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Spying on friends: British assessments of French security, 1945-50

> *With the leaky state of France, the Russians probably already have all the information they want.*
> – Ernest Bevin, UK Foreign Secretary, to Prime Minister Clement Attlee, 13 July, 1950.[1]

Abstract

The emergence of intelligence studies as a distinctive branch of international history has provided many new insights into the nature of international affairs during the past thirty years. Certain aspects of intelligence, however, remain largely overlooked. One such area, which is the focus of this article, is that of bureaucratic security; that being, how a state ensures the security of the information that it holds and how they disseminate this information throughout its bureaucracies and with its allies. Whilst this may appear as a mundane avenue for investigation, this piece demonstrates that bureaucratic security issues had an impact on 'high level' political decisions during the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), adversely affected relations between the United Kingdom and France, and created additional problems surrounding the emergence of an integrated military framework within the NATO alliance.

Keywords: *Attlee, Ernest Bevin, intelligence sharing, bureaucratic politics, Anglo-French relations; JIC; MI6; SIS; MI5; NATO.*

Introduction

NATO was unique in that, unlike previous peacetime alliances, it developed integrated military machinery to prepare against an attack from the Soviet Union that its founders considered likely. Joint command structures, cooperative planning, and defence procurement were initiated in order to integrate the resources of the twelve founding members of NATO

into one cohesive military force for the defence of Western Europe. Given this then, the sine qua non of an alliance is the secure exchange of information, for without it no combined strategic or tactical planning can take place and therefore render the entire purpose of a military alliance redundant. This, however, brings with it a whole series of other problems as for any state that engages in military collaboration runs the risk that sensitive information can be leaked by their allies. In essence, internal security can be assured (to a certain degree) because the state can ensure it has the necessary security practices and procedures in place. When sharing sensitive information with another state, this cannot be as easily assured given that the state which is being provided with the information cannot be guaranteed to adhere to the same level of security practices which it employs. It is the case, therefore, that in information sharing, the weakest link determines the strength of the overall chain.[2]

With this in mind, this paper is concerned with British perceptions of alliance security, the impact that military information sharing could have upon British interests, and the remedies which the British devised for overcoming such problems during the years when NATO was conceived and created, 1946-50. Central to our paper is what we term 'bureaucratic security'. By this, we simply mean the procedures and processes that are created for the sharing of information, and the enforcement and control of these procedures. In relation to this paper, we specifically analyse how information relating to intelligence and military matters was shared within both the NATO and Anglo-French context and the types of bureaucratic security procedures that were created and implemented for achieving the aim of secure information exchanges.

British assessments of France are at the forefront of this paper as is the discussion of the METRIC and COSMIC systems created at the behest of the British as a means of improving the alliances bureaucratic security. This area of research is something that is extremely under developed throughout the literature on the origins of NATO alliance, Anglo-French relations, and the broader discussions about the early Cold War period. For instance, all of the major works on the origins of the NATO alliance give scant regard to how military information sharing had a bearing upon the creation of the alliance.[3] Likewise, the extensive literature about Anglo-French relations gives the subject little time. Usually, they treat information security as a sideshow – if at all – only mentioning the matter when security considerations prevented France from attending the top secret 'Pentagon Talks' in March 1948.[4] Even works that look closely at the machinery of the security apparatus of the British state pay the subject scant attention.[5]

The apparent unimportance of bureaucratic security and the procedures put in place to improve it is perhaps best highlighted by the fact it receives no mention at all in the two recent official histories of the British intelligence services.[6] Whilst Christopher Andrew devotes an entire chapter to 'Vetting' and 'Protective Security' in his official history of MI5, he does not mention the types of bureaucratic security measures that were enacted by the service to improve either British internal bureaucratic security or that of foreign powers.[7] Likewise, Richard Aldrich in his study of Britain's signals intelligence agency, GCHQ, notes on several occasions how bureaucratic security procedures were deemed important by British elites, but then does not go on to explain how this impacted upon policy decisions or the types of procedures and structures that were created by the British to overcome these problems.[8]

Perhaps one could legitimately argue that this subject has not received much attention because it was largely irrelevant in influencing events. This, however, would be an erroneous assessment. As shown in this paper, the seemingly mundane matter of information sharing with alliance partners had a bearing upon the degree and speed of military sharing at the beginning of the Cold War and the actual building-up of NATO as an effective military alliance. The fact should be recalled that the signing of the Atlantic Treaty (1949) did not immediately yield an effective war-alliance. Rather, it was only in 1952, some three years following the creation of the alliance, that NATO was actually ready to take over the defence work from the Western Union Defence Organisation (WUDO). As Don Cook has written, the April 1949 signing ceremony was 'appropriate to the launching of a ship that now had to be towed away to a fitting-out yard to sit while builders and welders got to work to get it ready to put out to sea.'[9] Given the fact that NATO was a military organisation which would naturally involve the exchange of information related to areas often deemed by policy-makers as the most sensitive and secretive aspects of the states security, it should not come as any great surprise that British policy-making elites were apprehensive about exchanging information within the framework of this new organisation. What then is a surprise is not the fact that this paper surveys this subject, but rather the lack of attention that it has received from other scholars.[10]

Further to this, by chiefly utilising intelligence and defence files, we highlight that bureaucratic insecurity as perceived by British officials could, and did, have a bearing upon 'high level' decisions made by the Attlee government (1945-51).[11] With this in mind, this paper makes several arguments. The first of these is that bureaucratic security did play a role more important than hitherto considered by the existing literature. Specifically, fears about

French insecurity threatened to stall staff talks at a vital point in the creation of the NATO alliance. This is not to suggest that bureaucratic security issues would have prevented the creation of the integrated military mechanism within the NATO alliance. Rather, bureaucratic security concerns slowed down the creation of this and, perhaps more importantly, was an issue that had to be resolved before NATO could undertake the military cooperation that its founders intended.

Along with this, two other main points are presented here. The first of these is that British concerns about bureaucratic insecurity were largely genuine and they were not designed as a ploy to prevent military sharing with the French, nor was it designed to ensure that the US-UK 'special relationship' would remain exclusive.[12] Rather, British concerns about French insecurity were based on specific and detailed intelligence reports, and were 'real' reactions to what they perceived were genuine security problems.

Finally it is demonstrated that it was the British who were the driving force behind the creation of more sophisticated forms of bureaucratic security within the newly created NATO alliance. By pushing for bureaucratic security improvements, and by insisting that they actually be implemented, the British were reluctantly prepared to delay the establishment of military cooperation within the NATO alliance. This is not an insignificant point given the context of this period. It has to be remembered, of course, that even small delays were considered crucial at this point given the rising East-West tensions surrounding Berlin and the fact that the explosion of the Soviet Union's first atomic weapon in August 1949 led to deepening concerns that war would break out. When the Korean War erupted in June 1950, something that had come as a complete shock to western intelligence services, there was a genuine fear that a global conflict with the Soviet bloc was imminent.[13] Nor should it be forgotten that the British were extremely keen to establish an integrated command and control structure within the alliance, as this was one of the key lessons that British military planners had taken from the fall of France in 1940 – in the face of the German onslaught, inadequate joint command and control procedures between the allied powers had led to severe inabilities on the battle field and had hastened their defeat.[14] This, therefore, indicates just how important the British considered the information security issue to be, as they were prepared to delay setting up the military alliance even in the face of what they perceived as likely conflict with the Soviet Union.

Intelligence sharing

Since the end of the Second World War, British policy-makers sought to maintain their 'special relationship' with Washington which was designed to uphold Britain's international position in a world where economic difficulties had made it increasingly difficult to do so.[15] At the core of this relationship was the exchange of military and intelligence information between the two states.[16] In particular, the dissemination of Signals Intelligence (SIGNIT) was the heart of this security cooperation.[17] This relationship, however, was reliant upon the continued security of the information being shared between the two sides, and revelations about the extent of Soviet spies throughout democratic institutions in 1945-7, including those in the UK, openly challenged this security and jeopardised the relationship. Given this context, as well as the natural sensitivity that surrounds the collection, analysis, and sharing of intelligence material, it is unsurprising that the relationship with the United States was a factor that encouraged British officials in their thinking that the most stringent security apparatus was required in all of their intelligence sharing.[18] Thus sensitive to the issue, a number of improvements to Britain's own bureaucratic security, including the introduction of positive vetting of British Civil Servants, were being undertaken at this juncture.[19]

Whilst the relationship with the United States was of great significance in British post-war thinking, the role of France was also of importance. In conjunction with the United Kingdom, France provided a counterweight to American and Soviet domination of European matters (at least in the British official mind). Moreover, France's economic and military recovery was deemed as essential for containing the current Soviet threat, and the possibility of a revived Germany.[20] With this in mind, the British saw close cooperation with France as vital for securing Britain's own interests. This was all the more important, as the French government, despite realising its economic and military weakness, was determined to play a leading role in international relations and particularly in the Western alliance.[21] Military cooperation with France was therefore seen as something which should be promoted within British policy-making circles. Given this, bureaucratic security was to be a subject that would discussed at considerable length within British circles.

Prehistory of French insecurity

The influence of the Communist Party, its ability to win popular elections, and to attract large numbers of sympathisers throughout France, troubled British officials. Owing to its role in the wartime resistance against the German occupants, the French Communist Party (Parti Communiste Français, PCF) was highly popular. Given this, Britain's Secret Intelligence

Service (SIS), as early as 1945, had been monitoring communists throughout France.[22] The immediate post war period provided even greater concern for the British as the PCF's active participation in government saw one of its members managing to hold the post of the air ministry. By the time communists were expelled from government in May 1947, the PCF had managed to place a large number of its sympathisers in strategic positions throughout the bureaucracy of the French government. Despite openly siding with the Soviet cause from 1948 onwards, the PCF still received the largest popular vote in the 1951 elections, indicating continued grassroots support and genuine popular appeal.[23] This was viewed with great scepticism across the channel and even as late as November 1948, the *Observer* newspaper felt obliged to write that based on her recent communist past 'France is an ally on which we cannot count'.[24]

It was within this context then that British intelligence assessments were made about France. In general terms, these assessed the political stability of France and the likelihood of it becoming a fully communist state.[25] However, they were also concerned with the security of French institutions and the conclusions reached were extremely pessimistic. In 1948, for instance, one assessment concluded that Soviet agents had heavily penetrated French military institutions.[26] Why this was of concern was simply that the international circumstances increased the likelihood that both Atlantic and European military cooperation would have to be undertaken in the near future. Thus, the internal security of potential alliance members was of growing importance within the official British mind.[27]

This fact was evidenced as soon as discussions between British and French officials about military collaboration began. For instance, when the Chief of Staff of the French army, General Georges Revers, was due to visit the United Kingdom in early 1948, there was some trepidation about him receiving a candid assessment about Britain's military position – the British did not want to reveal their lack of military strength which might be leaked across the iron curtain. On this occasion though, and largely because the British wanted to act in 'good faith' so as to 'set the ball rolling' for Anglo-French military cooperation, the British Chiefs of Staff concluded that their French counterpart should be given a full appraisal.[28] At this point, French security did not inhibit information sharing, but crucially this was only on a limited, personal basis, concerning one of the highest-ranking soldiers of the Fourth Republic. When military co-operation was to be institutionalised through the WUDO matters began to change from a British point of view.

Western European Union

Initially, French post-war foreign policy had been aimed primarily at preventing renewed German aggression. It should be recalled that French policy-makers had initially considered the Soviet Union a potential partner in the quest to contain future German power and had signed the Treaty of Franco-Soviet friendship of 10 December 1944 largely to achieve this ambition.[29] George-Henri Soutou has characterised this policy as one of 'neutralité'; France pursued its German problem single-mindedly, while in the meantime trying not to side with either of the slowly antagonising power blocs. The Treaty of Dunkirk between France and the United Kingdom of 4 March 1947 was the culmination of these French efforts – a British defence guarantee against Germany.[30]

During the course of 1947, the international climate changed dramatically and on 12 March, just over a week after the Dunkirk treaty had been signed, the US-president announced his Truman-doctrine. In April, the Foreign Ministers' conference in Moscow failed amidst frosty accusations over wartime reparations policy. In June, the US secretary of state George C. Marshall announced the European Recovery Programme which – once the Kremlin forbade their European satellites to attend – cemented the East-West divide. Finally, in February 1948, a communist coup toppled the Czech government, driving that country firmly behind the iron curtain and settling the front lines for the next forty years. Internally, too, the French situation had changed with the dismissal of the communist ministers from government over the issue of nation-wide strikes in May 1947.[31]

It was within this deteriorating international environment that in March 1948, Britain, France and the Benelux countries concluded the Brussels Treaty. Although this treaty, too, was seemingly directed against Germany, it was de facto a defence treaty against the Soviet Union. While the Brussels Treaty powers agreed to joint defence planning, even together they did not possess enough military and financial resources to build up sufficient forces to conduct a successful defence against Soviet attack. It was to the United States then that the Western European powers looked to for a defence treaty that would guarantee their security against the Soviet Union and strong lobbying from the likes of Ernest Bevin for a broader Atlantic defence alliance was a constant theme of British diplomacy throughout this period. It was clear then, that the future of British security within Europe would involve some type of integrated military organisation and this would thus involve the exchange of highly sensitive security information between various states.[32]

Though an alliance which included the United States was the ultimate objective of British policy, until this could be secured, the British and their European partners continued to press ahead with their integrated defence planning in the shape of the WUDO. Its tasks were to strengthen, coordinate and integrate all member countries' military efforts; to study the strategic and tactical problems of defending Western Europe; and to provide a command organisation to face possible emergencies. Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery was appointed chairman of the Land, Naval and Air Commanders-in-Chief Committee which pitched camp in Fontainebleau, south of Paris. The post of Commander in Chief for the Army fell to General Bernard de Lattre de Tassigny, while the naval and air forces were headed by a French Admiral and a British Air Chief Marshal, respectively. Overall, this command structure reflected that of the wartime Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, SHAEF.[33]

Before staff talks to co-ordinate strategies could begin, however, the British were insistent that new security practices be established. The uncertain state of French security (which was by this stage an open secret) was significantly worrying the British military establishment. To get a clearer picture, the Chiefs instructed the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) 'to examine and to report on the security aspects of Staff Talks that might be held in the future with France, on the strategic policy for the defence of Western European countries.'[34] The findings of the JIC, disseminated in February 1948, were scathing.[35] In the Navy for instance, no information except those classified as 'très secret' or above could be regarded as reasonably secure.[36] Almost the same applied to the army, where nothing below 'secret personal' was considered to be kept safe. The air force came off worst. No information communicated with it could be presumed to be safe unless it was personally and orally provided to a selected few French officers believed to have been 'secure'. The French Defence Ministry fared no better in the JIC's assessment as it was noted that: 'no information can be considered secure despite any security classification.' More alarming yet was the JIC's argument that if the French Minister of Defence was a communist (as had happened in the past), any planning or discussion by the Joint Staff Council was liable to be leaked to enemy sources. Not only that, any communist minister was likely to use his position to place cronies in strategically important staff positions which would likely leave a long-lasting legacy of impaired security.[37]

The JIC also identified a number of reasons 'prejudicial to security in France'. First, there was a 'natural garrulous tendency in the French character which makes the temptation to pass

'hot' information, albeit in the "strictest confidence", almost irresistible.'[38] This was coupled with a severe lack of security-consciousness, resulting in carelessness and insufficient precautions to guard classified documents. Third, there was a 'certain decline in moral standards in France which, together with the extremely low rates of pay, must contribute to the temptation to "sell" information'. All this was exacerbated by the short tenure of office of French ministers which not only undermined their chances of sufficiently supervising their ministries, but always bore the danger that the next generation of ministers was even less reliable than the present one.[39]

Of course, it must also be noted that the JIC's report was not entirely damning of French security. While the JIC believed that 'any information passed to the French Air Force will be made known to Moscow', the army and the navy had certain redeeming features. Social background played a role, as the majority of the army officers were considered to come from families not susceptible to communist propaganda. Also, the inspector general of the armed forces, General Bernard de Lattre de Tassigny, had introduced new training methods and forced the general staff to address the problem of security. In spite of these improvements to French security, the JIC also pointed to numerous problems. For instance, French army staff work was regarded as 'notoriously bad', not helped by inadequate security standards displayed in the école de guerre. The situation was better in the navy, however. The reason for this, the JIC believed, was a close emulation of the Royal Navy's way of doing things. After all, the British system of administration and training 'produces men who are unlikely to make easy subjects for Communist penetration'.[40]

The JIC's 1948 report on French security therefore contained a curious mixture of concrete intelligence which was based upon reports provided by the British service attachés and SIS, and stereotypical assumptions which were couched in barely concealed xenophobic appraisals of the French 'national character'. This is noteworthy for two reasons. On the one hand did – and does – such stereotypical thinking potentially undermine the accuracy of intelligence assessments.[41] As Wesley Wark and Peter Jackson have shown with regard to British and French intelligence assessments of Germany in the 1930s, stereotypes of Teutonic efficiency led to considerable over-estimates of the speed and scale of the German rearmament effort, which had enormous consequences for their respective foreign and defence policies.[42] On the other hand, the use of stereotypes is indicative of considerable hubris on the British side, a 'can't happen here' attitude. This, of course, would come to haunt the British in the early 1950s, when the first of the Cambridge Five were discovered. It is hard to imagine how

crestfallen the admiralty must have been, when a spy – John Vassall – was discovered in their midst, too.[43] In the main, British assessments of French security were clearly at this stage extremely damning. All of the vital areas for possible military cooperation, such as the air force, army, navy and Ministry of Defence, were deemed to have been extremely vulnerable to Soviet penetration.

Apprehension within British official circles about intelligence sharing can be appreciated given that the UK, as the senior partner within the WUDO and with the most productive intelligence and advanced scientific community, had most to lose from any information leaks emanating from this new military alliance. In the background was the constant concern that their special relationship with Washington could be damaged by some sort of security breach. Along with this, of particular concern for British decision makers was the release of their scientific estimates about weapons development. Such was their apprehension that they would not countenance releasing such information to their allies unless they could guarantee that such information would remain secret. It should be noted at this juncture that the British were not only concerned with French insecurity; rather, British officials were unhappy with security in all of the members of the WUDO, including their own![44] For example, when discussing the disclosure of security information to the WUDO members, the JIC warned the armed services about passing on information to their counterparts abroad: 'We consider that, in general, Secret information should only be passed to the other countries through the METRIC procedure, and that it might be pointed out to the Service Ministries that, if it is not so handled and because of the lack of security in the other countries, it is tantamount to declassifying the information.'[45] However, particular attention was accorded to France, not least as it was viewed as the most significant ally in the alliance. France, therefore, came under the most suspicion and scrutiny within British circles.[46]

To assist with British assessments, both MI5 and SIS, on the instructions of the JIC, were to make contact with their partner services throughout WUDO members in an attempt to determine their security position more precisely.[47] Clearly then, the intelligence services of partner countries were deemed more secure than their military institutions. Interestingly, the matter was not solely confined to the secret dimension. Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary, 1945-51, had been aware of the problem for some time and took an active interest in French security. For instance, in 1947, Bevin warned his French counterpart, Georges Bidault, that 'we can't carry on a conversation between two Great Powers, with a third Great Power in the cupboard with listening apparatus'[48]. In a meeting with Bidault in December

1947, he reiterated the point and urged that '[s]omehow or other military talks between them must be begun quite soon, but in the most confidential manner'.[49] Nevertheless, he was reluctant to do so as long as there were 'problems with the communists in France'.[50] This highlights that bureaucratic security concerns are not just an obscure domain to keep low-ranking officials, historians, and social scientists busy. As Bevin was acutely aware, bureaucratic security had direct repercussions for his foreign policy designs.

Bevin's pleas were met sympathetically by Bidault who promised that the 'situation had now been changed and he would guarantee only to send to London as French military representatives men in whom he had the fullest confidence and men whom Mr. Bevin could trust.'[51] The man chosen was, in fact, General Revers, and the reaction of the British Chiefs to his appointment has been described above. Given his involvement in the creation of the western alliances, it was unsurprising that Bevin insisted that he be kept fully apprised when the matter of staff talks with France and the Benelux states began.[52]

Having been given the JIC's brief, Bevin met the French Prime Minister, Robert Schuman, as well as the French and Benelux foreign secretaries in a series of discussions on security aspects of staff talks in April 1948.[53] Schuman agreed with Bevin's proposal for a consultation of experts on physical security, and he proposed to expand the remit of the talks to include possible action against 'suspect persons and Communist strikes'.[54] The chairman of the JIC, Sir William Hayter, felt slightly ill at ease by the time pressure imposed to get the staff talks going which rendered the JIC's preferred approach of bilateral security consultations impracticable. Indeed, the JIC had agreed that a cautious approach to the matter would be a 'prerequisite to success with the experts on the working level.'[55] In spite of the 'impetus given by the Foreign Secretary' the JIC tried to gain a little more time, arguing that 'there would be advantage if the military aspect of staff talks with France were considered first.' A Mr Fulton, probably the SIS Representative at the meeting, drew particular attention to the need to carefully examine French and Belgian cipher security before any actual staff talks began.[56]

It appears then that within the British government there were divergent policy trains in motion. On the one hand, Bevin was seeking to push the security assessments of France through as quickly as possible so that cooperation could begin. Opposing this was the JIC and SIS, which preferred a more cautious approach be taken. This divergence in opinion is understandable given the respective roles of the different branches of the British government. What is of interest, however, is that all saw that improved bureaucratic security of potential

partner countries was essential before military cooperation could proceed. This, therefore, serves as a further example of how mundane bureaucratic matters could have larger political ramifications.

As the JIC recognised, British internal security would have to account for and design new procedures to operate within this new level of inter-nation military collaboration.[57] Of particular concern was the influence that communist parties had in various European states. The reasoning ran that if British papers on war planning, abilities, and assessments, were shared with the appropriate institutions in the WUDO, and, later, within NATO, these could be accessed by communist agents working throughout Europe and sent to Moscow.[58] One of the biggest concerns for British policy-makers was the degree of influence that the communist party had in what one report dubbed a 'certain country'. That country was – again – France.[59]

The British were particularly sensitive about both the amount and the type of information that would have to be shared with partner countries within the framework of both the WUDO, and, as it came to supersede this organisation, NATO. Therefore, a new system was devised to overcome any of the potential problems as outlined above. This came in the guise of the METRIC system. METRIC was a set of procedures which had to be followed for the handling and transmitting of sensitive information which, in turn, would be classified according to normal British rules.[60] The various rules devised placed a great emphasis upon bureaucratic procedures and the safe handling of information and were the subject of lengthy assessments by the JIC. The METRIC rules stipulated that all persons handling METRIC material be vetted; that all materials be kept in locked safes; that the material never be discussed over the telephone; that all METRIC related information only be discussed in secure rooms, and that all METRIC material be stored in locations which had security monitoring all entrances.[61]

METRIC also demanded that materials classed as 'top secret' had to be read in London in designated 'security reading rooms'. This obviously was problematic for an alliance given that the flow of information was being stymied by such procedures. Moreover, it provided an active demonstration that London simply did not trust its allies to share such information unless expressly under its control. This hardly augured well for alliance solidarity but it also meant that the timely dissemination of information, which could be crucial, was being delayed within the bureaucracy.

The British were also determined that METRIC should actually be implemented and followed throughout the entire alliance and pushed their case forcefully with their allies. For instance,

having been asked by a WUDO member, the Foreign Office's Security Department quickly supported the idea of inviting delegates to show the internal arrangements made by His Majesty's Government to keep other countries' secrets secret. While all JIC members agreed to this idea, some identified a danger associated with it: In the UK, METRIC documents were, in fact, given a fairly wide circulation, wider than in any of the other countries. Upon seeing this example, the others might decide to extend the distribution, 'thereby increasing the security risk abroad.'[62]

The establishment of METRIC could, in theory at least, overcome the bureaucratic security problems identified by the British. Nevertheless, METRIC was only going to work if it was actually adhered to. And on this point, the British had severe reservations that it was. In the following months, British insistence that METRIC be followed was causing tension in Anglo-French relations as the French were of the opinion that bureaucratic security demands were being used by the British as an excuse to not share much needed intelligence.[63] In spite of French annoyance, the JIC refused to budge. When the Air Ministry's representative asked if certain documents could be forwarded to the directors of intelligence in WUDO countries, the JIC declined to relax the rules and decreed that such papers could only be read by METRIC-indoctrinated officers in the London reading rooms.[64]

Of particular importance from the British perspective was the issue of cipher security. As the events of the Second World War had demonstrated most clearly, ciphers could be broken, thus allowing a potential adversary access to sensitive communications and information. Cipher security was, however, only one part of the story. Telephonic devices in general were deemed insecure and such was the seriousness in which the threat of 'leaks' emanating from any form of electronic communication was viewed, the JIC had laid down extremely stringent regulations at the onset of the METRIC system. For example, the JIC insisted that 'Telephonic and Telegraphic communications will <u>not</u> be used for the transmission or the discussion of METRIC information'.[65] Thus, it is not surprising then that upholding cipher security played an important role in the attempts to improve the overall security of France and similarly 'leaky' allies.[66] From the very outset of WUDO, Mr. Fulton, (presumably) representing 'C' on the JIC, argued that 'the cypher security of France and Belgium would need careful examinations before any staff talks took place.'[67] Again, the issue of bureaucratic security was an obstacle that needed to be overcome prior to increasing military planning within the alliance.

This continued when NATO's security measures were discussed by the JIC in late 1949. Indeed, cipher security was one of the few regulations of the alliance's interim security measures they considered insufficient, as '[n]o reference is made to transmission of Top Secret material by telegram. Cypher security cannot be discussed within NATO, and we recommend that such transmission be prohibited.'[68] This of course, the JIC noted, had been a useful interim measure adopted by WUDO, too. When the COSMIC machinery was to be set up from March 1950 onwards, the JIC reiterated its point of view: establishing secure channels of communications was – like carrying out complete, on-the-spot security checks – a necessary requirement before the bureaucratic security mechanism could even begin to work.[69]

To ensure that cipher security was at a reasonable level, the JIC was eventually prepared to allow inspections of UK cipher rooms which had not been possible under the METRIC procedure. There existed a number of reasons for such an approach. First, the cipher transmission system set up within COSMIC was an international one, necessitating international controls; second, '[i]t would be necessary to ensure that there was no risk of leakage of information during the period which would elapse between the message being drafted and its despatch. An inspecting team would require access to cipher offices to satisfy themselves on this point.'[70] Finally, the UK could not demand inspection of other nations' cipher rooms if it denied this right to the allies. This, the JIC concluded, was 'obviously undesirable if we wished to ensure that they took as strict precautions in regard to cipher security as we did ourselves.'[71] On the surface this may have made sense but there existed one major argument against such an approach which was: British cipher rooms contained equipment far superior to the one used for COSMIC messages to which even the NATO allies should not be given access. If inspections were to be carried out, therefore, some sort of screening-off of the relevant segments of the cipher rooms would become necessary.

In the end, despite the establishment of the METRIC procedure, along with establishing better cipher security, Britain still tried to reduce the flow of information to its WUDO allies. The core allies, France and the Benelux countries were normally not given information graded higher than 'Confidential'. Only 'in the interests of British strategic policy' might they be given information up to and including 'Top Secret', and if so, only under the METRIC procedure, as this (in theory) disclosed information to only a limited number of authorized individuals in the Western Union countries. Other countries such as Denmark or Norway were given information up to and including 'Confidential', whilst Italy and Iceland were only given

information classified as 'Restricted', the lowest level of security.[72] Perhaps even more crucial was that the British insisted that material classified 'secret' and above had to be read in the London reading rooms. Clearly this was an impractical way for an alliance to operate over any significant period of time.[73]

It is apparent then that METRIC alone was insufficient for either British needs or for actually disseminating information throughout the alliance in the longer term. Simply put, the British did not believe that METRIC procedures would be employed in other capitals. Nevertheless, it did not actually deal with the perceived problem that communists had infiltrated the key state institutions of Britain's new alliance partners. This shows then that setting strict rules is only one half of the story of bureaucratic security. The other part, effective enforcement of these rules, is just as important and can have, as this episode illustrates, considerable impact upon foreign policy-making. Thus, with the emergence of a bigger multi-national alliance, NATO, and the fact that these security problems had not dissipated, British officials went to task in devising a new set of bureaucratic security procedures and systems. This came in the form of the COSMIC system.

Creating NATO

The story of the deliberations that led to the signing of the Washington treaty has been covered exhaustively elsewhere and do not need to be retold here in detail.[74] The important point from the perspective of this paper is the fact that when the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in April 1949, NATO still needed to be 'fleshed out'. The Treaty embodied the will of the Western nations to enter into collective defence, but it did not lay down a detailed plan on how precisely the day-to-day work was to be carried out.[75] As Lawrence Kaplan notes, NATO's 'elaborate infrastructure existed only on paper in NATO's first year. There was little coordination among them. And it did not seem to matter. The Europeans seemingly had won their major objective: entangling the United States in a European alliance.'[76] This may have been so, but in the longer term, working institutions would be required to ensure that operationally the new military alliance would be able to function. Again, the spectre of bureaucratic security came to the fore in British policy-making circles. Initially, when considering the problem of Atlantic Pact military organisation, the British Chiefs of Staff rejected any solution which involved expanding the Joint Chiefs of Staff (UK and US) by including the French. The reason for this was not primarily security at the beginning, but rather the fear that other nations would want to be included, too, rendering any organisation

unwieldy and threatening the ‘special relationship’ London sought to maintain with Washington.[77] ‘Thus,’ the Chiefs wrote grudgingly, ‘we are reluctantly forced to the conclusion that a wider organisation would be necessary.’[78]

As this was being developed, the NATO members agreed that a dual system should be established. This comprised the Military Committee, which was made up of military representatives from all member states. It was this which was to be at the heart of the military organisation of the Alliance. As Lord Ismay, NATO’s first Secretary-General, put it, this would be NATO’s ‘supreme military authority’.[79] The British were not over enamoured with such a system. First, the alliance was made up of some twelve states, and the idea of a collective military authority made up of representatives from each state would make for an extremely cumbersome and bureaucratic decision making body. Along with this, the British retained their fears that such a large body would be easily exposed to infiltration and suffer from leaks. The British were not alone in holding such concerns, and, consequently, the Standing Group was set up as a ‘three-member executive agency’.[80] Staying in permanent session, the Standing Group was to provide strategic direction, co-ordinate and integrate defence plans, and ensure security of information.[81] Eventually, in 1950, it was to produce NATO’s first security policy, DC 2/1.[82]

Before all of this was achieved, the British discreetly strove hard to identify the French problems and implement bureaucratic security measures to help tackle this issue within the inner circle of NATO. Thus, in August 1949, the JIC produced a review of current procedures for sharing military information with NATO allies. From the start, British planners assumed a system parallel to METRIC would be introduced for secret and top secret information.[83] In any case, an important factor limiting excessive distribution would be the close adherence to the ‘need to know’ principle. Interestingly, while at this stage, the JIC was not prepared to upgrade any countries to a higher security clearing, it did believe that excessive use was being made of the ‘secret’ category. As the JIC noted, when examined closely, ‘it will be found that much information now graded “Secret” ought to be downgraded.’[84] This statement suggests then that the JIC was not an overzealous body determined to keep all and everything secret. Instead, their approach indicates that they realised that a workable bureaucratic security mechanism was required to keep the really important information safe. This would not be possible if the system were swamped with unimportant information. Moreover, it would indicate that the JIC was genuinely concerned with bureaucratic security and was not simply making a point of curtailing intelligence sharing for other political motives.

As military cooperation proceeded, the JIC produced a report in October 1949 which served as the blueprint for the British approach to NATO bureaucratic security.[85] An important first step would be a detailed scrutiny of all member states' security. This, the JIC argued, should be carried out in the open by the US and Britain, as they would be the key providers of intelligence within the alliance and had most to lose from any security breaches. Based on this review a conference of plenipotentiaries should decide on a method to handle secret and top secret information. For the first category, there clearly should be 'a security for adoption by all member countries similar to the Metric procedure.'[86] Along with this, a standing Security Subcommittee to the Standing Group should be created, manned preferably by the 'big three', that being the US, UK and France. Even this solution, however, had a severe drawback from a security point of view: France. As the JIC observed:

> [t]he effect of the inclusion of France in the Standing Group will be to reduce the security of the group to the French level. France cannot be expected to accept security limitations which are not applied to the other two members of the Standing Group. It would clearly be desirable, if it was possible, that the highly classified information received by her representatives on the Standing Group should be confined to Washington, but if this is done, we should presumably have to accept the same arrangement.[87]

Likewise, since the French were a member of the Standing Group, leaving them out of the sub-committee altogether would have constituted a severe diplomatic affront. It would also convey the impression that NATO was, in substance, an Anglo-American alliance. The solution then was to improve French security. Again, laying down rules for bureaucratic security – and making sure they were implemented – would be Britain's best hope.

To bridge the time until a security procedure was established, NATO adopted interim security measures.[88] The JIC judged them 'satisfactory', which was not altogether surprising as they were based on the METRIC system championed by the British representatives in Brussels.[89] The only amendment desired by the British Chiefs of Staff was an additional bureaucratic security mechanism designed to further avoid too wide a circulation in the supposedly unsecure receiving countries.[90] When slow decision-making at the Military Committee stalled the adoption even of the interim measures, the British made sure to use them on an ad hoc basis wherever they could. This was evidenced in the Northern European Region Defence Ministers meeting held on 31 October 1949, which again highlights how hard the UK worked

in order to get some basic security mechanisms established.[91] Likewise, the JIC argued for a need to compartmentalise intelligence within NATO. It accepted SG's role as a co-ordinator of the five NATO Regional Planning Group, but warned that circulation of their reports to all NATO members would 'inevitably increase security risks.'[92]

British persistence paid off and on 1 December 1949, the NATO Defence Committee adopted the COSMIC system as an interim security measure with detailed regulations for the security of information to be drawn up by the SG and implemented in the near future.[93] However, before any formal procedure was to be adopted, the British continued to press their argument that all member nations; security arrangements had to meet a certain standard. France and the US concurred – and they asked Britain to furnish a commission 'to make a security check of the security organisation, powers and standards of the member countries on behalf of the Standing Group.'[94]

As shown then, the British had assumed the position of primary responsibility for the improvement of NATO's bureaucratic security. Also, by pushing their case, the British had managed to convince their NATO partners that their own security service should be placed in charge of improving bureaucratic security. In addition, this episode also underlines the point that Britain was a driving force not only in the creation, but also in the 'fitting-out' of NATO, doing everything possible to turn an abstract treaty into an effective – and secure – alliance.

Eventually, in January 1950, the Standing Group produced a paper adopted by the Defence Committee as DC 2/1 which was to become the backbone of NATO security. According to Alasdair Roberts:

> [o]ne of the main innovations of DC 2/1 was the establishment of the COSMIC security system. Documents flowing through the NATO apparatus were to be given a COSMIC marking, in addition to a security grading. The distribution of COSMIC documents was to be carefully managed. They were to be sent only by cipher machines or in accompanied bags, and sealed in double envelopes to prevent unauthorized inspection. Each government was to establish a central registry to manage the flow of COSMIC documents, as well as sub-registries in each department. Receipts were to be issued whenever documents changed hands so that the registry could trace distribution. Only personnel with COSMIC authorization were permitted to view COSMIC documents.[95]

COSMIC then was a thorough bureaucratic security system which was designed to radically overhaul the information security of the NATO alliance. It composed of several elements which included the employment of departmental security officers who would be responsible for enforcing the COSMIC procedures. They would be tasked with controlling the security guards employed, review the persons given access to classified material and escort any visitors to the various government institutions. A national COSMIC Security Committee would be created so as to guarantee a uniformity of enforcing the rules across the various government departments. Finally, governments would have to appoint a 'National Security Authority' responsible for the technical aspects of security, including the screening of personnel before they were informed about the COSMIC procedures.[96]

In addition to the various branches of the COSMIC apparatus, further mechanisms were required to make the system effective. These included the thorough screening of all employees given access to sensitive information; the distribution of signed declarations; physical security means which included passports; lists of COSMIC qualified personnel; a sufficient amount of safes in which to store documentation; lockable rooms in which classified material would have to be read, and the creation of a system which could identify and limit leakages to the press.[97] In essence, COSMIC was an improved version of METRIC that was designed to cope with the added burdens that the expanded NATO alliance would likely put upon the information sharing bureaucracy. Nevertheless, much like METRIC, the fact remained that the system would only work if it was actually followed. As shown below, the British remained deeply sceptical that this was happening. More substantively, because of this concern, political and military cooperation within NATO was delayed even though the broader international situation deteriorated and calls for such progress intensified.

The French problem remains

The establishment of COSMIC did not immediately remedy the basic problem perturbing British officials, that being, they still believed that the French state was fundamentally insecure. Such was the level of distrust, that in February 1950, the British Chiefs of Staff concluded that the existing interchange of assessments that took place between the USA, UK and France would have to be reassessed. Once more they confirmed their decision that the French should not be given the same level of information as their American counterparts. Moreover, all JIC assessments concerning the Soviet Union would have to be vetted before they were to be made available to France.[98]

It was, with regard to the Soviet Union, that the JIC seemed to detect a general lack of pugnacity. In a discussion concerning a study of the effect of Soviet knowledge of existing WUDO and NATO plans, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Rear Admiral Eric Longley-Cook, reminded his colleagues that 'it would be quite fallacious to say that since the Soviet Union was so strong security no longer mattered.'[99] An episode of May 1950 illustrates how much French insecurity threatened to paralyse NATO work. Having recently carried out long-term estimates of Soviet intentions and capabilities, the American and British intelligence analysts realised that their appreciations were at variance with one another. JIC chairman Patrick Reilly argued that these differences be resolved outside the Standing Group. On the one hand, NATO intelligence requirements differed from US and UK ones and there was less need for such a study at NATO level. Perhaps more gravely 'in view of what was known regarding the state of French security, it was most undesirable that any discussion of differences in intelligence between the United Kingdom and the United States should take place in front of the French in the Standing Group since this might lead to questions regarding raw intelligence and sources.'[100]

Compounding all of this for the British was the apparent lackadaisical American attitude towards the issue. This had been most recently exacerbated by the American proposal to actually prepare intelligence appreciations in the Standing Group. Accordingly, the JIC decided to let their counterpart, the American JIC, know about their concerns, especially since one of their recent statements 'would seem to imply that the Americans wished to be at liberty to disclose combined intelligence information to the French, say, which we were not allowed to disclose to, say, certain Commonwealth countries.'[101] The same matter again occupied the British JIC only a week later when the Chiefs of Staff began to toy with the idea that the Standing Group could become a kind of NATO-Chiefs of Staff organisation. However, the JIC again reiterated its doubts about how continued French bureaucratic security problems would prevent this. As was noted, the whole role of the Standing Group 'hinged very largely on this question' of French security.[102]

In response to all of this, the JIC drew up a detailed assessment of the internal security of what was labelled a 'certain country'. This euphemism again referred to France. The urgency of the situation is underlined by the fact that because of delays in receiving the comments of the British ambassador to France, Sir Oliver Harvey, the JIC felt obliged to circulate a one-page 'interim report'. Its message was stark and clear: 'all information passed to the French in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation must be considered to be subject to compromise.'[103]

The JIC was determined to make its concerns known and made their reports available to the Chiefs of Staff on 16 June, 1950. Marked 'limited circulation' and 'Guard', the document was not even to be handed to the Americans in its entirety.[104] From the start, its authors made it clear that they viewed the situation with the 'gravest concern'. As the report outlined, the JIC had recently received evidence of 'a serious lack of security' in the French service ministries.[105] If anything, the situation was getting worse, 'as the scope of classified information being passed to the French is rapidly widening, and, in the Standing Group of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, is extending to global strategic planning and research and development'.[106] The JIC report further explained that the French Communist Party had managed to establish a strong influence in all of the key ministries of state for alliance cooperation. These included the ministries of Air, Armaments, Industrial Production and Labour. Efforts to remove such persons were deemed to be ineffective in the JIC's estimation. As the report suggested, in the civil service, communist influence remained 'substantial, particularly in the nationalised industries.'[107]

The most problematic field identified in the report was the Air Ministry. Here, communist penetration had been 'cleverly accomplished, probably during the period of office of a previous Minister for Air, M. [Charles] Tillon, who is a Communist and no doubt used his opportunity to place people in important positions.' Even his Chief of Air Staff from 1947 to 1948, General Jean-Ludy Piollet, was 'by no means above suspicion as a Communist.'[108] Another grave point was the failure of the French to observe the METRIC procedure. Following a lead from a French officer in the Western Union organisation, the JIC established that the Ministère de l'Air treated security grossly negligently. As they reported:

> (a) All METRIC documents do not pass through a METRIC Registry, and METRIC documents are sometimes being transmitted by ordinary post;
> (b) Little or no attempt has been made to indoctrinate other ranks and civilian clerks and draughtsmen who are handling METRIC documents;
> (c) While the majority of indoctrinated officers have read the document laying down the METRIC procedure, few have signed the indoctrination certificate.[109]

Given this dramatic assessment, the JIC – in consultation with the British ambassador to Paris, Sir Oliver Harvey – recommended a joint Anglo-American approach. Of course this posed problems of its own, for, as Don Cook acutely observed, '[t]here is plenty of history in this century and longer to show that it is easy to get at cross-purposes with the French and

seldom easy to disentangle the snarls when they occur.'[110] The JIC, too, were aware 'that the French are sensitive on the point of our ganging up with the Americans', but they hoped that given their predicament, they would soon come to see reason.[111] Since, ultimately, the Americans wielded 'the big stick' – namely financial and military support for the Fourth Republic – their wishes would, of course, be taken much more seriously than a unilateral British approach.[112] In terms of negotiating tactics, the JIC recommended an open, direct approach: the French should be given as much evidence as possible to show that British suspicions were not unfounded. Once the French accepted the necessity for better security to ensure a free and safe exchange of information within NATO, a joint Anglo-American commission should be sent to Paris to carry out detailed inspections on the ground.

Based on attaché information, and observations made by intelligence officers at the WUDO, the JIC report was much more factual than its 1948 predecessor. Most obvious was the omission of national stereotypes that had littered previous reports as well as being designed in an analytical format. The report also confirmed long held suspicions within the British policy-making bureaucracy about the level of French insecurity. Perhaps more importantly still was that this episode illustrates just how serious the British took bureaucratic security and that the subject had the potential to delay 'high-level' cooperation. This report was commissioned and presented at a time when the Joint Chiefs of Staff were proposing to create some form of an inter-alliance Joint Chiefs of Staff. The JIC, at least from the documentation, were not opposed to this. Rather, their entire concerns centred upon the lack of security within the French state. Accordingly, their objections to this made the Joint Chiefs reassess their plans and begin a concerted effort to help improve French security.

Bureaucratic Security and Politics

Although the establishment of METRIC and COSMIC along with the provision of secure cipher equipment were in essence an issue of bureaucratic security, the state of French secret-keeping was of utmost importance for elite decision-makers, both within the government and the military. By the summer of 1950, the French security problem had remained unresolved and soon became far more than the bureaucratic nuisance it might have seemed at first sight. The creation of NATO was, above all, a pragmatic act, laying the foundation for a coherent allied defence strategy and concrete defence planning by integrated political and military bodies. French insecurity, therefore, threatened both of these goals.

In the political realm, French security influenced the way a common defence policy was to be deliberated, both nationally and internationally. In July 1950, Attlee and Bevin discussed a request by opposition-leader Winston Churchill for a debate on Western defence policy in the House of Commons. Churchill had offered to carry this out in a secret session, an idea favoured by Attlee who feared that in an open session 'there would inevitably be an exposure of the weakness and lack of drive on the part of the French and our other allies which would do harm'.[113] Bevin opposed this idea, for two reasons. The first revolved around concerns that such secrecy would raise suspicions in American circles. The second point was that he doubted a secret session would prevent the Soviets from learning what had been discussed in any case because the French had already been informed about what was going to be stated in parliament and given 'the leaky state of France', Bevin complained, 'the Russians probably already have all the information they want.'[114]

On the military side, the problem became self-perpetuating. As has been shown above, from the outset it had been clear that to include France in the Standing Group meant 'to reduce the security of the group to the French level'.[115] This, of course, made the work of the security sub-committee much more difficult, indeed, if not almost impossible. As Lieutenant-General Sir Nevil Brownjohn, Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff, complained: 'he did not see how these responsibilities [of the Standing Group] could be fulfilled unless the Standing Group were given a substantial amount of information [...]. The Joint Intelligence Committee however, were – with due cause – very concerned about the risk which would be involved on account of the present unsatisfactory state of security in France.'[116] Similarly, the British refused to provide their French counterparts with their assessments about Soviet capabilities and motives.[117] Thus, without the ability and confidence to exchange information, the entire ability of NATO to function as a credible military alliance was being seriously impaired. It was, at heart, the lack of confidence in the bureaucratic security of the French state that was causing this set of circumstances.

Building and improving NATO's military cooperation was soon given added emphasis as the outbreak of war in Korea raised fears that a global conflict with the Soviet bloc was ever more likely. Thus organising western defence – and doing so quickly – was deemed a paramount task by western policy-makers in the months after the communist invasion of South Korea in June 1950. Given these circumstances, the Chiefs of Staff had awaited the full JIC report on French security and took hold of it on 21 July, 1950.[118] They immediately forwarded the document to the Minister of Defence and to the Foreign Secretary, and instructed the JIC to

prepare a brief based on the report to prepare him for the meeting with his French counterpart, René Pleven.[119] Bevin himself was regularly informed about the state of French security, and he received the JIC-report on 'security in a certain country' in mid-July – the urgency with which Bevin then treated the problem is evident from the fact that he gave a detailed reply the very same day he received the report.[120]

Bevin believed that the report showed 'a most serious state of affairs' and proposed to discuss the issue with the Americans first, before engaging the French in tripartite talks to finally resolve the problem.[121] Sir Oliver Franks, British Ambassador to Washington, and Lord Tedder, Chairman of the Joint Services Mission, suggested preliminary talks with their American counterparts before establishing another tripartite body. It was their idea to create a working group that would provide some concrete solutions to the security problem. In spite of this urgency, the diplomatic machinery moved sluggishly, and in mid-August, before a meeting with his American and French colleagues, Bevin was briefed that the Chiefs of Staff have recently expressed their unwillingness to discuss world strategy with the French while their security remained so bad. As Bevin's briefs concluded: 'it is likely to be weeks, or even months, before we can be sure of any improvement in French security.'[122]

How to improve the situation?

What becomes abundantly clear when studying the documentary record is that the British military seemed especially unhappy about letting their French colleagues know their secrets. It is also apparent that the British only regarded the United States as a trustworthy foreign power. Perhaps this is understandable given the close ties established between the two countries during World War II where they had cooperated to the extent that joint Anglo-American joint chiefs of staff had been created.[123] What is also clear, however, is that the military were determined to ensure NATO would be organised and ran via a joint Anglo-American framework as much as possible. As they argued in one report on the 'Atlantic Pact Military Organisation' in March 1949: '[T]he United States and United Kingdom representatives in consultation will have to be firm in restricting, as far as possible, the discussions in the Atlantic Pact Chiefs of Staff Committee of their detailed plans.'[124]

Certainly, as shown above, bureaucratic security issues in other states were influencing this opinion. In addition to this, these reservations are also indicative of Britain's pragmatic determination to turn NATO into a functioning alliance which they believed would be hampered if all military planning was conducted on too large a scale. Only bureaucratic

security then seemed to be a way out of this unwelcome situation. The problem was as much about adopting a NATO-wide security procedure as it was about making sure it was applied. Better control, or supervision, seemed to be the most obvious solution and this was duly proposed by the Chairman of the UK delegation to the Brussels Treaty Military Committee in July 1950 where he suggested that the existing METRIC controls should be internationalised.[125] This failed to convince the JIC however. As they argued, the existing checks were useful only to verify if the METRIC registries were in order or to see that all personnel were METRIC-cleared. As they further explained:

> If this is so, we are of the opinion that the proposed checks will achieve little more than to ensure the routine implementation of the Metric system. This, of course, is desirable from a security point of view and we are therefore in favour of such checks from the strictly security point of view, but we would point out that they may cause a certain amount of irritation and friction and result in window-dressing for the purpose of the checks.[126]

This 'window-dressing' would reduce much of the effects of checks to do away with the deep-rooted insecurity issues:

> We would also point out that such checks will not necessarily ensure the reliability of persons handling Metric documents, nor will they discover organised sources of leakage through Communist penetration. Too much reliance should not therefore be placed on them as a means of tightening up security in the countries concerned, particularly in France.[127]

What was needed then was a thorough inspection of the French departments which would be followed by a scrupulous overhauling of the entire security procedures within France to ensure that bureaucratic security was adhered to.

This practical approach to improving French security (though of course from a French perspective could legitimately be interpreted as being highly intrusive!) continued to concern the JIC throughout the rest of 1950. Thus, in October of that year, the JIC again advised the British government that it had to demonstrate to their French colleagues how to practically improve their security. The JIC was of the belief that the United States could be useful in achieving this and suggested that American officials invite their French counterparts to visit the Pentagon to see how to properly run their security.[128] Interestingly, the JIC did not propose that the French be invited to survey British security procedures!

As 1950 approached its end then, British security officials continued in their quest to improve French bureaucratic security and were now prepared to push the issue more forcefully with their French colleagues. Such was their determination that the British concluded that if the Americans refused to raise the issue of French security, then they themselves would do so.[129] All of these efforts, however, appeared to have achieved very little in the opinion of the British. As the JIC noted at the end of the year, 'security in the French Government Machine, and particularly in the French Service Departments, is extremely bad.'[130] The Minister of Defence, Emanuel 'Manny' Shinwell, and the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, shared such negative assessments.[131]

Sharing intelligence with France

The French Foreign Minister, Pleven, had declared in the summer of 1950 that intelligence sharing within the NATO alliance would have to be undertaken with the strictest of reciprocity. To no small degree, this had been caused by the obvious British reluctance to part with their intelligence.[132] Intelligence sharing within the newly created alliance system was certainly undertaken in a difficult, disjointed, and haphazard manner at this stage. For some time, the British Service Attachés based in Paris had experienced difficulties in obtaining information, with them often being told to make use of the Brussels Treaty machinery and the METRIC system. MI5 was not altogether unhappy with this proposal. After all, its representative, J. L. Irvine, argued the French had admitted that they were unable to vet everyone who had access to classified information and this was one of the reasons for the creation of the METRIC mechanism.[133]

The other JIC members were sceptical about this, and, moreover, genuinely wished for a more secure system so as to ensure the smooth functioning of the alliance. The JIC acknowledged that METRIC and COSMIC were slightly more secure than the Attaché system, but the system should be retained given that much valuable information would be lost if the attachés were suddenly cut off from the painstakingly established contacts in their host country. Perhaps even more important was the practicality of the situation. The METRIC system, if having to deal with the amounts of information to be expected if all traffic was run through it, would likely to be quickly overburdened and be thus crippled as an effective means of intelligence distribution. Captain John Litchfield, the DNI's representative, was most outspoken against the scheme. First, METRIC had been designed only for highest-level intelligence for joint policy and planning matters. Second, given the constraints of the METRIC system, information which had once passed through it were only to be seen by the

few METRIC-cleared personnel and could not be widely disseminated. This would considerably reduce the use of such information within the context of a military alliance. Finally, he doubted that the plan would actually improve security, noting that: 'The problem of French security had to be cleared up and if the French could not be persuaded to institute a purge system and get rid of communists in Government Departments, a high policy decision would have to be made as to whether we should continue to pass highly classified information to the French.'[134] Once again, the spectre of cutting off the intelligence flow due to French insecurity loomed ominously. And, when, soon after this, the Directors of Plans considered the implications of French insecurity on planning, they warned that passing on any technical information would be 'most undesirable'.[135]

Again then, the British decided that an effort in conjunction with the United States at the highest level had to be made to improve French internal security. How this should be undertaken caused some debate within British policy-making circles. The Foreign Office, along with the Colonial Office, warned that any approach to the French had the potential to undermine the confidence built up in Anglo-French relations throughout the past two to three years.[136] This advice appears not to have bothered Ernest Bevin all that much, who, at this point, had taken up the task of improving French bureaucratic security with vigour. Whilst he was hardly insensitive to broader Anglo-French relations, Bevin had decided the improvement of bureaucratic security within the French state should be accorded top priority. He had decided that a two pronged approach which would bring both British and US pressure upon the French should be taken. The first objective was to obtain American support for this plan and thus the British Ambassador to Washington, Oliver Franks, was ordered to address the State Department about the perilous position of French bureaucratic security. Lord Tedder, the Chief of the Air Staff, was instructed to approach the American Joint Chiefs of Staff to press the message home.[137] Manny Shinwell, the British Minister of State for Defence, was then instructed to raise bureaucratic security with Pleven himself 'in very general terms'.[138]

Bevin's plan appears not to have worked out in the fashion he had wanted. Whilst the Americans welcomed the British proposals about improving French bureaucratic security, they were not prepared to raise the matter with the French either directly, or in the form of a joint Anglo-American approach. Rather, they wanted the French to bring the matter up for discussion, and then they would offer their advice.[139] For the Americans then, the issue of bureaucratic security was simply not worth pursuing at a juncture when broader international circumstances dictated western cooperation. The British, however, refused to yield. Indeed,

all was not lost for Bevin for the Americans had mentioned that a French proposal about the creation of a special group to facilitate the exchange of information on weapons development could be exploited for improving French bureaucratic security. As the Americans suggested, if this special group was to be countenanced, then the Americans could insist that the French create a new working group which would be exclusively attached to the French President's office. Thus, the people employed here would be vetted and cleared to work on sensitive matters.[140]

The British were not entirely taken in by this and did not believe that such measures were sufficient on their own to actually tackle the problem of French bureaucratic insecurity. In the opinion of the Foreign Office it was:

> useful as a first step, but [...] it did not go nearly far enough. What we needed to find out was the steps the French were taking to improve security throughout their Government machine, particularly as regards the reliability of personnel in the Service Departments, so that we could be satisfied that all the information they got, most of which could not be confined to a small group such as that proposed by M. Moch[.][141]

The problem from the British perspective then was that the Americans seemed to have proposed a slow-working permanent organisation whereas they desired an 'ad hoc body for a special enquiry'.[142] Again then we can see that it was the British government that was the leading force for establishing more vigorous and far reaching institutional reforms. Frustrating their cause was a mixture of American and French apathy towards the subject.

One month later, the situation in the opinion of the British government had still not improved. On the contrary, things appeared to have deteriorated further. As Bevin's earlier scheme came unstuck, the Americans responded by suggesting that a US-UK working group should be created to discuss bureaucratic security. This only exasperated the British further who wanted to resolve the issue and believed that working groups would only postpone genuine reform. One briefing paper for Bevin captures this well when it laments: '[w]e do not want to set up another circumscribed group on the lines of the COSMIC system but to improve French security as a whole.'[143]

Consequently the British lobbied the Americans to accept the need to fundamentally address the problem of bureaucratic security. This they appeared to have succeeded in as the FO managed to convince their American colleagues to have preliminary bilateral talks about

NATO's entire bureaucratic security. The delegations were to be composed of security experts, including SIS and MI5 representatives, and once some sort of agreements had been found, France would be invited to join the talks.[144] The new working group was to meet in Washington before relocating to France in order to show the French how US Departments were properly secured.[145] When briefing Bevin and Shinwell, the JIC underlined the point that the American proposal to study the three countries' ministries of defence was not enough. In their talks, the ministers should argue for an extension of the investigation to 'make as comprehensive an enquiry as possible throughout the French Government'.[146]

Once again then, American support for British plans had not gone as far as the British would have had hoped, but at the very least it had begun the process of addressing French bureaucratic security. This limited support, however, appears not to have placated the British, and by December 1950, the British had reached the end of their patience. In their estimation the process of establishing secure bureaucracies in which information could be shared was far too slow. Therefore, the upcoming London NATO conference was to be used as a forum where the subject of bureaucratic security could be confronted head on.

The British, in what appeared to be a recurring theme, decided they again needed American support and decided to utilise the tripartite working group forum to discuss the matter. As the British intelligence services suggested, if the American secretary of state, Dean Acheson, did not raise the subject in this forum, then they 'should remind him about it' privately.[147] To reiterate the point, the JIC again informed Shinwell about the parlous state of French security.[148] While the JIC still considered it 'rather absurd' to have talks on French security 'on the other side of the Atlantic', they were prepared to send a delegation there as it offered an opportunity to win American support and could potentially speed along the process of bureaucratic security reforms.[149]

Such optimistic thinking was misplaced given the time it took for this tripartite group to find an agreed strategy for tackling French bureaucratic security. In the end, the group did agree that a major inquiry into the state of bureaucratic security in all of their respective capitals should be undertaken. However, as the British made known privately, they only agreed to reexamine their own bureaucratic security procedures because it would provide them with the 'covert purpose of discovering in particular the state of security in France'.[150] It should be noted then that reciprocity in bureaucratic security inspections was a path the British were willing to pursue all in order to improve the state of bureaucratic security within France.

The work of the tripartite group was concluded on 6 June, 1951, after the last inspections in Paris were finished. It should be recognized that the British were granted considerable access to various French institutions which included not only civil ministries but areas of French industry also. In spite of this, many elements within the British intelligence and military services remained unsatisfied and a special report by the British delegation to the Chiefs of Staff remained critical of the current state of French security. The JIC, which drew heavily upon this report, concluded that French bureaucratic security remained less than secure and consequently meant that the establishment of closer military and intelligence ties had to be delayed. As they concluded: 'the flow of classified information to France should not be generally increased at any rate for the time being, and that all highly classified information which it is proposed to pass to the French, either direct or through NATO machinery, should be carefully reviewed in the light of the security risk involved.'[151]

What then was still causing apprehension amongst British intelligence chiefs? Simply put, it was the inconsistency of the French in actually implementing the procedures that they said they were following. Along with this, the purging of 'undesirable personnel' throughout the French bureaucracy was encountering a number of legal difficulties which meant that suspected and known communists remained within their posts. Likewise, the efficiency of screening personnel was considered 'doubtful', being patchily organized, and based upon inadequate records. On a positive note, the British delegation had explicitly lauded the drive and determination of Defence Minister Jules Moch, the Defence Ministry's Permanent Under-Secretary, Mons, and the Director General of the Sûreté Nationale, Robert Hirsch. Overall, the report raised considerable hopes that the situation would soon improve:

> By and large the present state of French security cannot be regarded as altogether satisfactory; indeed, in places it may be said to be well-nigh non-existent. Nevertheless, considering the appalling difficulties, a very great deal has been accomplished in a relatively short time and satisfactory results have been obtained even if the methods employed are somewhat unorthodox according to British standards. The important thing is that there is an evident determination at the top to set matters right. If the co-operative attitude displayed by the French Security Working Group is any guide, every effort will be made, subject of course, to the complexion of the new French Government, to "stop the gaps".[152]

The JIC, perhaps remembering the long and painful story of French insecurity which had kept it busy for almost three years at this stage, was slightly less optimistic:

> The French authorities with whom the British team were in contact have shown that they really want to improve their security and, appear to have a sincere determination to eliminate all Communists from the administration as opportunities occur. On the other hand it could not be ascertained to what degree this determination permeated through all Ministries or among the politicians.[153]

Aftermath and conclusions

In spite of these latest developments, British suspicion about French bureaucratic insecurity persisted throughout the 1950s.[154] Their being allowed access to the French bureaucracy did not fully sooth their fears, nor did the creation of new security procedures such as METRIC or COSMIC. Ultimately then, what continued to cause apprehension for the British was the fact that the establishment of new security procedures did not actually mean that they would ever be followed.[155] Moreover, a simpler conclusion emerges: the British simply remained distrustful of their French ally. Nevertheless, towards the end of this episode, the French had at least shown themselves to be willing to improve the situation, and had even allowed Anglo-American inspections of their bureaucracy in order to temper British concerns. This, along with the hope that the situation might have finally improved, seems to have led to the British to conclude that whilst French security remained doubtful and only carefully selected information should be given to French contacts, the improvements in their security practices meant that the British could no longer object to joint planning and general information sharing within the NATO context because of bureaucratic security concerns.[156]

Of course, the irony in the British position must be noted at this juncture. Whilst constantly complaining about the possibility of Soviet penetration of the French state, the British themselves had been compromised. At the Pentagon Talks for instance, the French had been excluded because of their perceived insecurity yet in the British delegation was one Donald Maclean, who had been working for the KGB since 1936![157] Certainly one can make the observation then that the British security services would have been better placed to have looked at the problems within their own bureaucracies before advancing their case too strongly with foreign powers.

This point, however, should not be pushed too far for a number of reasons. The first is that the British were concerned with their own internal security practices and did throughout this period undertake a number of improvements to their own bureaucratic security procedures.[158]

Second, the fact remains that British concerns about French bureaucratic insecurity were not being engineered to create Anglo-French tension, nor were they 'imagined' to ensure the Anglo-American special relationship would remain exclusive and not be compromised or undermined by the establishment of NATO. Genuinely the British did fear that the creation of this multinational military alliance could seriously compromise their own security via communist penetration or leaks. In this they were not wrong given that Soviet agents had managed to penetrate large parts of the French government, including its foreign intelligence service, the Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage, SDECE.[159] This, and the irony of the British efforts is best summarised in a judgment made by Christopher Andrew: It was, Andrew wrote '[a]fter the compromise of the British Magnificent Five in 1951, [that] France became for the remainder of the decade the KGB's most productive source of intelligence on Western policy to the Soviet Bloc.'[160] So the British were right – French security was far from good and likely to be exploited by the Soviets. However, until the British spies were unearthed in the early 1950s, the French problem was far smaller than the UK's very own.

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[1] The National Archives (Hereafter: TNA): FO 800/456 Bevin to Attlee, 13 July, 1950.

[2] For an introduction on the subject of international alliances see: Joan Roberts, *Alliance, Coalitions and Partnerships: Building Collaborative Partnerships* (New York: New Society, 2004).

[3] For the best introductions see: Don Cook, *Forging the Alliance. NATO, 1945-1950* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989); Charles Cogan, *Forced to Choose. France, the Atlantic Alliance and NATO - then and now* (Westport/Conn: Praeger, 1997); Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of a European Settlement, 1945-63* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Lawrence S. Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance* (London: Praeger, 2004); Stanley Sloan, *Permanent Alliance?: NATO and the Transatlantic Bargain from Truman to Obama* (New York: Continuum Press, 2010).

[4] C. Wiebes and C. Zeeman, 'The Pentagon Negotiations March 1948. The Launching of the North Atlantic Treaty', *International Affairs*, 59/ 3, (1983), pp. 351–363.

[5] Some of the best works on the study of intelligence give the subject of bureaucratic security very little attention. See: Jeff Hawkins and Sandra Blakeslee, *On Intelligence*, (London: Owl Books, 2005); Loch Johnson, *Handbook on Intelligence* (London: Routeledge, 2009); R. Gerald Hughes, Peter Jackson & Len Scott, *Exploring Intelligence Archives: Enquiries Into the Secret State* (London: Routledge, 2008); Christopher Andrew, Richard Aldrich & Wesley Wark, *Secret Intelligence: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2008). In Richard Aldrich's study of British intelligence, he relegates the subject of this paper to a couple of paragraphs. See: Richard Aldrich, The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence (London: John Murray, 2001), pp. 119-121.

[6] Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised Biography of MI5* (London: Penguin, 2009); Keith Jeffery, *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service, 1909-1949* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010).
[7] Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm*, pp. 382-99.

[8] Aldrich uses the case of British concerns with Australian internal security. See: Richard Aldrich, *GCHQ: The Uncensored Story of Britain's Most Secret Intelligence Agency* (London: HarperCollins, 2010), pp. 85-6.

[9] Cook, *Forging the Alliance*, p. 222.

[10] TNA: CAB 158/10 JIC (50) 55 "Security in a Certain Country – Report by Joint Intelligence Committee, 27 June, 1950. This further supports the case that the study of 'spying of friends' is an area much understudied by scholars of international history. See, Martin Alexander (ed.), *Knowing Your Friends. Intelligence inside Alliances and Coalitions from 1914 to the Cold War* (London: Frank Cass, 1998).

[11] Given the nature of this topic, this paper draws primarily upon material from the Joint Intelligence Committee and the Ministry of Defence. When issues surrounding bureaucratic security infringed upon foreign policy decisions, then material from the Foreign Office and Prime Ministerial files has been consulted.

[12] Though, of course, this would have been perceived as a pleasant side effect. See: Jill Edwards*, Anglo-American relations and the Franco Question, 1945-1955* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), p. 238. Defending the special relationship by invoking French security problems is hinted at within: Aldrich, *Hidden Hand*, p. 120.

[13] Andrew, *In Defence of the Realm*, pp. 386-90; John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 26-125.

[14] Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 127-8.

[15] Klaus Larres, *Churchill's Cold War: The Politics of Personal Diplomacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. xiv-xv.

[16] Christopher Andrew, 'The Making of the Anglo-American SIGINT Alliance' in Hayden B. Peake & Samuel Halpern (eds.), *In the Name of Intelligence: Essays in Honor of Walter Pforzheimer*, (Washington DC: NIBC Press, 1994), pp. 95-109; Christopher Andrew, 'The Making of the Anglo-American SIGINT Alliance, 1940-1948' in James E. Dillard & Walter T. Hitchcock (eds.), *The Intelligence Revolution and Modern Warfare* (Chicago, IL: Imprint Publications, 1996), pp. 94-109; Christopher Andrew, 'The British-American "Special Relationship" and Secret Intelligence since the Second World War' in Adolf M. Birke, Magnus Brechtken &

Alaric Searle (eds.), *An Anglo–German Dialogue: The Munich Lectures on the History of International Relations,* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2000), pp. 231-9.

[16] Aldrich, *GCHQ*, pp. 277-366.

[17] This was shared via the Joint Intelligence Bureau. For discussion on this within the British documentation see: TNA: CAB 159/7 JIC (50) Chiefs of Staff Committee, Joint Intelligence Committee, 'Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Committee', 11 January, 1950.

[18] Oliver Franks, 'The "Special Relationship" 1947-1952' in Wm. Roger Louis (ed.), *Still more Adventures with Britannia: Personalities, Politics and Culture in Britain* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), p. 64. For examples within the British documentation see: TNA: CAB 158/4 JIC (48) 52, Note by the Secretary: Marking of documents containing information of United States origin, Annex, 6 May, 1948; TNA: CAB 159/7 JIC (50) Chiefs of Staff Committee, Joint Intelligence Committee, 'Minutes of the Twentieth Meeting of the Committee', 21 February, 1950.

[19] Positive vetting essentially meant that a person's background, including political affiliation, religious belief, and sexuality, would be investigated prior to them being given access to information concerning 'national security'. The investigations were usually conducted by MI5. On this subject and the controversy it created for the Attlee government see: Peter Hennessy and Gail Brownfield, 'Britain's Cold War Security Purge and the Origins of Positive Vetting', *Historical Journal* 25/4, (1982), pp. 965-73; Giora Goodman, 'The British Government and the Challenge of McCarthyism in the Early Cold War', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 12/1, (2010), pp. 62-97; Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm*, pp. 382-6.

[20] For example of such thinking see: TNA: CAB 121/400 COS (44) 485 (0) (PHP), War Cabinet, Chiefs of Staff Committee: Future Relations with France, 25 May, 1944. On Anglo-French relations at the beginning of the Cold War period and British attitudes towards European security more generally see: R. Gerald Hughes, *Britain, Germany and the Cold War: the search for a European Détente, 1949-1967* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007); Anne Deighton, *The Impossible Peace: Britain, the Division of Germany and the Origins of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); John Young, *Britain and European Unity, 1945-1999* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 3-36; John Kent, *British Imperial Strategy and the Origins of the Cold Warm, 1944-49* (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1994); S. Croft, *The End of Superpower: British Foreign Office Conceptions of a Changing World, 1945-51* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994); Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary, 1945-51* (London: Heinemann, 1983), pp. 655-715. On Ernest Bevin's designs of a 'Third Force', see: Anne Deighton, 'Entente Neo-Coloniale? Ernest Bevin and the Proposals for an Anglo- French Third World Power, 1945-1949', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 17, 4 (2006), pp. 835–852.

[21] Good overviews on French foreign policy can be found within: Irwin Wall, 'France in the Cold War', *Journal of European Studies***,** 38/2, (2008), pp. 121-139; William Hitchcock, *France restored: Cold War diplomacy and the quest for leadership in Europe, 1944-1954* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

[22] Jeffery, *MI6*, pp. 677-9.

[23] J.-J. Becker, 'La scène intérieure', in M. Vaisse, P. Mélandri and F. Bozo, eds., *La France et l'OTAN: 1949-1996*. Actes du colloque tenu à l'Ecole militaire, 8, 9 et 10 février 1996, à Paris (Vincennes, 1996), pp. 103–114; W. Loth, 'Frankreichs Kommunisten und der Beginn des Kalten Krieges. Die Entlassung der kommunistischen Minister im Mai 1947', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 26/1, (1978), pp. 9–65; G.-H. Soutou, 'France and the Cold War. 1944-63', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 12/4, (2001), pp. 35–52.

[24] Cited in Becker, 'La scène intérieure', p. 103.

[25] TNA: DEFE 4/21, JIC (48) 110, 'Situation in France between now and the end of 1949', 1 December, 1948.

[26] TNA: CAB 159/3 JIC (48) 22nd meeting, 12 March. 1948

[27] Kaplan, *NATO*, pp. 40-60.

[28] TNA: DEFE 5/10 'Military Collaboration with France', COS (48) 2, 2 January, 1948.

[29] C. Cogan, 'Puissance virtuelle. La France de la Victoire à l'OTAN', in M. Vaisse, P. Mélandri and F. Bozo, eds., *La France et l'OTAN: 1949-1996*. Actes du colloque tenu à l'Ecole militaire, 8, 9 et 10 février 1996, à Paris (Vincennes, 1996), pp. 53–76. Also see : John Young, *France, the Cold War and the Western Alliance* (Leicester : Leicester University Press, 1990); G.-H. Soutou, 'La sécurité de la France dans l'après-guerre', in M. Vaisse, P. Mélandri and F. Bozo, eds., *La France et l'OTAN: 1949-1996*. Actes du colloque tenu à l'Ecole militaire, 8, 9 et 10 février 1996, à Paris (Vincennes, 1996), pp. 21–52.

[30] Sean Greenwood, 'Return to Dunkirk. The origins of the Anglo-French treaty of March 1947', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 6/4, (1983), pp. 49–65.

[31] On the Western Union, see. John Baylis, 'Britain, the Brussels Pact and the Continental Commitment', *International Affairs*, 60/4, (1984), pp. 615–629; John Kent & Robert Young, 'The "Western Union" Concept and British Defence Policy, 1947-8', in Richard Aldrich (ed.), *British intelligence, strategy, and the cold war, 1945-51* (London, 1992), pp. 164–190; M.A.L. Longden, 'From "Hot War" to "Cold War". Western Europe in British Grand Strategy, 1945-1948', in M. Hopkins, M. Kandiah and G. Staerck, (eds.), *Cold War Britain, 1945-1964: New Perspectives* (London, 2003), pp. 111–126. On the hardening of the Cold War at this point see: John Lewis Gaddis, *We Know Now: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: OUP, 1997), pp. 1-88; Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National security, The Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 12-101.

[32] On this period generally see: Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of a European Settlement, 1945-63* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 7-58.

[33] The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, 'The Western Union and its Defence Organisation', *The RUSI Journal,* 138/4, (1954), pp. 52-59; Lord Ismay, *NATO: The first five years, 1949-1954* (Paris, 1954), Part I. Available online at www.nato.int

[34] TNA: CAB 158/3, 'Security Aspects of possible staff talks with France – Terms of Reference', 15 January 1948.

[35] TNA: CAB 158/3, ‘Security Aspects of possible staff talks with France’, JIC (48) 5, 24 February 1948.

[36] There existed four levels of security grading in the French system: Secret Personnel, where documents were to be opened personally by the addressee and kept by him in a special personal safe; Très secret, where documents were to be handled by selected officers only; Secret, where documents were handled by many people within the ministries; and Confidential.

[37] TNA: CAB 158/3, ‘Security Aspects of possible staff talks with France’, JIC (48) 5, 24 February 1948.

[38] At least parts of the report were passed on to the Americans. Aldrich, *Hidden Hand,* p. 120.

[39] TNA: CAB 158/3, ‘Security Aspects of possible staff talks with France’, JIC (48) 5, 24 February 1948.

[40] Ibid.

[41] M. Herman, *Intelligence power in peace and war* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), esp. p. 228. On intelligence failures in general, see. R. Betts, ‘Analysis, War, and Decision. Why Intelligence Failures are inevitable, in P. Gill, S. Marrin and M. Pythian (eds.), *Intelligence Theory: Key Questions and Debates* (London, 2009), pp. 87–111.

[42] Peter Jackson, *France and the Nazi menace: intelligence and policy making 1933-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Wesley Wark, *The ultimate enemy: British intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

[43] Vassall was blackmailed into Soviet services with photos showing him engaged in homosexual activities. See Christopher Andrew & Vasili Mitrokhin, *The sword and the shield: The Mitrokhin archive and the secret history of the KGB* (New York: Penguin, 2000), p. 401.

[44] Some very good examples can be followed throughout the documentation contained within: TNA: CAB 21/3937. For one such example see: TNA: CAB 21/3937 Memorandum by the Chairmen: Relations with representatives of the Press, I.S.C (50) 21, 9 September, 1950.

[45] TNA: CAB 158/4, ‘Disclosure of information to France and the Benelux countries – security precautions’, JIC (48) 96, 2 September, 1948.

[46] TNA: CAB 159/3, JIC, minutes of 21st meeting, 11 March, 1948.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Deighton, *The Impossible Peace*, p. 163. Bevin had been asked by the Minister of Defence, A.V. Alexander, to make clear to Bidault ‘the most urgent need to take remedial action to prevent the penetration by communists of their service departments’. Noted in TNA: DEFE 4/11, COS Minutes of 35th meeting, 9 March, 1948.

[49] TNA: FO 800/465, ‘Anglo-French Conversations’, 17 December 1947.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] TNA: CAB 159/3, JIC, minutes of 22nd meeting, 12 March, 1948.

[53] The British prepared some extremely detailed briefing papers for Schuman's visit. See the material within: TNA: FO 371/79072; TNA: FO 371/79073; TNA: FO 371/79074

[54] TNA: CAB 159/3, JIC, minutes of 26th meeting, 25 March, 1948.

[55] TNA: CAB 159/3, JIC, minutes of 26th meeting, 25 March, 1948.

[56] Ibid. Also see: TNA: CAB 159/3, JIC, minutes of 27th meeting, 1 April 1948,

[57] TNA: CAB158/10 JIC (50) 55 "Security in a Certain Country – Report by Joint Intelligence Committee, 27 June, 1950.

[58] TNA: CAB158/10 JIC (50) 55 "Security in a Certain Country – Report by Joint Intelligence Committee, 27 June, 1950. Of course, the opportunity to enact a sort of 'Double-Cross System' which the British had used with great success during World War II existed. This system essentially involved 'flipping' an enemy spy, and providing them with false information which they would provide to their handler. The idea would be to inflate your abilities as well as to add contradictory assessments of your own capabilities in order to create confusion and ambiguity in the assessments of your enemy. However, as shown elsewhere, the likelihood of this working against the Soviet Union in the fashion it had during World War II was remote. Moreover, neither of the authors of this piece have come across any information to suggest that the British viewed the bureaucratic insecurity of the WUDO or NATO as an opportunity to provide false information to Moscow. On the 'Double-cross System' see: Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, pp. 317-8.

[59] TNA: CAB158/10 JIC (50) 55 "Security in a Certain Country – Report by Joint Intelligence Committee, 27 June, 1950.

[60] I.e. Top Secret, Secret, Confidential, and Restricted.

[61] All of this is laid out in the following: TNA: CAB 158/4 JIC (48) 53, Note by the Secretary: Proposed Security Procedure to Govern Allied Political and Military Talks, 6 May, 1948.

[62] TNA: CAB 159/4, JIC, minutes of 72nd meeting, 15 July, 1948.

[63] TNA: CAB 159/5, JIC, minutes of 22nd meeting, 25 February, 1949. When Montgomery assumed command of the WUDO forces, he displayed the same knack for antagonising his French comrades-in-arms as he had displayed during the war with regard to the Americans. It is likely, therefore, that 'Monty' did not hide his true feelings about French security, possibly offending the French even more. See also: TNA: DEFE 5/8, 'Western Union – Provision of Equipment', COS (48) 133, February, 1948.

[64] TNA: CAB 159/5 JIC, minutes of 62nd meeting, 24 June, 1949.

[65] Underlined in the original. TNA: CAB 158/4 JIC (48) 53, Note by the Secretary: Proposed Security Procedure to Govern Allied Political and Military Talks, 6 May, 1948.

[66] On the French SIGINT organisation during the Cold War, cf. R. Faligot, 'France, Sigint and the Cold War', *Intelligence & National Security*, 16/1, (2001), pp. 177–208.

[67] TNA: CAB 159/3, JIC, Minutes of 26th meeting, 25 March, 1948.

[68] TNA: CAB 158/8, 'North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – Interim security Measures', JIC (49) 92, 13 October, 1949.

[69] TNA: CAB 158/10, JIC (50) 33, Brief for UK delegate at North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Military Council, 21 March, 1950.

[70] TNA: CAB 159/8, JIC, minutes of 79th meeting, minute 2, 28 July, 1950.

[71] Ibid.

[72] TNA: CAB 158/7, JIC (49), 51, Disclosure of British Military Information to Signatories of the Atlantic Pact, 5 August, 1949.

[73] For the institutionnalisation of the NATO alliance see: 'From alliance to organisation', cf. F. Bozo, *La France et l'OTAN: De la guerre froide au nouvel ordre européen* (Paris, 1991), pp. 33-37.

[74] F. Heller & J. Gillingham (eds.), *NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe* (New York, 1992); Soutou; L. Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance* (Westport, Conn, 2004); L. Kaplan, *NATO 1948: The Birth of the Transatlantic Alliance* (Plymouth, 2007); For the French role in the negotiations, cf. also P. Gerbet, 'Le rôle de la France dans la négociation de l'Alliance atlantique', in M. Vaisse, P. Mélandri and F. Bozo, eds., *La France et l'OTAN: 1949-1996*. Actes du colloque tenu à l'Ecole militaire, 8, 9 et 10 février 1996, à Paris (Vincennes, 1996), pp. 93–102; and C. Cogan, *Forced to Choose: France, the Atlantic Alliance and NATO - then and now* (Westport, Conn, 1997).

[75] Cook, *Forging the Alliance.*

[76] Lawrence Kaplan, 'Alliance', in Geraint Hughes & Saki Dockrill (eds.), *Palgrave advances in Cold War history* (Basingstoke: PalgraveMacmillan, 2006), pp. 111–129. Quote on p. 117.

[77] TNA: DEFE 5/13, COS (49) 92, Atlantic Pact Military Organisation', 18 March, 1949.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Lord Ismay, *NATO: The first five years, 1949-1954* (Paris, 1954), Part VII. Available online at www.nato.int.

[80] Ibid., Part VII. For the problem this would sometimes cause see Kaplan, *NATO*, p. 24.

[81] The Standing Group also acquired an Intelligence Committee. Here, the British representative acted as a 'standing man' for the JIC, who was responsible for reaching agreements with the French and the Americans

acceptable to the UK. See: TNA: CAB 163/8, JIC/1/56, History of the Joint Intelligence Organisation, 31 December, 1955.

[82] A. Roberts, 'Entangling Alliances. NATO's Security of Information Policy and the Entrenchment of State Security', *Cornell International Law Journal*, 36, (2003-2004), pp. 329–360, 340.

[83] TNA: CAB 158/7 JIC (49) 51, 5 August. 1949.

[84] Ibid.

[85] TNA: CAB 158/8 JIC (49) 88, 'Atlantic Pact Organisation Security', 3 October, 1949.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] TNA: DEFE 5/17, COS (49) 339, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – Interim Security Measures, 11 October, 1949.

[89] TNA: CAB 158/8, JIC (49) 92, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – Interim Security Measures, , 13 October, 1949.

[90] Before Top Secret material was distributed, each 'giver' country should notify the Secretariat about the distribution that they consider would be required in their own countries. Also see: TNA: CAB 158/8, Telegram to British Joint Staff Mission, Washington, undated [October, 1949].

[91] TNA: DEFE 5/17, COS (49) 462, Copy of a letter [...] dated 26th October, 1949 from the Chairman, United Kingdom Delegation, Military Committee of the Five Powers, to the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee', 26 October 1949.

[92] TNA: PREM 8/1357, JIC (50) 53 (Final), Intelligence for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 1 June, 1950.

[93] TNA: CAB 158/9, JIC (50) 29 (Final) 'North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – Co-ordination of Security Arrangements', 15 March, 1950.

[94] Ibid. Initially, the British employed SIS and MI5 for this task but MI5 would assume sole responsibility for the role of NATO's security organisation in 1950. Aldrich, *Hidden Hand*, p. 429. There are two exemplary MI5/SIS reports on Italy and Portugal, respectively, within TNA: CAB 158/9, JIC (50) 29 (Final), 15 March, 1950.

[95] Roberts, 'Entangling Alliances', p. 344.

[96] TNA: CAB 158/9, 'Security System required for the Handling of Cosmic', Appendix to Annex I to JIC (50) 29 (Final), 15 March, 1950.

[97] Ibid. For further discussion on Cosmic procedures see: TNA: CAB 159/7 JIC (50) Chiefs of Staff Committee, Joint Intelligence Committee, 'Minutes of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Committee', 16 February, 1950.

[98] TNA: CAB 159/7, COS Minutes of 18th meeting, 16 February, 1950. Of course this again had the side effect of ensuring that the special relationship remained exclusively between London and Washington. Nevertheless, the overriding motivation for the British decision to withhold information from the French was that their bureaucratic security was perceived to be so poor.

[99] TNA: CAB 159/7, JIC minutes of 48th meeting, 11 May 1950.

[100] TNA: CAB 159/7, JIC minutes of 54th meeting, 24 May 1950,

[101] Ibid. Another reason for the British dislike of the US proposal could have been the dilution of the special relationship with the Americans. This cannot be found in the JIC minutes, however.

[102] TNA: CAB 159/7, JIC minutes of 55th meeting, 1 June, 1950.

[103] TNA: CAB 158/10, 'Security in a Certain Country – Interim Report', JIC (50) 55, 13 June, 1950. This report is also contained within TNA: PREM 8/1357, thus indicating that the report reached the Prime Minister personally.

[104] TNA: CAB 158/10, 'Security in a Certain Country', JIC (50) 56, 16 June, 1950. Certain parts of the report were marked with: 'should not be discussed with the Commonwealth countries or the Americans, nor can they be used in any subsequent discussions with the French themselves.' Clearly the importance to which the British attached to this subject ruled out the possibility of intra-alliance discussion on it.

[105] Where this information came from is not made clear within the documentation.

[106] TNA: CAB 158/10, 'Security in a Certain Country', JIC (50) 56, 16 June, 1950.

[107] Ibid. paragraph 12.

[108] Ibid. paragraph 14.

[109] Ibid. paragraph 18.

[110] Cook, *Forging the Alliance*, p. 181.

[111] TNA: CAB 158/10, JIC (50) 56, paragraph 23, 16 June 1950.

[112] Ibid.

[113] TNA: FO 800/456, Attlee to Bevin, 12 July, 1950.

[114] TNA: FO 800/456, Bevin to Attlee, 13 July, 1950.

[115] TNA: CAB 158/8 JIC (49) 88, 'Atlantic Pact Organisation – Security', 3 October, 1949.

[116] TNA: CAB 158/10, Minutes of Meeting, COS (50) 84th meeting, 7 June, 1950.

[117] This had been agreed earlier in the year in relation to Soviet motives and capabilities towards Berlin. The British decided that any information provided to France would always have to be cleared by the JIC, the War Office and the Admiralty. In comparison, information to the United States would be transmitted via normal procedures. See: TNA: CAB 159/7 JIC (50) Chiefs of Staff Committee, Joint Intelligence Committee, 'Minutes of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Committee', 16 February, 1950. Also see earlier discussions about this very subject here: TNA: CAB 158/4 JIC (48) 52, Note by the Secretary: Marking of documents containing information of United States origin, Annex, 6 May, 1948.

[118] TNA: CAB 158/10, JIC (50) 55, 27 Jun. 1950,. The time lapse between the circulation of the paper by the JIC and the COS processing it can be explained by the outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June, 1950.

[119] TNA: DEFE 5/23 COS (93), Minutes of the 93rd meeting, 21 June, 1950.

[120] TNA: CAB 158/11, 'Brief for Minister of Defence', Annex to JIC (50) 96, 24 October 1950.

[121] Ibid.

[122] TNA: DEFE 5/23, COS (50) 321, 'Exchange of views of policy towards the Soviet Union in the light of developments', 23 August. 1950.

[123] M.A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and US Strategy in World War II* (London: Chapel Hill, 2000); B. Jackson and E. Bramall, *The Chiefs: The Story of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff* (London: Brasseys, 1992).

[124] TNA: DEFE 5/13,'Atlantic Pact Military Organisation', COS (49) 92, 18 March, 1949.

[125] TNA: DEFE 5/13, COS (50) 224, July 1950.

[126] TNA: CAB 158/10, JIC (50) 63, 'Security Checks within the Metric System', 15 July, 1950.

[127] Ibid.

[128] TNA: CAB 158/10 JIC (50) 96, Brief for Discussion on the Security of a certain country, 24 October, 1950.

[129] TNA: CAB 158/11 JIC (50) 107, Brief for Discussion of the Security of a certain country, [undated], December, 1950.

[130] TNA: CAB 158/11 JIC (50) 107, Brief for Discussion of the Security of a certain country Annex: Brief for Ministry of Defence, French Security, [undated], December, 1950.

[131] Ibid.

[132] TNA: CAB 159/8, JIC, minutes of 73rd meeting, 14. July, 1950. There were other reasons for this, such as the frictions caused by the French commitment to Indochina, Commonwealth issues, and, not least, the personalities of the two countries top soldiers in WUDO, Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery and General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, both of whom were described as 'vain, ambitious, theatrical, visionary and passionate', enjoyed a

somewhat strained relationship! See: Nigel Hamilton, *Monty: The Field Marshall, 1944-1976* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), p.739. Cf. also Archives Diplomatiques/Cabinet de Ministre/Schuman/147, 'Note for Minister on Chief of Staff Talks', 6 August. 1949.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

[135] TNA: CAB 159/8, JIC, minutes of 75th meeting, 14 July, 1950.

[136] TNA: CAB 158/8, 'Brief for discussion of security in a certain country', JIC (50) 66, 31 July, 1950.

[137] Ibid.

[138] TNA: CAB 159/8, JIC, minutes of 75th meeting, Minute 4, 14 July, 1950.

[139] TNA: CAB 158/11, 'Brief for Discussion on the Security of a Certain Country', JIC (50) 96, 24 October 1950.

[140] TNA: CAB 159/8, JIC, minutes of 75th meeting, Minute 4, 14 July, 1950.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Ibid.

[143] TNA: CAB 158/11, JIC (50) 96, Annex to 'Brief for Discussion on the Security of a certain country', 24 October, 1950.

[144] TNA: CAB 159/8, JIC, minutes of 107th meeting, 10 October. 1950,

[145] The British had hoped to start the talks in London which was closer to France. As the Americans were reluctant to give up their preference for Washington, the Foreign Office conceded this issue, in order to avoid further time loss.

[146] TNA: CAB 158/11, JIC (50) 96, 24 October. 1950.

[147] TNA: CAB 158/11, Brief for Discussion on the Security of a certain country, JIC (50) 107, 7 December. 1950.

[148] TNA: CAB 158/11, Annex to JIC (50) 107, 7 December, 1950.

[149] Ibid.

[150] TNA: CAB 153/13, JIC (51) 81, Report of the British Security on the Security of Classified Matter (viz. Information, documents & material) in France, Annex II to 'Security in a certain country', 6 September. 1951.

[151] TNA: CAB 158/13, JIC (51) 81, 6 September, 1951.

[152] TNA: CAB 158/13, .Annex II to JIC (51) 81, 6 September. 1951.

[153] Ibid.

[154] For one such example see TNA: CAB 21/3937 Secretary of the Joint Intelligence Committee to Sir Norman Brook, 8 June, 1953.

[155] A point that equally applied to the British. See, Andrew, *MI5*, p. 135.

[156] Cook, *Forging the Alliance*, p. 197.

[157] Kaplan, *NATO*, p. 67.

[158] See note 17.

[159] Andrew & Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, p. 460.

[160] Ibid. p. 461.