say to M. Pompidou reach the latter first through M. de Courcel's distorting mirror*'²³². Distrust of the Quai had already crossed the Channel, and it had found a parallel in Heath's similar distrust of his own Foreign Office, symbolised by his refusal to include Rippon in the delegation accompanying him to Paris, despite requests to that effect from his Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home.²³³

There was no other choice for Pompidou and for Heath than a tête-à-tête prepared and held in absolute secrecy. The secret one-to-one rencontre was the logical end-result of strategic, personal and technical considerations on the part of the British Prime Minister and the French President.

A bilateral meeting was on the cards almost since the beginning of the negotiations triggered by the conclusions of the Hague Conference in December 1969. Its occurrence became even more probable when Heath, against all odds, won the Premiership in June 1970, giving British top-level summitry a turn resolutely favourable to bilateral and personal discussions. It was the potential solution, within a timeframe imposed by Community institutional meetings, by the constraints of the British political and economic agenda, and by the stalling of Brussels negotiations, and was generally admitted by

²³⁰ TNA PREM15/369, Tickell's notes of conversation Rippon-de Courcel 26 March 1971.

²³¹ TNA FCO33/1376, Paris Embassy PM Briefs on 'Situation in France', 21 April 1971.

²³² TNA FCO33/1376, Barrington to Soames, Western European Department. Full quote: '*The French Ambassador has asked to call on the PM prior to the PM's Paris visit. Difficult to refuse M. de Courcel. But keep the interview quite short and general so as not to let his own ideas for what he is to say to M. Pompidou reach the latter first through M. de Courcel distorting mirror. Incidentally, this is the first time that M. de Courcel has called on the present PM officially*'.

²³³ TNA PREM15/371, Douglas-Home to Heath, 7 May 1971.

France's partners as the only way to break the Brussels deadlock, even if at the expense of the Community's traditional multilateral negotiation process.

Secrecy was the only way to handle, with the required discretion and confidentiality, all the monetary matters linked to Britain's currency reserve role status, personally considered as crucial by Pompidou. It was the solution to broach topics which did not clearly fit into the framework of the Community's institutional dialogue, whilst leaving to the Brussels negotiating teams (of Britain and the Six) discussions on the remaining technical points at stake between France and the Five plus Britain. A tête-à-tête of this sort was the only way for Pompidou to keep personal control over a negotiation process which was exhibiting worrying signs of deterioration, pointing to a lack of resolve, fear of isolation, and negotiation fatigue within the French camp. It was also the best format to avoid the negative influence and political/diplomatic interference from Pompidou's political adversaries, and from arch-Gaullists with their own political agendas.

A Heath/Pompidou meeting in May 1971 was the vector to manage a series of conceptual shifts in the enlargement negotiations from June 1970 to June 1971:

- A shift from specialist-led negotiations in Brussels on Community Finance, New Zealand Butter and Commonwealth sugar to discussions between Heads of State on monetary issues and power²³⁴,
- A change from the objective (the Brussels negotiations of tangible, immediately resolvable issues) to the subjective (personal discussions in Paris on less tangible resolutions based on perceptions and trust);
- A move from multilateral negotiations to bilateral discussions,
- A counterbalancing act from a bipolar, tacit but *de facto*, leadership of the Community (between France and Germany) to a tripartite balancing in all European affairs,

²³⁴ Rücker-Guitelmacher, 'Le Triangle', p. 453.

- A shift from classical states interactions to 'personal diplomacy'.

In this Chapter, answers have been offered to the questions of why a secret one-to-one between Heath and Pompidou took place, why it was a bilateral in this secretive format, and why it took this unorthodox form of a tête-à-tête. There is now a need to understand what these meetings actually were, in diplomatic terms, in terms of results and objectives. It is necessary to understand what they meant for the two leaders and the Community as a whole, and to determine and assess the type of legacy and example they set for the European Franco-British relationship until the disappearance of Heath and Pompidou from the European stage.

Chapter 5. A New Kind of Summitry

The President of the French Republic and the Prime Minister will certainly and easily direct their conversations towards essential topics.¹

The preceding chapters of this thesis have addressed some of the key questions associated with the Heath-Pompidou May 1971 meetings: the *When?* the reasons for the timing (Chapter 2), the *Who?* through an actor-centred analysis of the commonality of views and visions of the two protagonists (Chapter 3), and the *Why?* the choice of the particular format used (Chapter 4). There now remains the crucial question of continuity and legacy: firstly, the extent to which the May 1971 Paris meetings developed into a particular form of bilateral summitry in continued one-to-one Heath-Pompidou meetings held in 1972 and 1973, and secondly, the influence and role of these subsequent meetings in the promotion by the two leaders of a new model of political dialogue within the enlarged Community which had thus far lacked an adequate structure for summitry at the highest-level.

It is important to understand how these meetings were approached by the main participants (the *How?* question) as a means of discerning the actors' frame of mind, their overall objectives and the diplomatic elements and tactical considerations drawn from their advisers' recommendations, which all contributed to the preparation and conduct of the May 1971 meetings. Furthermore, in the knowledge that the May 1971 meetings were followed in the next thirty months by at least four similar instances of Heath-Pompidou one-to-ones, it is essential to find out if the May 1971 meetings were a 'one-off' opportunity determined by the occasion (Britain in or out?), and limited in scope and substance to its actual purpose or if, instead, it was a first step towards the establishment of a particular and unique type of meeting, whose pattern would be enhanced during the four additional

¹ TNA PREM15/903, letter of Jobert to Armstrong (undated) about the President's visit, initially planned for February 1972: '*Le Président de la République et le Premier Ministre orienteront certainement d'eux-mêmes leurs entretiens vers des sujets essentiels*'.

extended Heath-Pompidou tête-à-tête which took place in Paris on 18 October 1972 and 21-22 May 1973, and at Chequers on 18-19 March 1972 and 16-17 November 1973.

This Chapter sets out to provide answers to these crucial questions of the continuity and legacy of the May 1971 meetings by examining the model of the Heath-Pompidou meetings through the prism of the relationship between the actors, and their personal interactions. It will put an emphasis on the form of the meetings as well as on their content. The aim is not to provide a complete exegesis of all the technical topics broached by Heath and Pompidou, but rather to consider the characteristics, tone and style of their encounters. From this review, this Chapter will argue that Heath and Pompidou initiated a new type of top-level bilateral dialogue relying on their personal entente and commonality of views that, on the one hand, was eventually extended more generally as a working method within the European Community, and on the other hand, established a new mode of dialogic communication in top-level exchanges, based on what this study terms a *Three Es* model of interaction (*Exploration, Explanation, Exchange*) rather than meetings focused on obtaining specific concrete results.

In line with the actor-oriented approach taken in this thesis, the Chapter will first provide a framework for analysing the Heath-Pompidou tête-à-tête in the context of current scholarly theories on summitry and rhetoric. It will review the preparations for the May 1971 encounters, with evidence derived mainly from the prime ministerial briefings for the one-to-one meetings with President Pompidou. The Chapter will investigate how the 'persuasion thematic' gave a personal dimension to these meetings, and created the conditions for the exercise of 'personal diplomacy', pointing to the semantic and symbolic marks of entente and trust between Heath and Pompidou. It will conclude that May 1971 paved the way for a particular type of summit meetings where communication and personal exchange were prioritized over objectives and results.

For the British side, the Chapter largely uses material from the National Archives, FCO and PREM for information on the preparation of the one-to-one meetings in 1971, 1972 and 1973, the exchanges

with French counterparts, and the extensive briefings by Whitehall for each meeting. These include the regular notes and reports by Sir Christopher Soames (in communications to FCO and 10 Downing Street), as well as Heath's personal correspondence with the French President. On the French side, the fonds AG5(2)/108, AG5(2)/676 and AG5(2)/76 from the *Archives Nationales* provide an exhaustive view of all the tête-à-tête, as reported and archived by the French camp.

Key in this Chapter's discussion of the personal nature of the Heath-Pompidou relationship is the cache of hitherto unexploited reports written by the official interpreters of Heath and Pompidou: Sir Michael Palliser (a long serving and outstanding British diplomat, then deputy to the British Ambassador in Paris), and Prince Andronikof (de Gaulle's highly trusted and sole interpreter for all matters requiring proficiency in English or Russian). The verbatim account of the Heath-Pompidou private conversations is found in the hundreds of pages of notes taken by Palliser and Andronikof during the discussions, whilst translating 'live' unscripted hour-long conversations of the highest level and calibre. Palliser and Andronikof were the only consistent attendees at all the Heath-Pompidou tête-à-tête² as testified, for example, by Downing Street's agenda guidelines describing 'sessions "à deux" with interpreters only'³, or Heath's words of thanks to Palliser for his '*wonderful proficiency in interpretation and record-making [which was] an asset which [he] valued on this occasion as much as in the past*'⁴, or official requests to Palliser to clear his agenda for interpretation duties⁵. Palliser's and Andronikof's endeavours also included compiling reports and minutes '*late into the night*' from notes taken during the meetings⁶. For this reason, the two interpreters' notes provide a unique and common⁷ source of information on the content and conduct of the meetings.

² All British minutes and reports clearly identify as '*present*' Heath, Pompidou, Palliser and Andronikof as, for instance, TNA PREM15/2093, records of conversations between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic at Chequers at 11:45 AM on Friday 16 November 1973.

³ TNA PREM15/1864, telegram#346 Tomkins to FCO, Agenda for Prime Minister's meeting with President Pompidou, 5 May 1973.

⁴ TNA PREM15/2093, Heath Pompidou Meeting 16-17 November 1973, Heath to Palliser 21 November 1973.

⁵ TNA FCO33/1389, Greenhill to Palliser, 23 December 1971, about Pompidou's visit to Chequers on 11,12,13 February 1972 (postponed to March 1972): '*There is a possibility that the Prime Minister would like you to help again with the interpretation*'.

⁶ Testimony of Christopher Thiery in Andronikof, *L'Oreille*, p. 23.

⁷ The studied British and French reports for any given meetings did not show any relevant discrepancy in content, chronology or meaning.

However they differ in nature, tone and style. Palliser's notes adopt a more technocratic and literary style of reporting, edited (*'tautened and polished'*⁸), and using third-person forms (*'the PM agreed'*, *'the President expressed his agreement'*, etc.), whereas Andronikof's provide a verbatim account of the content of discussions, based on a more conversational transcript of the exchanges between Heath and Pompidou (*'je suis tout à fait d'accord avec vous'*, *'nous sommes d'accord'*, etc.) which is particularly useful for this study⁹. Unlike Palliser's reports in PREM, edited in a diplomatic language, and fashioned for communication to the FCO and Number 10, Andronikof's documents were directly communicated to Jobert without any apparent correction, or diplomatic or administrative editing.¹⁰

The interpreters' reports, key sources of evidence for this study, also provide precious situational information such as, for instance, Palliser's briefing on *'the informal exchanges between the Prime Minister and the President over drinks on the lawn at the Élysée before lunch on Thursday 20, May'*.¹¹

Palliser was the source of information for set meetings, but also for private side-conversations dealing, for instance, with *'other points of interest'* such as the *'timing of the negotiations, French Governmental procedures, Paris as the capital of Europe, the French language, the situation in Britain'*.¹² He and Andronikof took notes on conversations in all these situations:

at about this point the President and the Prime Minister were joined by Monsieur Chaban-Delmas and shortly afterwards moved in to join other guests before lunch. There was some general conversations

⁸ TNA PREM15/372, Palliser to Armstrong, 24 May 1971. Palliser mentioned Armstrong: *'I have been through them very carefully and ... have made a good many amendments to the first draft. With more time I could have certainly given them more polish and no doubt have made them shorter. But I am confident that they accurately reflect what was said. But I need hardly say that if, on reading them through, you want to do some further tautening and polishing up, I hope you will do so'*.

⁹ The reading of Andronikof's notes markedly reflected, for a native French reader, instances of conversations as they unfolded, not necessarily as they should be reported for information, administrative and archival purposes.

¹⁰ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques des 21-22 mai 1973, with the added mention *'trois comptes-rendus d'entretien non corrigés, envoyés à Michel Jobert le 24/5/73, 21 pages'* (*'three reports not edited/corrected, sent to Michel Jobert on 24/5/73, 21 pages'*).

¹¹ TNA PREM15/372, Palliser to Armstrong, 10 June 1971, The Prime Minister's Talks with the French President.

¹² Ibid.

*both at that stage and over coffee in the garden after lunch but I [Palliser] do not recall anything of substance being raised.*¹³

The accounts also included reporting of conversations held in more intimate circumstances such as those taking place in the car carrying Heath and Pompidou from the London airport to Chequers, and back, in November 1973.¹⁴

Characterisation of the May 1971 meetings

A striking fact from these sources is the multiplicity of terms and expressions used to describe the same events. This point is worth mentioning here because it is a reflection of the diverse and complementary approaches to the meetings, whether from the teams who were privy to the discussions on Britain's entry, from diplomats and civil servants, or from the main actors themselves. Words have a major importance and, in this particular case, the variety of terms used demonstrated the multiple facets of the meetings, and their unusual meaning and intent, whilst giving some indication of the users' state of mind. Significantly, the word 'negotiation' was never used by anyone in either the British or French camps. No term was employed that could give the impression that the meetings had a particular and defined objective.¹⁵

In the case of May 1971 particularly, and of the subsequent meetings, the diversity of wording demonstrated differences in approach and apprehension, and clearly underlined the unusual nature of what was taking place, reflecting the *état d'esprit* of the user(s), or indicating their knowledge (or lack of) of the meetings' purpose. From Rippon's common and neutral '*meeting*'¹⁶, perhaps marking a deliberate contrast with the conflictual negotiations he was leading in Brussels, to Nield's '*French*

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ TNA PREM15/2093, Report of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic in the car between London airport and Chequers on Saturday 17 November 1973 at 10.50 a.m.

¹⁵ It is all the more interesting to note this, in relation to today's propensity to name a meeting, or a point in negotiations, after a journalist's, pundit's or public commentator's expression or headline ('Brexit', 'backstop', 'flexextension', for instance) for the sake of public information and ease of communication to all parties involved.

¹⁶ TNA PREM15/370, Rippon to Heath, 31 March 1971: *Meeting between the Prime Minister and the French President*.

*bilateral*¹⁷, more in line with his diplomatic approach, May 1971 was described by Soames as a *'personal meeting'*¹⁸ or a *'good and effective dialogue'*¹⁹, thus emphasising efficiency and entre-deux relations, rather than the heavy *'fundamental talk'*²⁰ announced by Jobert, and recast less ominously in Heath's formal and equivocal *'talks'*²¹, to be downplayed in the almost casual, purposeless, yet already quite personal, *'rencontre'*²² by Pompidou. This lexical trend was confirmed in the terms used to describe the subsequent 1972 and 1973 meetings which, significantly, included Heath's Press Secretary Robyn Haydon's depiction of them as *'informal, intimate, à-deux'*²³, or allusions to *'sessions à deux'*²⁴ made by British diplomats. Heath referred to them as *'conversations'*, *'close consultations'* and *'discussions'*²⁵ in his private correspondence with Pompidou, who in turn described the encounters, in relation to his March 1972 visit to Chequers, as an *'unofficial and personal occasion'*, an *'opportunity to spend a relaxed country weekend with the Prime Minister and to range wide in discussions'*, making clear they were *'not in any sense negotiations'*²⁶.

From this, and from the review of Franco-British sources related to the Heath-Pompidou meetings, it appears that their characterisation by all the actors involved, underwent, over five sessions, an evolution from top-level meeting with an underlying purpose in the case of the May 1971 meetings, to what could be described as one-to-one personal occasions, wide-ranging and unscripted, in the context of a friendly ambiance and entente between the protagonists, epitomised by the November 1973 Paris meetings, but already discernible from Paris May 1971 onwards.

¹⁷ TNA PREM15/371, Nield to Armstrong, 22 April 1971.

¹⁸ TNA FCO33/1376, Soames' confidential report: 'Situation in France' April 1971.

¹⁹ TNA PREM15/371, telegram#521, Soames to FCO, report of visit to Michel Jobert, 6 May 1971.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ TNA PREM15/372, EEC Application, 19-24 May 1971, Heath request for confidentiality on May 1971 meetings.

²² AN 89AJ10, notes manuscrites Jobert, Conseil des Ministres du 11 mai 1971.

²³ PREM15/2093, Heath Pompidou Meeting 16-17 November 1973, Press Briefings about Meetings, Robyn Haydon to Heath, 15 November 1973.

²⁴ PREM15/1864, Edward Heath visit to Paris May 1973, telegram#635, Tomkins to FCO: *'Agenda for Prime Minister's meeting with President Pompidou'*, 5 May 1973.

²⁵ PREM15/1864, Prime Minister Personal Message to Pompidou, 26 May 1973.

²⁶ TNA FCO14/1068, Visit of the President of France to the United Kingdom, 18-19 March 1972, Background to the visit.

These were of course ‘summits’, and it is helpful at this point to consider the Pompidou-Heath one-to-one meetings within broader academic discussions of top level meetings and summits. David H. Dunn’s *‘Diplomacy at the Highest Level’*²⁷ provides definitions and case studies of particular relevance to the chapter. This thesis has argued that the specificity and singularity of the Paris May 1971 meetings were, on the one hand, their nature, objectives and results and, on the other hand, the status and personalities of their two protagonists. In that sense, they fit Dunn’s first stage description of *‘meeting of political leaders for official purposes’*²⁸ which corresponds to his broad definition of a *‘summit’*²⁹ seen as *‘an activity which constitutes diplomacy at the highest level’*. George Ball³⁰ suggests summits are limited in scope and complexity (*‘any occasion in which chiefs of state or heads of government get together bilaterally or in large meetings’*), whilst Elmer Plischke³¹ defines summits as a function of the participants’ positions and responsibilities (*‘diplomacy engaged in by political principals above the cabinet or ministerial ranks, including the participation of chiefs of state, heads of government’*). Arguably these definitions tend to classify summits in relation to the number or representativity of participants, not as to the frequency or purpose of the meetings. On the latter, more pertinent elements of summit classifications are provided by Geoff Berridge³² who identifies summits in three distinct categories: 1) the *‘serial summit’* occurring regularly and judged *‘most suited for negotiations’* and, for that reason, in his opinion, *‘less suited to the promotion of friendly relations’*, 2) the *‘ad hoc summit’* happening once for a high-profile set of purposes or intent,

²⁷ Dunn, *Diplomacy at the Highest Level*, op. cit.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

²⁹ Henceforth, the Heath-Pompidou meetings will be variously referred to as ‘meetings’, ‘summits’, ‘summit meetings’ or ‘bilateral summits’.

³⁰ Full definition: *‘Today the word “summitry” is used without distinction to describe any occasion in which chiefs of state or heads of government get together bilaterally or in large meetings’*, quoted in Constantinou, Kerr, and Sharp (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*, p. 237.

³¹ Ibid., full definition: *‘simply stated it is diplomacy engaged in by political principals above the cabinet or ministerial ranks, including the participation of chiefs of state, heads of government, a few others who qualify by virtue of their official positions (such as president elect, crown princes, and the ranking officers of international organizations) and certain agents of heads of government ‘who genuinely represent’ them at their level’*.

³² Berridge, *Diplomacy*, op.cit.

and 3) the *'high-level exchange of views'*, usually a lower-profile bilateral without a specific or topical agenda.³³

However, despite clarifying important aspects of summit meetings, these definitions do not clearly address the fundamental element of their personal dimension, of the characters and influence of actors and their interactions. This aspect of summitry is tackled most helpfully by Roland Vogt³⁴ who develops the concept of *'personal diplomacy'*³⁵. His crucial approach poses personalisation and its manifestations, such as *'personal chemistry, mutual trust, interactions, ideas and gestures'*³⁶ as well as *'persuasion and convictions'*³⁷, as central features of European integration diplomacy exercised in top-level meetings, and it proposes summitry as *'a way of life'* in matters of European integration, particularly in the case of *'peculiar partnerships'*³⁸ including notably the Heath-Pompidou tandem. These fundamental aspects of personal diplomacy give a new dimension to political leadership which is rarely analysed or taken into account, in his view, in the broader context of European negotiations.

In the specific context of the *'literally "dramatic" quality of the Fifth Republic'*³⁹, John Gaffney introduces the concept of performance of leadership based on the analysis of the President's *'comportment [...] framed by the perceived public exigency of a highly personalised presidential "character" or "persona" which must be seen to perform and act effectively and decisively'*⁴⁰. He also analyses the rhetoric of presidential discourse in relation to these exigencies. In his study of political leadership in France⁴¹, Gaffney argues that such constraints, because of the self-imposed extreme

³³ Ibid., pp. 169-174.

³⁴ Vogt, *Personal Diplomacy*, op. cit.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁸ Ibid. The main ones listed by Vogt are: *'Konrad Adenauer-Guy Mollet, Georges Pompidou-Edward Heath, Helmut Kohl-Francois Mitterrand and Angela Merkel-Nicolas Sarkozy'*.

³⁹ Gaffney, 'Political Leadership and the Politics', p.226.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 218.

⁴¹ Gaffney, *Political Leadership in France*, chapter *'The Pompidou presidency'*, pp. 96-112.

personalisation of presidential actions, explain '*why he can – and must – take decisions on his own*'⁴², observations which are highly pertinent to Pompidou's approach to the summits with Heath.

In Carl Death's view, summits often hold a component of '*symbolism, performance and theatricalism*'⁴³, aiming at persuading audiences of the seriousness of the political leadership. Equally, Vogt relates the '*rituals, gestures and the art of diplomatic signalling*' to '*a theatre of power*'⁴⁴, in which codes and usages may condition the success of personal diplomacy.

An important variant in explaining the holding of personal diplomacy-based summits is the distrust of diplomats held by leaders. '*There is often a distrust of diplomats by politicians, which encourages them to bypass them and hold summits*'⁴⁵ based on the fact that, as well as a disputed success track record, especially in the domain of European integration, '*diplomats who serve modern political leaders often come from different personal, professional and educational backgrounds. Professional diplomats have linguistic expertise, training and extensive knowledge of the country in which they serve. Politicians, in the main, do not*'⁴⁶ - a comment to relate, for instance, to the specificity of Soames' approach and objectives, and to the way in which he promoted them during his tenure as British Ambassador in France.

These scholarly analyses raise a number of key questions, listed by Redmond⁴⁷, which strike a chord in the particular case of the Heath-Pompidou one-to-ones. The first question relates to the real nature and achievement of summit meetings, the alternatives of symbolism vs. substance. The second question relates to the difference between prepared ('*pre-cooked*') talks, simply requiring the principal's assent on issues thoroughly discussed and agreed beforehand by negotiation teams, and meetings where all the decision-making work is still to be done by the leaders. The third question opens out wider discussions on the usefulness of summitry, of particular interest in the case of

⁴² Gaffney, 'Political Leadership and the Politics', p.225.

⁴³ Death, 'Summit Theatre', op. cit., p. 2.

⁴⁴ Raymond Cohen quoted in Vogt, *Personal Diplomacy*, p. 10.

⁴⁵ The SAGE Handbook, p. 236.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Redmond, 'From "European Community Summit"', p. 64.

European integration. A fourth line of questioning relates to the alternative or complementary nature of domestic and international motives in summitry. And the final question explores the potential evolution of summitry with a special focus on its format, frequency and continuity within parameters of impact, results and decisiveness.

In this last domain, John Redmond considers the wider evolution and continuity of European summits, reminding us that *'there was no reference to either the European council or summits in the treaty of Rome and their development has therefore been informal and ad hoc'*.⁴⁸ In his view, the Hague Conference in December 1969 was the first real European summit (the first three instances, Paris February 1961 and July 1961 at de Gaulle's initiative, and the ten-year anniversary Bonn 1967 were not significant in Redmond's opinion), and was only followed by two *'inconclusive'* summits (Paris October 1972 and Copenhagen December 1973) until an agreement was reached in 1974 in Paris *'to institutionalize and regularize EU summits and hold them three times a year'*, resulting in the Single European Act in 1987 which set up official European Council summits.⁴⁹ For Redmond, these summits, more *serial* than *ad hoc* summits, are *'talking shops'* or *'fireside chats of which no records are kept'*, facilitating contacts between leaders.⁵⁰ His analysis is of considerable relevance to this study which will argue that the Heath-Pompidou meetings over the period 1971-1973 set a precedent and established templates for subsequent pan-European high-level conferences from 1974 onwards.

Summit meetings moreover have potential limitations including the *'worsening of relations between leaders ... because summits are carried out at the highest level'*⁵¹, a fact which clearly underlines the importance of the leaders' entente. Without it, any face-to-face meeting aiming at getting first-hand

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁹ *'EU summits usually held twice a year at the end of 6 month presidency (June-December) usually last 24 hours (lunch to lunch) preparatory work done by the COREPER (Committee of Permanent Representatives) and the Political Committee which serves the EPC (European Political Cooperation) framework now superseded by the CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy), chaired by the leader of the country who holds presidency'*, in Redmond, 'From "European Community Summit"', p. 55.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 55-59.

⁵¹ Young, 'A Case Study', p. 264.

understanding of an interlocutor's attitude towards an issue⁵² would risk being at best ineffective, or at worst, counterproductive if the actors' personal relations were at a low point⁵³.

These definitions, theories and concepts around summitry constitute a vital background for this chapter's review of the Heath-Pompidou meetings which will analyse the nature of preparations for the May '71 meeting, the personalised diplomacy of the event, the subsequent meetings, and the relevance of the model for future institutional developments in the Community.

Preparations for the May 1971 meetings: specificities, tactics and constraints

Viewed from the outside, the May 1971 meetings seemed to be a confrontation of adversarial technical positions expressed by two leaders with seemingly opposite national interests. However, an analysis of official primary sources shows clear signs that they were in fact meetings of a particular and exceptional nature, differing from negotiations aimed at securing a 'win-win' situation or a 'win as much, lose as little' end-result. These signs were especially noticeable in the preparations and unofficial exchanges before the meetings which marked a desire to make the forthcoming one-to-ones a relation-building discussion focusing on persuasion and trust, and not solely a presentation of bargaining positions linked to topical objectives. From the onset, intentions were defined and clear, especially on the British *demandeur* side, about what to say and not to reveal, about what to gain and how to present Britain's case.

The first notable fact about the preparation of the meetings was the preliminary secret discussions of the Soames-Jobert tandem which played a determining role in the establishment of a purposeful and confidential channel of communication between the Prime Minister and the President. Through this channel, information about intent and expectations were exchanged in frankness and confidence. Interestingly, very few detailed topics were enumerated or reported to have been

⁵² Dunn, *Diplomacy*, p. 247.

⁵³ For instance Thatcher's observation in her memoirs that the French President Giscard d'Estaing '*was never someone to whom I warmed*' quoted in Dunn, *Diplomacy*, p. 248.

discussed between the two men. The emphasis was on the approach, on the environment, and on the final objectives of the discussions. In this, the Soames-Jobert discussions were both a cause and an effect of the personalisation of the May 1971 summit. A cause, because they marked a desire to imprint a personal dimension on the forthcoming meetings by voicing, through two unique highly trusted collaborators, personal expectations, principles and objectives. And an effect, in that they resulted from a deliberate choice to eschew the normal track of bilateral negotiations, usually involving teams of specialists and advisers concocting a pre-agreement in advance of their principals' discussions. The onus would be on the two leaders alone to make matters progress and to actually define what progress meant.

*'The President's concept was to have a fundamental talk with the Prime Minister'*⁵⁴ was Jobert's clear indication to Soames for the 21-22 May official *rencontre*. This interpretation was fully shared by the Prime Minister who *'saw these conversations in exactly the same light as did the President'*, and confirmed the understanding that neither participant should feel *'anxious that the frank and spontaneous character of their discussions should not be spoilt by too much preparatory work being done in advance'*⁵⁵, echoing Bernard's express hope that *'the Prime Minister would not wish to come with a big team of officials and a pile of briefs'*.⁵⁶ For this reason, a *'preparatory mission'*⁵⁷ including *'personal emissaries close to the Prime Minister'*⁵⁸ (Armstrong, Hurd, Palliser and Thornton) was sent by Heath to Paris on 15th May 1971, with strict instructions *'not to negotiate or reach an agreement on any matters in the agenda for the meeting between the Prime Minister and the President'*⁵⁹, but instead to establish what would be both the interlocutors' respective *'starting points'* in the

⁵⁴ TNA PREM15/371, telegram#521, Soames to FCO, report of visit to Michel Jobert, 6 May 1971.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ TNA PREM15/371, EEC Application, notes of conversation of John Galsworthy with Jean-René Bernard of the Élysée on 19 April 1971.

⁵⁷ TNA PREM15/372, Armstrong to Heath, 13 May 1971, Instructions to Preparatory Mission. It should be noted that John Robinson, initially considered to be part of it, was rejected by the PM, following Armstrong's advice, because *'he was FCO, not a personal emissary'*. Soames was also rejected because he was *'too big a gun for the mission'*, in TNA PREM15/371, Armstrong to Prime Minister, 8 May 1971, Meeting with Pompidou.

⁵⁸ TNA PREM15/371, telegram#521, Soames to FCO, report of visit to Michel Jobert, 6 May 1971.

⁵⁹ TNA PREM15/372, Armstrong to Heath, 13 May 1971, Instructions to Preparatory Mission.

discussions, and the points likely to arise in the course of the meeting. Preparatory issues for the mission importantly included *'the form and broad outline of the content of any document(s) to emerge from meetings'* as a way of confirming that the protagonists alone should be freely in charge of developing an agenda only touched upon in advance by very close advisers. Nothing was *'pre-cooked'* as testified by the report on the meeting of Jobert, Bernard and Raymond with the members of the British *'preparatory mission'*.⁶⁰ This report contained no more than four pages of information (beginning with the question of *'documentation'* and the detail of the form and content of *'records of understanding'*) to compare with, for instance, the dozens of pages of briefs⁶¹ reviewed by Heath during his *'technical'* preparation for the bilateral summit. The focus of the preparatory work was clearly on the sketching out of the skeleton of the Heath-Pompidou discussions, and on their reporting and communication, rather than on the content or results (for instance, Jobert and Soames worked together on the French version of the communiqué to announce the summit⁶²).

In addition, appearance and ceremoniousness were high on the agenda, as conveyed by Soames' request for ceremonial and pomp for the Prime Minister's *'first official visit to Paris'*⁶³ since, in his words to Jobert, it was *'a great occasion and needed to be seen as such'* especially for the British public's sake, who was felt to be in need of seeing their Prime Minister treated as a *'special and honoured guest'*. This request for a theatrical treatment (in Death's and Vogt's terms) of the bilateral meetings denoted a shared Franco-British insistence on appearances, on symbolism and on exceptionality. This resulted in a huge press coverage, *'more than four hundred journalists'*⁶⁴ at the Élysée's Salle des Fêtes on Friday 22nd May, for a very theatrical *mise en scène* by Heath and Pompidou:

⁶⁰ TNA PREM15/372, Preparatory discussions about the meeting between the Prime Minister and the French President in Paris on 20 and 21 May 1971. Summary of the points made at a Meeting at the Élysée on 15 May 1971.

⁶¹ TNA FCO33/1377 Prime Minister Briefings List, London 19/5/71.

⁶² TNA PREM15/371, telegram#521, Soames to FCO, report of visit to Michel Jobert, 6 May 1971.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ AN AG5(2)/676, *'Quatre cent journalistes'*, Dépêche AFP, 22 mai 1971.

The two declarations lasted twenty five minutes, including the translations. Pompidou stopped at regular intervals to let Andronikof translate and Palliser translated the British Prime Minister ... Then Messrs Pompidou and Heath stood up together and immediately left the Salle des Fêtes. In the Hall d'Honneur, the two men shook hands lengthily. Mr Heath stepped into the Embassy's Rolls Royce and left⁶⁵.

This intended apotheosis concluded meetings which had all the paraphernalia of a State Visit⁶⁶, and responded fully to Soames' initial suggestions. His fourteen-page detailed report about the summit's environment, conduct and timing underlined with satisfaction that the '*French authorities could not have been more co-operative*' as the President '*arranged to entertain the Prime Minister twice at the Élysée and accepted an invitation to a meal at the Embassy*'. These invitations marked, according to Soames, the exceptional nature of the summit for it was '*most unusual for a visiting Head of Government to be entertained directly by the President to more than one meal and it [was] exceptional, except during a State Visit, for the President himself to go for a meal to an Embassy*'.⁶⁷ Pre-scripted controlled communication and exceptional protocol were indeed markers of the particular nature of the Paris May 1971 meetings during their development and conclusion. In the preparation phase, these markers had pointed to the climate and spirit of the summit with a wide use of descriptive terms linked to the '*naturalness*'⁶⁸ and ambiance of the meetings, and to the need to '*create the right atmosphere*'⁶⁹, and demonstrate it. The terms used described the environment and framework of the meetings, not their precise function. These preambles nevertheless did not preclude intense thought being given on both sides as to how to approach the top-level meetings in Paris, and to fulfil the only self-imposed obligation, reassuringly and enigmatically summarised by

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ AN AG5(2)/676, TNA FCO33-1378 and CAC SOAM-34A for protocol duties and events, administrative arrangements for rencontre, timing, location and attendance, dinner compositions, guest lists and speeches, agenda of meetings, etc.

⁶⁷ TNA FCO33/1378, Soames to FCO, Diplomatic Report #321/71, The Prime Minister's visit to Paris 20-21 May 1971, 9 June 1971.

⁶⁸ TNA PREM 15/369, Soames to Armstrong, 12 March 1971: 'A possible meeting between the Prime Minister and President Pompidou'.

⁶⁹ TNA PREM PREM15/370, Barrington FCO to Armstrong, EEC Application, 29 March-21 April 1971: FCO report entitled: '*The EEC negotiations and a Meeting between the Prime Minister and President Pompidou*', 21 April 1971. Section title: 'Do We Want a Bilateral with Pompidou?'

Jobert to Soames, as ‘when the meeting actually took place, it was imperative that it should succeed’⁷⁰, whatever ‘succeed’ meant for either man at that stage.

An analysis of the British approach is of particular importance for a set of complementary reasons. In the first place, the very personal approach to the meeting was in fact less documented on the French side since it appeared to proceed essentially from the President’s own reflections. On this matter, and by choice, Pompidou was briefed by Bernard⁷¹, advised by Jobert, and tended to work on his dossiers rapidly and alone.⁷² Moreover, contrary to Heath who benefited from the more collegial approach of his entourage regarding fundamental objectives, Pompidou had to contend with the particular constraints of managing an arch-Gaullist opposition, a reticent Quai d’Orsay, and ministers with political *arrière-pensées* (cf. Chapter 4). Presumably this would have prevented him from freely revealing his technical and tactical approach to the summit⁷³, and probably encouraged him to remain in the typical, de Gaulle inspired, above the mêlée regal solitude of a French President. In addition, as Soames perfectly discerned, what was ‘fundamental to the French approach was that [Britain] was *demandeur and gestures of spontaneous good will towards the other party [do] not exist in the French negotiation repertoire*’.⁷⁴ Pompidou was therefore, in principle, on the receiving end of Britain’s arguments and European pleas. For these reasons, efforts to approach the meetings with astuteness and make them a success rested more heavily on the British Prime Minister.

⁷⁰ TNA PREM15/370, Soames to Secretary of State (copy personal for Prime Minister), telegram#374 of 27 March 1971.

⁷¹ The SGCI organisation made him a pivot of the bottom-up, top-down exchanges of information in European negotiations matters.

⁷² Bernard in Dulphy, Manigand, 'Entretien avec Jean-René Bernard', p. 3. Bernard’s comment was that Pompidou, when Premier Ministre, ‘worked a lot and fast: he used to leave Matignon every evenings to go to his flat, Quai de Béthune, with a case full of notes and, the next morning, everything was given back, fully annotated, even if he often participated to social dinners. This speed was an asset’ (*‘il travaillait beaucoup et très vite: il partait de Matignon tous les soirs pour rentrer chez lui, quai de Béthune, avec une petite valise pleine de notes, et le lendemain matin, tout était revenu avec ses annotations, même s’il dînait souvent « en ville ». Cette rapidité était un atout.*’).

⁷³ As testified by the rarity of developed comments on this matter in Jobert’s hand-written notes taken during the Conseils des Ministres, in AN 89AJ(10), notes Conseil des Ministres premier semestre 1971.

⁷⁴ TNA FCO33/1376, Paris Embassy, Prime Minister Briefs on Situation in France, 21 April 1971, section entitled: ‘The negotiations seen through French eyes’.

These efforts were made by dint of thorough reflection, processed by Heath and the whole Whitehall apparatus⁷⁵, on what the real stakes of the summit meetings were, and on what the British camp presumed that the French President expected and would feel apprehensive about. Again, Soames' acute situational analysis anticipated the fact that a solution '*could only be found in a catalyst of a personal meeting*', judging that '*what goes on in Brussels [was] of secondary importance*'.⁷⁶ In the view of this '*political animal*'⁷⁷, the key to unlocking the stalemate situation in Brussels was dependent on each side being :

*convinced of the sincerity of the other's intention i.e. until the British are convinced that the French are not out to strip them bare (as General de Gaulle put it) and the French are persuaded that the British are really prepared to put both feet in Europe (as Pompidou put it).*⁷⁸

Persuasion and trust were the elements paramount in establishing, during the *rencontre*, a beneficial relationship between Pompidou and Heath, *demandeur* and willing to stack the odds in his favour to reach a life-long political objective. To be persuasive and establish trust, Heath, '*briefed to the eyebrows*'⁷⁹, adopted an attitude and discussion tactics around three main axes: reassure, please and convince. In effect, the British camp sought firstly to reassure President Pompidou on the genuineness of Britain's European intentions and objectives, and secondly to assuage potential subjects of dispute and dissension by means of a positive communication style, putting aside

⁷⁵ TNA FCO33/1377, includes all the Prime Minister Briefs prepared by the FCO, the Paris Embassy, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Treasury, the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Preparation was more collegial, less centralised and personalised than the better organised SGCI, which was later imitated in parts by the Heath's administration.

⁷⁶ TNA FCO33/1376, Paris Embassy, Prime Minister Briefs on Situation in France, 21 April 1971, section entitled: 'The French attitude to the main negotiations issues'.

⁷⁷ CAC SOAM 49-3, Soames to Chalfont, Relationship with Georges Pompidou, 6 May 1968: '*I believe that I will draw a good deal of strength in Paris from the appreciation in French governmental circles that I have direct access to ministers, including the Prime Minister (Pompidou at the time), to an extent not normally available to a professional ambassador. This stems from the fact that I am essentially a political animal and in political life those who have still something to give do not have knighthoods*'.

⁷⁸ TNA FCO33/1376, Paris Embassy, Prime Minister Briefs on Situation in France, 21 April 1971, section entitled: 'The negotiations seen through French eyes'.

⁷⁹ Hurd, *Memoirs*, p. 199.

Heath had briefings sessions extending from Monday 10 May at 3pm at 10 Downing Street to Friday 14 May 10.30 am at Chequers, in TNA PREM15/371 Armstrong to Heath, Meeting with Pompidou, detail of briefing discussions, 8 May 1971.

anything that might prove contentious even if this were likely to be contrary to Britain's interests, or at variance with Britain's economic analyses or global strategic objectives. Thirdly, the British camp wanted to avoid discussing matters likely to generate an atmosphere of suspicion, i.e. anything that could take Pompidou aback or simply frustrate or irritate him, whether at a personal level, or in the context of French national pride, or in the defence of French national interests. The overarching strategy on the British side was to approach the Heath-Pompidou summit in a conciliatory, collaborative and almost compliant manner. This approach was clearly aimed at providing a satisfactory response to Pompidou's expected questioning of the sincerity of Britain's European intentions. This led to what this study conceptualises as the 'persuasion compromise vs. European blackmail' situation, i.e. a situation where Heath had to make compromises with Britain's views in order to persuade Pompidou, who conversely could easily interpret any British noncompliance with his expectations as a sign of Britain's lack of real European motivation.

The British approach was epitomised in the preamble of the briefs prepared for the meeting with Pompidou⁸⁰, which Heath of course was not obliged to follow in practice. Nevertheless, these Prime Minister's briefs translated deep-rooted notions and conceptions and, as such, were likely to influence Heath's actions and discourse in his exchanges with Pompidou. After opening discussions at a '*deliberately cosmic level*'⁸¹, the FCO strongly and unequivocally spelt out that the objective for the British was to:

show Pompidou that we accept the community system and future objectives, that as members our loyalty will lie with our European partners, that we have chosen Europe, and that Britain has the same instinct as France on the way Europe will develop towards unity.⁸²

to which the FCO added comments on the inevitability and unanimity of Britain's commitment ('*today no British figure of stature claims our destiny lies elsewhere*'), and did not hesitate to advise

⁸⁰ MTF 710520 & 710521, Pompidou-Heath Summit, sessions 1-4 and Record of conclusions.

⁸¹ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)1, London 14 May 1971, FCO Briefs on Edward Heath/Georges Pompidou: Vision of Role of Enlarged Community.

⁸² Ibid.

the Prime Minister to take France's side against Germany by paying *'tribute to the Franco-German reconciliation though in present circumstances it might also be desirable to refer to our understanding of the French position in face of inelegant German handling of recent monetary problems'*. From all ministries and departments, the commonly, and independently worded objective was to *'reassure'* President Pompidou. *'Reassure Pompidou that we shall not seek to upset the 1966 Luxembourg agreement (unanimity voting)'*⁸³, *'reassure the President that their rights will not be impaired'*⁸⁴ on the Yaoundé Convention, or *'reassure the President we do not wish English to oust French as a major working language of the Community'*⁸⁵.

The Prime Minister was also advised to avoid anything that could put the French, and especially the President, in a negative mood. This possibility was seen as an indicator for the Prime Minister to stand firm, concede, or stay quiet, on various subjects. For instance, on Algeria, the Prime Minister was advised by the Foreign Office, only if the French President broached the subject, to grant that Britain would *'consider that the French still have a vital role to play in Algeria'*, with the caveat that *'[the PM] will wish to avoid giving the French any reason to hope for our intervention with British firms to preserve a French "chasse-gardée"'*⁸⁶. On the Channel tunnel topic (*'the PM need not raise this subject'*), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) suggested that *'the relevance of the Channel Tunnel project to [Britain's] EEC negotiations [was] that the French, including President Pompidou personally, regard [Britain's] attitude as to some extent an index of the seriousness of its European intentions'*⁸⁷ (a clear example of French 'European blackmail'). But, given the financing structure and feasibility studies, this analysis was tempered by the proviso that, while the

⁸³ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)2 Prime Minister Brief on Institutional Changes and Majority voting London 18 May 1971. This brief's objective added comments were that *'community decisions must be in practice reached by unanimous agreement where vital national interests are at stake and that we have a similar view to the French generally about the workings of the institutions. But we should try to avoid agreeing words with the French which would compromise our position with the Five'*.

⁸⁴ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)5 FCO Prime Minister Brief on The Yaoundé Convention, problematic of "droits acquis" London 18 May 1971.

⁸⁵ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)4 FCO Prime Minister Brief on The Future of the French Language, What are the British Proposals, London 14 May 1971 .

⁸⁶ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)11 FCO Prime Minister Briefs on Diplomacy - Middle East, London 13 May 1971.

⁸⁷ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)7 Department of Trade & Industry, Prime Minister Brief on Channel Tunnel - Uranium, London 14 May 1971.

Department was *'aware of the project's importance for our European relations'*, the Tunnel project had to *'be justified in economic terms'*. Similarly, on a subject potentially raised by Pompidou about a possible Franco-British collaboration on uranium enrichment in Europe, despite *'differing assessments of the likeliness of the competitiveness'* of the French and British systems, Heath was counselled to take into account the fact that *'the French [saw] their own prestige as being heavily engaged'*. For that reason, the DTI developed the argument, applicable to the whole briefing documentation of the Prime Minister, that:

*at the present critical stage of the Brussels negotiations we must avoid giving the French grounds for taking offence or for turning this essentially commercial question into a political one which could be linked to our negotiations for entry into the EEC.*⁸⁸

This avowed wish to compromise led British agencies to suggest that the PM should put aside British reservations about projects and Franco-British common developments which had a symbolic, prestige-linked value for the French, even if they went against the British tendency to pragmatically approach the economic impacts of any given initiative. This applied for instance to the Concorde development, about which the DTI enumerated a number of ominous uncertainties varying from the *'noise problematic'* with the USA, the spiralling *'out of control of the R&D costs'*, the *'uncertain sale prospects'*, or the expected bleak *'overall economic returns'*.⁸⁹ Despite these strong reservations, the DTI simply advised Heath to *'point out that a number of difficulties still existed'* (which the PM in fact never did during the summit meetings). Concorde was a matter of national pride for France and a showcase cooperation project, along with the Channel tunnel, the Jaguar jetfighter or the CERN collaboration (European Organisation for Nuclear Research). In a similar way, another subject Heath's camp refrained from putting on the table was the African question. The British desire to

⁸⁸ Ibid. The DTI went on to explain that the French system (diffusion) was *'one of the few fields in which their nuclear efforts have been successful'*, explaining the national pride component in the reckoning of the Prime Minister.

⁸⁹ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)7 Department of Trade & Industry, Prime Minister Brief on Anglo-French Technological Relations - Concorde, London 14/5/71.

water down any potential dispute or harsh criticism of French policies reached its peak in the case of African matters in which the official briefing argued that:

[there was] *no reason why we should not work closely with the French on African matters based on the fact that between us, the French and we know more about Africa than anyone else, and we ought to work together as closely as possible to achieve our common objectives.*⁹⁰

These comments, incidentally *'playing down the past differences with the French in Africa to an extent which was almost misleading'*⁹¹, generated internal complaints within the Foreign Office which blamed ministerial self-censorship for making Franco-British African relations sound better than they actually were on the ground (referring to the fact that, for instance, *'the French were not so long ago fitting Biaffran aircraft with French rockets which were used against British-owned timber factories and Shell/BP's tankers in Nigeria'*).

In general, the writers of these briefs encouraged the Prime Minister to project the image of an almost trouble-free relationship with France, sweeping under the carpet points of disagreement or contention in various domains, fostering a kind of European 'Group Think' based on the common understanding that all points of difference had to be levelled down in order to please and gain the trust of the French. This understanding extended to areas not necessarily directly related to European affairs and revealed a genuine intention to make good, look good, feel good with the

⁹⁰ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)12, FCO Prime Minister Briefs on Africa, London 13 May 1971.

⁹¹ TNA FCO33/1377, Letter J. Wilson, West Africa Department, to J.K. Drinkall, West European Department, 3 August 1971.

An example of administrative 'blending' of information for the sake of preparing appropriately toned briefs, the reference to Foccart ("*Monsieur Afrique*" of the French Presidents from de Gaulle to Mitterrand) read: Censored text: *'We share the same fundamental objectives but under General de Gaulle and his henchman Foccart, the French worked against "Anglo-Saxon" influences in Africa, tried to break up the Nigerian Federation and supported the Biaffran rebellion which would have collapsed a year earlier but for French support. Following the failure of this adventure, the French have expressed the wish to "tourner la page" and to work more closely with us. We welcome this but M. Foccart is still in office ..and appears to be more influential than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs so we do not expect any dramatic progress unless M. Pompidou insists on it'*.

revised text: *'There is no reason why we should not work closely with the French on African matters. In the past, the French worked against "Anglo-Saxon" influences in Africa and supported the Biaffran rebellion. They have now expressed the wish to work more closely with us. We welcome this but M. Foccart is still in office ... and remains influential. We do not expect any dramatic progress unless M. Pompidou insists on it'*.

French. A potential side-effect was that this approach could also cast doubt on the accuracy and sincerity of background statements in briefs and thus sow the seeds of future discontent and frustration once Community membership was acquired by the British.

This rather bare form of 'persuasion compromise' also extended to former EFTA allies, literally abandoned on the field of Britain's struggle for European membership. Indeed, in order to dispel any doubts about Britain's allegiance and orientation, the briefs reiterated that:

*as the Prime Minister will have said, our commitment to the development of the community is complete, so that we would not wish to see the development of the community impeded by the nature of the relationship established with the non-applicants.*⁹²

These comments were concluded by a rather cold and definitive-resounding '*we no longer have any commitment to EFTA countries*'.⁹³ Priority was once again given to 'persuasion compromise', in that instance with the sacrifice of EFTA which was bound to lose strength and relevance after Britain's leaving notice was handed in.

The way in which Heath and his retinue approached the summit meetings with Pompidou was not only about 'persuasion compromise', based on eliminating all potential sources of reservations on Pompidou's part. It was also about handling the rencontre from a personal perspective, about managing interactions and the exchange of information with Pompidou in such a way that he would be comfortable enough to hear Britain's plea for entry without any anxieties or lasting concerns. The objective was to create a positive atmosphere free from contention or undue suspicions.

These considerations certainly played an important part in the British negotiating team's decision to leave nothing to chance. Symbolism, image or appearance were all taken into consideration, even if there were no measurable direct impact on the outcome of discussions. For instance, the FCO

⁹² TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)6 FCO Prime Minister Briefs on EFTA non-applicants, London 13 May 1971.

⁹³ Ibid. continued with '*such as that entered into in the London Declaration of 1961, by which EFTA countries bound themselves not to join or associate with the Community until satisfactory arrangements had been agreed for all*', and complemented by '*we have no commitment to EFTA countries beyond the requirement to give twelve months' notice of leaving the Association*'.

requested Kissinger to postpone his planned visit to France. Kissinger incidentally '*readily though unhappily accepted the "Trojan horse" significance of a visit too close to the meeting*' despite the fact that, in his view, there '*was no significance in the timing*'.⁹⁴ Pompidou's misgivings about Chancellor Brandt's position and policies (recent monetary crisis and reservations about Ostpolitik) were also to be favourably exploited as '*the French have tended to be more distrustful than we of Herr's Brandt Ostpolitik*'.⁹⁵ And since '*M. Pompidou may express some lingering anxieties on this score, the Prime Minister will wish to assure him that we shall be glad to stick with him*'⁹⁶ even if this somewhat hypocritical approach to the Britain/France/Germany triangular relations was not fully in phase with Heath's desire to maintain good relations with Brandt.

The British approach of making diplomatic efforts to woo, convince and gain the trust of the French President was far-reaching, to the point of even indulging, however slightly, French fears of a communist threat in Italy based on the fact that the '*Vatican [had] been extensively penetrated by communists and that Italy might go communist within two years*'.⁹⁷ The suggested diplomatic reply by the Prime Minister, were Pompidou to raise the subject, was that despite having '*no evidence to support Marenches' alarmist views*', the Prime Minister might consider answering that '*he much appreciated the President's readiness to discuss such matters, that the situation needed watching, and that it [was] obviously right to keep in touch*'. However anecdotal, this information was indicative of the British intention to leave nothing to chance, and to enable the Prime Minister to have acceptable, positive and cooperative answers to anything Pompidou might raise.

The same principle applied to Heath's evident wish to keep away from the negotiations any personalities potentially perceived by the French as conflictual. In the knowledge and understanding

⁹⁴ TNA PREM15/372, British Ambassador Cromer to FCO, telegram 1608 of 10 May 1971, repeated for information routine to Paris.

⁹⁵ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)10 FCO Prime Minister Briefs on Diplomacy - East West Relations, London 13 May 1971.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)15, FCO/Soames Prime Minister Briefs on Communist Threat in Italy, London 18 May 1971. Soames report of conversation with M. Marenches, Head of the French Secret Services, who indicated that President Pompidou was '*much exercised by this*'.

that Heath wanted *'to keep the main talks themselves being limited to [himself] and Pompidou with interpreters/notetakers'*, the Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home nevertheless felt *'it would be very useful if Geoffrey Rippon could also be on hand in Paris for [the PM] to refer when necessary'*.⁹⁸ Heath's indirect answer, sibylline in its content, but clear in its purpose, was that *'it would be impossible to maintain our presentational position if the Chancellor of the Duchy came to Paris with him'*⁹⁹, a character potentially considered by the French as 'toxic', given his uncompromising stance as leader of Britain's negotiating team in Brussels. Even if Rippon was not supposed to take any active part in the discussions, his mere presence was deemed to be a potentially negative signal. Keeping Rippon away from Paris also had the advantage of ridding Heath of a potential FCO chaperon whose presence might have had a disturbing effect on Heath's well-oiled operation in Paris. For this reason, the Prime Minister's team solely included personal aides, as suggested by Pompidou who had wished that preparations should be done *'on his side by his personal staff at the Élysée'* and had *'hoped the Prime Minister would be ready to match this'*.¹⁰⁰ FCO and Quai officials were not welcome, with the notable and understandable exception of Ambassador Soames.

A very significant feature of the approach to the summit undertaken by the British and French camps related to the sterling issue. It was argued in the previous chapter that sterling had been at the centre of Pompidou's preoccupations prior to the meetings. But a potential resolution could not be achieved by Heath alone, thus restricting his capacity to demonstrate the desirable attitude of compromise. For Heath, it was all the more difficult an exercise in that the Treasury briefs¹⁰¹ were not as conciliatory as those of other agencies. Indeed the Treasury's approach sounded more conditional than the other briefs and was packed with restrictive wording such as *'if accepted as*

⁹⁸ TNA PREM15/371, Douglas-Home to Heath, 7 May 1971.

⁹⁹ TNA PREM15/371, Armstrong to Graham, 8 May 1971.

¹⁰⁰ TNA PREM15/371, Soames to FCO, telegram 541 of 7 May 1971. Soames' added comment: *'de Courcel was summoned to Paris and informed by Jobert of the decision of the Prime Minister and the President to meet, and sworn to secrecy'*. Secrecy he respected with his hierarchy since Schumann was only supposed to be informed the next day his visit to London planned for 20-21 May would be postponed. *'He will be hurt'* Soames commented in TNA PREM15/371, Soames to FCO, telegram#528 of 7 May 1971.

¹⁰¹ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)3, Treasury Prime Minister Brief on Future of Sterling, London 18 May 1971 and Treasury Prime Minister Brief, Future of Sterling II, London 13/5/71.

sufficient it would be desirable to go no further, *'if necessary we could concede that*, *'if we are joining the EEC*, *'If the French press the non-discrimination point, there would be grave difficulties in meeting them*', or a more definitive *'it would therefore involve very great cost and for that reason alone is unthinkable*'.¹⁰² They also provided the Prime Minister with defensive speaking notes, along the same less compromise-ready lines, suggesting the PM could say: *'it would therefore be essential for me to manage the affair in my own way over a reasonable period'*. But Heath did not succumb to the hard-nosed approach proposed by the Treasury. Instead he replied to French 'European blackmail' attempts by the Quai¹⁰³ (toned down by Pompidou's team¹⁰⁴) with a surprising, rather iconoclastic, but resolutely reassuring comment that:

*the British Government did not regard sterling as an instrument of prestige nor did they feel sentimental about it, nor did they believe that the future of the City of London as financial centre depended on sterling.*¹⁰⁵

This last assertion emphatically demonstrated Heath's clear intention to make the necessary positive verbal efforts and gestures to convince Pompidou who counted on a strong statement on sterling that would *'not only represent an economic attitude but would also demonstrate British determination to change the nature of sterling on entry into the Community'*.¹⁰⁶

In summary, before and during the summit meetings, everything seemed to be framed in terms of personal perceptions, personal expressions of conciliatory statements, symbolic gestures and

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ TNA PREM15/372, Tickell, Private Secretary report to Armstrong about call on the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by the French Ambassador, Tuesday 27 April 1971. The report indicated that *'there were feeling in Paris that the British Government was not showing itself sufficiently Community minded in the negotiations'* in response to Ambassador de Courcel's reported assertion that *'the French tended to judge [British] Community-mindedness by their attitude towards Community preference'*, reinforcing that fact with the assertion that the President *'regarded [the sterling question] in some sense as a test of [Britain's] European intentions'*.

¹⁰⁴ TNA PREM15/371, Galsworthy to Tickell, note for record of conversation with M. Jean-René Bernard of the Élysée on 19 April 1971. During this conversation Bernard gave indications that, however important it was in the President's mind, *'the French had no wish whatever to make sterling a stumbling block'*.

¹⁰⁵ MTF 710520, Record of a Conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic in the Élysée Palace, Paris at 10.00 AM on Thursday 20 May 1971.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

empathic positioning. Intentions and their symbolic attributes were key, whether they stemmed from previous traditional positions, or called into question national interests in order to put aside potential causes of disagreement. A telling example of this particular approach was the British team's intention to show the President that *'the British [were] willing to learn French'*¹⁰⁷ - putting forward a strong statement of intent. This demonstrated from the British an *'understanding that the position of the French language was an emotional subject for President Pompidou'* - acknowledging the personal dimension of the matter. For this reason, it *'could be one of the factors influencing his ultimate decision on the enlargement of the community'* - identifying the potential European blackmail position of the French. Moreover, *'the other five members of the Six recognise the need on our part for a special effort to meet French fears'* - admitting to the necessity of compromise. Nevertheless *'they would be unhappy if we abandoned the claim of English to be an official language of the Community'* which was *'certainly not in our interest'* - making a potential concession, albeit temporarily, which would go against national interest.

Paris May 1971: the 'persuasion thematic' creates the conditions for 'personal diplomacy'

It would be erroneous however to reduce the success of the May 1971 summit to the beneficial effect of a purely manipulative manoeuvre from Heath and/or his team and Whitehall. Soames, benefitting from his unique experience, drawn from many personal contacts with Pompidou and his closest aides, was able to offer Heath direct access to Pompidou's opinion, thinking and reasoning to the extent that the latter was willing to share them. It should be noted here that the contention that meetings at the highest level aim at avoiding diplomats' influence has a particular resonance in the case of Soames, listened to and consulted on all matters of Franco-British relations, but kept away from the core meetings, where his persona and calibre would probably have created an

¹⁰⁷ TNA FCO33/1377, PMVP(71)4, FCO Prime Minister Brief on The Future of the French Language - What are the British Proposals?, London 14 May 1971.

imbalance in the Heath-Pompidou talks, despite his proficiency in French, and extensive knowledge of all the dossiers discussed.

The official PREM and FCO archives include numerous reports, telegrams and notes addressed by Soames to the Prime Minister, representing hundreds of pages, over the period June 1970 to June 1971. These had a significant influence on the Prime Minister as they consistently analysed Pompidou's thinking patterns, his personality (Soames' opinion about Pompidou was not entirely positive¹⁰⁸) and the best method to approach discussions with him.

Soames' overall analysis of Pompidou's misgivings was that:

Concrete issues are more or less negotiable. What is more difficult - and this is precisely this which we need to rid him of - is the residual legacy of mistrust and disbelief about Britain which he inherited from the General and which he has instinctively anyway.¹⁰⁹

Arguing the importance of direct and personal interactions between Heath and Pompidou, Soames' crucial opinion was that:

What Pompidou needs is to hear from the lips of the Prime Minister himself that his fears and misgivings are unfounded.

Confirming the importance of Heath's capacity to convince Pompidou, Soames explained that:

If the Prime Minister can convince the President that, contrary to all that has been and is being said, our European policy stems from a desire, no less deep than his own, to see an effective and really

¹⁰⁸ A compendium of Soames' judgement on Pompidou, rather harsh and sometimes condescending, includes, among many others: '*Pompidou is no European visionary panting for political unification. He is a cautious, hard-bargaining reticent Auvergnat with limited imagination and no talent for grandeur*' in TNA FCO33-1376, Paris Embassy note to Denis Greenhill on Soames' opinion on Pompidou, 21 April 1971, in which Soames successively described Pompidou as '*critical*', '*reluctant*', '*deeply concerned*', '*apprehensive*', '*fearing*'. Soames also depicted him as '*not visionary by temperament*', and that he was '*likely to prefer discussions on matters of current interests to more wide-ranging exchanges about the future development of Europe*' (FCO14/1068 Visit of the President of France to the United Kingdom 18-19 March 1972, Steering Briefs 13 March 1972: Point7) in stark contrast with the findings of this Chapter.

¹⁰⁹ TNA PREM15/371, Soames to Heath, Prime Minister's visit to Paris, 7 May 1971.

independent Europe - and that this is precisely why we have posed our candidature – we shall be in the straight and not very far from the post.

These conclusions resonated with Pompidou's own comments, made on the eve of the summit during the Conseil des Ministres on 19 May:

the outcome is uncertain. This is optimistic tactics from the British but it also represents a genuine desire to succeed. Nothing is certain since we need precise commitments and declarations. Britain's entry is the normal consequence of the Hague Conference, it has to be said. If the British feel European and take the turn, it will be possible. It is not superficial.¹¹⁰

This echoed the statement, made in a *Conseil des Ministres* which included pro and anti-Britain ministers, that:

in appearance, it is a conciliatory move. But one has to take realistic responsibilities: from there, all will be possible or impossible.¹¹¹

Persuading Pompidou in person was the paramount objective. This approach was conveyed, with constancy and acuity, in all the briefs prepared for Heath. The objective was seen to be more easily attainable by Heath because of two of his particular and fundamental 'assets':

his own European sincerity [which was] regarded here today, and always has been, even by our opponents, as unimpeachable ... the esteem in which the President is known to hold him and his policies and Mr Pompidou's belief that Mr Heath is a man with whom he can do business.¹¹²

The 'persuasion thematic' is highly relevant to this thesis in that it puts personal diplomacy and entente between leaders at the centre of the Heath-Pompidou successful encounters. Persuasion in

¹¹⁰ NA 89AJ(10), Notes Conseil des Ministres 1^{er} semestre 1971, notes manuscrites Jobert, Conseil des Ministres du 19 mai 1971: '*L'issue n'est pas certaine. Il y a une tactique optimiste des Anglais mais aussi un réel désir d'aboutir. Rien n'est acquis car il faut des engagements et des déclarations précises. L'entrée de la Grande Bretagne est dans la ligne normale de la Haye, il faut le noter. Si les Anglais se sentent Européens et prennent le virage, ce sera possible, ce n'est pas superficiel*'.

¹¹¹ NA 89AJ(10), Notes Conseil des Ministres 1^{er} semestre 1971, notes manuscrites Jobert, Conseil des Ministres du 11 May 1971: '*En apparence c'est un témoignage de conciliation mais il faut prendre les responsabilités réelles: de là tout sera possible ou impossible*'.

¹¹² TNA PREM15/371, Soames to Heath, Prime Minister's visit to Paris, 7 May 1971.

the context of interstate bilateral discussions is generally undertaken between two specific parties, rather than two negotiating teams comprised of governmental agencies, or diplomatic personnel, having to report results to higher levels for decision-making and/or official sanction. It necessarily involves interactions between two individuals and therefore it has an essentially personal dimension. It operates however within a set of conditioning parameters: an arguable and believable case to promote or defend, a capacity to listen and understand the opposite side's arguments and potential objections, the existence or potentiality of trust and confidence established between the parties, and, in the best case scenarios, a proximity of view between the actors, a positive relationship and a wish to make progress together, that is to say the ingredients of an entente.

The May 1971 meetings presented all the characteristics of a persuasion-oriented diplomatic discussion carried out at a very personal level in a friendly and warm ambiance. This fact was epitomised both by Pompidou's declaration to the press on 21 May 1971 and the Prime Minister's thank-you letter addressed to the President following their summit. In the Salles des Fêtes of the Élysée, a solemn but visibly content Pompidou, sitting on the stage next to an equally dignified and satisfied Heath, declared to an expectant hall of international journalists:

The aim of these talks was not and could not be to resolve all the questions that are under discussion in Brussels ... We tried, above all, to mutually understand the deep-seated political and economic reasons on which each of our two governments base their positions ... But the central theme of our discussion has been on the overall concept of Europe, its organisation, its functioning, and its future, and all this, in the general framework of major world problems, between European countries and others, and among these European countries ... On a certain number of major problems, we have concluded that our viewpoints were similar and even identical. On others, we have also concluded that although certain differences, divergences might have existed, they were in no way an obstacle to our co-operation, since we are in complete agreement on the goal to be attained.¹¹³

¹¹³ CVCE, "Statement to the press by Mr. Pompidou, President of the French Republic, after his talks with Mr. Heath, British Prime Minister (Paris, 21 May 1971)" (CVCE translation), URL:

This declaration encapsulated the essence of the meetings, and defined their particularity and significance. Pompidou, a lover of poetry by training and affinity¹¹⁴, chose his words with care¹¹⁵. When he made his statement, he clearly pointed to the nature of the summit in its usefulness, objective and effective result, consisting in understanding the other party's opinion, ideas and constraints, and expressing one's own. He underlined the issues of bilateralism in a multilateral Community environment. He asserted that the summit was about high-end politics and not about treatment of technical details in on-going negotiations. He confirmed the proximity, and even similarity, of his European views with those of Heath. He reminded the audience that the meetings were as much about substance as about opening a channel of discussion between the leaders, but that they were not about solving all the difficulties or assigning a unified approach to all situations. He described an intended 'top-down management' of European affairs, leaving the hard, almost confrontational, detailed negotiations and conclusions to the specialists' teams in Brussels. He hinted at the fact that this summit was not about officialising and communicating information on the meeting, which was destined to be kept secret to most observers and actors at the time.

On a more personal level, Heath's private thank-you letter to Pompidou offered an accurate description of the leaders' interactions, of the personalisation of the summit, of the gestures of personal diplomacy, notably through ceremonial and personal attentions (for example a gala-dinner and a concert played for the attention of Heath, the music lover) :

I valued the opportunity that my visit to Paris gave me of discussing with you in depth the whole range of issues which are of interest to our two countries and above all the future of Europe ... As you know the growing unity of Europe is an ideal which I have had before me throughout my political life ... It was not simply a pleasure but a profound encouragement to me to find our thoughts, ideas and hopes

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/statement_by_georges_pompidou_paris_21_may_1971-en-667a8476-fc33-4321-8c28-d6f175e823dc.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

¹¹⁴ Georges Pompidou, *Anthologie de la Poésie Française* (Paris: Hachette, 1961), 500-page book on his love and knowledge of French poetry. Pompidou was a *Normalien*, *Aggrégé de Lettres* and had taught French, Latin and Greek in Marseille and Paris from 1935 to 1944.

¹¹⁵ In an allocution to the *Académie Française* on 28 April 1969, Pompidou expressed the idea that '*poetry and action ... are the two forms of creative activity*' ('*poésie et action sont deux formes de l'activité créatrice*') in Georges Pompidou, *Entretiens et Discours*, vol. 1, pp. 169-176.

so close ... I believe that the understanding which we achieved during our talks will establish a new era of Franco-British friendship and cooperation ... Throughout my visit I felt that I had come amongst friends ... I would like to express my warmest gratitude for your hospitality ... magnificent dinner at Salle des Fêtes ... memorable occasion and I particularly appreciated the beautiful playing by the String Orchestra of the Garde Républicaine of a programme which grouped French and English works.¹¹⁶

This letter also acknowledged the depth and closeness of Heath and Pompidou's views about Europe and its future, shared during the summit. It unveiled the nascent entente between the two leaders, based on ease of communication and mutual appreciation of character and mind. It forecasted a continuity of the Paris May 1971 summit, indicating the future trends and rituals which had been initiated by the summit.

Post May 1971 Summit: success and consequences

Less than two pages of a secret report written by Robert Armstrong, Heath's Private Secretary, summarised the contents of the Heath-Pompidou private discussions during their May 1971 summit meetings. Eleven points for eleven hours tête-à-tête.¹¹⁷ From the start, secrecy of information and limited public and official communication, even at national, diplomatic and government levels, were the result of the unwritten agreement between the two leaders. No agenda had been communicated to avoid '*press speculation about the talks*'. Briefing to the Cabinet was, as desired by Heath, '*presented orally*' to avoid the '*risks arising of circulation of a memorandum*' on talks which should be essentially '*played by ear*'.¹¹⁸ In fact, Heath and Pompidou had spent a good part of the last session of the summit deliberating and agreeing on what to tell the press, and what letter should be written to the leaders of the Five to inform them of the summit proceedings.¹¹⁹ Heath agreed to answer Pompidou's concern that '*one should not tell more than the other since any type of difference*

¹¹⁶ TNA PREM15/372, Prime Minister Personal Message to President Pompidou, 24 May 1971.

¹¹⁷ TNA PREM15/372, Robert Armstrong's secret report on the 'Meetings between the President of the French Republic and the Prime Minister of United Kingdom held at le Palais de Élysée, Paris on Thursday 20 and Friday 21 May 1971', 24 May 1971.

¹¹⁸ TNA PREM15/372, Nield to Armstrong, 15 May 1971.

¹¹⁹ MTA 710521 Pompidou-Heath Summit (Session 4: 16.00-18.20).

between [their] letters would raise questions and would inevitably create uncertainty'.¹²⁰ Taking note of Pompidou's proposed letter, he committed to draft his in '*similar terms*' and clarified that, in the customary address to the Commons after a Prime Minister's official trip abroad, he would obviate any potential misunderstanding by announcing that '*a report of the meetings had been officially established, that they both read its conclusions and were satisfied with them*'.¹²¹ Heath and Pompidou intended to keep communication to a minimum, using sibylline expressions, and providing scant reporting of their exchanges.¹²² In effect, there was no real need to develop a detailed argument as, per Pompidou's announcement on the 21st of May, the bulk and core of the detailed discussions were supposed to take place thereafter in Brussels, with a predicted positive outcome. This was made clear in the cascaded communication to diplomats of France and of the Five by the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Hervé Alphand, who hailed:

*the rencontre which had enabled trust to be established between two men who barely knew each other. France believes that the British Government and its leader sincerely desire their country to get membership of a Community which is really European. On the British side, there should not be any doubt about France's will to assure the success of enlargement to Britain. We do wish that, starting from June, a tangible agreement reflecting that will should be reached in Brussels even if it means that we have to overcome numerous difficulties to accomplish this.*¹²³

¹²⁰ AN AG5(2)108, Compte Rendu Quatrième Tête-à-tête, vendredi 21 mai 1971, 16 heures.

¹²¹ Ibid.: '*la mienne sera rédigée en termes semblables*'... '*Comme il est d'usage après un voyage à l'étranger je vais faire une déclaration aux Communes et au pays. Je propose de m'en tenir aux termes du communiqué ... Un membre du Parlement me posera peut-être la question: il y a eu des malentendus dans le passé comment pouvez-vous être sûr qu'il n'y en aura pas cette fois ci. Je répondrai qu'il existe comme toujours dans ces cas là un compte rendu, que nous en avons vu tous les deux les conclusions et que nous en sommes satisfaits*'.

¹²² This generated some tensions in the French camp as, for instance, Boegner insistence on knowing what to tell the Governor of the Bank of England about the Heath-Pompidou discussions on sterling, reported in a note from Bernard to Jobert requesting instructions from Soames: '*Peut-être pourriez vous dans ces conditions demander à Soames (ou Palliser) ce que les Anglais désirent que nous disions aux quelques personnes qui doivent suivre ces problèmes ... Après tout, s'il y a un secret à garder, c'est bien parce que les Anglais le demandent*' ('*after all if there is a secret to keep, it is because the English requested it*'), in AN AG5(2)/76, Note Bernard to Jobert sur Problèmes Monétaires du 27 mai 1971.

¹²³ AN AG5(2)/108, Séjour à Paris de M. Heath 20-21 mai 1971: Note aux diplomates français du Secrétaire Général Alphand en date du 24/05/71 sur les entretiens Franco-Britanniques des 20 et 21 mai. Rapport sur le compte rendu de l'audience accordée par Alphand aux ambassadeurs des états membres le 22 mai pour les informer du contenu des entretiens.

From a general point of view, the May 1971 Paris summit meetings were certainly unique in their purpose of Heath persuading Pompidou that Britain was truly willing and able to take the European step. But their crucial characteristic was that they were focused on the personal dimension: the main protagonists' ideas, approach and interactions, the organisers' persona and motivations, the secrecy in preparations, the confidentiality of the discussions, the format and staging of proceedings, the communication and results of the meetings.

At this stage, it is important to assess the subsequent encounters, the 1972 and 1973 summits, using the same actor-centred perspective, in order to find out whether May 1971 was a special circumstance, a 'one-off' summit which had unique personal dimensions, or whether it in fact marked the beginning of a series of similar, entente-based personal diplomacy exercises by Heath and Pompidou.

Heath and Pompidou held their first post-May 1971 summit only on 18, 19 March 1972 because of busy official agendas at the beginning of 1972.¹²⁴ This summit was initially planned to take place on 11, 12 and 13 February 1972¹²⁵, '*shortly after British signature of the Treaty of Accession on 22 January*'¹²⁶. It was prepared and discussed in detail¹²⁷ but was first postponed to 19-20 February¹²⁸ because of a potential agenda clash with the Heath-Brandt and Brandt-Pompidou meetings¹²⁹, to be finally cancelled and put back to 18-19 March because of Heath's personal involvement in the resolution of the miners' strike (9 January – 28 February 1972)¹³⁰. These multiple changes

¹²⁴ TNA FCO33/1389, draft telegram Heath to Soames, undated, mentioning '*Pompidou's African trip*', the '*risk of clash with Brandt-Pompidou meeting*' and the Queen's trip '*out of the country*' for which '*he will be accompanying Her*'.

¹²⁵ TNA FCO33/1389, Greenhill to Palliser, 23 December 1971, request to Palliser to '*set those dates aside so that he could come if summoned*' as there was '*a possibility that the Prime Minister would like [him] to help again with the translation*'.

¹²⁶ TNA FCO33/1389, Steering Briefs, Background to the Meeting.

¹²⁷ TNA FCO33/1389, Steering Briefs, resumed and revised for the March 18-19 meetings, in TNA FCO14/1068, Steering briefs, 13 March 1972.

¹²⁸ TNA PREM15/903, Barrington to Armstrong, 21st January 1972, Talks between the Prime Minister and the President of France 19th and 20th February 1972. Request for briefs, methodology and description.

¹²⁹ TNA FCO33/1389, Soames to FCO, telegram #1650 of 22 December 1971. Report on his meeting with Jobert to discuss Pompidou's visit to Britain.

¹³⁰ TNA FCO33/1751, Heath to Pompidou, 19 February 1972.

nevertheless generated friendly epistolary exchanges between Heath, who wished *'to renew his personal exchanges on which [he] placed the highest importance'*¹³¹, and Pompidou who considered benevolently the *'adjournment of a rencontre ... at a date and in a place to be agreed in the weeks to come'*¹³². Heath preferred the meeting to be at Chequers as it could pose *'from the point of view of British Parliamentary and public opinion'* a risk of *'misinterpretation'*¹³³ for him to return to Paris for a second consecutive time.

Heath's introductory remarks to Pompidou at the 18, 19 March 1972 summit meetings, embodied the essence of what had happened in May 1971:

*I am delighted to welcome you at Chequers and I am honoured that you accepted to come here to continue, after our rencontre last May, conversations which will address a large number of topics. Indeed a lot has happened since ... The successful conclusion of the negotiations with the Community was, to a large extent, due to the arrangements you and I reached at the Élysée.*¹³⁴

This introduction by Heath encapsulated the important lessons and consequences of May 1971. A *'rencontre'* had determined and conditioned the success of negotiations in Brussels through *'arrangements'*, a term which implied a degree of collaboration, of partnership with a dose of secrecy, all on the basis of *'conversations'*, emphasizing the interpersonal relationship. Remarkably, the use of the word *'continue'* suggests that the 1972/1973 summits were represented as being in a continuous line of dialogue already opened in May 1971 by Heath and Pompidou, and meant to be carried on. This is exactly what was witnessed in the Heath-Pompidou relationship from May 1971 onwards: a continued dialogue unburdened by any obligation to arrive at a particular result, but

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² TNA FCO33/1751, Pompidou to Heath, 22 February 1972.

¹³³ TNA FCO33/1751, Heath to Pompidou, draft Letter for the Prime Minister to send to His Excellency M. Pompidou, undated.

¹³⁴ NA AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers les 18, 19 mars 1972: Premier entretien Heath-Pompidou, le 18 mars 1972, 11h00-13h00: *'je suis très heureux de vous accueillir et honoré de ce que vous ayez bien voulu venir ici pour reprendre, après notre rencontre de mai dernier, des conversations qui pourront porter sur un très grand nombre de questions. En effet beaucoup d'évènements se sont produits depuis. L'heureuse conclusion des négociations avec la Communauté a été due pour une large part aux arrangements auxquels nous étions parvenus avec vous à l'Élysée'*.

rather an exchange on an open list of topics, based on friendly communication and developing personal relations, a dialogic model that this chapter will characterise as the 'Three Es' (Explain, Exchange and Explore).

This approach had been adopted by design during the May 1971 summit meetings. It was not then a question of resolving Community-wide institutional or commercial matters, of expounding a Franco-British response on extra-European monetary issues, or deciding on the details of each and every percentage of Community financing. It was instead an opportunity for Britain to demonstrate, through Heath's direct, personal and confidential contact with Pompidou, its distinctive will to obtain membership of the EEC, giving the French President assurances and reassurance, whilst avoiding anything counterproductive. In May 1971, providing these assurances and reassurance relied on three factors for both sides: the French President mainly wished to explain the nature of his monetary concerns and to make clear France's positions and apprehensions about Britain's entry, whereas the Prime Minister was to explain why some answers could not be provided (e.g. the Basle agreement required secrecy) and, above all, why he thought Britain wanted to join the Community. In addition, the summit gave the Prime Minister the opportunity to explain *'his own conception of a united Europe with a distinctive personality of its own, free of economic, political, military or monetary vassalage and deriving its cohesion from the voluntary interlocking of nation states pursuing common objectives'*.¹³⁵ Both leaders expected to exchange¹³⁶ views and opinions on matters of particular interest, for them personally and for their respective nation, in domains as varied as the future of institutions, relations with ex-dominions and colonies, cultural collaboration, or industrial and technological cooperation. And these exchanges did not have to produce practical and tangible results. Heath and Pompidou also hoped to find ways together of circumventing potential blockages,

¹³⁵ Ibid. In his statement to the Parliament about his visit to France, Edward Heath mentioned four times *'I explained'* (*'I explained the great importance of reaching satisfactory arrangements for New Zealand'*, *'I explained the difficulties which the Community's fisheries policy causes us'*, etc.) in section 6 of his speech about the *'progress made so far in the negotiations in Brussels on the enlargement of the Communities'*, in PREM15/372, Prime Minister's visit to Paris, Statement in the House on 24 May 1971, draft.

¹³⁶ For instance, *'we exchanged views on the functioning of the Community's institutions'* in section 4 of Heath's speech to the House, in PREM15/372, Prime Minister's visit to Paris, Statement in the House on 24 May 1971.

to explore potential solutions to the most pressing issues in the negotiation in Brussels and at ministerial levels in Paris and London.

This May 1971 'Three Es' approach was extended to the 1972/1973 meetings and appeared to continue until Pompidou's death. It shifted progressively and demonstratively towards '*friendly and warm Anglo-French occasions*'¹³⁷, testifying to the remarkable level of trust and mutual appreciation between the two leaders. Despite having different objectives, the May 1971 meetings served as a template for subsequent Heath-Pompidou summits in 1972 and 1973, with such similarities as the wish not to raise subjects of potential divergence unless absolutely necessary. On defence, for instance, Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home indicated that '*the Prime Minister would be ready to do so [i.e. talk about defence] if the President wishes but no doubt would not insist on doing so if the President did not wish*'.¹³⁸ This amounted to the creation of an open mode of communication with no obligation to deal with any specific subject. Another similarity was the desire to downplay the importance of issues ostensibly at the heart of the leaders' concerns, such as Pompidou declaring himself '*a bit disappointed by the evolution of the sterling balances*', moderated by the comment '*but this was natural, there was the reality of events*'.¹³⁹ An open dialogue avoiding conflict was the overall feature. Recommendations to that effect to the Private Secretary coming from the PM himself expected that briefs should be:

written with the purpose of the visit constantly in mind ... The talks [were] not to be construed as negotiations between the PM and the French Government but as designed to enable the PM and the

¹³⁷ TNA PREM15/1864, Prime Minister Visit to Paris, May 1973 Preparation for visit: Heath to Tomkins, Thank you letter, 4 June 1973.

¹³⁸ TNA PREM15/1864, Prime Minister Visit to Paris, May 1973, Preparation for visit: Armstrong and Hunt to meet with Jobert and Bernard on Saturday 12 May 1973.

¹³⁹ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, les 18 et 19 mars 1972, Premier entretien Heath-Pompidou le 18 mars 1972, 11h00-13h00: '*un peu déçu par l'évolution des balances sterling, mais cela est naturel; il y avait la réalité des évènements*'. Sterling balances concerns were then only part of international monetary issues mainly raised by the 'Nixon shock', which was the topic of Heath-Pompidou preamble discussions during their exchange of views of the March 1972 summit meetings.

*President to talk over together the various aspects of policies which [were then] the subject of Anglo-French concern.*¹⁴⁰

From May 1971 onwards, 'Explain' meant providing the other party with the background on matters to be first discussed bilaterally between France and Britain before later adoption by the Community at the multilateral level. 'Explain' meant, in Heath's words, holding conversations which were '*as in previous occasions ... of the highest interest and value*', giving them the certainty that '*both the French and British Governments [would] benefit ... from the insight [himself and Pompidou] had gained into [their counterpart's] problems and policies*'.¹⁴¹ 'Exchange' meant sharing information on political, diplomatic or economic matters for the sake of furthering discussion about them, or with the aim, as expressed by the British, of '*opening the President's mind to the influence of new ideas and to ensuring that their dialogue on these subjects [could] be continued on subsequent occasions*'.¹⁴² This was the case, for example, in the setting of the agenda for the 16, 17 November 1973 summit meetings by Heath's advisers. They considered that '*the PM will have achieved all the success he can reasonably expect at Chequers if he has reached a satisfactory degree of understanding with the President*' on various crucial issues such as '*the complex international issues (Middle East, oil crisis, US/EU relations)*', '*the CAP review*' or '*Spain's attitude towards Britain*'.¹⁴³ 'Exchange' also meant addressing topics of a higher order, generally concerning the future of Europe, its main projects and development, as well as more prosaically sharing views and opinions about their other partners. Finally 'Explore' meant probing the other party's mindset on important subjects, for instance to understand '*Pompidou's thinking during the course of the weekend*', or '*whether he is coming round to envisage the kind of Europe we [Heath and Soames] would like to see*'.¹⁴⁴ It also

¹⁴⁰ TNA PREM15/903, To Private Secretary, Talks between the Prime Minister and the President of France, 19, 20 February 1972, dated 21 January 1972.

¹⁴¹ TNA PREM15/1864, Prime Minister Visit to Paris - May 1973: Heath Personal Message to Pompidou, 26 May 1973.

¹⁴² TNA FCO14/1068, Visit of the President of France to the United Kingdom 18, 19 March 1972, Steering Briefs 13 March 1972.

¹⁴³ TNA PREM15/2093, Visit of President Pompidou - Handling of Agenda, 14 November 1973, Nairne to PM, copy Armstrong and Hunt: agenda tactics.

¹⁴⁴ TNA PREM15/903 Letter Soames to Heath, 16 February 1972.

meant identifying the interlocutor's 'wish list', in order to get '*a closer measure of understanding*'¹⁴⁵ of their desiderata. For these reasons, 'understanding' (in all its meanings) had become a key word of the Heath-Pompidou relationship: 'understanding' as collaborative tolerance for any potential issue, 'understanding' as comprehension of the other side's views and objectives, 'understanding' as global agreement on key European matters.

This 'Three Es' approach in subsequent meetings showed the leaders' readiness to hold conversations without a formal '*pre-cooked*' position even if, in the background, there were doubtless more precise principles. For instance, when Pompidou broached with Heath the nominations to the Commission with the four additional member states which required '*judicious distribution of appointments*', he argued that he had '*no idea about it yet but ready to discuss it with you*'.¹⁴⁶ Whereas diplomacy and politeness undoubtedly played their part in such a rapport, the Heath-Pompidou summits gave a clear impression of being meetings as exchanges of view, laying the foundations for later mutually acceptable agreements at a European level. Their summits were an opportunity '*to make progress [in advance of a European Summit], at a bilateral level, by default of a global agreement*'.¹⁴⁷

This was only possible between two persons acting openly and in confidence. During their conversations, Georges Pompidou was clear, simple, direct and often professorial¹⁴⁸ in style. Edward Heath was articulate, unassuming, focused and participatory in his approach. Both men were highly intelligent, well spoken, accustomed to leading discussions without dominating. They shared their conceptions, even when divergent, frankly and without affectation. They continually asked for

¹⁴⁵ TNA PREM15/2093, Visit of President Pompidou - Handling of Agenda, 14 November 1973, Nairne to PM, copy Armstrong and Hunt: agenda tactics.

¹⁴⁶ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, les 18 et 19 Mars 1972: '*maintenant avec l'arrivée de quatre nouveaux membres, la Commission va en compter quatorze ... la question va donc se poser de repartir judicieusement les attributions ... pas d'idées mais prêt à en discuter avec vous*'.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.: '*et j'espère que nous pourrons faire des progrès dans ce domaine au Sommet et peut être aussi d'une manière bilatérale à défaut d'un accord général*'

¹⁴⁸ Bodleian (henceforth BL) Edward Heath Papers, shelf mark EH 2/4/10A (privileged limited access, not catalogued) Pre-meeting handwritten preparation notes (Armstrong to PM?) about the French language potential issue mentioning the officials' fear that '*the "professeur" in the President may cause his "École Normale Supérieure" hackles to rise and transform the question of language into a major issue*'.

feedback on their points and suggestions, as if sharing between equals. It is interesting to note that, in their conversations, Heath and Pompidou always referred to the '*Community*' or the '*enlarged Community*', de facto foregoing any reference to the '*Common Market*' and the connotation of a trade-only grouping, possibly symptomatic of some faith in a global European Union project whether political or monetary (cf. Chapter 3). Certainly there were limits to their commitment to the whole European project (for example federalism and the power of the Commission), but their political line was clearly to achieve a further deeper union of sovereign states.

An open-discussion mode was the distinctive feature of all the meetings post May 1971 which were characterised by an agreed lack of any official agenda. As Jobert indicated to Armstrong about the summit due to take place initially in February 1972, he did not believe that a preparation similar to that undertaken before the May 1971 summit would be really necessary, arguing that '*the President of the French Republic and the Prime Minister would certainly and easily focus the discussions on essential matters by themselves*'.¹⁴⁹ This mindset was particularly notable in the introductory questions asked at the beginning of almost each one-to-one either by Pompidou or Heath, such as '*what do you want to talk about, general matters or particular topics?*'.¹⁵⁰ Or more tellingly, Pompidou: '*we do not have an agenda, what would you wish to talk about? The world?*' - Heath: '*we can talk about anything you like*' - Pompidou: '*we do not have an agenda but we could start with world affairs, then talk about the Community and lastly about our countries' particular interests*'.¹⁵¹ These introductions underline the non-scripted nature of the meetings. Whilst it is likely that all the possible topics had been reviewed in detail in numerous steering briefs, the Heath-Pompidou

¹⁴⁹ TNA PREM15/903, Jobert to Armstrong, undated: personal reply to Armstrong letter sent 7 January 1972 about a Heath-Pompidou meeting initially envisaged to take place in February 1972: '*Le Président de la République et le Premier Ministre orienteront certainement aisément d'eux-mêmes leurs entretiens vers des sujets essentiels*'.

¹⁵⁰ AN AG5(2)108, Entretien du Président de la République avec Mr. Heath le 18 octobre 1972 (17h30-18h45): '*de quoi voulez-vous parler ? De questions générales ou particulières?*'

¹⁵¹ AN AG5(2)108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, Paris 21-22 mai 1973, Premier tête-à-tête entre M. Pompidou et M. Heath, le 21 mai 1973 (10h00-13h15): '*nous n'avons pas d'ordre du jour. De quoi désirez-vous que nous parlions? Du monde?*' - Heath: '*de ce que vous voudrez*' - Pompidou: '*nous n'avons pas d'ordre du jour mais nous pourrions commencer par les affaires mondiales, parler ensuite de la Communauté et enfin des intérêts particuliers de nos deux pays*'.

discussions were not organised as tactically pre-planned interventions. They were open conversations, seemingly with no official agenda, under the shared premises of openness and entente. Even when preparatory discussions did take place between Downing Street officials and the Secrétaire Général de l'Élysée about a prospective *'ordre du jour'*, for instance prior to the May 1973 summit meetings, the suggested agenda was to be *'comprehensive enough to cover any points which the President might wish to raise, the only point which President Pompidou did not think worth discussing was Anglo-French nuclear cooperation'*.¹⁵² Such a restriction was anyway limited in principle as it should not *'be taken to mean that the President would be unwilling to discuss the subject if the Prime Minister [wished] en tête-à-tête'*.¹⁵³

This 'Three Es' open discussion model was confirmed by the objectives, content and format (and public communication) of the summit meetings between Heath and Pompidou from 1972 on. These meetings were a sign of the leaders' desire to have conversations, not to hold results-driven meetings. A contention clearly demonstrated, for instance, by the British camp's understanding that *'the French have made it clear that the President sees his visit (March 1972) as an unofficial and personal occasion, the opportunity to spend a relaxed country weekend with the Prime Minister and to range wide in discussions'*.¹⁵⁴ The point was clear: *'the talks will not in any sense be negotiations'*.¹⁵⁵ Instead these talks were within a framework of the continuity and *'timelessness'*¹⁵⁶ of exchanges which would be set up whenever the need arose, as expressed by Heath's personal assurance to Pompidou that *'nothing would give [him] greater pleasure than to welcome you and Madame Pompidou to Chequers, whenever you feel that the moment has come for further talks'*.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, even when the Heath-Pompidou talks had been concluded with a tangible result publicly

¹⁵² TNA PREM15/1864, telegram#346 Tomkins to FCO, Agenda for Prime Minister's meeting with President Pompidou, 5 May 1973. Report of communications with Michel Jobert.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ TNA FCO14/1068, Visit of the President of France to the United Kingdom 18-19 March 1972, Steering Briefs, 13 March 1972.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ TNA PREM15/2093, Heath-Pompidou Meeting 16-17 November 1973: Press Briefings about Meetings, Haydon to Heath, 15 November 1973.

¹⁵⁷ TNA PREM15/1864, Prime Minister Visit to Paris, May 1973: Prime Minister Personal Message to Pompidou, 26 May 1973.

communicated, nothing of any relevance to the subject had in fact been discussed during their actual conversations. This was the case with the signing of the Channel Tunnel Agreement (17 November 1973) which, in essence, was a historical cornerstone of Franco-British rapprochement but was not in fact a subject in the discussions between Heath and Pompidou during their November 1973 summit meetings, and was not even signed by the interlocutors themselves, but rather by their respective foreign secretaries. Instead, Heath remarked on *'the friendly atmosphere in which [he] had more than eight hours' private discussion with President Pompidou on 16th-17th November at Chequers'*.¹⁵⁸ These were characterised as *'a successful visit that was crowned with the signing of the Channel Tunnel agreement'*¹⁵⁹ by Douglas-Home and Jobert, whereas, according to Heath, Pompidou and he *'would attend the signing ceremony, smiling but not uttering a word'*¹⁶⁰. For the British Prime Minister what mattered more was the progress made during the conversations in terms of understanding and clarifying a series of crucial issues: the second stage of Economic and Monetary Union *'on which the President understood our position about the "snake"'*, the Regional Development Fund *'on which the President expressed his wish to be helpful without committing himself'*, the CAP about which *'the president understood our approach to CAP review'* and other *'useful exchanges'*. Emphasis was equally put on the forthcoming Copenhagen Summit (14 and 15 December 1973) which would *'offer opportunity of renewing discussion on any issue with President Pompidou'*.

It was natural that this type of approach to leaders' meetings impacted on the actual format of the summits themselves. This was tellingly demonstrated by what could be termed the phenomenon of 'weekend summitry'. The wish for a relaxing time at the weekend was a trait shared by both Heath and Pompidou (cf. Chapter 3). Nevertheless they envisaged mixing business with pleasure on

¹⁵⁸ TNA PREM15/2093, European community Affairs John Hunt's report on Pompidou's visit, 21 November 1973.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, 16-17 novembre 1973, Deuxième Entretien en tête-à-tête vendredi 16 novembre 1973 de 16h00 à 19h00: *'Nous allons assister sans mot dire mais souriants à cette signature'*.

weekends as, for instance, when planning¹⁶¹ something as official and momentous as a State Visit to Britain¹⁶², Heath suggested that '*the President should spend the weekend after the State Visit at Chequers*'.¹⁶³ This very personal and social invitation, extended to Pompidou's wife Claude, suggested Pompidou could extend his stay in Britain after the three days traditionally devoted to a State Visit, a fact all the more remarkable in that Pompidou tended to resist working on official business during weekends.¹⁶⁴

Beyond the constraints of location generated by a State Visit (Windsor Castle or Buckingham Palace), Pompidou and Heath met almost exclusively at Chequers, underlining the friendly and almost non-official nature of Heath-Pompidou rencontres. On these special occasions, Pompidou's accompanying team did not include any member of the Government, nor any diplomat, and was reduced to a minimum for visits to Chequers. Out of the ten people who arrived at London Airport with Pompidou¹⁶⁵ for the March 1972 official visit, only six actually stayed with the President at Chequers including the indispensable Jobert, the no less indispensable interpreter Andronikof, the Aide de Camp Lt Colonel Pierre Aubry, Docteur Allilaire and the security detail.¹⁶⁶ All the other advisers had gone back to Paris (Bernard, economic adviser - Raimond, diplomatic adviser - Baudouin, Press and communication adviser, and Rougagnou - chargé de mission¹⁶⁷). Chequers

¹⁶¹ TNA PREM15/2093, Heath-Pompidou Meetings 16-17 November 1973. State Visit for 1975. Alexander to Armstrong, 7 December 1973: '*... the Queen is happy that the Prime Minister should sound out President Pompidou about a visit in 1975 when he sees him in Copenhagen*'.

¹⁶² Envisaged in 1975 rather 1974, probably because of Pompidou's foretelling signs of Pompidou's illness impacting his official agenda and forcing him to reduce his commitments. Heath declared to Pompidou that he was '*delighted .. that you would like to pay a State Visit to the UK ... I have also noted that you did not think likely that you would be able to pay such a Visit in 1974. Would it be practicable in 1975?*' in TNA PREM PREM15/2093, Heath Pompidou Meeting 16-17 November 1973, State Visit for 1975: Speaking notes on the occasion of the meeting in Copenhagen (EEC Summit) 14 December 1973.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Testified, for example, by his complaint to Heath about the arrangements suggested by the Danish government for the Copenhagen Summit which '*were a conspiracy to make Heads of Government work on Sunday*' in TNA PREM15/2093, Report of Heath Pompidou conversation in the car from Chequers to Heathrow Saturday 17 November 1973 - 10:50.

¹⁶⁵ TNA FCO033/1751, Visit of His Excellency Monsieur Georges Pompidou, President of the French Republic 8-19 March 1972, Administrative Arrangements, Annex IA French Official Party.

¹⁶⁶ TNA FCO033/1751, Visit of His Excellency Monsieur Georges Pompidou, President of the French Republic 8-19 March 1972, Administrative Arrangements, Annex II Room allocation at Chequers.

¹⁶⁷ Sabrina Tricaud and Emilie Willaert, 'Les Cabinets de Georges Pompidou à Matignon et à l'Élysée (1962-1974)', *Histoire@Politique*, 8/2 (2009), pp. 86-95.

'weekend summitry' appeared to be almost an occasion to unwind and enjoy leisurely weekend activities such as a walk in the surrounding countryside on the Saturday afternoon instead of getting back to work privately with his team after their tête-à-tête, accompanied by *'the only uncomfortable people'*¹⁶⁸, the French President security men making their presence as discreet as possible. Heath and Pompidou also innovated with what might be termed 'car summitry'. Indeed the two leaders (and their interpreters¹⁶⁹) travelled together by car in November 1973 between London airport and Chequers, and back, to Windsor (for a tea with the Queen), and on such occasions, held private conversations on various topics in almost intimate conditions (four people in the same vehicle) reported on in detail by Palliser. His account gave an impression of discussions *à bâtons rompus*, in the intimacy and confidentiality of the PM's car, on matters of interest in world affairs.¹⁷⁰

This type of testimony is even more striking when compared with the scant level of information on the summits given to the public via the press. The combination of personal diplomacy and open-discussion summits was a difficult thing to handle with the media. Journalists, commentators and observers were naturally hungry for revelations of real significance and were unlikely to be satisfied with reports about broad friendly conversations without clear decisions. The whole difficulty for the two men was to deliver carefully calibrated messages, with a sufficient amount of news material which could not be interpreted as infringing the Community's prerogatives or unveiling the content of talks which would remain confidential. This public relations dimension arose at the end of the first summit in May 1971. In their last session, Pompidou and Heath agreed that *'minutes resulting from their conversations would be kept strictly confidential'* and that it was *'important they should not give*

¹⁶⁸ Heath, *The Course*, p. 369. According to the Prime Minister, Pompidou on this occasion *'murmured to himself: what a beautiful countryside, the English have it all already'* revealing a certain comfort and appeasement and a lack of stress an atmosphere of negotiations or top-level official discussion could have generated.

¹⁶⁹ TNA PREM15/2093, Records of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic in the car between London Airport and Chequers at 10.50 a.m. on Friday 16 November 1973. Indicated as *'present'*: Palliser and Andronikof.

¹⁷⁰ TNA PREM15/2093, record of points arising in conversations during the return journey of Monsieur Georges Pompidou, President of the French Republic, from Chequers to London Airport, Saturday 17 November 1973. On the way to Windsor castle, Pompidou talked about and denied rumours of Gadhafi's visit to Paris and exchanged about *'arrangements for the forthcoming European Summit meeting in Copenhagen'*, a subject also discussed with the Queen during tea.

the impression to their negotiating partners that they had definitely settled matters that were for negotiation in Brussels'.¹⁷¹ And, because they 'could hardly avoid saying anything to the press', they both agreed 'they should keep their remarks general and "atmospheric" in tone' and that it should definitely be made 'clear to the journalists that they were not invited to a press conference'.¹⁷² This type of concern was echoed at each summit, generating candid questions such as Pompidou's at the end of their May 1973 summit' sessions: 'what are we going to say to the press?'¹⁷³. The two leaders' answers suggested that their discussions were not designed to be communicated every time, that they were more personal exchanges of points of view on certain situations and of respective *états d'esprit*, in line with this Chapter's argumentation. Indeed Heath's recommendation for giving the Press attachés a list of topics which had been discussed generated an almost surreal Prévert-type dialogue worth quoting in detail. The two principals added topics one after the other in order to fill the public communications gap, regardless of the depth or even reality of their exchanges on these matters:

Pompidou: *this morning we have tackled world affairs and monetary questions about which we have exchanged our respective ideas. We have said nothing about Vietnam, but we have to mention it. There is also the Middle-East. This afternoon, Community matters have been examined: CAP, regional policy, functioning of institutions, Economic and Monetary Union. On these, our positions are similar and this is important in view of our forthcoming discussions with our partners. We have agreed on the enhanced role of the Permanent Representatives.*¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ MTF 710521, Pompidou-Heath Summit (Session 4: 1600-1820), Record of a Conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic in the Élysée Palace, Paris at 16:00 on Friday 21 May 1971.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21 mai 1973: 'qu'allons-nous dire à la presse ?'.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.: 'ce matin nous avons évoqué la politique mondiale et les questions monétaires, à propos desquelles nous avons échangés nos idées. Nous n'avons rien dit sur le Vietnam, mais il faut le mentionner. Il y a aussi le Proche Orient. Cet après-midi, les questions de la Communauté ont été examinées: la politique agricole, la politique régionale, le fonctionnement des institutions, l'union économique et monétaire. Sur ces sujets nos positions sont communes et cela est important en vue des conversations avec nos partenaires. Nous avons été d'accord sur le rôle accru des représentants permanents'.

Heath: *We could also tell the press that we have discussed the position of the Community in relation with the current GATT negotiations.*¹⁷⁵

Pompidou: *let us add bilateral matters, on which there will be a lot to say, nuclear cooperation, space, aeronautics, culture*¹⁷⁶... *Anyway, about the press, maybe we should not bother. They will probably be interested only in two things, sterling parities and the Tunnel*¹⁷⁷.

Heath: *We could say that we have indeed discussed the monetary situation ... About the Tunnel we could mention that I told you that ministers in charge will have to resolve pending issues and that a decision will be made in July as planned.*¹⁷⁸

Pompidou: *We could declare that our talks have been positive, which is true. Maybe we will be asked if we talked about the Germano-Soviet agreements?*¹⁷⁹

Heath: *I would rather not mention it.*¹⁸⁰

This communication thread tends to demonstrate that there was real substance in their talks but also a constant worry about how to manage the information flow with third parties, the Press, the Community's partners, or even the USA. This situation was clearly repeated in Heath's press briefing for the November 1973 summit. Whereas he was advised '*to say something about the importance [he attached] to the regular meetings ... with President Pompidou*', the Prime Minister was invited to be '*a bit careful about this at a moment when some of the smaller fry in the Community may be extra sensitive about meetings between the big three* (i.e. including French and British talks with Germany)

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.: '*nous pourrions aussi dire à la presse que nous avons parlé des positions de la Communauté dans les négociations du GATT*'.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.: '*ajoutons-y les questions bilatérales, sur lesquelles il y aura beaucoup à dire, l'atome, l'espace, l'aéronautique, la culture*'.

¹⁷⁷ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 22 mai 1973: '*à l'égard de la presse, ce n'est peut-être pas la peine de se fatiguer, elle ne s'intéressera vraisemblablement qu'à deux choses: la parité de la Livre et le Tunnel*'.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.: '*Nous pourrions dire que nous avons en effet discuté de la situation monétaire de la communauté ... Quant au Tunnel l'on peut signaler que je vous ai dit que les ministres compétents devront résoudre les questions pendantes et que la décision sera prise en juillet comme prévu*'.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.: '*Nous pouvons aussi annoncer que nos entretiens ont été positifs, ce qui est vrai. On nous demandera peut-être si nous avons parlé des accords germano-soviétiques*'.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.: '*il vaut mieux ne pas le mentionner*'.

and when USA susceptibilities are marked'. And to the anticipated question of the press about the expected result of the discussions, Heath was counselled to *'refer to the timelessness of the meetings'*, downplaying their significance by counting them as *'one of regular meetings with President and other Heads of Governments of the Community'*.¹⁸¹

Again, semantics is a key factor in an analysis of what the Heath-Pompidou summits had become. In expressing the 'Three Es' (*'exchange', 'examine', 'explore'*), Heath and Pompidou used a range of words and expressions indicating entente, trust and even complicity (notably *'which is true'*) and creating a positive atmosphere between two leaders assuredly on the same wave length on many topics. Their conversations were punctuated, very often by Heath, with expressions of agreement, closeness and consent such as *'je suis d'accord', 'nous sommes d'accord', 'je suis très largement d'accord avec vous', 'j'appuie entièrement', 'si vous en êtes d'accord', 'nous avons pu constater une très large identité ou similitude de vues', or 'il y a entre nous un large domaine d'accord', 'vous savez que je suis entièrement d'accord avec vous', 'je suis en général d'accord'*, (March 1972, October 1972). Andronikof's notes in March 1972 even describe a striking mirroring of agreement of Heath's *'d'accord avec vous'*, immediately followed by Pompidou's *'tout à fait d'accord avec vous'* after Pompidou's assessment that *'when Europeans discuss together in presence of the Americans, it is quite difficult to reach unanimity'*.¹⁸² In their conversations, the two men demonstrated marks of agreement and symbiosis on almost all topics, with a slight variance in the wording used to announce their like-mindedness with *'je partage tout à fait votre sentiment'* or *'je partage vos vues'* or *'je comprends votre point de vue dans ce domaine'* uttered during the May and November 1973 summit meetings.

There were no less than twenty such instances in March 1972, and twenty-seven in May 1973, far too many occurrences to be attributable to a mere communication tic. Each of these instances

¹⁸¹ TNA PREM15/2093, Heath Pompidou Meeting 16-17 November 1973: Press Briefings about Meetings, Haydon to Heath, 15 November 1973.

¹⁸² AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: *'quand on discute entre Européens en présence des États Unis, il est difficile de parvenir à l'unanimité'*.

punctuated a statement, an opinion or an idea expressed by them, for instance Heath: *'on the structure of the Community, I am in agreement with you'*, or *'with regards to the Commission, I am in full agreement with you'*¹⁸³, or Pompidou: *'I believe we are in agreement to say that the definition of our independent and friendly relations with the United States is the biggest challenge we face'*.¹⁸⁴ This last quote also points to a notable characteristic of the Heath-Pompidou phraseology: the frequent use of first person plural pronouns and adjectives 'we', 'us', 'our' or 'ours' denoting the proximity of bilateral views, in contrast with the customary absence of a European 'we' in the traditional Franco-British European summit vocabulary.

A discursive analysis of the Heath-Pompidou interactions reveal a number of examples of this dialogic openness and frankness including:

- expressions of candour about personal conceptions of the regional policy (Pompidou: *'please allow me to be as frank on this point as I have been on all others'*¹⁸⁵),
- words referring to an overall/global agreement to downplay any underlying disagreement (Pompidou: *'between us there is no contradiction but a divergence on the principle'*¹⁸⁶),
- expressions of comprehension and understanding to defuse potential conflicts of interests (Pompidou: *'this matter is a challenge everywhere in the Community, and a more important one in your country'*¹⁸⁷),

¹⁸³ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, les 18-19 mars 1972: *'pour ce qui est de la Commission: je suis très largement d'accord avec vous'*.

¹⁸⁴ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: *'Je pense que vous êtes d'accord avec moi pour dire que la définition de nos relations indépendantes et amicales avec les États-Unis est la plus grande question qui nous soit posée'*.

¹⁸⁵ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: *'Permettez-moi d'être aussi franc sur ce point que sur tout le reste'*.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.: *'Entre nous il n'y a pas de contradiction mais une divergence sur le principe'*.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.: *'ce genre de question se pose partout même si la vôtre est plus importante'*.

- slight dissent within an overall agreement (Pompidou: *'I agree with almost everything you said' about defence*¹⁸⁸, or Heath: *'your declaration I broadly agree with'*¹⁸⁹).

Pompidou and Heath also exchanged words of gratitude for the other's understanding on thorny issues (Heath: *'you have demonstrated a great capacity to understand our problems'*¹⁹⁰ for sterling parities, or about the Regional Funds *'I am grateful for your support. I know you have reserves and I understand them'*¹⁹¹). They expressed compliments about the other's actions and results (Pompidou about EMU: *'You have had your own problems to deal with and, in many respects, you overcame them with a mastery which struck all the observers'*¹⁹², or Heath: *'I know the [Paris] Conference will be a success under your chairmanship'*¹⁹³, or *'you were the only one to forecast it'*¹⁹⁴). In addition they used probing questions, asking for feedback as, for instance, in May 1973 when Heath asked about his decision to let sterling float (*'I would be happy to know your impression on the situation'*¹⁹⁵) and was replied to in empathic mode (Pompidou: *'I would tell you, if I were to consider things from your position, that you have chosen the best method'*¹⁹⁶). Feedback and comparison even extended to finding common features in their own national political experiences. This was exemplified by Pompidou's heartfelt comment on Heath's criticisms of social movements in Britain at times of economic difficulties (in 1973) :

We have entered in a phase where economic laws are dominated by political reasons ... I think, like you, that there should not be strikes in a country hit by unemployment, whereas these would be

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.: *'Je suis à peu près d'accord sur tout ce que vous avez dit'*.

¹⁸⁹ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques Pompidou-Heath, 18 octobre 1972 meeting: *'votre déclaration sur laquelle je suis en général d'accord'*.

¹⁹⁰ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: *'vous avez fait preuve d'une grande compréhension pour nos problèmes'*.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.: *'je vous en suis reconnaissant. Je sais que vous avez pourtant des réticences et je les avais comprises'*.

¹⁹² Ibid.: *'Vous avez vos difficultés et, à bien des égards, vous les avez surmontées avec une maîtrise qui a frappé tous les observateurs'*.

¹⁹³ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques Pompidou-Heath, 18 octobre 1972 meeting: *'Je sais que la Conférence aura un grand succès sous votre présidence'*.

¹⁹⁴ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques Pompidou-Heath, 18 octobre 1972 meeting: *'Vous avez été le seul à l'avoir prévu'* (i.e. recovery of the US balance of payments and of the dollar).

¹⁹⁵ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 16-17 novembre 1973: *'j'aimerais connaître votre impression sur'*.

¹⁹⁶ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: *'Je vous dirais, en me plaçant à votre point de vue, qu'à mon sens, vous avez choisi la meilleure méthode'*.

*natural in periods of full-employment ... strikes are a political weapon ... I recognise though that the income support policy attempted, and failed, by your predecessor, has also been tried in France and its consequences embarrassingly linger on today. We cannot avoid being the successors of our predecessors.*¹⁹⁷

All this was discussed in a trusting confidentiality, using specific wording such as Heath's declaration that *'there was something [he] would like to tell Pompidou in confidence as it concerned their arrangements'*¹⁹⁸ about the forthcoming Paris Conference, mirroring Pompidou's prior remark that he could tell him *'in confidence'* about his epistolary communications with Nixon, on concerns about the international monetary situation. These confidential information exchanges were only extended to a very limited list of trusted third parties and messengers, which could even exclude Government Ministers, but naturally included Soames who, for instance, reported his conversations about monetary issues with the President in such terms :

*M. Pompidou began to say that what he was telling me was in strict confidence. He had not given any details to his council of ministers ... He repeated at the end of his conversation that what he had told me was on a strictly personal basis for the Prime Minister.*¹⁹⁹

These exchanges were typical of the two leaders' rather unusual propensity, discernible since the May 1971 summit, to share confidential information whether on nationally sensitive details, or on their personal thoughts on a wide range of topics, going from defence and nuclear strategy to state management, from laws²⁰⁰, budget orientations and tax decisions to very personal considerations as, for instance, Pompidou's sharing of his unexpected views on the CAP.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.: *'Je crois que nous sommes entrés dans une nouvelle phase où les lois économiques sont dominées par des raisons politiques. Je pense comme vous qu'un pays où il y a du chômage ne devrait pas avoir de grèves, tandis que celles-ci seraient naturelles quand il y a plein emploi ... La grève est une arme politique ... Je n'en reconnais pas moins que la politique de revenus tentée par votre prédécesseur, et manquée, a aussi été tentée en France; ce qui ne laisse pas de nous embarrasser. Nous ne pouvons éviter d'être les successeurs de nos prédécesseurs !'*

¹⁹⁸ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques Pompidou-Heath, 18-19 mars 1972: *'il y a autre chose que je voudrais vous dire en toute confiance puisque cela concerne nos arrangements'*.

¹⁹⁹ TNA PREM15/325 Soames to Heath, telegram#1598, 15 December 1971.

²⁰⁰ During the March 1972 summit meetings, Heath informed Pompidou of the submission of a *'bill to the Commons around July, of which one article provided that all the Community's laws would automatically*

In the nationally sensitive domain of defence and on the complex question of the relationship with the USA, Heath confided in Pompidou his view that the USA should not *'demand from us [European!] commercial and monetary concessions in exchange for the defence of Europe even if, to a great extent and inevitably ... the European defence [was] dependent on the USA'*, and that *'such dependence was undesirable for healthy relationships with the USA'*.²⁰¹ This statement complemented his preamble²⁰² for their first meeting on Thursday 20 May 1971, and was echoed by the French President's equally unexpected private acknowledgement of France's (and Europe's) total dependence on the USA for protection in a bipolar world²⁰³, at odds in its frankness and modesty with the mantra of his predecessor. In the related domain of nuclear deterrence, Pompidou stressed his inflexible insistence that French nuclear tests be carried out in the Pacific²⁰⁴ despite the formal opposition and complaints of Australia and New-Zealand. In conciliatory mode, Heath put forward his personal efforts to lessen the scale of the British Government's reaction in the Commons to French tests, adding that the Australian Prime Minister and New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister *'had clearly been told that Britain neither intended to take any initiative about it, nor wished to make any representation on their behalf'*²⁰⁵, on the understanding that France's intransigence in this domain resulted from international status and considerations of national interest, as explained by Pompidou :

become British laws' making it possible for Britain to 'apply the whole Community's legislation right from Britain's entry into the EEC on January 1st, 1973', in AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques Pompidou-Heath, 18-19 mars 1972.

²⁰¹ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: *'nous ne pensons pas qu'il soit désirable de lier les questions relatives à la défense, au commerce et à la réforme monétaire afin de ne pas permettre aux EU d'en tirer prétexte pour exiger de nous des concessions commerciales et monétaires en contrepartie de la défense de l'Europe. Il est vrai que celle-ci dépend des États Unis dans une large mesure et inévitable jusqu'ici, quand bien même une telle dépendance serait indésirable pour des relations saines'*.

²⁰² MTF 710520, Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic at the Élysée Palace, Paris at 10.00 A.M. on Thursday 20 May 1971. To the contention that *'Britain only sought partnership with the USA'*, Heath's *'frank reply to this was that there could be no satisfactory partnership, even if Britain wanted it, between two powers, one of which only barely a quarter of the size of the other'*.

²⁰³ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: *'Nos relations avec les États Unis sont en réalité dominées par un fait: la défense européenne dépend avant tout de la puissance américaine'* (*'our relations with the USA are in actual fact dominated by a fact: the European defence depends above all on American military might'*).

²⁰⁴ Ibid.: *'tant que je serai là, je tiendrai bon'* (*'as long as I am here, I will hold on firm to these'*).

²⁰⁵ Ibid.: *'Le PM Australien et le vice PM Néo-Zélandais qui se sont rendus à Londres se sont clairement fait dire [sic] que nous n'avions pas l'intention de prendre d'initiative ni de faire de représentation en leur nom'*.

*I will be frank. We will not deviate from our route ... we will carry on with our nuclear business on our own, not without difficulties coming, for instance, from your friends in Australia and New Zealand and a few other countries. At least, it gives us full freedom of expression and some freedom of action. Although modest in proportion, this freedom worries a bit everybody and gives us more weight than we physically have.*²⁰⁶

Another significant example of Pompidou openly and confidently revealing his personal views to Heath concerned the Common Agricultural Market (CAM) which, whereas he agreed that France drew ‘*certain benefits*’ from it, ‘*he would not defend (it) to the death*’.²⁰⁷ Admitting to its sometimes deficient functioning, Pompidou confessed ‘*he would not start a fight to the death to make or lose one more million*’²⁰⁸ but positively considered ‘*this market brought the Europeans together and helped them overcome difficulties*’. In response to this declaration, strikingly at variance with the traditional strongly held French position about the CAP in parts at the root of Gaullist France’s political and diplomatic intransigence, Heath himself reassuringly avowed that ‘*British farmers drew benefits from European business*’ and that ‘*opposition to Europe in rural districts had dissipated*’, drawing a response from Pompidou that despite the fact that ‘*Britain had been accused of wanting the death to the CAP, [Heath] did not do it and [France] gladly acknowledged that*’.

Heath and Pompidou also shared confidential information about their respective nation’s budgets in advance of their public communication and official adoption. To Heath’s confidence in May 1973²⁰⁹ about budgetary measures, in advance of their announcement to the Commons, Pompidou reciprocated with the news that France’s next budget, then a few months away, might introduce ‘*a*

²⁰⁶ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: ‘*Je serai franc: nous ne bougerons pas ... Nous allons poursuivre tous seuls notre affaire nucléaire, non sans difficultés, par exemple de la part de vos amis australiens et Néo-zélandais et de quelques autres. Au moins cela nous donne une liberté d’expression complète et une certaine liberté d’action. Bien que modeste, celle-ci inquiète un peu tout le monde et nous donne plus de poids que nous n’en avons*’.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.: ‘*Je ne me ferai pas tuer pour cela*’.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.: ‘*Je n’engagerai pas une lutte à mort pour gagner un million de plus ou de moins*’.

²⁰⁹ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: ‘*the measures we will announce this afternoon, i.e. more than eight hundred millions of savings, do represent a change of economic focus in our policy*’.

*sort of wealth tax*²¹⁰. In effect, Heath and Pompidou shared budget numbers, orientation and objectives. They even conceded to national shortcomings or unknown tactics like, for instance, Pompidou's reply to Heath's suggestion that the Community's budget should be controlled as in Britain, that *'until now, [the French] have always considered that a certain budgetary laxity was useful to keep people quiet'*²¹¹.

Europe's general relationship with the USA was another instance of reciprocal confidences on the part of the British PM and the French President. Based on the systematic usage, atypical for a British Prime Minister, of the pronouns 'we' and 'us' encompassing Britain and Europe, his statement that *'now the Community is enlarged and has set its policy for the next ten years, we must trust our capacity to act together as a community ... In our relations with the USA, we must begin with asking ourselves what we want from them as a Community'*²¹², *'we must show to the Americans where our interests lie'*²¹³.

Another topic where Heath and Pompidou found an opportunity to share unexpected common grounds was their mutual recognition of the remnants of Franco-British rivalry within their respective administrations, and amongst their former colonies. When talking in May 1973 about the renewal of the Yaoundé Agreements and the Commonwealth negotiations on sugar, Pompidou declared: *'I think that our administrations have somehow maintained colonial traditions, of which the main motto is that the enemy of France is Britain and vice versa. We must try our best to thwart this'*.²¹⁴ A comment with which Heath concurred: *'there is truth in the criticism you made: we sometimes think that former*

²¹⁰ Ibid.: *'mais il y aura une certaine forme d'impôt sur les fortunes acquises, mais nous ne l'avons pas encore décidé'*. A similar tax, surprising for a centre-right politician, was eventually introduced by President François Mitterrand in 1982.

²¹¹ Ibid.: *'Jusqu'ici nous avons considéré qu'un certain laxisme budgétaire était propre à faire taire les gens'*.

²¹² AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: *'Maintenant que la Communauté s'est élargie et qu'elle s'est fixée une politique pour dix ans, nous devons avoir confiance dans nos capacités d'agir ensemble en tant que Communauté ... Dans nos relations avec les États-Unis, nous devons commencer par nous demander ce que nous désirons d'eux en tant que Communauté'*.

²¹³ Ibid.: *'nous devons bien montrer aux États-Unis où sont situés nos intérêts'*.

²¹⁴ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973: *'je trouve que nos administrations ont quelque peu gardé des traditions coloniales, dont l'article premier, c'est que l'ennemi de la France est la Grande Bretagne et vice versa. On doit tout faire pour le contrarier'*.

French territories are as unpleasant for London as former British colonies are for Paris', hoping that a real European état d'esprit in an enlarged Community could solve many issues: 'I have always had hopes that with the Enlarged Community, some barriers between them would break down and it has happened'.²¹⁵

The evidence suggests that from May 1971 onwards, Heath and Pompidou practised a particular top-level form of personal dialogue, relying on trust, entente, commonality of views and understanding on a wide range of topics, using specific language patterns and modes of discussion. This meant that both leaders felt they could talk freely about confidential matters and candidly share unorthodox or unaccustomed points of view, 'off the record', without the worry of public communication, or without the pressure of governmental political discussions. Replicating the conditions and environment of their first summit held in May 1971, the intimate format of their discussions facilitated information exchange. It also enabled discussion about substantive issues like the defence of national interests, considered in the longer-term, and in the wider scope of the European development project.

From European discussions to discussions on Europe

Britain's entry into the European Community created new conditions for the Franco-British relationship. Post-May 1971, Heath's European policy evolved from immediate resolution to long-term undertakings, dealing with a variety of subjects, '*some of current interest and some of a more forward-looking nature*'.²¹⁶ Significantly, the PM's steering briefs for the March 1972 summit meetings placed on top of the priority list '*the way in which Western Europe is likely to develop in the*

²¹⁵ Ibid.: '*Il y a du vrai dans la critique que vous avez faite: nous pensons quelquefois que les anciens territoires français sont tout aussi désagréables pour Londres que les anciennes colonies britanniques pour Paris ... j'avais toujours espéré quand la Communauté aurait été élargie, que certaines barrières tomberaient entre eux et c'est ce qui s'est produit*'.

²¹⁶ TNA FCO33/1389, Proposed Visit of President Pompidou to United Kingdom, Steering Briefs: draft finalised in FCO14/1068, Visit of the President of France to the United Kingdom, 18-19 March 1972: Steering Briefs 13 March 1972.

future, underlining Britain's will *'to find as much common ground with the French as possible'*.²¹⁷ Further objectives included the *'progress towards economic and monetary union in the context of the international monetary system as a whole, including international monetary reforms'*. It also encompassed *'European industry and technology, future defence of Europe and Anglo-French politico-military talks'*, as well as *'relations of the enlarged Community with the USA, Japan and the East/West relations'*.²¹⁸ For the French President, it was about solving remaining crucial issues, like the sterling balances, and advancing his own monetary, economic and political agenda in concert with his newly-found British ally, *'a vital support ... perhaps more European than Germany or Italy'*, and definitely more in phase with his personal objectives than the German Chancellor whom *'he [had] respect for... but he [did not] understand well'*.²¹⁹

On all these issues, there existed possibilities of contention or divergence. But Heath and Pompidou handled them according to the openness established in Paris in May 1971 and maintained in all the following summit meetings. As an example, two main themes will be briefly reviewed here: the EMU and the Regional Development Policy funding, as they typified both the potentially adverse positioning of protagonists, and the collaborative spirit in which they were discussed.

With regards to the EMU, for example, the point of friction between the two leaders related to the pound sterling leaving the *'tunnel'* and *'the snake'*²²⁰ on 23 June 1972²²¹, an event which threatened the whole edifice of monetary cohesion ardently desired by Pompidou. But instead of contention,

²¹⁷ TNA FCO14/1068, Visit of the President of France to the United Kingdom, 18-19 March 1972: Steering Briefs 13 March 1972.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ TNA PREM15/2093, letter to R. Armstrong, President Pompidou's visit, 17 Janvier 1972: *'Translation of a very interesting Paris Match article about Heath, Pompidou and Brandt, to be circulated'*.

²²⁰ Adopted by the European Council on 21 March 1972, this system, implemented in July 1972, aimed at framing and limiting the variations of European currencies between themselves ($\pm 2,25\%$) and with the dollar, and at preventing any such fluctuations in the longer term, imprinting the mediated image of a *'snake moving inside a tunnel'*, in CVCE, Le "serpent monétaire" européen, URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/le_serpent_monetaire_europeen-fr-321c4261-cfab-41b7-ac73-2b66454cba34.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

²²¹ Sterling joined the snake in May 1972 but, under speculative pressures generated, among others, by markets' concerns about Britain socio-economic performance, got out of it and floated on 23 June of the same year, in CVCE, The difficulties of the monetary snake and the European Monetary Cooperation Fund (EMCF), URL: https://www.cvce.eu/obj/les_difficultes_du_serpent_monetaire_et_le_fecom-fr-710d6313-9ef1-47fc-b69d-81a4d7fecaec.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

Heath's concerns were met by rather moderate and understanding reactions from the French President, reassured by the PM's firm commitment to the principles of fixed parities which '*he accepted and intended to maintain*'²²² in the hope, expressed in the House of Commons, of reintegrating the '*snake*' by 1st January 1973. For Pompidou, it was mainly a '*question of trust*' even if '*he would be frank: he greatly hoped that [sterling reintegrating the snake] would be possible, in the interest both of Britain and all of its community partners*'.²²³ Pompidou met Heath's further embarrassment at sterling still being out in May 1973 with unexpected reassurances made in a conciliatory tone: '*you know I do not want to rush you to join back in the snake ... We would certainly appreciate it but everybody needs time to adapt*', adding that '*Britain, which has a worldwide market and a currency different from the others, requires extra time to adapt to speculation*'.²²⁴ Similarly, and surprisingly from a leader whose principal concern had persistently been the exceptionality of sterling's status, Pompidou nevertheless confided in Heath that he '*put aside the return of sterling in the snake because [he understood Heath's] difficulties*'.²²⁵ Pompidou showed clear signs of empathy with Heath, partly based on their political affinities,²²⁶ declaring that he realised Heath '*found [himself] in an extremely difficult situation*'²²⁷. Pompidou confirmed the impact of Heath's usage of

²²² AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, Pompidou-Heath, 18 octobre 1972: '*nous acceptons le principe des parités fixes et nous entendons le maintenir*'.

²²³ TNA PREM15/896, Records of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic at the Élysée Palace, at 5:30 pm on Wednesday 18 October 1972.

²²⁴ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, Pompidou-Heath, 21-22 mai 1973: '*Vous savez que je ne veux pas vous bousculer pour que vous rejoignez le serpent. Nous ne demandons pas mieux que vous puissiez le faire mais je crois qu'il faut donner à tout le monde le temps de s'adapter et que le Royaume Uni, dont le marché est mondial et dont la monnaie est un peu différente de celle des autres, a besoin d'un certain temps pour se mettre à l'abri de la spéculation*'.

²²⁵ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, 16-17 novembre 1973: '*je mets à part le retour de la livre dans le serpent parce que je comprends bien vos difficultés*'.

²²⁶ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, Pompidou-Heath, 21-22 mai 1973: (Heath) '*vous avez fait preuve d'une grande compréhension pour nos problèmes. Notre objectif est de revenir dans le serpent ... Si nous avons dû faire flotter la Livre en abandonnant la parité fixe, c'est que nous y étions poussés par la spéculation extérieure, injustifiée à tous égards ... Il y a cependant de plus en plus de gens qui se rendent compte de ce que les difficultés de l'économie britannique proviennent aussi des troubles sociaux et que notre balance des paiements en souffre*'.

²²⁷ Ibid.: '*vous vous trouvez dans une situation extrêmement difficile*'.

*'the language Pompidou would expect and would understand', 'a language [Britain] must get used to using'*²²⁸, i.e. a language of compromise, of trust and frankness.

In the same vein, regional development policy funding was a subject of vital importance for Britain, and a source of potentially crippling tensions with France. It was however handled with care, cohesion and intelligence by the two leaders, in a dialogue marked by the 'Three Es' approach outlined above. With one million unemployed in January 1972²²⁹, regional policy was an issue of prime political importance to the British Government. It mainly concerned areas of declining or stagnating industries such as traditional coal and steel producing regions. But since the Treaties of Rome did not contain *'a coherent body of doctrine on regional policy'*²³⁰, the interpretation of the targeting and funding of aids varied according to member states' economic profiles and political choices. Whereas Heath deemed such funds should be devoted to ailing industrial regions, Pompidou was adamant *'that Regional Policy consisted primarily of measures to help develop purely agricultural areas'*.²³¹ He was *'not in favour of a fund to finance a Community Regional Policy'*, promoted by Britain and other European partners, as he considered regional industrial policies were *'a contradiction of liberal capitalism'*, and believed that regional aid should only be tackled on a national basis because of the danger of *'Community's dirigisme ... if it were moved at Community level'*.²³² The French position was easier to understand when considering that the British suggestion meant that

²²⁸ TNA FCO33/1751, Soames to Greenhill: Pompidou's visit at Chequers on 18-19 March 1972: Briefs for PM's talks with President Pompidou.

²²⁹ *'The number of people out of work and claiming benefit has risen above one million for the first time since the 1930s. There were angry demonstrations in the House of Commons when the jobless total was confirmed as 1,023,583'*, BBC, On This Day.
URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/20/newsid_2506000/2506897.stm [last accessed 22.11.2019].

²³⁰ TNA PREM15/903, European Institutions - the Present Commission Brief for the Prime Minister in preparation of President Pompidou's visit 21 February 1972, Supplementary Brief: Regional policy and the EEC, 11 February 1972. These briefs were prepared for summit meetings planned for February, cancelled and then postponed to March 1972.

²³¹ TNA PREM15/896, Records of conversations between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic at the Élysée Palace at 5:30 pm on Wednesday 18 October 1972.

²³² TNA PREM15/896, Record of discussions after luncheon at the Élysée, 20 October 1972, on Regional Policy (Note: this record was prepared by Mr. D.M. Thomas who acted as interpreter for the Prime Minister). This note shows that Palliser was Heath's interpreter for all the one-to-ones with Pompidou and was replaced (by Thomas in this case) for European multi-lateral occasions.

securing regional development contributions for Britain equated to *'diverting some of the existing expenditure on agriculture to regional development rather than adding to the total budget'*.²³³ Naturally, this option could not obtain Pompidou's assent, in 'public' occasions, or during one-to-ones. *'This time we are not on the same wave length'*²³⁴ was the first negative-sounding sentence pronounced during their summit meetings²³⁵, otherwise interspersed with the usual terms of agreement by the two leaders²³⁶. Despite his facing an uphill struggle to defend his case, Heath eschewed Soames' quid pro quo suggestion to *'let it be understood in an elegant way, that we need progress on regional policy if we are going to go along with ever-narrowing exchange rate margins'*.²³⁷ Instead, over several summits from May 1971 to November 1973²³⁸, Heath repeated his basic point, gradually developing his argument by using all aspects of the 'Three Es' approach. From the initial rebuke, Heath went on to invoke the personal concessions and efforts he had made to gain entry (*'At the Summit [i.e. Paris May 1971], I had accepted the CAP because we considered it as integral part of the Community. We shall contribute to it and not on the basis of a pound for a pound'*²³⁹), calling for reciprocity on Pompidou's part. Then, using a tint of pompidolian explanatory rhetoric, he argued that *'as far as we are concerned, Regional Policy's value for us is comparable with*

²³³ TNA PREM15/903, European Institutions - the Present Commission Brief for the Prime Minister in preparation of President Pompidou's visit 21 February 1972, Supplementary Brief: Regional policy and the EEC, 11 February 1972.

²³⁴ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, Pompidou-Heath, 18 octobre 1972: *'cette fois, nous ne sommes pas sur la même longueur d'onde'*. This comment was transcribed into *'President Pompidou was not sure that the French views were wholly in line with those of Britain'* in the English version of the record established by Palliser, in TNA PREM15/896, Records of conversations between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic at the Élysée Palace at 5:30 pm on Wednesday 18 October 1972. This shows again that Andronikof's reporting was more verbatim (more colloquial language used by Pompidou) than Palliser's edited version.

²³⁵ Though, in Palliser's terms, Pompidou also *'expressed serious misgivings about the proposal'* by Heath to waiver some of the debt of Third World countries, the only other point of disagreement between the leaders, in TNA PREM15/896, Records of conversations between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic at the Élysée Palace at 5:30 pm on Wednesday 18 October 1972.

²³⁶ Ibid.: counting no less than fourteen utterances of the President or the PM *'agreed'* or *'expressed assent'* (Palliser's wording) and the customary *'thanks'*, *'thankful'* and *'gratitude'* about their respective actions and reflections.

²³⁷ FCO33/1751 Pompidou's visit at Chequers in 18-19 March 1972: Briefs for Prime Minister's talks with President Pompidou - Soames to Greenhill: *'the quid pro quo we would like to see is regional policy'*.

²³⁸ Discussions spread over the summit meetings held in October 1972, May 1973 and November 1973.

²³⁹ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, Pompidou-Heath, 21-22 mai 1973: *'Au Sommet, j'avais accepté la PAC car nous la considérons comme faisant partie de la Communauté. Nous y contribuerons et pas sur la base d'un sou pour un sou'*.

CAP's value for France. It is also a link to bind the Community together'.²⁴⁰ However he acknowledged 'with gratitude' Pompidou's positive declaration in the Paris 1972 Summit communiqué, and claimed to understand the President's 'reticence given his general attitude towards economic policy' which he assured Pompidou that 'he fundamentally shared'.²⁴¹ Eventually, Heath's requests gained some success when Pompidou declared, during their last summit together: 'we can make progress roughly on three domains, starting with Regional Policy, to make you feel comfortable'²⁴².

These examples argue that Heath and Pompidou were able to resist Franco-British tensions and disagreement on subjects which had significant impacts on their country's economies.²⁴³ The Heath-Pompidou entente had been put to the test of divergent national interests, and played a role in the avoidance of conflictual opposition, or irreconcilable positioning. It meant that, post May 1971, this entente was sufficiently firmly established for them to discuss potentially divisive themes of substance from their private talks.

In broader terms, the Heath-Pompidou entente constituted an ideal foundation for them to exchange, explain and explore their counterpart's approach on Community-level matters related to EEC institutional bodies, and to influence their functioning. The discussions resembled alliance comforting exercises prior to discussions with other Community members, particularly on the subjects of the Commission and the European Assembly, given their marked accord on these two institutional bodies. As early as March 1972, the two men tested their respective viewpoint on these,

²⁴⁰ Ibid.: 'En ce qui nous concerne, cette politique a une valeur comparable à celle que la France attribue à la PAC. Elle aussi est capable de lier la Communauté', in reference to Pompidou's assertion that the Common Agricultural Market was the 'string that holds us [the Europeans] together, which obliges us to hold discussions as a community and to develop', in AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, 21-22 mai 1973.

²⁴¹ The argumentation even became jokingly personalised as, after suggesting to input Auvergne (Pompidou's region of origins he had, probably lightly, claimed was as much in need of development as northern Wales) in the list of the beneficiaries of regional aid, Pompidou expressed his satisfaction to have seen it on the map prepared by the Commission, possibly at Heath's instigation, in AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, 16-17 novembre 1973.

²⁴² Ibid.: 'Je voudrais dire un mot d'un domaine où nous pouvons avancer... En gros, il y aurait trois domaines: d'abord la politique régionale pour vous mettre à l'aise'.

²⁴³ Heath to Pompidou in May 1973: 'we must modernise our steel industry which has fallen behind because of the nationalisations. In Northern Wales, we have refused to maintain and support a steel factory and the related coal mines resulting in the loss of 10,000 jobs, ... 10,000 in west Wales, 15,000 in the Midlands. These are three examples of areas badly in need of new industries'.

with Heath starting the conversation in a typical ‘Three Es’ fashion (*‘what do you think of the role of the Commission?’*²⁴⁴). In substance, Pompidou’s answer was a deprecation of the *‘illusion of building Europe on technocratic institutions’ foundations*²⁴⁵, and a confirmation of his view of Europe exclusively as *‘an association of states’*, whose only decision-making body was the Council of Ministers²⁴⁶. Taking exception to an extension of the Commission’s level of competence to enable it to behave as *‘a seventh state among the Six’*²⁴⁷, his view was that the *‘Commission was not an executive body but it was an executive agency’*.²⁴⁸ *‘Largely in agreement’* with Pompidou, Heath considered that the Commission’s role was to serve the Council of Ministers and the different member states, and did not think *‘it had a representative role.’* But remarkably, the two men’s discussions on this topic were also an opportunity for them to pre-arrange, bilaterally and confidentially, *‘a judicious sharing of appointments’*²⁴⁹ in the enlarged Community’s Commission²⁵⁰. Heath’s choice pointed to Sir Christopher Soames (as Vice-President, in charge of External Relations), and George Thomson (as Commissioner in charge of Regional Policy) *‘before the public announcement was made’*. In response to Heath’s commitment to *‘support the French in seeking the next Presidency for one of the French Commissioners’*²⁵¹, Pompidou disclosed France’s forthcoming proposal of François-Xavier Ortoli for the Presidency and, *‘speaking in strict confidence’*, expressed his wish to see Jean-François Deniau remain in the Commission (Development Aid, Cooperation

²⁴⁴ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques Pompidou-Heath à Chequers, 18-19 mars 1972 meetings: *‘que pensez-vous du rôle de la Commission ?’*.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.: *‘Ce serait en effet une illusion de vouloir faire l’Europe sur la base des institutions technocratiques’*.

²⁴⁶ The Council of Ministers, or Council of the European Union, its official title since the entry into force of the 1992 Treaty on European Union (EU), is the institution which represents the Member States within the EU. The Council, which consists of government representatives at ministerial level, is the main EU forum in which matters are debated and decisions taken.

²⁴⁷ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques Pompidou-Heath à Chequers, 18-19 mars 1972: *‘comme si elle constituait un septième état parmi les Six’*.

²⁴⁸ AN 89AJ(7), Notes Manuscrites Michel Jobert, Conseil des Ministres du 3 décembre 1969: *‘la Commission n’est pas un exécutif mais un agent d’exécution’*.

²⁴⁹ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques Pompidou-Heath à Chequers, 18-19 mars 1972: *‘la question va donc se poser de répartir judicieusement les attributions’*.

²⁵⁰ Including Britain, the Republic of Ireland and Denmark, Norway having rejected membership via a referendum held in September 1972.

²⁵¹ TNA PREM15/896, Records of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic at the Élysée Palace, at 5:30 pm on Wednesday 18 October 1972. Eventually, the French President of the Commission will be François-Xavier Ortoli (Commission 6 January 1973 - 5 January 1977) and Soames, Thomson and Deniau will all be appointed to the desired/discussed positions.

Policy, Budget and Financial Control), whilst guaranteeing to Heath that France had '*no claim on Regional Policy*'. The conversations that followed about the potential nominee for agriculture²⁵², reinforced this impression of witnessing bargaining in Brussels' back kitchen, with the two interlocutors shrewdly making tactical choices: for Heath, Soames, the experienced diplomat to deal with External Affairs, including the crucial relationship with the USA, and Thomson, in charge of Regional Policy, at the heart of Heath's preoccupations. For Pompidou: the global control of the Commission with Ortolí, and a stranglehold on budget, especially expenses where excesses were increasingly the object of both his and Heath's concerns²⁵³, coupled with an influence on Development Aid to tackle the '*priorities inherited from the Commonwealth and the former "French Empire"*', meaning '*the Yaoundé Convention and the twenty countries or so joining the association in the wake of Britain's membership*'.²⁵⁴

The Heath-Pompidou discussions were really about substance. They included cooperating in influencing and shaping the composition of Europe's main institutional body in advance, and in lieu of European multi-lateral talks on the issue. The same spirit of Franco-British cooperation, committed to the advancement of their own nations' causes and interests, applied to the European Assembly, or European Parliament. Pompidou was viscerally opposed to any parliamentary representation in Strasbourg to the point of having a semantic aversion to it (to his Government: '*Do not call it European Parliament!*'²⁵⁵; to Heath: '*the European Parliament that we call the Assembly in*

²⁵² AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, 18-19 mars 1972: Heath: '*do you have anybody in mind for agriculture?*' - Pompidou: '*no set ideas yet. Normally this position will be requested by minor agricultural countries, Denmark, Ireland or the Netherlands*' - Heath: '*Andreotti, the Italian, would like to keep the job. Nevertheless I agree with you, agriculture should be given to a small country*' - Pompidou: '*if the Italian wants to stay, we will have difficulties to make him go*'. Eventually, Ortolí's Commissaire for Agriculture will be the Dutch Pierre Lardinois.

²⁵³ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques, Pompidou-Heath, à Paris, 21-22 mai 1973. Heath: '*another preoccupation is the control of Community expenditure. It is necessary to ensure there is no waste*'.

²⁵⁴ NA AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Paris, le 18 octobre 1972: '*D'abord nous avons des priorités héritées du Commonwealth et de l'ancien "Empire Français" ... autrement dit la convention de Yaoundé et une vingtaine de pays qui vont s'associer de votre côté*'.

²⁵⁵ AN 89AJ(10), Notes manuscrites Michel Jobert, notes Conseils des Ministres Premier Semestre 1971, Conseil Ministres du 20 Janvier 1971. Pompidou to his Ministers: '*N'utilisez pas le terme "Parlement Européen"!*'.

*Strasbourg*²⁵⁶). Both leaders' positions and reservations were clearly summarised by Heath: 'we [himself and Pompidou] want the Community bodies to work to the maximum of their efficiency, within their remit and under the authority of the Council of Ministers'.²⁵⁷ And even if, as Heath stated, the 'Treaty [of Rome] made specific provisions for the Assembly to make proposals for the holding of direct elections and it could not be prevented from doing so', Pompidou confided that 'so far the French had always managed to stall on progress by saying that it required the agreement of the Council of Ministers and by then ensuring that no action was taken by the Council'.²⁵⁸

On these essential institutional points, the agreement between Heath and Pompidou was firmly anchored in their common conception of European organisation, and resulted in very practical consequences, such as the appointment of European commissioners. But it went resolutely a step further when they began discussing the conditions and nature of political dialogue within the institutional framework of the Community, as well as exchanging and exploring possibilities to shape the future of European summitry based on the particular format and approach of their bilateral talks.

A new kind of summitry at the highest level

Discussions between Heath and Pompidou began after the Yom Kippur war which broke out on 6 October 1973 when Israel was attacked by Syrian and Egyptian forces. The same month, the Arab oil-producing countries announced an embargo on oil deliveries to states supporting Israel. The resulting fivefold increase in the price of a barrel triggered the first oil shock which threatened all western economies²⁵⁹ and put a definitive stop to the 'Thirty Glorious Years' ('Trente Glorieuses').

²⁵⁶ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques Pompidou-Heath à Chequers, 18-19 mars 1972 meetings: 'le parlement européen que nous appelons l'Assemblée de Strasbourg'.

²⁵⁷ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques Pompidou-Heath à Chequers, 18-19 mars 1972 meetings: 'Pour résumer notre accord, je dirais que nous voulons que les organismes de la Communauté travaillent au maximum de leur efficacité mais qu'ils soient maintenus dans leurs compétences et qu'ils dépendent entièrement du Conseil des Ministres'.

²⁵⁸ TNA PREM15/896, Records of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic at the Élysée Palace, at 5:30 pm on Wednesday 18 October 1972.

²⁵⁹ 'Back in the 1970s Western European countries relied on imported oil to meet over 50 per cent of their energy need. Arab oil imports corresponded to 45% of the EC's energy needs in 1973, a figure that had significantly increased if compared to the 13,4% of 1956 and the 36% of 1967 ... France relied on imported oil to meet 67% of its energy needs, whereas West Germany relied on oil for 55% of its needs and Italy was

The European Community, bitterly divided on these crucial energy matters²⁶⁰, could only express a semblance of unity with the Nine's late issuance, on November 6 1973, of a joint Declaration²⁶¹, calling for a peace settlement²⁶².

The oil crisis in the wake of the Yom Kippur war was the dominant issue in the two leaders' minds when they met on 16 and 17 November 1973 at Chequers for what would turn out to be their last tête-à-tête.²⁶³ These meetings were devoted *inter alia* to exploring the impact and constraints of a new type of summit, with a particular focus on the sort of political cooperation required by the circumstances generated by this oil crisis. By the same token, they aimed at finding a viable solution, at first bilaterally, to fill the void of the Treaty of Rome's provisions in terms of summitry, and to find corrective actions to compensate for what Heath and Pompidou deemed the negative conclusions and chaotic conditions of the latest European Summit held in Paris in October the year before. This idea of a new type of European summitry, matured during his multiple one-to-ones with Heath, stemmed from Pompidou's intense frustration over the late and almost insipid reaction²⁶⁴ of the Community to the Middle-East crisis of October 1973. Judging that '*Europe had been absent from the international scene in an almost humiliating fashion*'²⁶⁵, Pompidou expressed his wish for deeper '*political cooperation*' which, in his view, supplanted and conditioned '*the rest, the material*

dependent for 74% of its needs', in Elia Di Fonzo, 'Facing Adversities: The EC Nine and the First Oil Shock. Engine for Integration or step towards Disintegration?', *Going Global. The History of EC/EU External Relations* (University of Trento: University of Trento, School of International Studies and Department of Humanities, 2015), p. 6.

²⁶⁰ 'On the one hand, there were The Netherlands and West Germany, who displayed a "pro-Israeli outlook", with Denmark going in that direction as well, all three blaming Syria and Egypt for the outbreak of the war. On the other, by contrast, there was France, who in the mid-1960s had strengthened its ties with the Arab states, and the newest member of the community, the United Kingdom, who prioritized its oil interests', *Ibid.* p. 5.

²⁶¹ CVCE, Joint statement by the Governments of the EEC (6 November 1973), URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/joint_statement_by_the_governments_of_the_eec_6_november_1973-en-a08b36bc-6d29-475c-aadb-0f71c59dbc3e.html [last accessed 22.11.2019].

²⁶² This document could be viewed as a '*historical novelty*' being the first '*joint statement on a major international issue*' produced by the Community leaders, according to Di Fonzo, 'Facing Adversities', p. 11.

²⁶³ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, 16-17 novembre 1973.

²⁶⁴ CVCE, Joint statement by the Governments of the EEC (6 November 1973).

²⁶⁵ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, 16-17 novembre 1973: '*l'Europe a été absente de la scène internationale d'une façon que je qualifierais presque d'humiliante*'.

questions'.²⁶⁶ To make this political cooperation possible, President Pompidou promoted the idea of the Nine:

*meeting at the highest level, without unnecessary formalities, to discuss with sincerity of their points of view, within a frame from which no information would transpire to the outside world, or at least nothing the participants would not voluntarily communicate publicly, in order to make progress on matters of political importance. My idea is that this type of extraordinary summits, which could potentially be repeated in particular circumstances, without nevertheless becoming sequential, would constitute a basis and an encouragement, even for more formal and more specific related meetings.*²⁶⁷

In this declaration to Heath, Pompidou accurately described the very nature, format and objectives of their tête-à-tête held over the period May 1971 - November 1973. It was as if Pompidou saw these particular summits as potential templates for the establishment of an efficient European dialogue at the highest level, designed not necessarily to take decisions or obtain tangible results, but rather to exchange, explore and explain ideas of an economic, political and diplomatic nature, but only between the Nine's Heads of State/Government. This was in effect a proposal for a new kind of European summit that would satisfy the need for a structure of political dialogue, thus far absent from the Treaty of Rome's provisions, and a prerequisite, in Pompidou's view, for reaching real political union.

As seen earlier in this Chapter, Redmond places the start of European Summitry at The Hague Conference (December 1969), followed by the Conference in Paris (October 1972), and the Copenhagen Conference (December 1973). The Paris Conference was held at the invitation of Pompidou who did not 'allow himself to be overruled by [the] logic' that the Heads of Government

²⁶⁶ Ibid.: 'le reste, les questions matérielles, même si importantes elles sont subordonnées à la politique'.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.: 'les Neufs devraient se réunir régulièrement à un haut niveau, sans formalités inutiles, pour échanger sincèrement leurs points de vue dans un cadre qui ne laisserait rien transpirer à l'extérieur, du moins rien de ce que l'on eut voulu ne pas faire transparaître; et cela pour voir si l'on pouvait véritablement aller de l'avant ... Mon idée était qu'une telle réunion servirait d'incitation pour d'autres du même genre et non pas qu'elle fut nécessairement suivie d'une série de réunions identiques. C'eut été une sorte de rencontre extraordinaire où l'on aurait pu décider de nous réunir à nouveau à l'occasion, même d'une manière plus formelle et plus spécifique'.

of the Community could not have a conference because, contrary to *'the Council of Ministers ... the Commission ... the European Court'*, they were *'not in the Treaty'*.²⁶⁸ Hence Pompidou disregarded this limitation and called the *'first Summit Conference of the Enlarged Community'*.²⁶⁹ But this summit led to a rather timid result. The Nine, having failed to reach a compromise because *'no agreement could be reached over a text on regional policy and especially on the Community financing of same'*²⁷⁰, concluded with a sixteen-point declaration including the:

*resolve to strengthen the Community by forming an Economic and Monetary Union as a token of stability and growth as the indispensable basis of their social progress and as a remedy for regional disparities.*²⁷¹

Heath was nevertheless impressed by the *'finest communiqué of modern times ... issued at the end of that summit'* of which the *'first half was written by President Pompidou in his own hand'*, but he also regretted that the only suggestion to meet again was, at best, in 1976.²⁷² This fact, which clearly demonstrated the lack of an established structure for the conduct of a political dialogue within the Community, was a source of intense frustration for both Heath and Pompidou. This frustration had originated in a large part from the chaos of the 1972 Paris Conference where fruitful debates proved close to impossible to organise. No fewer than one hundred and forty-three officials from nine countries had attended the Conference (plus the 26 members of the Commission - and remarkably, by today's standards, no women at all), from Heads of State and Government and Ministers to officials, civil servants and advisers (paradoxically the British and French delegations were the largest ones with the Netherlands').²⁷³ During tea with the Queen at Windsor Castle in November 1973, Douglas-Home, Armstrong and Jobert jointly concluded that the next summit would have to *'be kept*

²⁶⁸ Heath, 'European Unity', p. 201.

²⁶⁹ TNA PREM15/895, Meetings of the Heads of State or Government, Paris 19-21 October 1972, Conclusion of the Preparatory Work. Reproduced from the Bulletin of European Communities, No10, 1972.

²⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 10.

²⁷¹ Ibid. Declaration, p. 14.

²⁷² Heath, 'European Unity', op. cit.

²⁷³ TNA PREM15/895, Paris Conference 19 October 1972, Annexe A, list of delegates: counting for Belgium (10), Denmark (16), Germany (14), France official delegation (16), France non official delegation (10), Ireland (12), Italy (14), Luxemburg (10), Netherlands (21), United Kingdom (20).

small to avoid the problems of Paris'.²⁷⁴ The three men equally considered that even a reduced team would still represent too many people to be efficient, judging that a Head of State or Government plus the Foreign Minister/Secretary and three or four officials '*would make it more fifty than ten*'. This was confirmed by the Queen herself, who intervened in the conversation with President Pompidou and declared that '*a summit meeting at ten would be better than a summit at fifty*'.²⁷⁵

In fact, since their tête-à-tête in March 1972, Heath and Pompidou were envisaging potential solutions. A common idea propounded the advantages '*in the creation of a small secretariat to service the meetings for political consultations*'²⁷⁶, a '*secretariat and machinery suitably reinforced*'²⁷⁷ to prepare meetings, a sort of '*common agency at the Foreign Affairs Ministers/Secretaries' disposal*'²⁷⁸. This '*old idea from the French*'²⁷⁹ however proved immediately problematic as such a secretariat risked '*becoming in effect a eleventh Foreign Minister and for that reason [the French] wanted it divorced from the Commission as the latter, with its large bureaucracy, would rapidly convert it into a virtual Foreign Ministry*'²⁸⁰. Also, the location of such a secretariat rapidly posed a problem as Pompidou thought it appropriate to have it in Paris, as '*there [were] only two great capitals in Europe: London and Paris*'²⁸¹, whereas Heath thought it '*better to keep all the Community's agencies in the same place*', namely Brussels. But these unresolved organisational initiatives only underlined the fact that there existed no defined structure for political consultation of the Heads of State or Government of the Community. Political consultations on pressing matters or longer-termed issues had hitherto only occurred in meetings, organised at the initiative of individual leaders, such

²⁷⁴ TNA PREM15/2093, Report of Heath Pompidou conversation in the car from Chequers to London airport, Saturday 17 November 1973 10:50, mentioning the discussion at Windsor Castle.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. '*the President asked who the tenth was supposed to be. The Secretary of State said it would be a record taker*'.

²⁷⁶ TNA FCO33/1751, Pompidou's visit at Chequers in 18-19 March 1972, meeting de Courcel - Douglas-Home 13 March 1972 at FCO, Preparation Pompidou's visit.

²⁷⁷ TNA PREM15/903, Letter Soames to Heath, 16 February 1972. Impressions about Pompidou and Heath-Soames exchange about the way to develop European economic and political consultations.

²⁷⁸ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, les 18 et 19 mars 1972.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.: '*une vieille idée lancée par la France il y a quelques années et reprise par les Allemands*'.

²⁸⁰ TNA FCO33/1751, Pompidou's visit at Chequers in 18-19 March 1972, meeting de Courcel - Douglas-Home 13 March 1972 at FCO, Preparation Pompidou's visit.

²⁸¹ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, les 18 et 19 mars 1972.

as for instance Pompidou taking charge of discussions with Nixon on monetary instability.²⁸² Hence, they always lacked the Community dimension, and rarely resulted from concerted actions or deliberations taken at the highest level of all member states

European summitry as promoted by Pompidou and Heath however implied that the 'Three Es' approach of their bilateral summits might apply to the whole Community's collegial dialogue on matters of immediate relevance to the Nine, or on policies to be discussed for the longer term. Paris May 1971 opened the way for Paris/Chequers 1972 and 1973, which subsequently led to the establishment from 1974 onwards, sadly after their initiators had left the stage, of *serial European summits* (in Redmond's understanding) institutionalised, formalised and, crucially, based on the two leaders' vision and experience. The particularity though of their 'template' summit meetings was the exceptional entente between the key actors which might make this evolution conceivable for the Community as a whole.

Nevertheless, the two recognised that this type of summitry could have limitations in a Community context. Pompidou noted that coalition governments might find it difficult to appoint the highest-level representative to participate in such summits, and that there could be personality issues or juridical barriers: *'in Italy for instance, it [was] obvious that Mr. Moro [was] not under the impression that his President of the Conseil [was] more qualified than him, quite the contrary actually. The Belgian Foreign Minister [talked] about his Prime Minister with both affection and condescension. As for the Dutch, they [deemed] our summit would jeopardize their Constitution'*.²⁸³ Pompidou was also concerned that the *'syndicate of the foreign ministers'*²⁸⁴ would probably erect barriers to this type

²⁸² Bussière, 'Georges Pompidou et la Crise', pp. 69-105.

²⁸³ AN AG5(2)/108, Entretiens Franco-Britanniques à Chequers, 16-17 novembre 1973: *'En Italie par exemple, il est évident que M. Moro n'a pas l'impression que son Président du Conseil soit plus qualifié que lui-même, ce serait bien plutôt l'inverse. Le ministre Belge des Affaires Étrangères parle de son Premier Ministre avec affection mais sur un ton un peu supérieur. Quant aux Néerlandais, ils estiment que notre sommet mettrait en cause leur Constitution'*.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.: *'le syndicat des Ministres des Affaires Étrangères'*.

of summitry which might jeopardise their prerogatives, confirming Dunn's contention of leaders' distrust of diplomats leading to the organisation of summits.

In fact, Pompidou's initial idea likened this new type of summit to *'a kind of family circle, as it existed in the past, convened to authorise the younger daughter to marry her suitor but neither to settle the contract, nor decide on the menu or the ceremony'*.²⁸⁵ His proposal, accompanied with the then customary request for Heath's feedback (*'I would like to know what you think about this?'; 'I would like to know if you think that '*) also raised the issue of the presence and role of the Commission amidst the top leaders attending these new-type summits. It equally mentioned the potential pitfall of holding a meeting just *'for the sake of chanting "Europe" in unison and to no avail, like in musicals where stage soldiers chant "Onward, Onward" without taking a single step'*²⁸⁶, or of dealing with questions infringing on the prerogatives and remit of European bodies such as the Council, the Permanent Representatives, or even the Commission, thus rendering the meeting of Heads of State or Government unnecessary. Heath, who adhered plainly to the principle of the *'family circle'*, added that the Heads of State or Government could indeed sit around a table with their interpreters and, if so desired, could have notes taken of their discussions. The British PM considered with equal interest *'this type of arrangement'*²⁸⁷. In his view, only the Heads of State or Government should participate in order to acquire a direct understanding of the other participants' opinions and positions. Like Pompidou, Heath advised that the Commission President could attend all or part of such deliberations *de facto, not de jure*, principally as a *'gesture of courtesy'*²⁸⁸. For his part, Pompidou put emphasis on the symbolic nature of the proposed summits, as *'meeting to manifest a*

²⁸⁵ Ibid.: *'une sorte de cercle de famille, comme cela se faisait autrefois pour autoriser la cadette à épouser son galant mais non pas pour mettre au point le contrat, le menu, ni la cérémonie'*.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.: *'nous pourrions sortir en nous écriant: "Europe, Europe!" comme dans les comédies musicales où des soldats poussent le cri: "Marchons, Marchons!" sans bouger d'un pas; autrement dit nos travaux resteraient vagues et ne changeraient rien à rien'*.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.: *'Je vois un grand avantage à un tel arrangement'*.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.: *'étant invité par un geste de courtoisie'*.

common will’ would definitely symbolise the Community’s unity on any given subject or crisis, whose avowed purpose was to ‘*mark European presence before the crisis ended*’.²⁸⁹

Pompidou’s description of the running and organisation of the proposed new type of European summit closely resembled their own tête-à-tête meetings, without too precise and detailed an agenda, otherwise ‘*these meetings would lose their interest*’²⁹⁰. The summits would be spread over ‘*three half-days work*’²⁹¹, with a first day, possibly devoted to political cooperation, and a second day, ‘*inevitably*’ dedicated to political questions having implications for the Community’s competence, in which the President of the Commission could be invited to participate. This day (‘*Friday*’ quoted in Pompidou’s description, demonstrating his desire to respect the sacrosanct weekend’s break, equally dear to Heath) could end up with a dinner, involving ‘*minimum protocol and no concrete agenda*’, again with an invitation *ad extra* to the President of the Commission. He might also be associated with the second day’s discussions on questions derived from the first day’s talks which fell within the Commission’s remit. In Pompidou’s opinion, this was a ‘*judicious formula*’ intended to prove the Commission would not be ‘*kept away from discussions dealing with Community’s responsibilities*’.

However, Pompidou’s desire to distinguish between higher level political discussions and questions falling under the Commission’s competence was not entirely shared by Heath. Though ‘*none the less agreeing*’²⁹² with the French President, Heath pointed to the sometimes necessary presence of the President of the Commission as a means of managing the risk of multiple representation from smaller countries, potentially worried by the problem of their relative weight in discussions with the heads of the ‘*big three*’. Indeed, for Heath, the presence of the President of the Commission could be a ‘*psychological factor*’, useful in eliminating the somewhat ‘*irrational*’ hesitation of smaller countries about attending meetings of Heads of State or Government. Finally, Heath pointed out that, for

²⁸⁹ Ibid.: ‘*pour marquer la présence Européenne avant même que l’évènement ne soit accompli*’.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.: ‘*sinon ce genre de réunion perdrait beaucoup de son intérêt*’.

²⁹¹ Ibid.: ‘*trois demies journées de travail*’, precisely.

²⁹² Ibid.: ‘*je n’en suis pas moins d’accord*’.

merely practical reasons, running European summits in this format would necessarily lead the attendees to tackle a broad spectrum of concrete and sometimes pressing issues, and to potentially have to formulate instructions to ministries of foreign affairs, resolving, in the same token, the Netherlands' specific and potential constitutional issue of decision-making attributions between the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. European summits organised in such a way were conceived as an opportunity to reach, on a Community level, the rapprochement which they had personally achieved at a bilateral level from May 1971. Heath regretted that he and Pompidou '*did not have similar discussions as those taking place between [them] with other members of the Community and [that] none [was] taking place between other members themselves*'²⁹³ (indirectly confirming the exceptional nature of their own meetings). For it was essentially '*better to talk to each other in the same way as we [he and Pompidou] had done at the Élysée [in May 1971], a quicker and more direct procedure which had enabled them to reach an important agreement in Paris*', asserting again that the pattern of their first summit should apply to wider European summitry.²⁹⁴

On this last point, Pompidou made a distinction between *la petite cuisine* (the economic debate, to be carried out at levels other than Heads of State or Government) he did not want to get involved in, and *la haute cuisine* (political debate) which in his view should only involve the top-level of Europe's leadership. This might have been the views of an ill and tired man who wanted to concentrate on the essential parts of his presidential activities and not lose time on 'secondary' issues. When using the expression '*in this case, spirit is more important than content*'²⁹⁵, Pompidou clearly marked the difference in his opinion between '*secondary oppositions on sugar or cereals*', and the role '*our continent*' was bound to play on the world scene.

²⁹³ Ibid.: '*Cependant nous n'avons pas de pareilles discussions avec les autres membres de la Communauté et ceux-ci n'en n'ont pas non plus entre eux*'.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.: '*Il vaut mieux en parler ensemble comme nous l'avons fait à l'Élysée, la procédure est plus rapide, plus directe et elle nous avait permis d'aboutir à un important accord à Paris*'.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.: '*En l'espèce l'esprit est beaucoup plus important que la matière*'.

These discussions on a model of new European summitry were concluded by yet further proof of the particular trust and personal entente between Heath and Pompidou, with the latter's clarification that he :

*did not talk about this with anybody, not even Jobert, because [he] did not have the opportunity ... these are therefore personal reflections ... now you are part of it, you know about our partners' sensitivity within the Community area: we must not give them the impression that you and I have made decisions that we will communicate to them.*²⁹⁶

Collaborative and open discussion between key leaders was the model proposed, directly emanating from the Pompidou-Heath experience. As Jean-René Bernard contended in May 1971, *'when reading the Heath-Pompidou's conversation reports, one often cannot tell which leader is speaking! It is true that [Pompidou] happened to discuss with a rare truly European English leader'*.²⁹⁷

This approach and methodology were exactly what Pompidou and Heath had in mind, on a wider and more inclusive scale, for the Community's political dialogue. In this context, their prospective exchanges on new European summitry were rapidly confronted by the reality of Community discussions during the Copenhagen Conference which took place a month after their last tête-à-tête.²⁹⁸ The idea for the conference had come from a double-handed communication offensive from Heath and Pompidou started some weeks before. In a press conference, held on 27 September 1973, Pompidou had suggested that the *'Heads of State or Government of the EEC member states should meet from time to time to discuss political cooperation'*, expressing his support for a frequency of meetings *'not too often but nevertheless regularly ... between those with the highest responsibility*

²⁹⁶ Ibid.: *'je n'ai parlé de ça à personne, même pas à Jobert, parce que je n'en ai pas eu l'occasion ... ce sont donc des réflexions personnelles ... maintenant que vous y êtes, vous connaissez la sensibilité de nos partenaires dans l'enceinte communautaire: il ne faut pas leur donner l'impression que nous avons pris vous et moi des décisions que nous allons leur communiquer'*.

²⁹⁷ Jean-René Bernard about Pompidou's relations with Heath, in Dulphy, Manigand, 'Entretien avec Jean-René Bernard', pp. 7-8: *'Quand vous lisez les entretiens Heath-Pompidou, vous ne savez pas, souvent, lequel des deux parle! Il est vrai qu'il était tombé sur un des très rares Anglais vraiment européens'*.

²⁹⁸ Heath and Pompidou also briefly met on 14 December 1973, on the eve of the Conference, but no specific records of their conversations were identified.

and between them alone'.²⁹⁹ This declaration had been echoed by Heath, in a speech to the Conservative Party Congress in Blackpool on October 13, 1973, explaining in comparable terms: *'I would like to see the Heads of Government of the Member Countries of the Community meeting together, perhaps twice a year, without large staff, so that we can jointly guide the community along the path we have already set*'.³⁰⁰ Both leaders had agreed publicly on the desirability of *'meeting together, [in order to] lay down the broad direction of European policy, to help forward the working out of common internal policies'*, and so to agree upon the *'strategic issues facing the Community as to avoid the damaging controversies which so often appear to the public to dog the deliberations in Brussels'*.³⁰¹ The October 1973 Middle East crisis provided the catalyst for the two men's advocacy for top-level summitry, leading, on 31 October 1973, to Pompidou's proposal to his European partners to decide on the *'principle of regular meetings, between only the Heads of State or Government, with the aim of comparing and harmonizing their outlooks under the concept of political cooperation'*, calling for such a *'first meeting to be held before the end of 1973'*.³⁰² *'Despite various reservations'*, originating mainly from the Netherlands about periodicity, and from Belgium and Germany which nevertheless agreed to the idea which they claimed they had suggested first, *'these proposals were by and large welcomed'*, and a Summit Conference was called for mid-December by the President of the EEC Council (then the Prime Minister of Denmark, Mr Anker Jorgensen).³⁰³

For Heath and Pompidou, the joint offensive to have their views on summitry discussed and applied at Community level immediately bore fruit despite member states being bogged down in diverging interests, particularly as regards the handling of the consequences of the oil crisis, epitomised by the fiasco of the unexpected visit at the Conference of *'five Arab Foreign Ministers'* wanting to talk to the EEC. To Heath's and Pompidou's dismay, the *'first one-and-a-half hours of discussion had been*

²⁹⁹ TNA PREM15/2041, Meetings of the Heads of State or Government, Copenhagen, 14-15 December 1973, *Preparations for the Summit Conference, Initiative*.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ TNA PREM15/2041, Meetings of the Heads of State or Government, Copenhagen, 14-15 December 1973, *Agreement to hold the Conference*.

spent entirely on how to deal with the five Ministers'.³⁰⁴ In the spirit of exclusive top-level only meetings, *'President Pompidou said that this was nothing to do with the Heads of Government'*. And because of this, Heath was led to believe that the Copenhagen Summit *'was quite the worst summit of modern times and the result was calamitous for everybody'*.³⁰⁵ In his view, the Copenhagen Summit was intended *'originally to be a very formal gathering in which we could exchange views between ourselves'*, in the spirit he had actively promoted with Pompidou, but it ended in the confusion of a hastily written communiqué, summarizing the views of individual states.³⁰⁶

Regardless, Pompidou and Heath had initiated a process to develop European summitry and achieve individual/national goals. On 18 December 1973, Heath made a declaration to the House of Commons outlining the results of the Copenhagen Conference Summit³⁰⁷ which included, crucially for Britain, Europe's agreement that *'the Regional Fund should be established on 1 January 1974 without any link to the passage to the second stage of Economic and Monetary Union'*. And, to Pompidou's satisfaction, the Nine had *'affirmed their common will that Europe should speak with one voice in important world affairs'*.³⁰⁸ Importantly however, for the acceptance and implementation of Heath's and Pompidou's ideas about European Summitry, the Heads of State and Government also agreed:

*to meet more frequently. These meetings will be held whenever justified by the circumstances and when it appears necessary to provide a stimulus or to lay down further guidelines for the construction of a united Europe. They also agreed to meet whenever the international situation so requires.*³⁰⁹

This meant that the Franco-British tandem had successfully opened the door to institutionalizing European discussions at the highest level, and had initiated a type of summitry based on their

³⁰⁴ TNA PREM15/2041, Report of Conversations at Luncheon on 14 December 1973.

³⁰⁵ Heath, 'European Unity', p. 201.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ TNA PREM15/2041, British Information Services, Policy Statements, 84/73 Europe: EEC Summit, Middle East, Energy and Consultation Machinery, 19 December 1973.

³⁰⁸ TNA PREM15/2041, Copenhagen Summit Conference, Final Communiqué issued by the Conference Chairman. Point#1.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. Point #3.

practical and personal experiences of entente-based one-to-one conversations as started in Paris in May 1971.

In relation to Berridge's summit definitions, Paris May 1971 was the *ad hoc* summit which started this process. Initially intended to happen once for a high-profile set of purposes and intent (Britain in or not), it actually developed into the first stage of a series of *high-level exchanges of views* between Heath and Pompidou in 1972 and 1973, because the two leaders' entente, within the framework defined by the 'persuasion thematic', favoured a personalisation of the summit. It initiated a sequence of highly personalised bilateral summit meetings held without specific agendas, evoking the '*fireside chats, of which no official records are kept*'³¹⁰ (or at least publicly communicated) presented by Redmond. The two men's shared wish to develop a similar type of summitry at the Community level then initiated the move towards holding *serial summits* in the spirit of the Heath-Pompidou's tête-à-tête.

The 1971-1973 Heath-Pompidou summits did not stem exclusively from the exigencies of domestic policy, even if key national issues were occasionally tackled. They mainly originated from the leaders' wish to share views, explain positions, and hold general discussions about the European project from a Franco-British perspective ('Three Es'). The summits definitely presented the hallmarks of Vogt's 'personal diplomacy' at the highest level: '*personal chemistry, mutual trust, leaders' positive interactions, ideas and gestures*'³¹¹ were all systemic features of every Heath-Pompidou one-to-one. These attributes maintained the summits at a very personal level, emphasized by the secrecy of the conversations, achieved by keeping diplomats, technocrats and politicians at arm's length. The leaders' desire to control public communication, in a situation without tangible results, encouraged a type of theatricalism practised by Heath and Pompidou with a view to proving to the world that Britain and France were no longer in conflict. The features of this 'personal diplomacy' also underlined the importance of the rhetoric employed by Heath and Pompidou, of their language and

³¹⁰ Redmond, 'From "European Community Summit"', p. 59.

³¹¹ Vogt, *Diplomacy*, op. it.

discourse as markers of entente and of the commonality of their views on the Community, and on its direction and functioning. In relation to Redmond's theoretical questions on summitry³¹²: there was indeed substance in these Heath-Pompidou meetings, although this was not communicated in detail. There was symbolism too, since the summits, by their very nature, created a Franco-British unity of views and objectives on most European matters, epitomised by the visible personal entente of the British Premier and the French President. The fact that these summits were not pre-prepared in detail left the principals considerable leeway as to the direction their conversations should take, and demonstrated their usefulness *per se* in the exchange and promotion of Franco-British interests and goals, mixing domestic considerations with international concerns.

Most importantly, this review of the Heath-Pompidou summits from May 1971 to December 1973 shows that the Heath-Pompidou bilateral meetings, where discourse and persona played a determining and unique role, were to be institutionalized at the highest European level. The Heath-Pompidou entente witnessed during their common tenures, their own 'special relationship' that was unique and which conditioned Britain's entry into the EEC, also contributed to creating a Franco-British axis, albeit temporary, which was to be a major contributor to the future development of a political Europe.

³¹² Redmond, *op. cit.*, p. 64

Conclusion

Success in the aftermath of the Paris May 1971 summit meetings

'After the Heath-Pompidou meetings, things moved on a predictable course ... to a successful conclusion'.¹ Con O'Neill, a key figure in the British negotiations team, gave an assessment of the consequences of the Paris 1971 May meetings which left no possible doubt: the two days of tête-à-tête between Heath and Pompidou had unblocked the situation in Brussels leading to Britain's accession to membership of the EEC. Indeed, at the end of their landmark summit on Friday 21 May 1971, Heath had insisted that it was *'important to ensure that the discussions at Brussels should not become embittered and that their negotiators should not get involved in excessive arguments'*.² Pompidou, convinced by Heath's *'perfect loyalty'*³ agreed that *'they would not want the discussions there to take place in an unsatisfactory atmosphere'*⁴. The nerve centre of the enlargement discussions could shift back from Paris to Brussels where considerable progress was made until a British-European agreement was reached in June 1971, as planned months before by the French and the British (cf. Chapter 4) and as discussed by Heath and Pompidou in Paris.⁵

*'From the Heath-Pompidou meetings onwards, the final outcome was certain'*⁶: agreements were found on the outstanding issues (cf. Chapter 4) on the premise of the Paris top-level discussions which both leaders agreed should only define orientations and possibilities but *'should not give the impression to their negotiating partners that they had definitely settled matters that were for negotiation in Brussels'*⁷. On the very sensitive issue of sterling in particular, only a vague

¹ O'Neill, *Britain's Entry*, p. 330.

² MTF 710521, Record of a Conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic in the Élysée Palace, Paris at 16:00 on Friday 21 May 1971.

³ Pompidou quoted in AN 89AJ(10) Notes manuscrites de Michel Jobert, Conseil des Ministres du 27 mai 1971: *'Heath a été d'une loyauté parfaite'*.

⁴ MTF 710521, op. cit.

⁵ *'On the negotiations themselves, [Heath's] understanding was that the President and he were agreed in wishing to see the main problems resolved before the beginning of the summer holidays and thus hopefully during the two ministerial meetings to be held in June'*, in MTF 710521 Record of a Conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic in the Élysée Palace, Paris at 10:00 on Friday 21 May 1971.

⁶ O'Neill, op. cit.

⁷ MTF 710521, op. cit.

commitment was made by the British Delegation in Brussels.⁸ It reflected Heath's declaration to Pompidou on 21 May 1971 that, on sterling, *'what mattered was a clear statement of principle'*⁹, matching perfectly Pompidou's assertion that he was *'not wedded to the concept of figures: what mattered was the question of principle'*¹⁰. Heath's reassurance that he *'fully supported the development of economic and monetary union'* were convincing enough for Pompidou to suggest Heath that *'there had been an evolution in French policy and that any possible concern about French reticence had been dissipated'*. On this matter, *'his conscience would then be at peace'*¹¹.

Of course, the two leaders' entente and show of unity did not radically and instantaneously change the behaviour of all the negotiators in Brussels as there were *'plenty of leopards in the French administration whose spots [would] not change overnight'*.¹² But in the case of insurmountable difficulties posed by the French, who could be as *'bloody minded'*¹³ as the British, Soames was *'certain that Pompidou [did] not want his people to make life difficult for [the British]'*¹⁴ which meant that *'if things were to get too bad, [they] could appeal to a sympathetic higher authority'*¹⁵. Calling for Pompidou's direct support (*'sneaking to the Headmaster'*¹⁶) was an option for the British team in Brussels. It meant that, if Heath had unlocked the enlargement process in Paris, Pompidou did the same in Brussels. Consequently, in January 1972 Britain signed the Treaty of Accession to the European Community, crowning the two leaders' personal involvement which revealed their personal entente. And because he was *demandeur*, Heath could be credited with at least as much

⁸ AG5(2)/76, Résumé des accords entre la Délégation de la Communauté et la Délégation du Royaume Uni: Britain is *'disposed to envisage a gradual and orderly rundown of sterling balances after our entry'* (*'nous sommes disposés à envisager une réduction ordonnée et graduelle des balances sterling officielles après notre adhésion'*). This meant for Britain to *'work towards an alignment of the external characteristics of sterling with those of the currencies of the other members of the enlarged Community'*, in TNA PREM15/2241, Agreed English text of Record of Conclusions of the meetings 20-21 May 1971.

⁹ MTF 710521, op. cit.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² TNA PREM15/375, Soames to Rippon, 12 July 1971.

¹³ TNA PREM15/375, Rippon to Soames, 14 July 1971. Rippon nevertheless confessed to a *'sneaking affection to Boegner'*.

¹⁴ TNA PREM15/375, Soames to Rippon, 12 July 1971. Soames added that *'if ever they seem to be particularly unhelpful ... it would be worthwhile [his] trotting down the road to sneak to the Headmaster'*.

¹⁵ TNA PREM15/375, Rippon to Soames, 14 July 1971.

¹⁶ TNA PREM15/375, Armstrong to Tickell FCO, 14 July 1971. Armstrong made clear that, since it *'clearly evokes the Prime Minister's relationship with the President'*, it would be *'a technique to be used sparingly ... and should be kept under [the PM's] control'*.

merit as Pompidou who had had the courage to '*dispel the doubt and disbelief about Britain he inherited from the General*'¹⁷. As far as Heath was concerned, Palliser, a key direct witnesses to all Heath's undertakings and achievements, tellingly asserted:

*Heath did it really on the basis of a very confident and trusting relationship with the French President. I saw the relationship developing between those two men and there is no doubt in my mind that Heath brought something off which probably no one else could have done.*¹⁸

Building on this success, the Heath-Pompidou relationship developed, through regular tête-à-tête, into a rare Franco-British convergence on principles and goals of European development, on ambitious plans which, by 1980, already envisaged:

*to have had the complete abolition of all internal restrictions as well as establishing a common tariff and a common agricultural policy. [Europe] would have had a common currency, a central bank and all the other aspects of a unified community.*¹⁹

But this exceptional moment of convergence in the Franco-British history of European relations reached its tragic end on 2 April 1974, the day of President Pompidou's death, from '*a malignant and lethal deterioration of the bone marrow*'²⁰, sadly and ominously announced on the day when Wilson's new Foreign Secretary '*Callaghan made the statement [at the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg] ... of the British government's desire to see a re-negotiation*'²¹. After the February 1974 General Elections, where no party won a majority, Heath failed to negotiate a coalition agreement

¹⁷ FCO33-1378, Soames to FCO, Diplomatic Report - The Prime Minister's visit to Paris 20-21 May 1971, 9 June 1971.

¹⁸ Palliser quoted in McManus, *Edward Heath*, p. 115.

¹⁹ Heath, 'European Unity', p. 200.

²⁰ TNA FCO33/2042, Death of President Pompidou, diplomatic report No 227/74 dated 17 April 1974. According to his son, Docteur Alain Pompidou, the President died from a then incurable illness called '*la maladie de Waldenström*' which is a gradual deterioration of the body's immunity system, in Pompidou and Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, p. 65. Pompidou, who hid his illness to his collaborators (he announced it to the *Conseil des Ministres* just six days before he died) and to the public, courageously fulfilled his presidential tasks until the pain totally prevented him from working, in Balladur, *La Tragédie*, op. cit.

²¹ BDOHP, *Interview with Michael Palliser*, p. 32.

with the Liberal Party, and resigned as Prime Minister, to be replaced by Harold Wilson who took office on 4 March 1974.

Three years after their first official meetings in May 1971 in Paris, Heath and Pompidou had disappeared from the centre of the European stage. This period had been marked by the birth of a temporary Franco-British European axis based on an exceptional entente between a pragmatic French president with a plan and a vision for Europe, and a truly, and perhaps uniquely, European British Prime Minister, two men who resembled each other, not only in some features of their personae, but above all in their common belief in a particular European project.

Research Questions

This study set itself two different and complementary overall purposes: on the one hand to demonstrate that France's unblocking of British access to membership of the European community was crucially facilitated by the tandem Heath-Pompidou in Paris on 20-21 May 1971 and, on the other hand, that 'personal diplomacy' based on an exceptional entente between the two leaders had a determining influence on the result of the meetings. These aims were further broken down into a set of questions relating to 1) the challenges of the Paris May 1971 summit meetings in the context of Britain's previous applications, 2) the possible reasons for the tandem's exceptional entente, 3) the choice of a particular format for the forum to discuss the issues at hand, and 4) the actual nature of the discussions that took place at the Élysée Palace, leading to a subsequent enquiry on the legacy of the Paris May 1971 summit meetings, in order to assess whether these were one-offs talks, or indeed were the first of a series of similar meetings between the two leaders in 1972 and 1973 which indirectly shaped the structure of European top-level dialogue.

These questions were integral to the arguments expounded in this thesis. Thus for Question 1) a claim that the Paris May 1971 meetings were successful presupposed some knowledge of the two previous failed applications, success being partially calibrated by previous failures. This study therefore endeavoured to place the May 1971 summit in the timeline of Britain's decade-long

European integration process and in the context of its long relationship with France, with a view to identifying the elements that Heath and Pompidou would have to correct in order to get a successful result. Question 2) the argument that the meetings were successful because of the Heath-Pompidou entente, required some justification of the basis of the entente. Thus, this study engaged in an original analysis of the Heath-Pompidou entente, identifying the factors favourable to it in their biographies and in their conceptions of the European project. Question 3) an analysis of the rationale for the Heath-Pompidou Paris May 1971 meetings presupposed studying the reasons both for the choice of bilateral Franco-British discussions to settle matters hitherto handled multilaterally with France's partners in Brussels and for the format adopted, meetings prepared and conducted in secret as top-level discussions, excluding ministers, advisers and diplomats. Question 4) an investigation of the exact nature of the Paris May 1971 meetings entailed exploring their goals, and reviewing the way both leaders approached and conducted the encounters. Understanding their legacy required a review of the similar subsequent Heath-Pompidou summit meetings held in 1972 and 1973.

Methodologically, this study sought to adopt an original actor-centred approach, focusing on the actors in the discussions, and on their verbal interactions. Words and rhetoric, the thesis argued, played a special part in meetings which were designed for persuasion and trust building, whilst the 'intimate' settings (*tête-à-tête*) revealed a lexis of agreement, trust and appreciation.

Findings

Question 1) Britain's policy toward European integration under the leadership of the 'reluctant' European British PMs (Macmillan and Wilson) had fluctuated with changing geopolitical and economic conditions, in the particular context of their respective premierships. The pre Heath-Pompidou period testified to Britain's difficulties in formulating a viable European policy, mainly originating from the persistent post-war, 'imperial', Churchillian concept of the Three Circles of influence and interests (the United States, the Commonwealth and Western Europe). Policy-making on European integration was equally hampered by strategic contradictions, organisational impediments, 'groupthink' reflexes and, markedly, by Macmillan's and Wilson's uncertain European

convictions and common reticence to forego the interests of the 'special relationship' with the USA and the quasi emotional bond with the Commonwealth for the economic benefits of an increasingly performing European Community. The dynamic of change of direction for the two Prime Ministers, was largely provoked by crises of sterling, seen by both as a symbol of Britain's power and status, and resulted in their respective applications for membership in 1961 and 1967. De Gaulle's apparently unreadable European policy and intentions, the challenge of his personality and negotiation methods, added to the difficulty of British leadership. However, despite his two vetoes, this thesis suggests, de Gaulle made openings for a new kind of European organisation, notably expressed in the 'Fouchet Plan' and in his confidences to Ambassador Soames. The latter's handling by Wilson demonstrated the over-personalisation of the relationship with de Gaulle, thwarting progress for, and communication about, potential Franco-British arrangements. It also exemplified the British executive's list of interpersonal misconceptions, tactical and strategic mistakes, and political and organisational limitations, one of the most blatant of these being Wilson's 'Friendly Five' tactic consisting in forcing France's hand by isolating it within the Community.

These findings suggest that, for Pompidou and particularly for Heath, the main lessons of the unsettled past of Britain's European integration process were: firstly, France, considered as the key to unlock the door to EEC entry, would better be handled directly, and not bypassed via a hypothetical and uncertain alliance with unreliable 'Friendly Five' allies; secondly, Britain had to distance herself from the persistent and illusory aspiration to be positioned at the intersection of the Three Churchillian Circles and clearly claim its place in Europe; thirdly, Britain should renew its relationship with France in a more constructive and personal manner, with a clear intention to explore each parties' objectives and constraints; fourthly, Britain should forego its exclusive economic and 'imperial' power-related consideration of sterling, both the origin of domestic difficulties, as well as of global monetary concerns for its prospective European partners, chiefly France; finally, from an organisational point of view in the negotiations, Heath should prevent the involvement of multiple state agencies and agents, in order to speak with only one voice and avoid complications in establishing a purposeful channel of communication with the French. Moreover,

Heath should not blindly accept Wilson's implicit view that France would be more manageable without de Gaulle, since Pompidou would certainly maintain the fundamentals of the Gaullist approach. France's reservations about Britain's European policy issues would persist, and still include Britain's lack of an immutable European commitment, concerns with sterling, and an ingrained distrust for the Friendly Five's allegiance to the British cause.

Question 2) The quality of the Heath-Pompidou relationship was key for the future of Britain's relaunched aspiration for European membership led by, arguably, the most Europhile British Prime Minister, and Pompidou, politically and ideologically convinced of the merits of enlargement. A review of their respective biographies and personalities revealed common features in their experiences, careers, and social and political profiles. Similar leadership styles and approaches, a marginalisation within their political families, and a shared reformist centre-right economic agenda, focused on industrial modernisation and economic competitiveness. In addition, both men had complex relations, as heirs and successors, to their political predecessors and mentors, Macmillan and de Gaulle. A shared appreciation of culture and music, and a common approach to work/life balance completed the picture of the tandem's singular closeness of character. But this closeness also clearly stemmed from the similarity of the European values and ideology they consistently expressed in interviews and speeches. A close reading of speeches and interviews made over the period 1950-1974 revealed a striking similarity in concepts, but also in lexis, giving an impression of apparent identity on fundamental questions about the European project. Both Heath and Pompidou shared a view of a Europe shaping the unity of a civilisation and culture of which Britain and France were the most influential elements, and of a Europe guarantor of peace in a world dangerously divided by the Cold War. They both represented the European Community as a new vector of influence for two former dominating colonial powers. The similarity of their 'high-end' considerations on Europe was matched by their pragmatic refusal of a union of nations solely for the purpose of trade and exchange. Their agreement on the place of Britain in this Europe meant that it could only be a confederation of nations whose distinct identities should be mindfully respected. Heath's and Pompidou's common wish for Europe also envisaged a greater commitment to aid for developing

countries. In addition, the two men's approach to the relationship with the USA, which both envisaged through the prism of European unity, was also surprisingly close, since Heath's description of a 'natural relationship' with the USA, instead of a 'special relationship', was compatible with Pompidou's acceptance of the inevitability and indispensability of American power and influence. All these personal similarities were to play a part in the one-to-one summit meetings held at the Élysée Palace in May 1971.

Question 3) The announcement of the Heath-Pompidou May 1971 Paris summit was preceded by a number of precursory contextual signs suggesting the likelihood and desirability of such bilateral meetings. Deciding on the format of a Franco-British meeting was further influenced by the emergence of the particular issue of sterling. For the French, sterling issues had to be broached prior to membership, and their satisfactory resolution would indicate the strength of Britain's European convictions. For the British, discussions on monetary matters were possible, but only in a context of strict confidentiality because of the fear of speculative and damaging impacts on sterling and on the British economy. The Franco-British bilaterals thus had to be confidential and secret events, in their preparation, conduct and post-event communication. The decision to make the meeting a top-level one only originated from different but complementary factors. It stemmed firstly from Pompidou's desire to handle the matter himself, revealing not only his personal interest in monetary questions, but also a deep concern for France's status in a sterling dominated Europe. It was also influenced, especially for the French side, by an ingrained distrust of their European partners, and a fear of losing control over the negotiations because of negotiation fatigue in the French team in Brussels. The requirement for a secret Franco-British meeting at top-level only also derived from Pompidou's anxieties over the anti-British stance of some departments of his administration, chiefly the Quai d'Orsay, and from the 'arch-Gaullist' alliance whose representatives could blur his message, concerns which were mirrored by Heath's own unease about having collaborators present who might jeopardise the smooth running of a crucial summit.

Question 4) The May 1971 summit was prepared in secret by the tandem Soames-Jobert with the exclusive intent of establishing the conditions for fruitful and meaningful exchanges between the British PM and the French President. The May 1971 meetings mainly addressed the underlying 'persuasion thematic' which supplanted all the issues in the on-going negotiations in Brussels. Heath's overall objective amounted to persuading Pompidou of the reality and depth of his European intentions through appropriate answers and explanations on the main outstanding issues, and especially on the sterling problematics. This approach was confirmed by the PM Briefs prepared by Whitehall for the visit to President Pompidou. Their recommendations advocated concessions and arrangements on British interests and policies to avoid giving Pompidou opportunities to underline Britain's lack of commitment. The summit meetings were carried out within a discourse of accord, understanding, appreciation and trust, which was equally central during the further four successive occasions (at Chequers and at the Élysée in 1972 and in 1973) when Heath and Pompidou engaged in a mode of intergovernmental discussions based on what this study has termed the 'Three Es' (for Explain, Exchange and Explore). Post Paris 1971, all Heath-Pompidou meetings took place in the format of confidential tête-à-tête, with no subsequent public communication of results, without precise prior agenda setting by aides and advisers, and always in the presence of the 'habitual' Palliser and Andronikof. The subjects of these conversations were varied and open, mostly topical and never conflictual, significantly using a collaborative stance which denoted an atmosphere of confidence and even, at times, of relaxation. The entente and trust established between the two leaders even encouraged the exchange of confidential information, personal comments or ideas not yet discussed with other parties and, naturally, of matters of state and national interest. These included invariably the Regional Development Funds (RDF) for Heath, keen on recouping some of Britain's financial contribution in the form of European aid to England's industrial distressed areas.²²

²² CAC SOAM 47-2, Soames, then appointed British Commissioner in Brussels, set up in February 1975 a 'Theme Book' detailing the benefits of membership from January 1973 to January 1975 and the outlook for the coming three years in several domains. This *Theme Book* was addressed to the FCO and the distribution list included, *inter alia*, Edward Heath and Margaret Thatcher. In the *Theme Book*'s section concerning the RDF, Soames explained that the planned Britain's share of the RDF was 35m£ in 1975, 60m£ in 1976, 60m£ in 1977 over a three-year budgeted total of 540m£, so that 'Britain's share [amounted] to 28% of total, the largest national share after Italy, and very comfortably in excess of Britain Budget contribution'.

For Pompidou, they dealt with the structure and objectives of top-level European political dialogue. This was for him an object of intense frustration, reaching its peak on the occasion of the oil crisis which showcased the European Community's inability to talk with one voice, and to discuss political matters and crises in an appropriate forum which did not then exist in the current institutional structure provided for by the Treaty of Rome. After an intense public preparation and public lobbying by both Heath and Pompidou, the new *Nine* agreed during the December 1973 Copenhagen European Conference to organise regular summits, and to have institutional discussions at the highest level, which actually replicated almost exactly the structure of the Heath-Pompidou meetings since May 1971.

In conclusion, the failure of Britain's previous applications for EEC membership encouraged a deeper personal and individual involvement of the two newly elected leaders, politically and personally keen on achieving the success of enlargement. Because the remaining main blocking issue could only be discussed confidentially, and because of the potentially damaging interference of the many actors involved in the negotiations, Heath and Pompidou opted for a particular type of meeting (secret tête-à-tête), untypical in standard European discussions on enlargement questions. The very essence of the chosen format of the meeting naturally increased the personalisation of the discussions. Logically it made an entente between Heath and Pompidou a crucial factor in the success of the summit. On the premise of the entente established on this occasion, Heath and Pompidou then took the May 1971 meetings as a model of Franco-British top-level discussions to explore various other European issues. In this way, the Heath-Pompidou May 1971 meetings became a major contributing factor to the development of an implicit, albeit temporary, Franco-British axis to influence the future enlarged Community.

At the end of the day on Friday 21 May 1971, France and Britain entered into a 'marriage of convenience' in which concessions were made, past and future confrontations were brushed aside for the sake of political cooperation and the fulfilment of foreign policy goals. But because of Heath

and Pompidou, because of their similarities and the apparently exceptional nature of their entente, that day witnessed the start of a 'Franco-British Honeymoon', sadly *qui ne dure qu'un temps*.

Contribution

This thesis is of course inscribed in the general narrative of British European integration history. However, it has sought to introduce a series of original contributions.

The main innovation in this study has been to consider the success of the meetings within an analysis of the entente established between the British Prime Minister and the French President. This has involved discussing both the meaning of success in this particular context, and the nature of the entente between the two men. In defining success, this study has offered an alternative narrative of Britain's first two applications, already extensively exploited by scholars, focusing this time on factors specific to these Heath and Pompidou meetings. It also investigated another possible, and unexplored, route to define the success by appraising the one-to-ones that followed in 1972 and 1973, and by establishing the determining influence of these encounters in the modelling of future European political dialogue at the highest level.

In relation to entente, this study has focused, in accordance with Vogt's concept of '*personal diplomacy*'²³, on an analysis of the Paris May 1971 meetings (and subsequent tête-à-tête) from the particular angle of the actors themselves ('*who they are*'), their ideas and undertakings ('*what they think and do*'), their exchanges, the words they used ('*how they interact*') in order to explain the relationship between Heath and Pompidou. In this context, the thesis adopted an original actor-centred approach to its examination of the Heath-Pompidou meetings which aimed to put the human at the centre of the analysis, rather than taking the more classical approach of detailing facts and figures, and recounting the chronology of proposals, counter-proposals, and resolutions.

In this thesis, the preparation, conduct, objectives, stakes and results of the Heath-Pompidou meetings were studied, whenever possible, with a focus on the personal dimension: on the actors

²³ Vogt, *Personal Diplomacy*, op. cit.

themselves, their personal impact on choices and decision making, their undertakings and reactions, background and experience, seeking to understand the reasons for the choice of secret one-to-one discussions, the ways in which lessons from past applications might have been learned, the 'persuasion thematic', and the all-important debate on sterling.

On this last point for instance, the study has argued that the substance (the problems of sterling balances and its reserve currency status) was important because of Pompidou's personal perception of it. His personal involvement in the matter, his own professional experience and intellectual approach, which explained his concerns, were key factors in assessing the real nature of the problem. The debate on sterling could of course be exclusively presented through its technical components, detailing and evaluating the respective merits of Britain's and France's views, the conclusions of the Five and the Commission, or the Werner Report, and thus be represented as one negotiation item among others. But it is the argument of this study that raising the sterling issue before enlargement was a product in a major way of Pompidou's personal concerns and individual interest in monetary matters. Clearly this was timely in a period of international monetary upheavals, and depended on complex technicalities. However significant, it was also indicative of the President's wish to see Heath confirm in person his position and intentions, on Europe and on that specific subject, which explains, *inter alia*, the need for a tête-à-tête with the British PM in May 1971.

The actor-centred approach adopted in this thesis required an innovative analysis based on a comparison of the leaders' personae and ideas on Europe, in order to seek to understand the entente between Heath-Pompidou which has thus far been stated as a given by previous academics and commentators. This comparison was twofold: firstly a study of their biographies, their political ideas and backgrounds, the influence of their mentors, their intellectual and social abilities, and personal interests, and secondly, a comparison of their ideas and personal reflections, expressed publicly, on the European project.

This comparison of their ideas was carried out through a close reading of their political speeches and interviews in order to identify similarities in their conceptual 'high-end' approach to the foundations,

structure, and goals of the European project. There is no doubt that their approach would have differed markedly if their respective views on the percentage of Britain's contribution to Community's finance had been examined, or opinions on the acceptable price of butter, or the level of tariffs on sugar. But this type of comparison is largely irrelevant to this study since the Paris May 1971 meetings focused on defining and demonstrating European convictions, rather than listing technical national positions. The close reading of their declarations and addresses with the striking similarity of lexis served as a context for the other facet of the actor-centred analysis of the Heath-Pompidou meetings in this study: the importance of what Heath and Pompidou said, their discourse, their verbal interactions, and modes of communication.

These discursive features constitute key elements of the study of the Heath-Pompidou relationship that developed in the course of their three years of one-to-one European discussions. The chosen lexis, its meaning and intent, in English or French, has assumed a particular importance in this thesis in defining their proximity and their unity of views and ideas, even when discussing topics potentially more contentious between Britain and France. The importance of this close reading of the interpreters' notes, in English and French, explains the decision taken in the thesis to provide translations in the footnotes, in order to enable a full comparison of the discussions and comments in both languages.

What has been key in this study indeed has been the use of original and hitherto unexploited British and French primary sources, which enabled a consideration of events and discussions in both languages. This has underlain the adoption in this thesis of a resolutely combined Franco-British approach to the reading and interpretation of the summits. Original sources included the PM's briefs which were vital to assess and understand preparations, tactics and strategy on the British side, as well as their French equivalent in Bernard's multiple notes to Pompidou or *Conseils Restreints*, giving an insight into Pompidou's supporting documentation for his decision-making. Other primary sources exploited for the first time in this study include the papers of the two key persons, additional to Palliser and Andronikof, important in the genesis of these meetings, namely Jobert and Soames.

Jobert's handwritten notes of the *Conseil des Ministres* are unique in that they provide insider's information otherwise not available, and they give a particular view of the exchanges, since note-taking reflects the verbatim of discussions, in line with the focus of this thesis. The other set of original sources concerns the papers of Sir Christopher Soames from the Churchill Archives Centre. Soames, a colourful personality, verbally expressive, produced a striking amount of reports and analyses for the FCO and Number 10. In addition, the thesis has been the first study to benefit from access, albeit limited, to the personal Heath Papers at the Bodleian which had not, at the time of writing, been fully opened to the public.

These new primary sources enabled the study to follow up the examination of the Heath-Pompidou Paris May 1971 meetings with a detailed investigation of the four consecutive one-to-one encounters which occurred in 1972 and 1973. These summit meetings, previously overlooked by scholars, have enabled the May 1971 summit to be placed within the context of a continuity of discussions between the two leaders, instead of being considered as a 'one-off', a 'do or die' rencontre which is the mainstream line of current academic interpretation.

These new sources also enabled the thesis to examine the theatricality of the May 1971 meetings, with information on protocol, dinner speeches, attendance, menus, and press conferences, and to see evidence of diplomatic gestures (Pompidou having a lunch and an official dinner with the PM at the Élysée Palace and a lunch at the British Embassy, car discussions, 'tea' with the Queen, improvised walks in the Chilterns, etc.), revealing key parameters of 'personal diplomacy'.

Overall this thesis has provided a view of the personal dimension of an historic moment, with a themed approach and close reading, instead of a chronological narrative of discussions. It delivers a piece of diplomatic history with a personal twist which will contribute to the ongoing story of European integration history. In broader terms, it may serve too to encourage future scholars to review anew the achievements of these two currently forgotten men, and their role in the building of Europe.

Limitations

Whilst encompassing and evoking, within the remit of the research questions, the background actors and historical data of the Paris May 1971 meetings, this thesis did not seek to present an expansive study of “secondary” key people or consider the role of other factors, in order to restrict its analysis to the principal actors and to the characteristics and immediate legacy of the Heath-Pompidou summits.

To an extent, it would have been interesting and challenging to add to the discussion additional information on the actors and specifics of the 1971-1973 Franco-British summits. However, such an endeavour would necessarily have detracted from the study’s essential focus on the Heath-Pompidou tandem, on their interactions, on the analysis of the ‘personal diplomacy’ they undertook during their one-to-one summits.

Four alternative paths of research are presented here, all linked with this thesis’ major themes of the actor-centred approach, ‘personal diplomacy’ and summitry. All four paths have their own particular limitations.

Firstly, this study could have developed a comparison between the Heath-Pompidou relationship and that of other political tandems²⁴ in order to ascertain their uniqueness, their specificities and the key influence they had in the improvement of the evolution of a Franco-British political dialogue. The de Gaulle-Macmillan relationship, its influence in the context of Britain’s first application to membership, first come to mind. The study of this tandem, only occasionally treated academically, with the notable exception of Mangold²⁵, would have been forcibly limited by the scarcity of primary sources on de Gaulle’s side, beyond his personal testimony, and by the difficulty in objectively interpreting the indirect testimonies of collaborators and admirers²⁶, the only other sources of

²⁴ There are rare examples of studies of duo leaders’ entente in the context of European integration and development such as, for instance, Laurence Pellegrini, 'Les Activités du « Couple » Valéry Giscard d’Estaing-Helmut Schmidt après 1981/82: L’Entente Personnelle au Service de l’Union Monétaire de l’Europe', Thèse de Doctorat (Aix-Marseille Université, 2013).

²⁵ Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally*, op. cit.

²⁶ For instance, Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, op. cit., or Lacouture, *de Gaulle*, op. cit.

relevant information. For this reason, such a comparison would have necessarily introduced a speculative dimension in the academic consideration of the two men's interactions and personal exchanges. This problem would equally apply to a second obvious tandem: de Gaulle-Wilson and more particularly Pompidou-Wilson. It may have been interesting to carry out a comparative study of Wilson's relationship with de Gaulle and/or Pompidou. However, the existence of diverse and sometimes antagonistic interpretations by academics and contemporaries²⁷ of Wilson's European interests, and the reality of his personal appreciation of these two French Presidents²⁸, would have risked diluting as well as limiting the scope of the study of the relationship between Heath and Pompidou, by engaging with a relationship already known to be more superficial. A third type of comparison would have naturally involved German Chancellor Brandt's relations with either Heath or Pompidou. Yet such a comparison, besides encroaching upon existing, more detailed academic studies²⁹, would have *de facto* introduced a tripartite dimension that would run counter to the whole purpose of this thesis whose focus is on the Franco-British relations. Moreover, for all these alternative comparisons, it would have been difficult, not to say impossible, to find and review the necessary sources for tackling these relationships from the angle of the leaders' interactions and semantics in similar summits since neither Wilson nor Brandt seemed to have favoured one-to-ones. In effect, the comparison of political tandems could only take the form of a compendium of narratives and situations, based on limited supporting sources, with a view to demonstrating a specific point or supporting a chosen approach such as, for instance, Vogt's work on the concept of 'personal diplomacy'. At best it would entail a comparative reading of existing studies including original sources and themes such as Pellegrini's thesis or Hiepel's book.

Secondly, this thesis chose not to explore the influence of Jean Monnet and his personal relations with Edward Heath, only mentioned here in passing (cf. page 149) and, to a certain extent, with

²⁷ Counting, for instance, Denman, *Missed Chances*, op. cit.; Furby, 'The Revival', op. cit.; Hurd, *Memoirs*, op. cit.; Pine, *Harold Wilson*, op. cit. and Ziegler, *Wilson*, op. cit.

²⁸ Wilson, *The Labour Government*, op. cit.; Sanderson, *Perfide Albion*, op. cit.

²⁹ Hiepel, *Willy Brandt*, op. cit.; Rücker-Guitelmacher, 'Le Triangle', op. cit.; Möckli, *European Foreign Policy*, op. cit.

Georges Pompidou, who did not share Heath's and Brandt's admiration³⁰ for the '*man from Cognac*'³¹. Monnet's intense networking, principally with the collaborators of European leaders such as Michael Palliser for Heath, Jean-René Bernard for Pompidou or Katharina Focke³² for Brandt, would have certainly brought some insight into the mechanisms of persuasion. However, Monnet's interactions with the top European leadership and key actors of European integration have already received academic attention³³ in such a way that further revelations, particularly on his impassioned European lobbying with Heath, Pompidou, and their close collaborators, Bernard and Palliser, would have necessitated intensive additional research in the Archives of Jean Monnet in Lausanne without any prior guarantee of finding unexploited original sources. On the whole, additional information would have relied on testimonies and memories of the people involved in Monnet's lobbying activities, an issue which leads to the third path that has not been taken in this study.

Thirdly, it would have been informative and exciting, from a human and actor-centred point of view, to gather oral testimonies of direct witnesses to the events of May 1971 and subsequent summits. The main actors have of course long disappeared but close collaborators, such as Douglas Hurd, Jean-René Bernard, or Édouard Balladur, would certainly have made significant contributions to the knowledge and understanding of the May 1971 summit preparations, unfolding and sequels in 1972 and 1973. Nevertheless, it would have raised the question of the inherent limitations of main actors' interviews in terms of methodology and academic value as propounded by Drake.³⁴ In her experience, politicians tend to use interviews as a means of putting forward their own version of events and of promoting personal ideas or arguments. These diversions tend to be '*substitutes for*

³⁰ Grazio Merlchionni, in Bossuat, *Jean Monnet*, p. 397: '*Yet if Brandt liked and admired Monnet, it was not the case of Pompidou*', author's translation of '*or si Brandt aimait et admirait Monnet, ce n'était pas le cas de Pompidou*'.

³¹ Henry H. H. Remak, *The Man from Cognac, Jean Monnet and the Anglo-American Mindset*, in Dean J. Kotlowski, (ed.), *The European Union: from Jean Monnet to the Euro* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000), pp.57-77.

³² State Secretary in the Chancellery with special responsibility for the coordination of European policy, in Bossuat, *Jean Monnet*, op. cit.

³³ For instance : Gérard Bossuat, 'Jean Monnet: la Mesure d'une Influence', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 51 (1996), pp. 68-84; Bossuat, , *Jean Monnet, L'Europe*, op. cit.; Kotlowski, *The European Union*, op. cit.; Éric Roussel, *Jean Monnet 1888-1979* (Paris: Fayard, 1996).

³⁴ Helen Drake, *Jacques Delors: Perspectives on a European Leader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

*memory*³⁵, potentially adulterating the academic value of the interviews which she argues should only be used '*sparingly and selectively*'³⁶.

Fourthly, this study did not review and analyse the post Heath-Pompidou legacy and durability of 'personal diplomacy' and entente-based agreements within the field of European integration³⁷. Following this line of enquiry would have inevitably led to an unmanageably broad interdisciplinary research project that would take the research, not only to the specialist sub-field of European integration studies, but also to issues in other kin disciplines which, although related to the research, are not directly relevant to its central focus. These would include leadership, discourse, modality and perception of political acts (political science), European negotiations and political dialogue (international relations), and post-events actors' influence and relations, economic and financial data based comparisons (diplomatic and economic history). Consideration of all these ramifications of the present research would thus have made it too vast to be handled satisfactorily in the limited scope of this thesis.

However, despite their limitations, these four potential lines of investigation and academic study all prefigure, in various degrees, the parameters of future research perspectives commented on in the next section.

Future research perspectives

This study opens the way to paths of possible further academic research which can be grouped into three main domains relating: 1) to the follow-up of the May 1971 summit meetings and resulting Community enlargement to Britain, 2) to the questions raised by the meetings' outcome and by their specific proceedings, and 3) to the actor-centred approach used to appraise them in this thesis.

³⁵ Ibid., *Preface xi*.

³⁶ Ibid., *Preface xii*.

³⁷ For instance, Pierre Gerbet, *La Construction de l'Europe* (Armand Colin, 2007); Wilfried Loth (ed.), *Experiencing Europe: 50 Years of European Construction 1957-2007* (Nomos, 2009).

The first level of further research following this study might involve a review and analysis of what happened next, given the change of Government, focus and intention after Heath and Pompidou had left office. A classical approach could direct academic attention to a detailed comparison of what was discussed in Paris, and then eventually agreed in Brussels, in the light of specific British requests, French opposition and/or counter claims, and the arbitration and respective interests of the other five members of the EEC. It might explore the impact of the concessions and of the remaining issues not handled by Heath and Pompidou (fisheries for instance, or sterling to some extent) on future relations between France and Britain, or within the Community as a whole. This impact of May 1971 on Franco-British relations post Heath-Pompidou could also be investigated on diplomatic and institutional levels, on changes in intergovernmental relations, civil service adaptation to the Community, and structural reorganisation of Whitehall and Number 10 to adapt to the new rules, methods, constraints and negotiation processes of the Community.

Related to this first avenue of future research, would be the study of the evolution of British, French and European public opinions with regards to Britain's membership of the EEC, as well as the impact on party policies, with a view to determining what influence the Heath-Pompidou agreements might have had on future Euroscepticism.

In relation to the enlargement discussions per se, it could be instructive to place Paris May 1971 in the wider context of integration negotiations with the other new members, Ireland and Denmark, to see whether differences or similarities might potentially change the relevance of the Franco-British focus. More generally, a study of the European integration process as experienced by new members could provide the background to pertinent academic comparisons of negotiation methods, from first enlargement initiatives to later and current ones.

Overall, the further investigation of Heath's private papers, when these are finally made public, may provide new information to build on this study, in particular his personal approach to the enlargement discussions and goals in general, and his relation with Pompidou. This information may be useful for understanding the process of British entry into the EEC, given the fact that although

Ziegler had privileged access to Heath's uncatalogued papers when writing Heath's authorised biography, he had no particular interest in European matters, nor in Heath's relations with President Pompidou. Consequently, this material was neglected by Ziegler.

A second area of potential research involves the outcomes and conduct of the Paris May 1971 meetings. These pose the general question of the impact of leadership on the achievement of political projects, on the concluding of economic agreements or on the management of inter-governmental opposition in the context of European integration, particularly when taking into consideration Pompidou's and Heath's approaches favourable to enlargement as part of their political plans and personal objectives. On a European level, this study initiates a wider debate on the choice, merits, limitations, and influence of bilateralism over the Community's institutional multilateralism. Furthermore, the fact that Franco-British relations changed considerably when Heath and Pompidou were not in power anymore, raises questions about the legacy and permanence of decisions made, in European integration or in international affairs, by ideological, political, or opportunistic leaders and, in the case of Heath and Pompidou, decisions made without public or political knowledge of the exact content of their conversations and objectives.

This study implicitly asks broader questions about the impact and representativity of a leader's decisions in potentially adverse circumstances when for example goals might not be shared by his/her citizens, party or Cabinet/Government, given in this specific case the level of Euroscepticism in Britain at the time of the Paris 1971 meetings, or the relative indifference of the French public for European matters, both denoted by the low turnouts and majorities in the British and French referenda. The May 1971 meetings might provide an interesting point at which to examine the gap between the executive's policies, discussed and agreed in Brussels, and public opinion, and voters' aspirations.

However, it is arguably in the focus on the actors, on the personal dimension in European integration events, that the opportunities for academic follow-up to this study are the greatest. In a challenging

paper³⁸, Ludlow rightly questioned the future orientation of research in European integration historiography in the context of existing scholarly production. His suggestions, whilst covering a wide range of possibilities, some of which relate to the potentialities listed above, do not include approaching a study of the actors, of the human factor, as a potentially key part of the integration process, despite the fact that all negotiations surely involve human beings, with their particular ideas and characteristics, which are likely to have some influence on proceedings. Further research might therefore profitably consider other Heath-Pompidou types of 'tandems' in European integration, whether based on an entente, as for instance, in the case of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt³⁹, or simply relying on common European beliefs, as in the case of François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl⁴⁰. There is equally a case for analysing the reasons for, and implications of, a '*mésentente*'⁴¹ (disharmony), and for comparing the problematics of "alternative" tandems - Wilson-Pompidou, Pompidou-Brandt⁴² or Heath-Brandt - which might not only reinforce the particularity of the Heath-Pompidou entente but also provide additional insight into leaders' relationships, and the development of Europe.

Importantly, this study signals the academic potential in studying further examples of '*summit diplomacy*'⁴³, and particularly the personal (actor-based) components of successful negotiations: the personal features and ideas of leaders, the diplomatic gestures and, above all, verbal interactions, the communication mode of leaders' exchanges, the role and impact of translators, and translation-related issues. An integral part of these studies would concern aspects of external communication, whether to the press, government agencies, or other states and governments.

³⁸ Piers N. Ludlow, '*History aplenty: but still too isolated*', in Michelle Egan, Neill Nugent and William E. Paterson (eds.), *Research Agendas in Eu Studies: Stalking the Elephant. Palgrave studies in European Union politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, UK, 2009).

³⁹ Laurence Pellegrini, 'Les Activités', op. cit.

⁴⁰ Vogt, *Personal Diplomacy*, pp. 136-177 - *Problem solving leadership 1990-1993*.

⁴¹ Hélène Plisson, 'La Mésentente Cordiale Franco-Britannique: la Deuxième Tentative d'Adhésion Britannique au Marché Commun à l'Épreuve du Vêto Français (Octobre 1964-Avril 1969)', Thèse de Doctorat (Université Paris IV, 2004).

⁴² Hiepel, *Willy Brandt*, op. cit.

⁴³ Vogt, *Personal Diplomacy*, p. 104.

Ludlow's summary that *'integration history, while not without achievements, has a great deal still to discover'* is correct, and it is the firm contention of this thesis that integration history should now begin to take critical note of the human personality, of the actors who drive and influence the building of Europe.

However, the reflection on future research perspectives in this thesis would not be complete if it were restricted to diplomatic history or European integration studies. Academic research in the domains of summitry, 'actor-centred' approaches, and political leadership, as components or extensions of 'personal diplomacy', is not a monolithic construction. It shares common foundations with a vast array of academic disciplines, which all demonstrate capacities for development and deepening⁴⁴, whether in the fields of political science and international relations, or, because leaders' personalities, culture and interactions are essential parameters in face-to-face diplomacy, in disciplines related to sociology, political psychology, cultural sociology and neuroscience. The next step for the inclusion of the human component in the study of 'personal diplomacy' is to build bridges between academic scholarship to facilitate inter-disciplinary exchanges and, to paraphrase Reynolds, like face-to-face summitry, this future research should be *'an arena of "maximum communication"'*⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ - *'This specific foreign policy tool and practice [political dialogue] has not received the attention it deserves in the literature'*, in Blanc, 'The EU', p.4.
- *'further theoretical elaboration will be needed to conceptualize the role of emotions in IR and particularly in dialogue settings'*, Ibid., p.25.
- *'summitry as a diplomatic genre has received surprisingly little attention from diplomatic historians or political scientists'*, in Reynolds, 'Summitry', p. 115.
- *'the concept of leadership has received scant attention in the field of European Studies'*, in Aggestam and Hyde-Price, 'Learning to Lead', p.10.
- *'personal diplomacy is a highly understudied area'*, in Ülgül, 'Erdoğan's Personal Diplomacy', p. 162.
- *'personal impression are an important but up to now relatively ignored source of evidence [..]'*, in Hall and Yarhi-Milo, 'The Personal Touch', p. 560.
- *'Face-to-face diplomacy is undoubtedly one of the most prevalent forms of international political practice, yet it has largely been ignored by theories of international relations'*, in Marcus Holmes, 'The Force of Face-to-face', p. 856.

⁴⁵ Reynolds, 'Summitry', p. 127.

Appendix. List and details of Heath-Pompidou one-to-one meetings

Date	Location	Participants	Object Discussion Topics	Recorded Time	Meetings' Duration Estimate
1962 ¹	Unknown, maybe Hotel Matignon	Heath, Pompidou Interpreter(s)	European Community		'for some two hours' per Heath
5 May 1970 ²	Paris Élysée Palace	Heath, Pompidou Soames, interpreter(s)	Britain's membership of the EEC	16h30-17h40	1h10
As Prime Minister and President					
20 May 1971	Paris Élysée Palace Official meetings	Heath, Pompidou Palliser, Andronikof	Britain's application	10h00-12h55 15h30-17h30	4h55 +lunch and official dinner at the Élysée
21 May 1971	Paris Élysée Palace Official meetings	Heath, Pompidou Palliser, Andronikof (Chaban-Delmas ³)	Britain's application	10h00-13h00 16h00-18h20	5h20 +luncheon at British Embassy ⁴
18 March 1972	Chequers Personal meetings	Heath, Pompidou Palliser, Andronikof	Open agenda	11h00-13h00 16h00-17h25	3h25 +lunch, diner
19 March 1972	Chequers Personal meetings	Heath, Pompidou Palliser, Andronikof	Open agenda	10h30-13h00	2h30 +lunch, walk
18 October 1972 ⁵	Paris Élysée Palace Personal meeting	Heath, Pompidou Palliser, Andronikof	Paris Conference (19-20 October 1972) Open agenda	17h30-18h50	1h20
21 May 1973	Paris - Élysée Official visit	Heath, Pompidou Palliser, Andronikof	Open agenda	10h00-13h15 16h15-19h00	6h00 +meals+reception
22 May 1973	Paris - Élysée Official visit	Heath, Pompidou Palliser, Andronikof (Messmer ⁶)	Open agenda	10h00-13h15	3h15
16 November 1973	Chequers Personal meetings	Heath, Pompidou Palliser, Andronikof	Copenhagen Conference (14-15 December 1973) Open agenda	10h50-11h30 11h45-13h10 14h30-15h20 ⁷ 16h30-19h10	c. 5h30 +lunch, dinner Incl. car journey London Airport to Chequers ⁸
17 November 1973	Chequers Personal meetings	Heath, Pompidou Palliser, Andronikof	Copenhagen Conference (14-15 December 1973) Open agenda	10h35-13h25	c. 2h50 +car journey Chequers to Windsor Castle ⁹
14 December 1973	Copenhagen Conference	Heath, Pompidou interpreters	speaking notes, no detailed information ¹⁰	Unknown	
Visits planned in 1975 ¹¹	Pompidou's State Visit ¹²	Invitation to private weekend at Chequers		Estimated Total	c. 36 hours

¹ Meeting mentioned by Heath: 'I first met Pompidou in 1962, by which time he had already become Prime Minister of France. For some two hours we talked about the European Community, and what would be required for Britain to get into it'. No detail given on place or participants, in Heath, *The Course*, p. 367.

² AN AG5(2)/108, Audience accordée par le Président de la République à Mr. Heath: Heath mentioned the 'last time they met in Matignon'.

³ MTF 710521, 'The French Prime Minister joined the meeting at 12 noon'.

⁴ TNA PREM15/372: Records of Conversations between President Pompidou and the Prime Minister at luncheon at the Embassy on 21 May 1971. No mention of beginning and end times.

⁵ TNA PREM15/896, Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic at the Élysée Palace on Wednesday 18 October 1972.

⁶ AN AG5(2)/108, Prime Minister Messmer is reported to have joined the meeting at the end of the morning session.

⁷ TNA PREM15/2093, Records of meetings mention 'after lunch' start.

⁸ TNA PREM15/2093, Records of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic in the car between London Airport and Chequers at 10.50 a.m. on Friday 16 November 1973. Indicated as 'present': Palliser and Andronikof.

⁹ TNA PREM15/2093, record of points arising in conversations during the return journey of Monsieur Georges Pompidou, President of the French Republic, from Chequers to London Airport (via Windsor), Saturday 17 November 1973.

¹⁰ TNA PREM15/2093, Prime Minister's speaking notes on the occasion of meeting President Pompidou at Copenhagen (EEC Summit) on 14 December 1973. No indication of meeting's duration and participants.

¹¹ Ibid. Nothing planned for 1974: 'I have also noted that you did not think it likely that you would be able to pay such a Visit in 1974'.

¹² TNA PREM15/2093, Heath's invitation to Pompidou for a private weekend visit at Chequers after the three-day State Visit. 'The Queen is happy that the Prime Minister should sound out President Pompidou about a visit in 1975 when he sees him at Copenhagen' (Alexander to Armstrong, 7 December 1973).

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