

INTERNATIONAL CRISES IN A SUB-NUCLEAR CONTEXT

An Analysis of Crisis Management During the
Crises of July 1914, Suez 1956 and the Falklands
1982.

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in the

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International Crises in a Sub-Nuclear Context: An Analysis of Crisis Management During the Crises of July 1914, Suez 1956 and the Falklands 1982.

This thesis examines theories of crisis management as they relate to 'sub-nuclear' crises, a term which refers to a class of international crisis occurring in an international system dominated by two superpowers, but not taking place directly between the United States and the Soviet Union.

It is stressed that the approach adopted is not 'scientific' as are, for example, laboratory simulations and game theory analyses. However, the first two chapters do examine the nature of the theoretical models which underpin existing notions of crisis and crisis management and also formulate a definition of the term 'crisis' which is used in this thesis. Such a definition rests primarily on the perceptions of decision-makers themselves rather than on 'objective' systemic evaluations. Hence, the main unit of analysis is the decision-making group responsible for the formulation of policy.

Yet, it is argued that a number of conceptual problems arise from an apparent predisposition, in the literature concerned with crisis and crisis management, towards the generation of theories which are designed primarily to explain the development of superpower crises. What is suggested is that a way of resolving these difficulties would be to try and reconcile the concept of 'crisis management' with that of the rationality of a use of 'limited war' as a means of ameliorating perceived political problems.

It is noted that the purposes for which limited war was waged prior to the advent of nuclear weapons resemble the assumptions which govern behaviour observed during sub-nuclear crises. However, that there are significant factors which distinguish 'sub-nuclear crisis management' from both conventional crisis management and pre-nuclear era limited war strategies.

The hypotheses of the first two chapters are tested in an analysis of the three historical crises which form the subject matter of the case studies: the crisis preceding the first world war, the Suez crisis of 1956 and the Falklands conflict of 1982.

The concluding chapter of this study assesses the theory and practice of 'sub-nuclear crisis management' in the nuclear age.

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Of course, I remain responsible for the content herein.

DEDICATED WITH LOVE TO MY MOTHER

INTRODUCTION.

This thesis examines theories of crisis management as they relate to 'sub-nuclear' crises, a term which refers to a class of international crisis occurring in an international system dominated by two superpowers, but not taking place directly between the United States and the Soviet Union. The study of such crises is useful because it provides an insight into the manner in which states other than the superpowers attempted to manage international crises during a distinct historical period.

As is illustrated by the recent Gulf War and the problems in the former Yugoslavia, decision-makers in the post-cold war period continue to be faced with the task of managing international crises. Thus, it is suggested that concepts of crisis and crisis management derived from the analysis of sub-nuclear crises may also have relevance in trying to understand modes of state behaviour in the contemporary international system.

The purpose of the first two chapters is to present the themes and concerns which are to be discussed in the rest of the thesis. The structure of these chapters is described below.

The rationale for a "focused comparison"¹ of the decision-making groups responsible for managing three historical crises, which form the subject matter of the case studies, is discussed in the first section of Chapter One. It is stressed that this approach is not considered to be 'scientific' as are, for example, laboratory simulations and

1. A.L. George and R. Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974). See Chapter 4, especially pp. 95-97.

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game theory analyses. Yet, much of the ensuing discussion will be concerned with examining the nature of the theoretical models which underpin this study. In the analysis of crisis and crisis management, a priori models of the 'political universe' which all analysts inevitably utilise have some extremely important methodological and substantive implications. An analogy which springs to mind is that of a person observing an abstract three dimensional sculpture. At any given time and position the observer sees one side of the object. Viewed from another perspective, the sculpture looks different and communicates a different message. Much the same is true in the study of crisis. The questions one asks are determined by the theoretical position initially adopted. When the subject is approached in terms of a different set of assumptions, new questions have to be asked and new answers sought. Therefore, this section does not attempt to undermine the methods adopted by other students of crisis because it is not concerned with arguments about 'right' or 'wrong' approaches to the study of international crisis. It merely serves as an exposition of the theoretical models which will be utilised in the analysis of a complex and fascinating field of interest.

The second part of Chapter One concentrates on the formulation of a definition of the term 'crisis' which will be of use in the rest of this thesis. Essentially, this definition rests primarily on the perceptions of decision-makers themselves rather than on 'objective' systemic evaluations.

Section Three discusses what is meant by 'crisis management'. It outlines the method which will be employed in the assessment of crisis management techniques and formulates, at the risk of oversimplification, what may be considered a 'conventional' definition of the term.

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The final section of the first chapter goes on to show that such definitions are subject to some severe limitations when they are applied to sub-nuclear crises. It will be argued that a number of conceptual problems arise from an apparent predisposition, in the literature concerned with crisis and crisis management, to formulate theories which are designed primarily to explain the development of superpower crises. What is then suggested is that a way of resolving these difficulties would be to try and reconcile the concept of 'crisis management' with that of 'limited war'.

Chapter Two is devoted to an attempt at such reconciliation. A main theme of the first section of this chapter is that attitudes towards limited warfare, prior to the advent of nuclear weapons, bears a resemblance to assumptions which govern behaviour observed during sub-nuclear crises. However, it is also argued that there are significant factors which distinguish 'sub-nuclear crisis management' from both conventional crisis management and pre-nuclear era limited war strategies. The unique demands which are placed on decision-makers in the management of sub-nuclear crisis is discussed in the second part of Chapter Two. This is followed by a brief final section which broadly describes the perspective to be adopted in the rest of the thesis.

Chapter Three takes the form of a case study of the crisis preceding the first world war.¹ The Suez crisis of 1956 is the subject of Chapter Four and the Falklands

1. For the sake of brevity, this crisis is also referred to as the crisis of July 1914.

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conflict of 1982 is analysed in Chapter Five. The purpose of incorporating these case studies is to test the validity of the hypotheses introduced in the preceding chapters.

Chapter Six concludes this study. It assesses the observations of previous chapters and discusses the theory and practice of 'sub-nuclear crisis management' in the nuclear age.

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Empiricism and Theory.

Analysts have employed a variety of techniques in the study of crisis and crisis management, of which content analysis, game theories and simulation analyses readily come to mind. However, in the preface to The Politics of Force, Oran Young identifies a weakness in conceptualisation without sufficient reference to empirical evidence. He perceives:

..a substantial need to formulate a new relationship between conceptual and empirical work based on a more systematic approach to empirical analysis and the development of a two-way flow between conceptualization and empirical analysis.¹

Phil Williams also tends to veer away from an overly 'scientific' approach. He notes that:

In so far as it may be possible to to discern or discover 'rules' of behaviour, for example, they should not be regarded as rules from which no deviation is possible.....Not only is this a valid objection against regarding crisis management as an exact science in which it is possible to formulate immutable rules for statesmen to follow unquestioningly, but it is also an indispensable antidote to any temptation to conceptualise and rationalise the actions of decision-makers to a greater extent than is warranted...any attempt to develop a detailed blueprint for crisis management or to reduce it to a set of simple axioms and preordained rules can only prove sterile.²

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1. Oran Young, The Politics of Force. Bargaining During International Crises (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968). Preface p. VIII.
 2. Phil Williams, Crisis Management. Confrontation and Diplomacy in the Nuclear Age (London: Martin Robertson and Co. Ltd., 1976). p. 9.

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For Coral Bell:

...the results of a piece of crisis management can only be observed in history, not established by theory. That does not mean that no theory is possible: only that theory is the stepchild of the activity, rather than its parent.¹

In a footnote she hardens her stance:

Many writers concerned with crisis or conflict would take a more optimistic view than this about the sources from which theories and generalizations might be derived, holding that model-building techniques of various sorts are, or will be, important founts of theory about the real world of international politics. The author does not share this view, and would maintain that techniques like game theory, content analysis, operational research, systems analysis, and simulation have already been in use for long enough to have demonstrated their limitations as well as their occasional (and marginal) usefulness.²

Accepting the validity of such observations does not mean that the following discussion is devoid of method. In the analysis of particular historical case studies it has been found useful to adopt a similar approach to that utilised by George and Smoke in Deterrence in American Foreign Policy. They state:

The method of 'focused comparison' as we would like to call it...examines multiple case and establishes its results, in the main, by making comparisons among them...it proceeds by asking a limited number of

1. Coral Bell, The Conventions of Crisis. A Study in Diplomatic Management (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).
p. 6.

2. Ibid.

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questions or testing a limited number of hypotheses, all of which are usually closely related to each other...

But the focused comparison method also ...examines each case in some depth; for all practical purposes, therefore, only a small number of cases can be studied. All cases are approached by asking identical questions. This standardized set of questions or hypotheses insures the comparability of results...

With this method the investigator is able, of course, to uncover similarities among cases that suggest possible generalisations; but he is also able to investigate the differences among cases in a systematic manner.¹

Although the case studies examined in this thesis are smaller in number than in George and Smoke's study, it is suggested that the benefits of using this perspective will still be apparent. The analysis will pose six interrelated questions² to help determine the value and relevance of three historical case studies: the crisis of July 1914, the Suez crisis of 1956 and the Falklands conflict of 1982.

Yet, one should constantly be aware that even the most empirically oriented analyst cannot avoid approaching this particular area of study without also applying fundamental, preexisting models, both of the structure of the international system and of the process of decision-making. Graham Allison observes:

..that bundles of...related assumptions constitute basic frames of reference or conceptual models in terms of which analysts and ordinary laymen ask and answer the questions: What happened? Why did it happen?

1. George and Smoke, op. cit. pp. 95-96.

2. These questions are listed in Chapter Two, Section Three.

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What will happen? Assumptions like these are central to the activities of explanation and prediction.¹

In order to clarify the rationale which governs the formulation of these six questions and the selection of each case study, it is necessary to now turn to a discussion of the nature of some of the assumptions which underpin this analysis.

Models of Decision-Making.

Allison formulates three paradigms of governmental decision-making: the Rational Actor Model, an Organisational Process Paradigm and a Governmental Politics Model. When discussing the first of these models, he states:

In spite of considerable differences in emphasis and focus, most contemporary analysts (as well as laymen) proceed predominantly - albeit most often implicitly - in terms of this framework when trying to explain international events. Indeed, the assumption that occurrences in foreign affairs are the acts of nations has been so fundamental to thinking about such problems that the underlying model has rarely been recognized...²

It is worthwhile to briefly discuss the basic underlying concepts of this unitary agent model. Allison identifies four stages in the process of rational action:

1. Graham Allison, Essence of Decision. Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971).
p. 4.

2. Ibid. p. 13.

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(i) Goals and Objectives.

The goals of the rational agent are translated into utilities, or payoffs. The consequences of any action the agent takes in response to a problem will be evaluated in terms of this payoff function. Allison notes: "...at a minimum, the agent must be able to rank in order of preference each possible set of consequences that might result from a particular action."¹

(ii) Alternatives.

Allison states that:

The rational agent must choose among a set of alternatives displayed before him in a particular situation...The alternative courses of action may include more than a simple act, but the specification of a course of action must be sufficiently precise to differentiate it from other alternatives.²

(iii) Consequences.

A set of consequences are assigned to each alternative, the accuracy of which are dependent on the extent of the agent's knowledge.

(iv) Choice.

Rational choice is made by selecting the alternative having consequences which result in the highest payoff.

1. Allison, op. cit. p. 29.

2. Ibid. pp. 29-30.

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Allison observes that this theory is so pervasive because of its analytical power. By reducing the decision-making process to a set of a few basic assumptions the analyst can 'explain' how and why particular actions took place. But, he goes on to note:

...the power of the theory of rational action derives from its rigor - rigor purchased at the price of assumptions too heroic for many empirically oriented social scientists. The rigorous model of rational action maintains that rational choice consists of value-maximising adaptation within the context of a given payoff function, fixed alternatives, and consequences that are known.¹

This requires that the rational, purposive, unitary agent functions with the aid of a god-like 'comprehensive rationality'. Phil Williams comments that, despite certain advantages:

...'Comprehensive rationality' is so obviously unattainable that even its utility as a prescriptive model must be called into question. It ignores the inherent limitations upon policy-makers who have neither the mental and physical capacities, nor the time and information necessary to explore the whole universe of possible alternatives.²

Given these problems, many analysts turn towards concepts of limited, or bounded, rationality. According to such notions, problems will be 'factored'; that is, problems are broken down into independent or quasi-independent parts and dealt with one by one. Value-maximising is replaced by 'satisficing'. Instead of seeking an alternative the consequences of which have the highest payoff, decision-

1. Allison, op. cit. p. 31.

2. Williams, op. cit. p. 61.

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makers opt for solutions which suffice and satisfy in the short-term. Thus, the search for alternatives is severely limited and ceases once a 'good enough' option is found. In order to minimise uncertainty, bounded rationality emphasises the selection of short-run feedback choices. While this formulation of the term may be a more accurate description of the 'reality' of the process of rational decision-making during crisis, Williams argues that:

..actual decision-making tends to be a mixture of rational, logical inferences on the one hand, and non-rational pressures and influences on the other.

It seems feasible, therefore, to suggest that in reality there are varying degrees of rationality: it is not a matter of all or nothing, but of more or less.¹

Graham Allison constructs two other paradigms in an attempt to further the understanding of the process of governmental decision-making. He states:

For some purposes, governmental behaviour can be usefully summarized as action chosen by a unitary, rational decisionmaker: centrally controlled, completely informed, and value maximising. But this simplification must not be allowed to conceal the fact that a government consists of a conglomerate of semi-feudal, loosely allied organizations, each with a substantial life of its own.²

Governmental action, in this sense, is regarded as being the "outputs" of organisations functioning according to established patterns of behaviour. However, the complexity

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 65.

2. Allison, op. cit. p. 67.

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of foreign policy means that rarely does a particular problem fall exclusively into the domain of any one organisation. Therefore, leaders of Governments partially coordinate these semi-feudal organisations and so influence, but not fully control, organisational behaviour. Allison continues:

At any given time, a government consists of existing organizations, each with a fixed set of standard operating procedures and programs. The behavior of these organisations - and consequently of the government - relevant to an issue in any particular instance is, therefore, determined primarily by routines established in these organizations prior to that instance.¹

In organisational terms, the learning process will be gradual. Modifications to standard procedures are likely to be incremental and dramatic organisational change occurs only in response to disasters. This model emphasises the functioning of bounded rationality, since organisational behaviour is characterised in terms of satisficing, factoring, uncertainty avoidance, search and repertoires.

Allison stresses that such observations must be regarded not as norms but as "tendencies" because the internal structures of these organisations are not homogenous. Yet, despite these qualifications, Allison maintains that:

..the characterization of government action as organizational output differs sharply from Model I. Attempts to understand problems of foreign affairs in terms of this frame of reference should produce quite different explanations.²

1. Allison. op. cit. p. 68.

2. Ibid.

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Allison goes on to formulate a third paradigm of governmental action:

Model II's grasp of government action as organizational output, partially coordinated by a unified group of leaders, balances the classical model's efforts to understand government behaviour as choices of a unitary decisionmaker. But the fascination of Model II analysis should not be allowed to blur a further level of investigation. The 'leaders' who sit on top of organizations are not a monolithic group. Rather, each individual in this group is, in his own right, a player in a central, competitive game.¹

From this perspective, policy is neither a rational purposive choice nor an organisational output. It is a political resultant of bargaining amongst players:

..players who focus not on a single strategic issue but on many diverse intra-national problems as well; players who act in terms of no consistent set of strategic objectives but rather according to various conceptions of national, organizational, and personal goals; players who make government decisions not by a single, rational choice but by the pulling and hauling that is politics.²

An analogy which Allison uses to illustrate this concept of government action is that of moves on a chess board:

...what moves the chess pieces is not simply the reasons that support a course of action, or the routines of organizations that enact

1. Allison, op. cit. p. 144.

2. Ibid.

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an alternative, but the power and skill of proponents and opponents of the action in question.¹

The Governmental Politics model has been found useful in the analysis of the following case studies because discussion focuses, to a large extent, on the workings of the decision-making groups which were formed to manage each particular crisis. Far from being the product of a rational agent, it will be demonstrated that policy selection was greatly influenced by the political bargaining games which took place within these units.

As well as being subject to political pressures within the group, statesmen must also function within a set of restraints imposed by the domestic context in which they find themselves. Attention must be paid to the way in which decision-makers responded to, and attempted to manipulate, domestic political conditions.

Furthermore, the national unit which statesmen govern is itself a member of the international system. Decision-makers must also reconcile policy selection with perceived systemic requirements. Glenn Snyder, for example, is of the opinion that systemic variables such as the number of major actors, the distribution of power, alliances, alignments and the level of military technology, "are not just passive factors to be sketched in as 'background'; they may very strongly

1. Allison, op. cit. p. 145.

However, one must be careful not to take this analogy too far. Not only do chess pieces move according to pre-established routines, but the selection of particular moves is made by an individual player which, it might be argued, corresponds more to a unitary model of decision-making.

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influence the nature, course and outcome of the crisis.."1
However, it is necessary to constantly bear in mind that, for both observer and participant, the cognition of such variables is not the product of a perfectly 'objective' perspective. One's understanding and evaluation of the way a particular crisis developed is profoundly influenced by a priori assumptions of the structure of the international system.

Systemic Models.

In reference to the cold war period, there are two commonly accepted characteristics of 'the international system' which are of interest in this study of sub-nuclear crisis and crisis management. These characteristics are: the dominant role of the bipolar, superpower subsystem and the advent of massive nuclear capabilities (both in terms of destructive power and rapid projection).

In their study of deterrence theory, George and Smoke make the following observation:

What deterrence as a concept had always lacked prior to at least the interwar decades and did not clearly possess until the coming of atomic weapons was a sharp, radical distinction between the power to hurt and the power to defeat military forces - between punishment and victory (or, as some writers have put it, between 'punishment' and 'denial')...But with the advent of strategic bombing it became possible to hurt an enemy grievously before (or without) destroying his military capability. With the opening up of

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1. Glenn Snyder, "Crisis Bargaining." Chapter 10 in: C.F. Hermann (ed)., International Crises. Insights from Behavioral Research (New York: The Free Press, 1972). p. 220.

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this possibility, the threat to hurt him could be separated - in fact and therefore in theory - from the threat to engage and destroy his forces. Deterrence was conceived in its modern sense when it became possible to threaten vast damage and pain while leaving opposing military forces intact.¹

George and Smoke also note that this development occurred about the same time as the international system came to be regarded as being bipolar in structure:

...deterrence as a concept became separated from the art of diplomacy when the capacity to inflict pain on the opponent became separable from the capacity to defeat his military forces or to defend one's territory. Somewhat coincidentally, this separation of the concept of deterrence also took place more or less simultaneously with the emergence of bipolar conflict for enormous stakes. In the postwar period the convergence of several new factors - the capability of vast destruction, the deterrent potential of the threat of such destruction, and the emergence of bipolarity - strongly encouraged the development of a theory and practice of deterrence that focused upon extremely polarized situations and problems. The fact that the logic and requirements of deterrence proved to be the simplest in such cases further enhanced this tendency.²

The prevalence of such a view of the international system is not restricted to those analysts interested in general deterrence theory. This perspective also appears to have been accepted by authors interested in crisis and crisis management, which may be an explanation for the fact that in the literature concerned with this subject there exists a

1. George and Smoke, op. cit. p. 21.

2. Ibid. pp. 32-33.

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predisposition towards the study of nuclear-armed, superpower crises. When studying crisis behaviour, analysts (including the writer) are inevitably influenced by previously formulated, if implicit, models of the structure of the international system. Consequently, they address themselves to particular themes and concerns. Superpower crises are fascinating because they occurred within the dominant subsystem of the recent post-war international order and tended to starkly exhibit the tensions which are inherent in general deterrence theory. Thus, superpower crises are an exciting area of study for the analyst wishing to understand the workings of the 'cold war' international political system.

George and Smoke go on to observe that:

...deterrence at the level of limited war and below is usually much more complex and involves additional variables, many of them difficult to measure. The intellectual history of deterrence has thus consisted, naturally enough, of identifying and elucidating the logic of the simplest case first...¹

This comment can be applied equally as well to the study of crisis as to deterrence theory. Indeed, it is apparent that theories of deterrence and those of crisis management are closely interwoven. They share a very similar set of assumptions about the nature of conflict in the nuclear age. But, when studying events such as the Suez crisis and the Falklands conflict, it is argued that existing notions of crisis and crisis management are of only limited value precisely because of this orientation towards the understanding and explanation of superpower crisis.

1. George and Smoke, op. cit. p. 49.

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Neither the Suez crisis nor the Falklands conflict occurred directly between the superpowers and the threat of mutual mass destruction was not perceived as being a realistic possibility. The assumptions underpinning both deterrence theory and theories of crisis management are, therefore, less valid when applied to crises which occurred in the 'nuclear age' but were not primarily nuclear weapons oriented. Much of this thesis will be devoted to illustrating the limited explanatory power that existing notions of crisis management have in the analysis of sub-nuclear crises.

Conclusions.

The approach which has been adopted in this study is not 'scientific' in that it does not, for example, rely on techniques such as laboratory simulation or game theory. However, it does uniformly apply a particular set of questions to a body of empirical evidence in an attempt to further the understanding of sub-nuclear crisis and crisis management. In this sense, on a much smaller scale, it resembles George and Smoke's method of 'focused comparison'.

No matter how committed to empiricism one might be, it is impossible to approach a particular area of study without also applying a set of preexisting assumptions and objectives. In this thesis, the models which will be utilised are a mix of both decision-making and systemic paradigms.

In terms of the decision-making process, the central unit of analysis will be the specialist group which was responsible for the management of each of the historical crises analysed in the case studies. The perceived systemic environment is also regarded as being of vital influence. It

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is here, perhaps, that a priori assumptions have had the most impact on both the study and practice of crisis management in the cold war era. The view that the international system during this period was dominated by the bipolar, nuclear-armed superpower relationship has resulted in the formulation of a body of theory which does not adequately 'explain' modes of behaviour observed when decision-makers are faced by sub-nuclear crises.

In order to facilitate further exploration of these concerns, the discussion will now turn towards a preliminary definition of what is meant by the terms 'crisis' and 'crisis management.'

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A Definition of Crisis.

Crisis is a very broad term and is used to describe a variety of conditions, from the innermost workings of the human mind to global problems. Within the field of international relations there has been extensive discussion as to its precise meaning. For Phil Williams: "...an international crisis is a confrontation of two or more states, usually occupying a short time period, in which the probability of an outbreak of war between the participants is perceived to increase significantly."¹ Coral Bell states:

To my mind the essence of true crisis in any given relationship is that the conflicts within it rise to a level which threatens to transform the nature of the relationship. In adversary crisis, the potential transformation is from peace to war;...The concept is of normal strain rising to the level of breaking strain.²

For both authors, 'international crisis' is a phrase used to describe a phase of tension between two or more states which arises from the perception that an outbreak of hostilities is imminent. Such a view is shared by Glenn Snyder:

We begin, conventionally, with a definition. For our present purpose an international crisis may be defined simply as a situation of severe conflict between adversary governments generated by the attempt of one side to change the status quo which is resisted by the other giving rise to the perception of a significant probability of war but not actual war. Other characteristics often present are surprise, shortness of decision time, unpredictability and fears of

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 25.

2. Bell, op. cit. p. 9.

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losing control of events. But the element of a perceived real possibility of war is central and essential and the common denominator of all crises..¹

Snyder goes on to note: "As a corollary of this, it is useful to conceive of a crisis as a 'transition zone' between peace and war. Almost all wars are preceded by a crisis of some sort although, of course, not all crises eventuate in war."²

Although these overlapping definitions do capture much of the essence of the notion of international crisis, the manner in which they have been formulated gives rise to two areas of concern. First, the boundaries of Snyder's 'transition zone' appear to be somewhat unclear. One gets the impression of a situation in which peace merges into crisis which merges into war. This might well be an accurate observation about the nature of crisis and so, to some extent, negates the need for assigning hard and fast dates marking the 'beginning' and 'end' of such events. In the following case studies, precisely such an exercise has been undertaken simply because assigning temporal limits to a particular historical crisis makes critical discussion of that period easier. But, it is to be constantly kept in mind that this approach is not intended to mask the fact that the boundaries between periods of crisis and non-crisis are not clearcut.

The second question involves the use of the term 'war' in the above definitions. To what exactly is this referring? Is it to be assumed that 'war' actually means all-out war

1. Snyder, op. cit. p. 218.

2. Ibid.

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between the superpowers? In The Politics of Force, Oran Young attempts to sidestep the problem. He states:

..a crisis in international politics is a process of interaction occurring at higher levels of perceived intensity than the ordinary flow of events and characterized by: a sharp break from the ordinary flow of politics; shortness of duration; a rise in the perceived prospects that violence will break out; and significant implications for the stability of some system or subsystem...in international politics.¹

By using the term 'violence' instead of 'war' in the definition of crisis, Young implies that the imminence of full-scale military conflict is not the only source of threat. An increased probability of limited hostilities may also generate such perceptions.

However, despite Young's careful wording, one does get the impression that analysts have not adequately explored the relationship between crisis and war. Glenn Snyder observes:

War in its most extreme forms is the pure, ultimate form of coercion - the raw, physical clash of armed forces - in a context where the pursuit of objectives in conflict greatly predominates over the pursuit of common interests..²

He goes on to note that during crisis: "Coercion becomes coercion by potential or threatened force, or perhaps sometimes by small doses of actual force, usually administered for political effect rather than for physical

1. Young, op. cit. p. 15.

2. Snyder, op. cit. p. 218.

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compulsion."¹ Yet this attempt to distinguish war from the physically coercive aspects of crisis bargaining is not fully supported by historical evidence. Is it really possible to term the Anglo-French expedition to Egypt in 1956, or the despatch of the Task Force in 1982, as examples of "small doses of actual force" designed mainly for effect?

This problem is a crucial one. It arises because the definitions mentioned so far have been formulated primarily in reference to superpower crises. The structure of this type of crisis is characterised by an upper threshold of massive thermonuclear conflagration, therefore, making theoretical distinctions between 'small doses of force', such as a blockade or an airlift, and 'war' is valid. However, when these definitions are applied to other types of crisis, such as the Suez crisis and the Falklands conflict, the distinction between war and crisis coercion is far less convincing.

A solution to this problem might be to regard a crisis in international relations in terms of the perceptions of decision-makers and not attempt to make systemic evaluations about the imminence of hostilities. C.F. Hermann, for example, defines a crisis as having the following three characteristics:

..we stipulate a definition which delimits a class of situations and contains some of the properties frequently associated with crisis. Specifically, a crisis is a situation that (1) threatens high-priority goals of the decision-making unit, (2) restricts the amount of time available for response before

1. Snyder, op. cit. p. 218.

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the decision is transformed, and (3) surprises the members of the decision-making by its occurrence. Threat, time, and surprise all have been cited as traits of crises, although until recently, all three properties have not been combined.¹

This tripartite structure is central to the definition of crisis in international relations as it is used in this thesis. Thus, it is worthwhile to go on to discuss each pillar of this 'triad' separately.

(i) The Nature of Threat.

The source of threat to the high-priority goals of the decision-making unit is external, for example, such perceptions may arise as a result of the actions of another member of the international community. This does not necessarily mean that the threat to the high-priority goals of the unit in question arises from the imminence of war. Indeed, it is not to be assumed that the high-priority goals of the decision-making unit are even foreign policy goals. Threat perceptions may very well be the product of largely domestic political concerns. In this sense, the possibility that a state may resort to force to uphold its interests need not correspond with strategic calculations.

The perceived threat during the Cuban missile crisis was primarily military in that the actions of the Soviet Union constituted a serious destabilisation of the balance of terror, since the strategic security of the United States was widely regarded as being at risk. In contrast, Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company in July 1956 was a

1. Hermann, op. cit. p. 13.

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superbly executed fait accompli. Although there were strategic implications to this move, threat perceptions in the minds of decision-makers in London were not solely the product of such concerns. In 1956, threat was largely inspired by political and economic considerations. By formulating this concept in terms of the high-priority goals of the decision-making unit, one may apply the term 'crisis' both to confrontations as stark as Cuba 1962 and to periods of a far more ambiguous nature, such as Suez 1956.

This perspective poses a variety of questions. In the following case studies there will be a discussion as to the nature of the threat which was perceived by the decision-makers involved. The aims of such a discussion will be to ascertain which high-priority goals were threatened and how did these evaluations relate to policy selection?

(ii) The Impact of Limited Time.

It has already been observed that assigning strict temporal boundaries marking the 'beginning' and 'end' of a crisis is to oversimplify what in reality may be a complex and indeterminate period. However, in the following case studies this has been done because identifying a distinct timespan makes critical discussion easier. Furthermore, the duration of such periods is an important factor when assessing whether policy selection may be termed 'successful' crisis management.

Williams is of the opinion that:

The presence of a high threat, the element of surprise and - perhaps most important - the limited time available for decision-making combine with the rise in tension that is an

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inevitable concomitant of adversary crises to ensure that the members of the decision-making units in the participating states are subject to considerable stress.¹

During crises, policy-makers might be faced not only with consecutive challenges, but with simultaneous problems which require different and possibly conflicting solutions. These factors cumulatively increase the level of tension. Extended exposure to intense stress is bound to fuel feelings of anxiety and tiredness, both as a psychological reaction and as a physiological response to lack of sleep.

Trying to accurately measure stress levels is a difficult task. Williams accepts that discussion about the impact of stress is severely restricted by the crude understanding of the term itself. He states:

There are formidable problems, for example, in trying to discover whether one set of decision-makers is subjected to a greater or lesser degree of stress than another. Not only are there likely to be significant variations from one crisis to another, but even in the same crisis policy-makers in the opposing states might confront rather different levels of anxiety during different phases of the encounter.²

Research into this factor is also hampered by secrecy. Observation of the decision-making groups in action is not possible and governmental documents relating to particular crises are subject to a high degree of censorship. Instead,

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 73.

2. Ibid.

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information has to be gathered from sources such as: interviews, biographies and articles, all of which are retrospective and contain a fair degree of authorial bias.

Despite these problems it is reasonable to accept that, when faced with a crisis, policy-makers are faced with a highly tense situation during which crucial decisions have to be made relatively quickly. This decision-making environment is a far cry from that required by models of comprehensive rationality. Williams notes:

A crucial aspect of decision-making is the search for, and subsequent assessment of, alternative courses of action. Yet this is also the aspect that is perhaps most vulnerable to the effects of stress in general and to time pressures in particular.¹

If an immediate response is called for, it is less likely that thorough assessment of alternatives and extensive evaluation of consequences will occur. Instead, the pressure of limited time will have the effect of pushing decision-makers towards a reliance on short-run feedback options, standard operating procedures and 'satisficing'.

Phil Williams goes on to observe that:

A number of participants in the group that formulated the response to the Soviet installation of missiles in Cuba have suggested that, had there been less time available, a less judicious and restrained policy than the blockade would have emerged.²

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 74.

2. Ibid. pp. 74-75.

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Had these same decision-makers been subjected to a much longer period of acute stress, would they still have selected the blockade option? Thankfully, this question can only ever be hypothetical, but Williams suggests:

..there is probably an upper time limit within which decision-makers can operate efficiently. Beyond this limit they cease to function effectively: cool detached officials who are able to calculate the logical implications of each move will be replaced by tired, emotional men liable to make rash, unwise and perhaps irrevocable choices. Actions and policies that would normally be eschewed may be advocated by decision-makers whose critical and analytical abilities have degenerated temporarily as a result of sustained exposure to stress.¹

Limited time is regarded as restricting the process of rational decision-making and increasing stress on decision-makers. However, there also appears to be an upper time limit beyond which effective control of a crisis becomes increasingly difficult.

Consequently, it does not seem unreasonable to state that crisis, and the opportunity to engage in effective crisis management, occurs within a timespan of the order of hours, days and weeks, rather than months or years. The following case studies attempt to establish temporal boundaries in order to ascertain whether these particular historical events merit the label 'crisis' and to facilitate critical discussion thereafter. A further concern will be to analyse the effect that the duration of the crisis had on the process of decision and eventual option selection.

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 76.

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(iii) The Element of Surprise.

The first question to be asked in relation to this criterion is whether decision-makers were caught unawares by the initial unfolding of events? A lack of prediction implies that decision-makers are unprepared and no organisational routines are in place ready to ameliorate the situation. It is important to establish whether prediction failure occurred because the element of surprise has implications for the way these affairs were subsequently managed. For example, decision-makers may be 'blamed' for failing to foresee the crisis and a decision-making unit engaged in crisis is already faced with a complex enough range of tasks without also having to field damaging attacks upon its competence to govern. The following case studies will analyse whether governmental error contributed to prediction failure and were such mistakes a source of domestic criticism?

A further area of interest will be determining if the advent of a surprising situation facilitated the adoption of novel and innovative procedures? Or, when faced with difficult problems, did decision-makers merely fall back on preexisting policy options? These questions are closely linked with perceptions of threat in crisis. It might be argued that, during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the risk of escalation to all-out nuclear war functioned as a pressure to search for a range of alternatives that would demonstrate commitment without a recourse to direct hostilities. However, in reference to the Falklands conflict of 1982, perceptions of threat were not concerned with the proximity of nuclear conflagration. Such a war was never a realistic possibility between Britain and Argentina. Thus,

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when faced with a novel situation, decision-makers in 1982 were not under the same kind of pressure to search for a range of alternative solutions that did not involve a resort to arms.

Conclusions.

In order to merit the application of the term 'international crisis', a particular historical period must satisfy the requirements of the three criteria. At all times it is important to remember that evaluations of threat, time and surprise rest primarily on the perceptions of the contemporary decision-makers themselves. In the ensuing discussion there are occasions when 'observer' evaluations of these criteria are made, but these do not determine whether one may term a particular historical event a crisis. That is governed by the perceptions, so far as it is possible to grasp them, of the actors involved.

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Techniques of Crisis Management.

In a study of the Korean war, the Suez crisis and the Falklands conflict, Colin Seymour-Ure makes the following observation:

It is taken as axiomatic that large deliberative bodies cannot run wars, nor anything else that needs quick decisions and firm control...For the predominantly executive purpose of managing a crisis leading to war, a much smaller group is better.¹

Phil Williams states that: "Past behaviour appears to support the thesis that problem-solving is facilitated by a group of between twelve and fifteen policy-makers..."² Certainly, in terms of the way British and American decision-makers have attempted to manage crises, there is ample evidence to show that policy-making tends to be delegated to a small, ad hoc decision-making group. Yet, such groups should not be regarded as being homogenous. Their internal structure is made up of varied patterns of inner coalitions and hierarchies which are themselves engaged in political bargaining games. Consequently, the success with which one particular member or coalition plays such games has important implications for eventual policy selection. When analysing techniques of crisis management, the ensuing discussion will centre on the workings of these groups and is split into a number of areas.

1. Colin Seymour-Ure, "British 'War Cabinets' In Limited Wars: Korea, Suez and the Falklands." A discussion paper from the European Consortium for Political Research Workshops. Freiburg-Im-Breisgau, March 1983. Published by the University of Kent at Canterbury. p. 2.

2. Williams, op. Cit. p. 71.

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The Structure of the Decision-Making Group.

(i) Membership.

In assessing the structure of these groups attention will be given to the rationale for the inclusion of particular members. Although, to a large degree, personnel selection will be determined by an individual's ministerial relevance or specialist expertise, this is by no means always the case. It will be argued that certain members were included in the group for political reasons, for example, to strengthen one inner coalition against another and hence facilitate the adoption of particular policies. The relative status of the members of these groups, coupled with the way the 'specialists' related to the 'politicians', is another area of interest. A further concern is fluidity of membership, since a completely static group, or conversely, an excessively fluid membership may well serve to reinforce tendencies towards the adoption of certain policies and the discarding of others. The way in which membership and membership fluidity was manipulated is, therefore, a useful indication as to the nature of the internal bargaining games which took place.

(ii) The Relationship of the Ad Hoc Group to Formal Institutions.

The formation of a specialist decision-making group is regarded as a function of the peculiar conditions which crisis imposes. However, in terms of the British political system, the formal decision-making body remains the full Cabinet. Attention will be paid to the nature of the powers which the smaller group wielded, for example, which policies

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were implemented without a recourse to Cabinet approval and why were others formally presented for discussion and endorsement?

(iii) The Manipulation of Information.

It is observed that statesmen, when they are engaged in crisis management, try to establish tacit 'rules' of engagement. Such rules limit the potential scope of conflict with the opponent and communicate the message, to other actors in the international arena, that restraint is being exercised. In order to further increase the probability of a successful outcome, decision-makers also promote an image of the state as being a 'victim' of aggression. The effectiveness of such strategies is largely dependent on competent signalling and skilful diplomacy. Thus, an area of interest in this study is the manner in which decision-makers attempted to accomplish these aims.¹

The extent to which decision-makers manipulate the spread of information to Cabinet, Parliament and the public is also a major concern. In theory, the full Cabinet can choose to ignore the ad hoc group's policy recommendations, but in practice this is rarely (if ever) done. It is suggested that genuine debate on policy selection does not take place in the larger forum because the flow of

1. A full survey of such crisis management strategies in the 'international arena' is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this study. Instead, the discussion concentrates on the U.N. and, in particular, the diplomatic interaction with the senior alliance partner.

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information from the specialist group is restricted. Parliament is kept at an even further distance from the centre of decision-making.

Policy-makers are also motivated by the need to maintain domestic public support for their policies (and so suppress dissent). A special area of concern is the way in which statesmen attempted to manipulate media access to information during the crisis.

The evenness with which information was distributed between the members of the specialist group itself is also of interest. Given the responsibility which such a group has for the managing of particular crises, one might assume that information would be evenly distributed amongst its members in order to facilitate as wide a discussion as possible. However, this is not always necessarily the case. If one accepts that the internal structures of these groups are not homogenous, but actually contain inner coalitions and hierarchies, it becomes obvious that controlling the spread of information is a powerful political strategy in securing the adoption of preferred policies. Furthermore, as will be most clearly illustrated when analysing the crisis preceding the first world war, prior restrictions on the even distribution of information can severely limit the room for manoeuvre during crisis.

An analysis which concentrates on the structure of the central decision-making unit and the manner in which it manipulates information should yield some very interesting insights into the reasons for the adoption of certain policies and the rejection of others. But, it must be noted that this perspective does not, in itself, determine whether policy selection is regarded as 'successful' crisis

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management. A small, specialist decision-making group subjected to high stress, short decision-time, surprise, threat, structural biases and imperfect information might just as easily opt for all-out war, or total capitulation, as select a 'crisis management' option. What then is the essence of this notion which distinguishes it from other styles of policy generation? At the risk of a certain amount of oversimplification, the core assumptions in the concept are as follows.

A Preliminary Definition of Crisis Management.

In his study of crisis management, Phil Williams makes the following observation of the Munich crisis of 1938:

After his meeting with the German leader at Berchtesgaden, Chamberlain realised that Hitler would take the risk of war, and even go to war if necessary, to achieve his ambitions. Thus when he went to Munich the sole objective of the British Prime Minister was to save the peace. The integrity of Czechoslovakia, if not a hindrance, was only of secondary importance and could be sacrificed if necessary.¹

Here is illustrated two very different approaches to the handling of a perceived crisis. When discussing Hitler's behaviour, Williams notes:

If crisis management is interpreted as merely 'winning' a crisis, then Munich was undoubtedly a superb example of crisis management on Hitler's part. Where this interpretation falls down is that the Fuhrer was intent on attaining his objectives

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 40.

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regardless, and it was almost immaterial to him whether this was to be achieved merely by the threat of force or by its actual use.¹

A preoccupation with value maximising regardless of potential cost is not equated with Williams' understanding of the term crisis management since, "the basic prerequisite for an attempt at crisis management is the assumption on the part of all the antagonists that they have more to lose than they have to gain by going to war against one another."²

In the analysis of Chamberlain's strategy, Williams states:

Appeasement differs from crisis management in that it involves 'peace at any price' or surrender to aggression. It puts peace above all other interests and regards any peaceful solution as preferable to war. Appeasement is the result of unilateral pacifism, whereas crisis management is the result of perceptions on the part of all the antagonists that they have an overriding common interest in making an agreement short of war, while at the same time recognising that there is room to bargain and manoeuvre over the exact terms and nature of that agreement.³

This is a central assumption in the concept of crisis management. Statesmen engaged in crisis management are motivated by a "duality of purpose"⁴; although engaged in a competitive relationship, they mutually recognise the

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 41.

2. Ibid. p. 54.

3. Ibid. pp. 41-42.

4. See Chapter 4 in Ibid. Particularly Section II.

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dangers in allowing a crisis to spill over into war. Thus, a style of behaviour has evolved which is characterised by a peculiar mix of conflict and common interest.

Significantly, in providing an illustration of the difference between the concept of crisis management and those of appeasement or value maximising, Williams has referred to a crisis which occurred well before the advent of nuclear weapons. Throughout the literature devoted to the study of international crisis, there appears to be a widespread distinction made between the way nuclear age crises and pre-nuclear crises were managed. Coral Bell, for example, is of the opinion that the structure of the 'cold war' international system had a major impact on crisis behaviour. She observes:

There are periods in history when individual crises remain distinct, like isolated boulders rolling down a mountainside...There are other periods when the boulders, or the crises, not only come thick and fast, but seem as it were, to repercuss off each other until the whole mountainside, or the whole society of states, begins to crumble. These episodes are what I mean by crisis slides, and I would argue that there was one in the period 1936-9, and an earlier one in the period 1906-14.¹

Bell continues:

To establish the reasons why such a crisis slide has not yet eventuated in the postwar period, we must look at the way in which the decision-makers of the dominant powers make their choices during crises. There is one overwhelming factor of difference as against

1. Bell, op. cit. p. 14.

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the two earlier periods, consciousness of which must suffuse all discussion of the later period: the existence of nuclear weapons.¹

Phil Williams suggests:

...at the very time their conflicts become acute, the common interests of the superpowers become most obvious and pervasive. This may well be one of the most novel and distinctive characteristics of contemporary crises, and something that is unique to the nuclear age. Whereas prenuclear crises could be regarded as almost pure competition, in which the interests and motives of the adversaries overlapped to a minor extent if at all, in nuclear crises the motives of each antagonist are likely to be far more mixed.²

The perceived risk of potential escalation to nuclear conflagration meant that a recourse to war became mutually recognised as an irrational method of resolving superpower disputes. The stakes involved were just too great. Yet, the two superpowers were engaged in a competitive relationship and crises continued to occur. Therefore, when faced with superpower crisis, statesmen had to uphold national interest while simultaneously attempting to minimise the risk of escalation to all-out war. Hence, in the vocabulary of political analysis, these modes of behaviour are termed 'crisis management'. However, there are a number of problems associated with this formulation of the concept.

1. Bell. op. cit. pp. 18-19.

2. Williams, op. cit. p. 53.

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Problems in definition.

The explanatory power of theories of crisis and crisis management is observed to be seriously limited when applied to crises which occurred in the cold war era, but which did not take place directly between the two superpowers. Discussion now focuses on these problems and a possible solution is also suggested.

Perhaps the best way to start would be to briefly restate the definitions of crisis and crisis management as they are understood in relation to the period since 1945. In short, these terms are as follows:

A 'conventional' definition of crisis management might be described as the search for, and implementation of, policy designed to ameliorate a perceived crisis. In pursuit of this goal statesmen must tread a fine line. Although engaged in competition, decision-makers must not allow a crisis to escalate uncontrollably because they mutually recognise that they have more to lose than they have to gain by going to war with each other. Therefore, crisis management is a process characterised by a curious "duality of purpose."¹

The definition of crisis is regarded as resting on participant perceptions of three criteria: threat, time and surprise. The combination of these elements creates a situation of high stress and tension in which the probability of the outbreak of violence is increased.

1. Williams, op. cit. See Chapter 4, Section II.

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Throughout the literature devoted to this area of study, one sees the application of the term to a very wide spectrum of disparate events, such as: Agadir 1911, July 1914, Munich 1938, the Berlin crises of 1948, 1958 and 1961, Suez 1956, Cuba 1962 and the Falklands conflict of 1982.

As they stand, these definitions appear to be incompatible. The case studies demonstrate that it is quite reasonable to regard the Suez and Falklands affairs as meriting the label 'crisis', but difficulties begin to arise, when examining the way these crises were managed. Can one equate policy generation during the Falklands conflict with the 'crisis management' of the Cuban missile crisis? According to some analysts it would appear not, for example, G.M. Dillon in The Falklands, Politics and War, states: "it would be misleading to classify the actions of the War Cabinet, which was quickly formed to manage Britain's response to Argentina's invasion, as an exercise in crisis management.." ¹ Given the structure of the crisis and the absence of certain crucial preconditions, Dillon is of the opinion that the aim of policy-makers was to manage a "rite of passage" ² from peace to war. Yet, Dillon then goes on to observe of the War Cabinet's response to the April invasion:

It approximated neither to the rational ideal of crisis management nor the conspiracy thesis of war-mongering. Instead, a classic socio-political drama was in progress.

The profound ambiguity of the invasion crisis was revealed most of all in the War

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1. G.M. Dillon, The Falklands, Politics and War (London: Macmillan, 1989).
pp. 90-91.
 2. Ibid. p. 101.

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Cabinet's pursuit of a peaceful settlement while it simultaneously tried to maximise the Task Force's prospect of a military victory...What appeared to be logically inconsistent, however, was nonetheless both understandable and necessary. Suspended between peace and war Britain's crisis diplomacy served many functions including an attempt to avert armed conflict.¹

Clearly, Dillon feels that 'crisis management' is not an adequate description of the style of policy-making during the Falklands crisis. After all, the conflict created by the Argentine invasion was eventually settled by means of warfare. It was not resolved by a blockade or a negotiated solution, both of which are options akin to crisis management. But, one also detects a sense of unease in Dillon's account of policy. Just as he does not use the term crisis management, neither does he feel free to use the phrase 'war-mongering'. The reason for this lies in the fact that, despite eventually being resolved by force, certain aspects of the Falklands conflict bore a distinct resemblance to concepts which reside in conventional crisis management theory. For example, the manner in which the ODSA² was formed, its structure and the dualism of its policy-making appears to be closer to an attempt at crisis management than it does to out-and-out war management strategy. Although events such as the Falklands and Suez affairs are regarded as deserving of the term crisis, they do not neatly fit into existing notions of crisis management. As a result, there exists a need to reconcile the conceptual incompatibility inherent in the formulation of these terms.

1. Dillon, op. cit. pp. 101-102.

2. Abbreviation of Overseas Defence Committee (South Atlantic).

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Adherence to Existing Concepts.

One method of resolving these difficulties might be to accept the rigours of 'conventional' definitions. In terms of the Falklands conflict and the Suez affair, this means that decision-makers did not engage in effective crisis management in the nuclear age.

Also, one cannot really compare the nature of strategic threat perceptions in 1956 or 1982 with that of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, since the latter occupied a completely different order of magnitude. It might be argued, therefore, that only those situations which elicited perceptions of the threat of mass destruction deserve to be referred to as crises. An implication of this view is that the term has, to date, been far too loosely applied. Even July 1914 does not qualify as being a crisis on these grounds (and the decision-makers of the period cannot be said to have 'failed' in their attempt at crisis management) because the scale of the war to come was not predicted, which means there was no widely perceived threat of mass destruction prior to its outbreak.

Strict application of the definitions also creates the problem of subsequent classification of policy generation during the Suez affair and Falklands conflict. If the use of the term crisis management is to be denied, how are they to be described? Is a new set of definitions required to characterise a process of policy selection which is similar to crisis management, but in fact falls somewhere between the conventional definition and war-mongering? This approach is undesirable as it would merely introduce distinctions without significant differences. The only alternative appears to be to let this grey area stand and acknowledge the extreme

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limitation of existing theories. As does Phil Williams when he observes: "the conflict in the South Atlantic demonstrated very clearly the limited applicability of notions and practices of crisis management developed by the two super-powers."¹

Thus, in reference to the study of sub-nuclear crises, it is suggested that strict adherence to existing concepts of crisis and crisis management leads to something of a theoretical impasse. However, another possible avenue would be to expand the scope of the terms beyond their conventional meaning. This route of inquiry is difficult but the potential benefits may be worth the costs.

A Way of Expanding the Meaning of Crisis Management.

The term 'crisis' poses less of a problem than that of 'crisis management'. C.F. Hermann's criteria are formulated in terms of participant perceptions which results in a definition broad enough to encompass a whole variety of events including, for example, both the Cuban missile crisis and the Suez affair. Given this emphasis, the present formulation requires little modification.

A potential problem, which has already been briefly mentioned, concerns the nature of threat perceptions. Many authors have stressed that threat during crisis should be regarded as arising from perceptions of the imminence of the outbreak of hostilities. Such periods are, therefore,

1. Phil Williams, "Miscalculation, crisis management and the Falklands conflict" an article in: The World Today (April, 1983). p. 149.

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situated at the border of peaceful and warlike interstate relations. Yet, in reference to superpower confrontations, perceived threat is of a different order of magnitude to that of sub-nuclear crises (or indeed any other type of crisis one would care to mention). In the light of this observation it must be noted that, when discussing this criterion, threat is regarded as: "Threat to the high-priority goals of the decision-making unit.." ¹ The emphasis does not rest on observer evaluations of strategic threat to the continued existence of the state, but on the perceptions of the decision-makers themselves. In this sense, a source of perceived threat could just as easily be the political aspirations of individual statesmen as it could the survival of the Western world.

Rather than residing in the use of the term crisis, the main difficulty appears to lie in the 'conventional' meaning of the term crisis management and it is this concept which requires the most modification. It has already been observed that Dillon's refusal to classify the ODSA as being engaged in crisis management has, rather than clarifying the nature of the way the affair was handled, instead led to further serious conceptual problems. It might be argued that in the attempt to avoid similar difficulties other authors have refused to enter this particular theoretical arena. For example, Phil Williams' rationale for the inclusion and, importantly, the exclusion of particular crises from his study of crisis management is as follows:

Another kind of difficulty arises in deciding which crises are to be examined and which omitted. On what criteria is such a choice to

1. Hermann, op. cit. p. 13.

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be based?...As a guiding principle....it takes into account those confrontations that appeared to involve a distinct possibility that large-scale military hostilities might erupt - either between the United States and the Soviet Union or between the United States and Communist China...

It could be objected, of course, that this selection omits situations like the conflict over Iran in 1946, the Suez episode of 1956 or the United States intervention in the Middle East in 1958...

...In relation to the Suez intervention the United States and the Soviet Union were not even on opposing sides.¹

Williams' criteria for inclusion in his study are entirely logical, but surely only in terms of the study of superpower crisis. Is it really acceptable to ignore crises such as Suez 1956 simply because they were not primarily superpower confrontations? Although it might be simpler to exclude anomalous events such the Suez crisis and Falklands conflict, does this not also run the risk of creating a body of theory which may be limited or inflexible?

Coral Bell uses another technique to deal with the Suez crisis. She suggests that:

International crises are of two main sorts, which I propose to call adversary and intramural. Adversary crises are, obviously, between powers regarding themselves as adversaries. Intramural crises are crises within the walls of an alliance, or the power sphere of one of the dominant powers, or a regional organisation..

.....Many episodes of diplomatic history, such as the Suez adventure, are complex enough to seem assignable to the category either of intramural crisis or of adversary crisis. In such cases I propose to classify them according to which set of dangers

1. Williams, op. cit. pp. 5-7.

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appears to have been the most real and important. Thus I would class Suez primarily as an intramural crisis, because the dangers to the functioning of the Western alliance were greater than the dangers to the general peace.¹

While it is reasonable to accept that the "intramural" elements of the Suez affair played a vital role in its development, to ignore the 'adversarial' aspects of the crisis runs the risk both of oversimplifying the event itself and of restricting subsequent generalisations about the nature of crisis management. Coral Bell appears to have neatly categorised the Suez crisis because, as she herself states:

I shall be preoccupied mostly with crises affecting the powers of the central nuclear balance, because the policy choices of their decision-makers have consequences of such gravity. The crises of local balances and of regional organisations are often of great interest, but they do not usually carry such a freight of potential danger to the rest of the world. The military consequences of such crises, if any, mostly remain local, unless the dominant powers become involved.²

Bell is by no means alone in her preoccupation. Throughout the literature concerned with crisis management, crises such as Suez 1956 and the Falklands 1982 have been more or less relegated because they did not take place within this "central nuclear balance". Although the advent of the 'cold war' spawned a unique and interesting class of superpower crisis, many other crises continued to occur during this period. To date, the fashion in which sub-nuclear

1. Bell, op. cit. pp. 7-10.

2. Ibid. p. 7.

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crises were managed has not been sufficiently examined, despite the fact that such crises were a far more common and repetitive occurrence than has been implied.

One does not mean to underrate the work of the authors mentioned. The need for close and extensive study of periods such as Cuban missile crisis of 1962 is understandable because of the gravity of such situations. They have a great sense of drama and are a fascinating subject for the analyst. However, the apparent disposition to concentrate on nuclear-armed, superpower confrontations has had a restrictive effect on the formulation of theory designed to explain crisis and crisis management.

Extensive study only really commenced in earnest during the 1960's. At this time, the nuclear-armed superpower relationship was punctuated by a series of easily definable crises which starkly illuminated the tensions and dynamics of the broader relationship, and hence attracted the attention of theorists in international relations. The fashion in which these conflicts were resolved thus gave rise to the concept of 'crisis management.' In other words, the style of policy-making which was observed during such crises inherited the mantle of 'conventionality'. It is argued that crisis management became synonymous with 'superpower crisis management'.

Yet it is not unreasonable to suggest that the way superpower crises were managed was influenced by the structural characteristics of that particular subsystem. The awesome threat of nuclear war forced superpower decision-makers to evolve a unique style of management governed by a peculiar mix of conflict and common interest. Therefore, crisis management is regarded as being different from both appeasement and, most importantly, a resort to arms.

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Events such as the Falklands conflict demonstrate that this theoretical distinction does not accurately describe the 'reality' of sub-nuclear crisis management. The problem arises from the view that the advent of nuclear weapons has severed the relationship between political ends and military means. This assumption is central to the 'conventional' concept of crisis management. In order to generate a theory of sub-nuclear crisis management the relationship between politics and force must be reassessed. Crisis management has to be expanded to incorporate the idea that a use of force is a rational policy option and not a complete failure of management. How this complex and difficult task might be attempted will be discussed in the following chapter.

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Some Parallels Between Crisis Management and Limited War.

During the 1950's and early 1960's, a sudden growth in interest was shown towards theories of limited war. Such ideas were perceived to be a route via which analysts could reintroduce the concept of the 'rational' use of force into American strategic thinking. They identified a need to do so because the dominant strategic rationale to date emphasised a reliance on creating a massive nuclear deterrent defence posture. This strategic bias had created severe imbalances in American military capabilities. Robert Osgood notes:

The ability to support national interests and aims with war and the threat of war under a variety of contingencies has always been an essential condition of successful diplomacy, but the United States loses that ability if its principal adversary is free to use force and the threat of force with impunity, while the United States, being unwilling to run the risk of total war and unable to counter Communist incursions by means short of total war, is reduced to mere bluff and protest.¹

Analysts such as Osgood were attempting to formulate a coherent strategic rationale in the middle ground between "bluff and protest" and "total war". In the light of this observation, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the evolution of limited war theory in the nuclear age was a response to the same concerns which gave rise to the notion of crisis management. Both were products of the imperative to reconcile the existence of massive nuclear forces with political strategy. Many authors have even noted that the two bodies of theory are somewhat interrelated. For example,

1. Robert Osgood, Limited War. The Challenge to American Strategy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957).
p. 7.

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Glenn Snyder observes: "In fact, much of the theory of limited war - ideas such as limited objectives, restrained application of means, symbolic action, escalation, and tacit bargaining - has close parallels in the developing theory of crisis behavior."¹

Indeed, there seems to be a general consensus of opinion that, as Glenn Snyder states:

Nuclear weapons have raised the costs of war by several orders of magnitude, although the behavioral effects of this are limited by the inability of the human mind to fully comprehend the horrors of nuclear war. Nevertheless, statesmen probably fear war a good deal more now than in the nineteenth century, and this induces a considerable measure of caution into crisis behavior. It has raised the threshold of challenge or provocation above which statesmen feel themselves willing or bound to fight.²

However, despite initial agreement on the impact of an upper threshold of mutual mass destruction, divisions begin to emerge over how warfare below this point should be regarded. Is war still a rational instrument of policy? Or is warfare now irrational because of the risk of uncontrolled escalation to total nuclear conflict? Different answers to these questions are provided by the advocates of limited war theory and those analysts interested in crisis management

1. Snyder, op. cit. p. 220.

2. Ibid.

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Limited War in the Nuclear Age.

In On Escalation, Herman Kahn suggests:

Probably the most important, and certainly the most discussed, threshold in war today is that of nuclear use...

To recognize that it is so widely accepted does not, of course, necessarily imply that it is in the interests of the United States, or any other nation, either to enhance or to weaken this threshold...the concern here is with preparations and policies for the unlikely crises in which the question might be reopened.¹

Although the threshold between the use and non-use of nuclear weapons is distinctive, Kahn argues that there are several thresholds beyond this point. He observes:

In treating the coercive aspects of international relations, this study analyzes a spectrum of international crises and a selection of mechanisms for dealing with them. It will focus attention on the use and misuse of escalation tactics and strategies, rather than consider sustained conflicts at any given level. The study will not deal with all aspects of escalation, but will focus on the escalation ladder-metaphor,[sic] a methodological device that provides a convenient list of the many options facing the strategist in a two-sided confrontation and that facilitates the examination of the growth and retardation of crises. Most important of all, the ladder indicates that there are many relatively continuous paths between a low-level crisis and an all-out war, none of which are necessarily or inexorably to be followed.²

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1. Herman Kahn, On Escalation. Metaphors and Scenarios (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965).
p. 94.
 2. Ibid. p. 37.

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This "escalation ladder" is a forty four stage description of the various thresholds which Kahn identifies between what he terms "Ostensible Crisis" and "Spasm or Insensate War."¹ An implication of Kahn's argument appears to be that a limited use of nuclear weapons does not necessarily mean that uncontrollable escalation to full-scale nuclear war will automatically follow.

Robert Osgood also advances the argument that nuclear weapons are not incompatible with the formulation of limited war strategy. He initially defines limited war as:

..one in which the belligerents restrict the purposes for which they fight to concrete, well-defined objectives that do not demand the utmost military effort of which the belligerents are capable and that can be accommodated in a negotiated settlement. Generally speaking, a limited war actively involves only two (or very few) major belligerents in the fighting. The battle is confined to a local geographical area and directed against selected targets...²

Such a definition is not dissimilar to that formulated by Clausewitz himself, over a hundred years earlier, but Osgood is attempting to address a problem which Clausewitz could not have foreseen; the impact of modern weapons technology. Osgood is of the opinion that: "The essential requirement in adapting weapons to a strategy of limited war is that we have a flexible weapons system and flexible military strategies and tactics capable of supporting limited objectives under a wide variety of conditions."³ He goes on to state:

1. Kahn, op. cit. p. 39.

2. Osgood, op. cit. pp. 1-2.

3. Ibid. p. 249.

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In considering the requirements of a flexible military establishment, the role of tactical nuclear weapons looms large; for the adaptation of these weapons to limited war is probably the most crucial problem of weapons and targets limitation that American strategists face today.¹

Osgood continues with a theoretical discussion of how this might be achieved. For example, he speculates that low-yield nuclear weapons might be used against strictly defined, localised military targets. In conclusion, Osgood argues:

...tactical nuclear weapons, especially the low-yield battlefield weapons, can play a decisive role..by giving the United States an adequate capacity for limited war at a tolerable cost....

But regardless of the composition of our military establishment, it is essential that American strategists plan the use of tactical nuclear weapons in accordance with a policy of graduated deterrence, based upon the distinction between tactical and strategic targets. Above all, these weapons must be employed within a carefully defined political context of limited objectives, susceptible to the process of diplomatic accommodation.²

Essentially, authors such as Kahn and Osgood are of the opinion that the advent of nuclear weapons has not necessarily made war an irrational tool of state policy. Both, in their own ways, seek to establish the view that such weapons could be used in a limited and controllable manner. Therefore, even the outbreak of hostilities which involves nuclear weapons should not be regarded as the first step in an uncontrollable escalation towards total nuclear conflagration.

1. Osgood, op. cit. p. 251.

2. Ibid. pp. 258-259.

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Crisis Management Versus Limited War Theory.

A fundamental criticism which other analysts have made of concepts of limited war is that such theory is purely speculative. For example, Phil Williams observes:

Because there have been no limited wars directly involving both superpowers...debates about the course such wars might take or about their possible outcomes tend to be shrouded in speculation. It could hardly be otherwise. Yet it is not inconceivable that empirical analyses of crisis management can be of assistance by instilling a greater degree of realism into discussions that have sometimes been as impractical as they have been imaginative.¹

A further problem lies in the assumptions which are made about the rationality of the decision-making process. Each decision-making unit is supposed to have comprehensive knowledge of the other's intentions. It is assumed that decision-makers mutually recognise a whole host of qualitative and quantitative distinctions such as: geographical limitations, targeting strategies and the 'tactical' use of nuclear weapons. Given such requirements, Phil Williams states:

..it is difficult to be sanguine about the ability of the superpowers to fight a nuclear war in a controlled and regulated manner. Limited strategic exchanges presume cool, sober, detached policy-makers able to make fine discriminating calculations about the level of damage being incurred and inflicted. The experience of crisis management, however, suggests that this presumption may be totally unwarranted.²

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 197.

2. Ibid. p. 198.

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During superpower crises, decision-makers are faced with huge pressures. In a short period of time and with imperfect information they have to decide upon courses of action the consequences of which, should things go wrong, could well be fatal for the nation and themselves. Under such conditions they are not likely to test 'theories' of limited nuclear warfare. Instead, statesmen will search for policies that demonstrate commitment, but do not signal the initiation of hostilities. Quite simply, the risks of losing control over events are just too great. Thus, in practice, superpower behaviour during crisis has been one of 'crisis management' rather than the initiation of limited military action.

How are these conflicting theoretical positions to be resolved? First, it must be noted that limited war theory, despite the criticisms which have been levelled against it, does have a certain power. For example, Osgood observes that the United States:

...has sought to contain the Communist sphere of power by three principal methods: (a) deterring aggression with America's capacity to retaliate against the center of aggression by the means of total war; (b) meeting force with counterforce in a local, limited action; and (c) building situations of strength through economic, technical, and military aid.

The United States applied all three methods in Europe. In the Greek civil war and during the Berlin blockade it successfully employed local, limited action.¹

The behaviour of American decision-makers during the Berlin crises has been regarded as exercises in crisis management, not as examples of the use of limited force. Indeed, the

1. Osgood, op. cit. p. 150.

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Cuban missile crisis is frequently cited as illustration of an instance of effective superpower crisis management. Yet, is it not also possible to describe the blockade in 1962 as a limited military action? Clearly, there are some problems in perspective. Whether one regards the 1962 'quarantine' of Cuba as an exercise in crisis management or a use of limited force appears to depend on the theoretical approach one adopts.

Although elements of nuclear age limited war theory are attractive, it is argued that decision-makers attempted to avoid the use of direct military force in times of superpower crisis. It is not unreasonable to state that there is a qualitative difference between an action such as blockade and that of the firing of shots in anger. The historical record supports the view that the overwhelming fear of the loss of control over events, because of the perceived probability that a military clash would quickly escalate into all-out war, was a moderating factor in superpower crisis decision-making.

This does not mean that theories of limited war are of no use at all in the study of crisis. Phil Williams states that:

Violent interactions could be enormously damaging to attempts to maintain control over events, irrespective of the way they begin. As well as the adoption of alternatives that do not cross the threshold between coercion and violence, therefore, successful crisis management requires efforts to prevent the inadvertent or accidental outbreak of violence.¹

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 113.

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But, such an observation appears to have relevance only when thinking about crises which occurred directly between the superpowers. The overriding imperative to prevent the outbreak of violence (and hence the validity of applying judgements about 'successful' crisis management) arises from the awful possibility that uncontrolled nuclear war may erupt if events are mishandled. Many crises which took place in the cold war period were not structurally defined in terms of this threshold.

In the analysis of sub-nuclear crisis management, a blanket dismissal of the utility of limited force is unwise. The distinction which has been made between crisis management and a resort to arms rests on the existence of an upper (nuclear) threshold. However, during the Falklands conflict, for example, nuclear war was never a realistic option. Neither was conventional total war for a variety of reasons. First, the limited resources of the opposing states functioned to restrict the scale of conflict. Second, the disputed territory was a geographically isolated and distinct area. Third, decision-makers in Britain took active steps to control the scale of hostilities. Concepts of limited war and total war, even in the nuclear age, have not become as blurred as some authors seem to think. In sub-nuclear crisis, a resort to arms is not necessarily a sign of irrationality or policy failure and it does not signal the end of political direction. If we are to usefully apply theories of crisis behaviour to crises other than those which took place between the superpowers then the concept of crisis management has to incorporate the notion of a resort to arms. In the absence of a perceived upper threshold of mass destruction, limited military action reemerges as a rational, controllable option for decision-makers faced with crisis.

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It has been accepted that theories of limited war, fashioned in the 1950's and 1960's, contain some weaknesses which restricts their usefulness in the attempt to reconcile 'crisis management' with a use of force. However, there exists a substantial body of limited war theory which was not formulated in response to the needs of American strategy in the cold war era. Examination of attitudes towards limited war occurring prior to the advent of nuclear weapons might prove to be instructive.

Limited War in the Pre-Nuclear Age.

Surprisingly, Glenn Snyder appears to envisage a concept of limited war solely as it may occur within the superpower subsystem. He suggests:

In the nineteenth century there was not much room for manoeuvre between verbal communication and full-scale violence. But, since World War II, states have been extremely inventive in developing a varied ensemble of physical manoeuvres and 'uses of force short of war'¹ to communicate and test resolve in crises.

I cannot agree with Snyder on this point. Limited war was an integral part of the balance of power system in the nineteenth century. George and Smoke, for example, list a variety of techniques which states employed to test and communicate resolve, while moderating the potential scale of conflict. One of which is as follows:

..the dispatching of naval forces to trouble spots became during the nineteenth century a highly conventional, even slightly

1. Snyder, op. cit. p. 220.

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ritualized, codebook for the demonstration of a commitment..It was effective in this role not only because it carried a threat of escalation...but also because the limited forces involved could often effect a local military operation under the umbrella of the overall stable deterrent balance...¹

Indeed, George and Smoke state:

The balance-of-power system, adopted generally in the eighteenth century and reaching its height in the nineteenth, had a number of features in common with what today would be called 'deterrence' systems. In particular, the core concept of the balance-of-power system was that the military capabilities available to any combination of powers should be sufficiently balanced so that full-scale conflict would appear profitless.²

They go on to note that coercive bargaining in the form of ritualistic troop movements and diplomatic gestures was a highly refined art:

It is slightly surprising, in retrospect, how many of the concepts of contemporary deterrence theory - commitments, and how to reinforce or escape them, signaling, comparatively fine calculations of opposing forces, the fear of escalation and the use of that fear as a deterrent, the mutual assumption of rationality - were implicitly part of the diplomatic practice of the balance-of-power system, without being articulated in this kind of terminology.³

1. George and Smoke, op. cit. p. 16.

2. Ibid. pp. 13-14.

3. George and Smoke, op. cit. p. 14.

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Furthermore, this period was punctuated by a whole series of wars which cannot be described as 'full-scale violence'. For example, Osgood states:

..in their extent and duration and their immediate impact upon the material, social, and economic foundations of society these wars were significantly restricted in comparison to the French Revolutionary and the Napoleonic Wars that preceded them. The Crimean War (1853-56), the Austro-Sardinian War (1859), the war of Prussia and Austria against Denmark (1864), the Austro-Prussian War (1866), the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), the Russo-Turkish War (1877), the Spanish-American War (1898), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the Boer War (1899-1902), and the Balkan Wars (1912-13) - all these except the last involved major European powers; yet they were all relatively short and local contests...which caused little disruption of society and which were settled by an accommodation of limited objectives.¹

In the hundred years prior to 1914, war had been controllable. Thus, it is suggested that just as the nuclear war threshold has governed the expectations and crisis behaviour of superpower decision-makers, so did beliefs about the limited nature of war govern the crisis behaviour of statesmen in the balance of power era. When faced with crisis, pre-nuclear age policy-makers were not averse to using force as an option to ameliorate their perceived problems. As Phil Williams suggests: "It was quite conceivable in the years up to 1914 for the leaders of a state to envisage calmly the prospect of going to war in pursuit of national ambitions. War was still regarded as a rational instrument of state policy..."²

1. Osgood, op. cit. pp. 64-65.

2. Williams, op. cit. p. 33.

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Another feature of pre-nuclear crisis behaviour which merits attention is the use of diplomacy. According to Osgood:

The problem of limited war is not just a problem of military strategy but is, more broadly, the problem of combining military power with diplomacy and with the economic and psychological instruments of power within a coherent national strategy...¹

In the multipolar balance of power system, the security of the state was dependent on reliable alliances. Snyder observes: "Consequently, the preservation of alliances was an important stake in crises, and the support or non-support of allies was a crucial determinant of their outcomes."²

Bargaining options were restricted by these concerns, since the needs of allies required serious consideration and policy had to be coordinated. Snyder states:

The shift to bipolarity after World War II considerably reduced in crises the role of alliance relations between the superpowers. The United States and the Soviet Union, being much less dependent on allies for their power in crises and war, had a much wider range and greater flexibility in their choice of bargaining tactics.³

But, this observation does not extend to lesser powers engaged in sub-nuclear crisis. The junior position of such states creates a need for the support of allies and vigorous diplomacy is a method of securing such aims. In this sense,

1. Osgood, op. cit. p. 7.

2. Snyder, op. cit. p. 220.

3. Ibid. pp. 220-221.

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sub-nuclear crisis management more closely resembles behaviour observed in the pre-nuclear era than it does policy generation during superpower crises.

Conclusions.

There are a variety of features of the pre-nuclear era which have relevance in the study of sub-nuclear crisis. The use of limited force was not an irrational policy decision. It was regarded as a valid option for the management of interstate disputes. Indeed, military force was utilised in quite a sophisticated manner by decision-makers of the period. Furthermore, the relationship between force and diplomacy was a very close one. The multipolar nature of the system and the reliance on alliances for security meant that diplomacy did not end with the initiation of hostilities, it continued to play a vital role.

With the notable exception of the superpower relationship, it is argued that such 'pre-nuclear' expectations have not ceased to function in the nuclear age. In fact, they still govern the attitudes and expectations of decision-makers involved in the management of sub-nuclear crises. However, there are also some vital differences which distinguish the management of sub-nuclear crisis from both pre-nuclear age, and superpower, crisis management.

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Sub-Nuclear Crisis Management.

'Crisis management' is founded upon a set of assumptions derived from the study of the superpower relationship. The crises which occur in this particular subsystem have two structural characteristics:

- (i) They are nuclear weapons oriented. The upper threshold, should the crisis escalate uncontrollably, would be all-out nuclear destruction.
- (ii) They are bipolar and the powerful main protagonists can exert a high degree of control over their respective alliance blocs.

These structural peculiarities have influenced the formulation of the concept of crisis management. Therefore, it is characterised by:

- (i) A clear dissociation from the use of force. Direct hostilities between the protagonists is not equated with crisis management. The risk of moving from crisis to total war is so great that even a limited use of force represents a failure of crisis management.
- (ii) Comparatively little requirement of support from allies and a consequent lack of need for diplomacy except as it occurs between the superpowers.

But, sub-nuclear crises are structurally unlike superpower crises:

- (i) They are not nuclear weapons oriented. There is no upper threshold of mutual mass destruction.

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- (ii) They are not necessarily bipolar. The fact that they are 'sub-nuclear' implies that the protagonists are not dominant world powers. They cannot exert a high degree of control over their respective allies. Thus, the pattern of alliance relationships reemerges as a crucial factor.

If it is accepted that that these structural factors differentiate sub-nuclear crisis from superpower crisis, one must also acknowledge that existing notions of crisis management can only be of limited value in the explanation of the fashion in which sub-nuclear crises are managed. When assessing techniques of crisis management in terms of the relative 'success' or 'failure' of policy, a shift in emphasis is required.

Non-violent techniques.

The implication of the argument so far should not be taken to mean that statesmen are singlemindedly engaged in limited war-mongering. The search for peaceful solutions to crises in the nuclear age remains a crucial element of sub-nuclear crisis management. A preoccupation with value maximising is not equated with crisis management and attention must be paid to whether decision-makers sought for alternative options or attempted to reach a compromise solution via diplomatic means.

However, one must also pay attention to diplomacy as it is used in conjunction with a recourse to military action. Crisis diplomacy itself is regarded as fulfilling a dual purpose. Not only is it a method of arriving at peaceful solutions, it is also a means whereby decision-makers attempt to secure international support for a resort to arms.

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For a superpower faced with crisis, diplomacy was regarded as being of lesser importance. Although, in part, this may be due to the limited time which was available to decision-makers, it is mainly a product of the high degree of control that the superpowers exerted over the junior partners in their respective alliance systems. In terms of sub-nuclear crisis, diplomacy reemerges as a vital management technique. In particular, the junior partner must seek the acquiescence of its senior ally and this requirement is one of the most important distinguishing characteristics of sub-nuclear crisis as opposed to pre-nuclear or superpower crisis. For example, during the Suez crisis, acquiescence was not obtained due to both a perceived threat to the central deterrent balance and outrage at apparent British duplicity. Consequently, decision-makers in the United States exerted pressure on their British counterparts to halt the military operation. It is suggested that the disastrous outcome of the affair was largely caused by a failure in effective diplomacy. British decision-makers did not transmit clear diplomatic signals of intent nor did they convince their allies that the stability of the deterrent balance was not under attack. In comparison, it appears that by 1982 such lessons had been learned. The Thatcher administration undertook a vigorous and extensive diplomatic campaign in regard to the United States in order to ensure that the transmission of signals of intent was clear and unambiguous. This is regarded as a factor which contributed to the securing of U.S. support during the Falklands conflict.

A relative lack of power also forces decision-makers to seek the aid of allies besides that of the senior partner. Thus, sub-nuclear crisis diplomacy aims at securing wide international support for a resort to arms. Moral and

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material support, in the form of physical aid or sanctions, from the wider audience can greatly increase decision-makers' chances of success.

In this sense, diplomacy resembles that of the pre-nuclear age in that, prior to engaging in hostilities, decision-makers would attempt to simultaneously strengthen their own position and weaken their opponents by forging a network of alliances. George and Smoke observe that: "eighteenth- and [sic] nineteenth-century diplomatic and military history provides the politico-military analyst with a rich lode of empirical material for the expansion and refinement of contemporary concepts."¹ Although George and Smoke are primarily interested in the study of deterrence theory in general, their observations, once again, are of relevance for crisis management in particular. While there are key differences, many links between sub-nuclear crisis and pre-nuclear crisis repeatedly emerge. In order to pursue this theme further, one of the following case studies will, therefore, be of a crisis which occurred in the pre-nuclear era: the crisis preceding World War One.

Another observation which should be considered is that crisis diplomacy does not end with the commencement of hostilities. During superpower crisis, the unambiguous dominance of the protagonists over their respective alliance systems, and their massive power projection capabilities, lessened the need to seek support in the international arena. Realignment for the alliance partners in a stark, superpower dominated, international system was not a realistic option. The superpowers may have made loud and vigorous protests in international forums such as the U.N., but the support or

1. George and Smoke, op. cit. p. 14.

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opposition of other members was not materially vital. Such is not the case for small or medium powers engaged in sub-nuclear crisis. Throughout the Falklands affair, for example, British diplomats undertook a vigorous campaign to ensure continuing support in the international arena for the (military) crisis management option which had been implemented. They did so because of the recognition that the maintenance of international support would have a crucial bearing on the success of the military venture. Therefore, the notion of 'diplomatic crisis' is not regarded as something separate from sub-nuclear crisis management. Diplomatic activity does not miraculously end when limited violence begins except, perhaps, directly between the opponents. Even when military operations have been initiated, crucial diplomatic tasks remain. Once international support has been established it must be maintained. Consequently, when assessing techniques of crisis management, one must examine the diplomatic methods which decision-makers employed to try and achieve these objectives.

Limited force in Crisis Management.

A central argument in this study is that a use of limited force should be incorporated into the concept of crisis management. However, there are certain difficulties involved in relating the two ideas. It appears that 'conventional' formulations of crisis management were fashioned in response to events such as Cuba 1962 and the successive Berlin crises. Thus, some fundamental assumptions which underpin the superpower relationship have been absorbed into theories of crisis and crisis management. For authors such as Bell, Williams and Snyder, the advent of nuclear weapons has made war between the superpowers an irrational policy option. The means with which war may be waged have

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become so great that no rational political ends could be satisfied by their use. But, superpower decision-makers are engaged in a competitive relationship and are periodically faced with unforeseen, highly threatening problems which require rapid policy decisions. During such periods, statesmen are faced with a dilemma. They must seek to uphold national interests while at the same time ensuring that events do not spill over into uncontrollable nuclear war. Hence 'crisis management' is born.

However, other authors have analysed the very same conflicts which gave rise to concepts of crisis management and have characterised them as instances in which limited force was effectively used. Indeed, does it seem unreasonable to describe the Cuban blockade in 1962 as a 'forceful' measure? Is it not an example of a local and limited action? This interpretation depends to a great extent on the theoretical perspective one adopts. Certainly, in terms of the logic of this particular study, it would be much more convenient to wholeheartedly accept that the Cuban blockade is an example of a limited military action. One could, therefore, come to the conclusion that crisis management and the management of limited force are one and the same.

Yet, the criticisms which advocates of crisis management have made of theories of limited war are powerful enough to prevent this from happening. There is ample historical evidence to suggest that, faced with superpower crises, decision-makers resisted pressures for the selection of policies which can only be described as ones of limited war. For example, in reference to the Cuban missile crisis, Graham Allison observes:

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To the Joint Chiefs of Staff the issue was clear....The security of the United States required a massive air strike leading to an invasion and overthrow of Castro. Convinced that this time the President had no real alternative, the Joint Chiefs advocated their option with an abandon that amazed other members of the ExCom...The President was not convinced. As he recalled on the day the crisis ended, 'An invasion would have been a mistake - a wrong use of our power. But the military are mad. They wanted to do this. It's lucky for us that we have McNamara over there.'...¹

The risks inherent in the escalation of the crisis functioned as a moderating influence on the behaviour of policy-makers. Although the blockade can be considered a forceful measure, it must surely be regarded as qualitatively different from that of attacking the Cuban mainland.

When analysing the behaviour of superpower decision-makers engaged in crisis, there is a valid distinction to be made between the use of limited force and crisis management. However, the validity of this distinction is primarily due to the particular structural characteristics of the superpower subsystem. Surely it is equally acceptable to state that, in the absence of an perceived upper threshold of mutual mass destruction, a use of limited force can be regarded as a rational means of managing interstate disputes. Superpower crisis management is not only unique to the nuclear age, it is unique to superpower crisis. 'Crisis management' has to be expanded to include a recourse to the use of limited force if it is not be confined to the mere description of a limited number of events taking place in one particular subsystem during a distinct historical period.

1. Allison, op. cit. pp. 197-198.

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But, a use of force is a rational crisis management option only so long as it is employed in a limited and controlled manner. The analyst should concentrate on how decision-makers sought to limit the scale of conflict. This entails the assessment of, for example, the success with which statesmen established qualitative and quantitative boundaries, tacit norms, and rules of engagement.

Although Dillon and Williams find it difficult to characterise policy selection during the Falklands crisis as an exercise in crisis management, it is observed that British decision-makers resisted internal pressures to expand the zone of conflict to include the Argentine mainland and practised self-denial by keeping nuclear weapons out of the war zone. Furthermore, with partial success, they attempted to establish rules of engagement. These techniques of limiting and controlling hostilities ought to be classified as crisis management, especially when one observes that such measures were combined with an extensive and vigorous diplomatic campaign. Success should not be judged solely on whether force was avoided, it should be judged on how well decision-makers maintained political control over the needs of military logic.

This does not mean that sub-nuclear crisis management is synonymous with pre-nuclear age crisis behaviour because the systemic context in which decision-makers find themselves is of vital influence. Throughout the cold war era, the structure of the international system and Britain's position within it was very different from that of earlier periods. After the second world war, the state was a relatively junior partner in a rigid, bipolar, alliance system and the stability of that alliance system was the prime concern of Britain's senior partner.

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In terms of the Suez crisis and Falklands conflict, British decision-makers were able to contemplate a resort to arms to ameliorate their problems since the opponent was not a member of the opposing alliance bloc. However, the needs of the central alliance system remained paramount. If British decision-makers were to initiate military action, they had to do so in such a manner that the senior partner would not perceive it as constituting a threat to the stability of the dominant subsystem. In reference to the Suez crisis, for example, some authors have suggested that the United States placed pressure on the United Kingdom to cease hostilities because of residual anti-colonial sentiment and outrage at the deception practised by British decision-makers on their American allies. But, this is not regarded as being a comprehensive explanation. The United States was also motivated to take steps as a result of signals emanating from the Soviet Union. This is illustrated by Robert Murphy's observation:

The big question was what the Russians would do. Their technicians got out of Egypt quickly and went to Khartoum, in neighbouring Sudan. The Soviet Union declared that it might resort to force, threatened that the conflict could spread into general war, and hinted of nuclear bombs.¹

He goes on to note:

Eisenhower was unperturbed...But a high ranking official of the State Department, who was not a career Foreign Service officer could not conceal his alarm. 'We must stop this before we are all burned to a crisp!' he exclaimed at a staff meeting after Russia had

1. Robert Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors (London: Collins, 1964). p. 475.

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sent threatening notes to Britain and France. His reaction based on fear was not appreciated by his colleagues, and his remark remains in my memory as an example of the success sometimes achieved by Russian intimidation tactics.¹

While other authors have subsequently questioned whether such threatening behaviour was not merely a case of sabre-rattling, it is certainly difficult to believe that American decision-makers of the period were as 'unperturbed' about the possibility of Soviet intervention as Murphy suggests. Clearly, they were not about to put Soviet resolve to the test. In this sense, the 'forceful' crisis management policy of the Eden administration failed because it had not been reconciled with the needs of the wider systemic balance. In contrast, during the Falklands conflict of 1982, the Soviet Union adopted a fairly passive stance in relation to the two protagonists. Consequently, the stability of the central system was not perceived to be at stake and a use of force was not actively hindered by the United States.

Conclusions.

Successful 'conventional' crisis management is, therefore, regarded as achieving the dual aims of demonstrating commitment while preventing escalation to war. Such a view rests on the assumption that no rational political objective can be fulfilled by using the awesome destructive power of nuclear weapons. Direct military conflict between the superpowers was perceived as being irrational since, as Clausewitz states:

..War can never be separated from political intercourse, and if, in the consideration of the matter, this is done in any way, all the

1. Robert Murphy, op. cit. pp. 475-476.

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threads of the different relations are, to a certain extent, broken, and we have before us a senseless thing without an object.¹

Yet, although sub-nuclear crises did occur in the cold war era, they were structurally unlike superpower crises in that the main protagonists could not threaten mutual mass destruction. Therefore, the relationship between political ends and military means was not severed. When engaged in sub-nuclear crisis, decision-makers could consider using force as a rational option in the attempt to resolve their perceived problems. Thus, sub-nuclear crisis management is not incompatible with the Clausewitzian view that: "War is nothing but a continuation of political intercourse, with a mixture of other means."² The management of sub-nuclear crisis remains a dualistic process, but that dualism is characterised by the simultaneous pursuit of peaceful and forceful 'modes' of crisis management.

Such a formulation of the term 'crisis management' requires that the criteria for judging 'success' and 'failure' be altered. Clausewitz observes:

That the political point of view should end completely when War begins is only conceivable in contests which are Wars of life and death, from pure hatred: as Wars are in reality, they are...only the expressions or manifestations of policy itself. The subordination of the political point of view to the military would be contrary to common

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1. Carl Von Clausewitz, On War. Translated by Col. J.J. Graham (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949). p. 122.
 2. Ibid. p. 121.

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sense, for policy has declared the War; it is the intelligent faculty, War only the instrument, and not the reverse.¹

A recourse to force during sub-nuclear crisis does not automatically mean that crisis management has failed, nor does it signal the end of political direction. Because force is regarded as a rational instrument of policy, 'successful' crisis management is judged on the extent to which political control was maintained over military logic.

It might be argued that such criteria are not dissimilar to those applied to the use of force between states in the nineteenth century balance of power system. By definition, however, sub-nuclear crises occurred in the 'cold war' international system. Therefore, success is also dependent on the reconciliation of a resort to arms with the needs of the nuclear age systemic balance and this distinguishes sub-nuclear crisis management from the management of pre-nuclear crises. Decision-makers engaged in sub-nuclear crisis must court, at the very least, the acquiescence of the senior ally. The dominant partner must be convinced that the initiation of hostilities does not threaten the stability of the balance of terror. The key concept in successfully using force as a crisis management option is that of control. Force must be employed in a limited fashion and political direction must remain dominant since, as Michael Howard noted in 1983:

Whereas in Clausewitz's day human effort had been necessary to transcend the limitations imposed on the conduct of war by the constraints of the real world, now that effort is needed to impose such limits.²

1. Clausewitz, op. cit. pp. 124-5.

2. Michael Howard, Clausewitz (Oxford: Oxford University, 1983). p. 70.

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A Perspective on the Following Cases.

The following chapters take the form of case studies of three historical crises: the crisis preceding the first world war, the Suez crisis of 1956 and the Falklands conflict of 1982. The crisis of July 1914 has been selected as the subject of the first case study because it occurred in the pre-nuclear era and is an interesting illustration of participant attitudes towards crisis and crisis management prior to the advent of nuclear weapons. The intent of the case study is to examine the way this crisis was managed in order to provide an instructive comparison with sub-nuclear crises. The Suez crisis and the Falklands conflict have been chosen because they occurred in the 'nuclear age' but were not nuclear weapons oriented. Thus, they are both examples of a type of crisis which has, hitherto, not been the subject of extensive analysis in terms of existing concepts of crisis and crisis management.

A criticism which might be levelled at the selection of the case studies is that generalisations about 'pre-nuclear' and 'sub-nuclear' crisis management, based on an analysis of a small number of crises faced by British decision-makers, will be of debatable validity. Although there are grounds for such an argument, it should also be noted that the temporal range of this study is wide. For example, the crisis of July 1914 occurred almost seventy years before the Falklands conflict. Also, the crises which have been selected cumulatively involved a large number of decision-makers. Furthermore, Britain's opponents in each crisis were located in disparate geographical locations and their behaviour presented policy-makers with a variety of problems.

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The themes and concerns discussed in the previous chapters suggest a number of questions which will be applied to the case studies:

- (i) What was the nature of threat perceptions?
- (ii) What was the duration of the crisis?
- (iii) Were decision-makers surprised by events?
- (iv) What was the structure of the decision-making group?
- (v) Did multipolarity play a significant role?
- (vi) Was there a duality of purpose?

The answers to these questions will help our understanding of the behaviour of states engaged in sub-nuclear crises. And, it is argued that this is an important task since, as Coral Bell observes:

The emotional - indeed the moral - impulse behind the search for a theory or a technique of crisis management has been the belief that political considerations must maintain ascendancy over military ones in the nuclear age.¹

1. Bell. op. cit. p. 3.

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Threat in the Pre-Nuclear Era.

Although the phrase 'pre-nuclear age' has been used as a convenient label referring to the period before the advent of nuclear weapons, applying such blanket terminology masks the fact that attitudes towards the use of force prior to 1945 were far from homogenous. Michael Howard notes of the interwar years:

...the desire to avoid war was not universal in the Europe of the 1930s [sic]. Violence, then as now, had its attractions for the younger generation in an increasingly urbanised society...The Fascist and Nazi movements and their counterparts provided a literally glorious rationale for violence...The Nazi movement in particular used force as an instrument of internal policy in a peculiarly systematic and effective way, and the use of force in international policy was, for many of its members, only a logical and necessary extension of an enjoyable and socially desirable activity.¹

In part, the formulation of this "rationale" was facilitated by developments in weapons technology. The use of mechanised armoured divisions and air power was seen as effecting a transformation in the conduct of war. No longer would states have to undergo mass mobilisation and engage in struggles of attrition, the new image of war was to be 'blitzkrieg'.

1. Michael Howard, "Changes in the Use of Force, 1919-1969." Chapter 7 in Brian Porter (ed)., International Politics. 1919-1969 (London: Oxford University Press, 1972). pp. 144-145.

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Enthusiasm was by no means the sole reaction to the impact of technological advances in weapons systems. It has been observed that a separation of the concepts of punishment and denial in war is a characteristic of the 'nuclear age' and underpins nuclear deterrence theory. Yet, similar distinctions can be identified far earlier. Michael Howard, for example, argues that Douhet's The Command of the Air: "gave, as early as 1921, the most complete and lucid account of the philosophy of air power."¹ This philosophy was characterised by:

...optimism about the ease with which bombers could, with a few score tons of high explosive, create total panic within capital cities, bringing civilized life to a stand-still; and...pessimism (and equanimity) about the impossibility of preventing an enemy from inflicting comparable damage on their own civil population. These views, which were widely discussed in the late 1920s and 1930s, [sic] played their part in discouraging the citizens of Western Europe, and the statesmen who represented them, from contemplating war again.²

George Quester is of the opinion that:

...the major strategic complications imposed by bomber aircraft actually appeared long before 1945....they arose early in the twentieth century with the introduction of aircraft systems that first led governments to assume the bomb-delivery capabilities that only now exist..Exaggerated or not, these early estimates of punishing or disabling capabilities were premises on which a series

1. Howard, op. cit. p. 144.

2. Ibid.

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of policy decisions were made in this period - decisions, therefore, responding to problems remarkably similar to those that we face today...¹

The 'nuclear age' assumption that no rational political ends are commensurate with available military means also has a parallel in the interwar period. As well as being the result of a perceived separation of punishment and denial, policies of appeasement were a political reaction to the carnage witnessed during the first world war. The magnitude of this struggle, in which millions died, had never been previously experienced. Consequently, in the interwar decades, Howard notes: "The statesmen and peoples of the Western democracies could conceive war only as a total effort, a transformation of the political system which signified the breakdown of policy."²

But, the nuclear age imperative to resolve conflict without a use of force is regarded as being dissimilar to the assumptions which gave rise to policies of appeasement. When faced with superpower confrontation, policy-makers had to moderate competition because uncontrollable escalation ran the risk of vast, mutually punishing, nuclear strikes against the state. However, when not engaged in such conflict, decision-makers in the United States and the Soviet Union were not averse to selecting more 'forceful' policies, as the wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan (to name but two) illustrate.

1. George Quester, Deterrence Before Hiroshima. The Airpower Background of Modern Strategy (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966).
p. 1

2. Howard, op. cit. p. 146.

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For the advocates of appeasement war in itself was an evil to be avoided at all costs. Of Neville Chamberlain's role in the Munich crisis of 1938, Phil Williams observes:

To argue that Chamberlain's behaviour was dictated by fear of losing a war, however, implies a preoccupation with the military balance which is perhaps not warranted...It is not only military power that counts, but the will to use it. Chamberlain lacked that will. The emotional repugnance towards war which he expressed on a number of occasions seems to suggest a 'simple fundamentalism' of belief: the great divide was between peace and war. It seems unlikely that Chamberlain clearly differentiated between a war that Britain could win and one that she might lose. War was anathema; even the likelihood of victory could not make it palatable.¹

Clearly, concepts of the utility of force between the two world wars are far more complex than the phrase 'pre-nuclear age' implies. Furthermore, it is suggested that the first world war was something of a watershed in the development of pre-nuclear era attitudes. Prior to 1914 a resort to arms was regarded very differently. Robert Osgood states:

Two periods of modern Western history stand out as predominantly periods of limited war: the period from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 to the French Revolutionary War and the period from the Congress of Vienna in 1815 to World War I. It is notable that in both of these periods statesmen were for the most part content to fight for limited, well-defined 'reasons of state,' which did not excite extreme aspirations or fears, which demanded something short of the maximum

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 40.

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exercise of force, and which could be accommodated before military destruction passed beyond the bounds of predictable consequences.¹

It is the period 1815 - 1914 which conforms most closely to the formulation of the 'pre-nuclear age' discussed in earlier chapters. The relatively low level of technological capability meant that the threat of war did not involve the perceived probability of vast strikes against the state. Thus, the concepts of punishment and denial were not separate and decision-makers regarded a resort to arms as a rational means of pursuing political objectives. Although a fairly sophisticated range of bargaining moves existed below a use of force threshold, there was no overriding, mutually recognised, imperative to limit competition below this level.

This does not mean that there was no such thing as a system of 'deterrence' in the nineteenth century, as George and Smoke observe:

Though the measures that nineteenth-century powers took to demonstrate commitment and reinforce deterrence differ somewhat in details from those open to the Cold War superpowers, the earlier generations of statesmen were at least as imaginative, if often no more successful, in finding military and diplomatic tools to deter (and coerce) others.²

During this period, deterrence was not based on the threat of a massive military response. Faced with a failure of the state's deterrent posture, statesmen could resort to arms in

1. Osgood, op. cit. p. 62.

2. George and Smoke, op. cit. p. 15.

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the expectation that the violence would be of a limited nature. The terrible irony of the management of the crisis of July 1914, of course, is that the war which subsequently developed proved to be on a scale far greater than had ever been previously witnessed.

The Nature of Threat: July 1914.

Following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, it appears that a surprisingly long period elapsed before British decision-makers began to regard events on the continent as being gravely threatening. For example, the Foreign Secretary, Edward Grey, states: "My usual week-end was curtailed, but things were not yet so critical that it was unsafe to be out of town even for the Sunday, and I left Nicolson in charge that day, July 26."¹ With the benefit of hindsight one might question Grey's judgement on this point, since only nine days later Britain was formally at war. However, as Spender and Asquith observe, such a comparatively relaxed attitude to the European situation was a product of the view that:

Up to 31st July, the ruling hypothesis was that of a straight fight between the European Alliances; and upon that ground it was the view, if not of the majority, at least of a party strong enough to break the Government, that there were no commitments, legal or moral, requiring us to intervene in this continental struggle, and that public

1. Viscount Edward Grey, Twenty Five Years. 1892-1916 Volume I. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925).
p. 315.

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support would not be forthcoming for a war ostensibly in support of Russia in her quarrel with Austria about Serbia.¹

The only alliance commitment which might ostensibly have been an obstacle to pursuing a policy based on this "hypothesis" concerned the promises to protect the neutrality of Belgium. Cabinet attitudes to these Treaties at the end of July are revealed by Asquith's letter to the king (dated July 30). In reference to the nature of British commitments to Belgium, Asquith comments:

The Cabinet carefully reviewed the obligations of this country in regard to the neutrality, arising out of the two Treaties of April 1839, and action which was taken by Mr. Gladstone's Government in August 1870. It is a doubtful point how far a single guaranteeing State is bound under the Treaty of 1839 to maintain Belgian neutrality if the remainder abstain or refuse. The Cabinet consider that the matter if it arises will be rather one of policy than of legal obligation.²

Thus, almost until the end of July, the 'continental quarrel' did not widely elicit threat perceptions of a sufficient level to merit the use of the term crisis.

By midnight of August 4, Great Britain was formally at war. What are the reasons for this apparent reversal of opinion? Some authors are of the opinion that the "march of

1. J.A. Spender and Cyril Asquith, Life of Herbert Henry Asquith, Lord Oxford and Asquith Volume II. (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1932). p. 87.

2. Letter from Asquith to the King, July 30, 1914. Reproduced in Ibid. p. 81.

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events"¹ restricted the chances that British decision-makers would find a solution other than intervention. In Grey's autobiography, there appears a discussion of the abortive attempt to convene a conference of ambassadors in late July:

After the refusal of a Conference one blow to the prospects of peace followed after another. I do not suggest that I thought them the direct consequence of the refusal of a Conference; they were rather like the deliberate, relentless strokes of Fate, determined on human misfortune, as they are represented in Greek tragedy. It was as if Peace were engaged in a struggle for life, and, whenever she seemed to have a chance, some fresh and more deadly blow was struck.²

He returns to this theme when discussing the events of early August:

My recollection of those three days, August 1, 2, and 3, is of almost continuous Cabinets and of immense strain ; but of what passed in discussion very little remains in my mind, not even what part I took in the discussions. There was little for me to do : circumstances and events were compelling decision.³

Grey describes his view of the course of events should Britain have stood aside. He considers that France would have been conquered and Germany would be the supreme power on the continent:

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1. Churchill to Lloyd George in undated Cabinet note, August 1914. Taken from an article by: K.M. Wilson, "The British Cabinet's Decision for war, 2 August 1914." In: The British Journal of International Studies Volume I, Number 2. July 1975. (Harlow: Longman, 1975). p. 148.
 2. Grey, op. cit. Vol. I. p. 325. The proposal was sent by Nicolson on July 26 and was subsequently vetoed by Germany.
 3. Ibid. Vol. II. p. 10

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Belgium would have been under her heel. The fear of the fate of Belgium would have been before the eyes of every neutral State ; the position of Italy, who had refused to join the other two members of the Triple Alliance in the war, would not have been pleasant.

Consider what the position of Britain would have been. We should have been isolated ; we should have had no friend in the world ; no one would have hoped or feared anything from us, or thought our friendship worth having.

We should have been discredited, should have been held to have played an inglorious and ignoble part.¹

In terms of one's understanding of pre-nuclear age attitudes, diplomatic isolation and the potential dominance on the continent of a single power would be regarded as being highly threatening to the security of the state. But, if this threat was as obvious as Grey claims, why did the Cabinet come to such a decision about the status of the Treaties regarding Belgian neutrality at the Cabinet meeting of July 29? Clearly, Grey's pessimism about the 'march of events' was not at this time wholeheartedly shared by many of his Cabinet colleagues. K.M. Wilson states:

On 1 August the Cabinet decided against any immediate despatch of the British Expeditionary Force to the Continent, and forbade Churchill to proceed to the full mobilization of the Navy, no doubt eliciting the remark that Morley remembered making to the First Lord of the Admiralty: 'we have beaten you after all.' As far as John Burns was concerned, there had still been 'no decision'...²

1. Grey, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 36.

2. Wilson, op. cit. p. 150. Quotes from Morley's 'Memorandum on Resignation', and Burns diary, entry dated August 1, 1914.

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Wilson contends that:

...the argument that the German invasion of Belgium was crucial is one still far too readily employed, and that the 'march of events' (which is, in effect, what this argument amounts to) was not by any means as 'dominating' as Churchill at one point forecast that it would be.¹

Cameron Hazelhurst is of the opinion that the Belgian question was merely an excuse for a reversal of the previous Cabinet stance. He observes:

...in truth, when they talked as though a German invasion of Belgium might have changed the situation they were simply saving face. The invasion of Belgium did not convert Lloyd George, or any of the others; it provided a pretext for an otherwise humiliating volte face.²

For authors such as Hazelhurst and Wilson, the underlying cause for the shift in Cabinet opinion lies in the perceived political need to maintain Cabinet unity in the face of developments on the continent. Despite Grey's arguments, it appears that opinion in Cabinet was, initially, far more uncertain as to the nature of strategic threat arising from the European situation. Consequently, there was a resulting division in Cabinet as to which policy option need be adopted. Grey and Churchill, for example, were in favour of intervention, while Morley and Burns favoured non-intervention. In fact, the Cabinet rift was so wide it threatened the very stability of the Liberal Government itself. Wilson notes that: "What inspired the activity

1. Wilson, op. cit. p. 148.

2. Cameron Hazelhurst, Politicians at War. July 1914 to May 1915 (London: Jonathon Cape, 1971).
p. 68.

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and compelled the decisions of 2 August was the political problem of the future of the Liberal party."¹ Wilson continues:

On 4 August, Simon told Christopher Addison M.P. 'that an important consideration with him was that...if a block were to leave the Government at this juncture, their action would necessitate a Coalition Government which would assuredly be the grave of liberalism.'...²

Yet, accepting this characterisation of threat perceptions, during late July and early August, does not explain why intervention was the option eventually adopted. The argument that the 'march of events' was irresistible is far from convincing. Indeed, surveying Cabinet attitudes of period reveals that those apparently against intervention were in the majority. If the level of perceived strategic threat was not sufficient to clearly require an armed response and the maintenance of Cabinet unity was vital for the future of the Liberal Government, why was unity not achieved under the banner of non-intervention? It is suggested that the answer to this question lies in the structure of the decision-making group and in the political bargaining games which took place within it.

Conclusions.

The nature of threat perceptions during this crisis were far more mixed than some authors have implied. Certainly, Churchill and Grey were of the opinion that the threat to the stability of the balance of power system was so great that

1. Wilson, op. cit. p. 154.

2. Ibid. p. 155. Quoting from C. Addison, Four and a half Years (London, 1934).

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intervention was required, and justified, to halt the potential dominance of Germany on the continent. However, for other decision-makers, the selection of the policy of intervention was not entirely a response to external events. Perhaps for the majority of the Cabinet, the main source of threat was Party political. Statesmen were aware that should unity over policy selection not be achieved the Liberal Government would be in danger of collapse.

The fact that Cabinet unity was achieved over a policy of intervention, rather than non-intervention, is regarded as being due more to the nature of the political bargaining games taking place within the decision-making group, than it is to clear or uniformly perceived threat identification. It is argued that the decision for war in 1914 was as much a product of political compromise as it was a reaction to perceived strategic threat. As such, this decision might be regarded as a 'model' pre-nuclear age crisis management response in the sense that, despite their avowed horror of war, members of the Cabinet in August 1914 were not averse to selecting a forceful option in pursuit of a mix of both national and Party political interests.

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Time Limits in the Pre-Nuclear Era.

Modern weapons delivery systems and advances in telecommunications have radically accelerated the potential speed with which members of the international community can wage war against one another. As a result, it might be assumed that in the nuclear age, and particularly during superpower crisis, the period of time available for decision-makers to make choices would be sharply reduced. But, when analysing crisis, such 'objective' evaluations should not be overstressed. Of the crisis of July 1914, Ole Holsti observes:

An analysis of European military technology and doctrines would reveal...that objectively time was of incalculably less importance than in the present nuclear age. In contrast to the ability of the Soviet Union and United States to strike each other in a matter of minutes, estimates of the time required for Austria-Hungary to field a full army ranged from three to four weeks....

Yet the 'reality' as defined by European leaders was quite different. In the situation of high tensions the decision makers of 1914 perceived that time was of crucial importance - and they acted on that assumption.¹

In this sense, notwithstanding their technological disparities, nuclear and pre-nuclear age crises are not fundamentally different. Given the 'subjective' nature of perceptions of limited time, it is argued that a decision-maker in the balance of power era was subject to as much time related stress as his superpower counterpart. Thus, time

1. Ole Holsti, Crisis Escalation War (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972).
p. 141.

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limits in pre-nuclear age crises are not regarded as being significantly different to those taking place after the second world war.

The Impact of Limited Time: July 1914.

The crisis preceding Britain's entry into the first world war was of a surprisingly short duration. Although Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated on June 28, the Cabinet did not formally discuss the situation in Europe until much later. Ekstein and Steiner state:

It was not until the afternoon of the 24 July, at the close of a discussion on Ulster that the Foreign Secretary brought the international crisis - 'the gravest for many years past in European politics(Asquith)' - before the Cabinet.¹

This is confirmed when referring to the diaries of Charles Hobhouse. The first mention of any Cabinet discussion of the Serbian problem occurs in his record of the Cabinet meeting of July 24. Hobhouse notes: "Grey broke in to say that the Ultimatum by Austria to Serbia had brought us nearer to a European armageddon than we had been through all the Balkan troubles."²

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1. Michael Ekstein and Zara Steiner, "The Sarajevo Crisis." Chapter 23 in: F.H. Hinsley (ed)., British Foreign Policy Under Sir Edward Grey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
p. 400.
 2. Entry in the diary of Charles Hobhouse, July 24. In: Edward David (ed)., Inside Asquith's Cabinet. From the Diaries of Charles Hobhouse (London: John Murray, 1977).
p. 176.

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Despite such ominous warnings, this date is not regarded as marking the start of the crisis for British decision-makers. Cameron Hazelhurst is of the opinion that, at least in the mind of the Prime Minister, the main concern remained the situation in Ireland:

Not until the 30th, after Bonar Law and Carson had taken the initiative, did Asquith put aside his map of Ulster, his files of population and religious statistics, and postpone the second reading of the Home Rule Amending Bill. Cynical detachment gave way to concern. New priorities prevailed.¹

Keith Robbins observes: "The Cabinet met on the morning of 29 July amid this mounting crisis, but it broke up without coming to a decision on the major issue."² As has ~~has~~ already been noted, on July 30 Asquith still felt confident enough to write to the king stating that Britain's position in respect to Belgium was one of 'policy' rather than 'obligation'. For these reasons, one encounters some difficulty in selecting a definite date which marks the 'beginning' of the crisis. The impression is one of steadily mounting tension from July 24. Yet, only from July 29 onwards can one clearly identify a general perception among decision-makers that they were facing a crisis. In order to facilitate subsequent discussion this date has, therefore, been chosen.

The date on which crisis ended is much clearer. In Asquith's diary the entry of August 4 is as follows:

1. Hazelhurst, op. cit. p. 32.

2. Keith Robbins, Sir Edward Grey. A Biography of Lord Grey of Fallodon (London: Cassell, 1971).
p. 278.

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We had an interesting Cabinet, as we got news that Germans had entered Belgium and had announced that if necessary they would push their way through by force of arms. This simplifies matters. So we sent the Germans an ultimatum to expire at midnight requesting them to give a like assurance with the French that they would respect Belgian neutrality.¹

By midnight, August 4, no reply had been received and Britain found itself at war.

The duration of the crisis preceding the first world war was a mere seven days. Such a timespan is in fact considerably shorter than, for example, that of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. It has been observed that severe limitations on the amount of available time will adversely affect the functioning of rational decision-making and some authors have indeed argued that the 'march of events' during the crisis of July 1914 was irresistible. Thus, according to this view, statesmen could exert only a limited influence on the development of the crisis, since external events dictated the temporal framework and restricted the search for alternatives.

Certainly, there is a measure of truth in such an 'explanation', but it is not entirely plausible. Edward Grey first informed the full Cabinet of the worsening European situation on July 24. Keith Robbins states:

When his colleagues at the meeting on 24 July heard him say that the Austro-Hungarian proposals might be the prelude to a war in which at least four of the Great Powers might be involved, they blenched...Grey himself

1. In Spender and Asquith, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 92.

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described the Austrian proposals as 'the most formidable document ever addressed by one State to another that was independent'...¹

The use of such language might lead one to assume that the perceived gravity of developments would prompt the Foreign Secretary to vigorously engage in an attempt to avert the impending crisis. When discussing the events of 24 - 26 July, Grey notes: "Day by day I consulted with Nicolson at the Foreign Office. We agreed that, if things became more anxious and the prospect grew darker, I should propose a Conference."² However, he then goes on to observe: "My usual week-end was curtailed, but things were not yet so critical that it was unsafe to be out of town even for the Sunday, and I left Nicolson in charge that day, July 26."³ There appears to be a curious incongruity between Grey's avowed fears and his actions throughout this period. Keith Robbins seems unsure as to how to characterise the behaviour of the Foreign Secretary. He merely comments: "With unflappable sang-froid, or culpable disregard of duty, Sir Edward disappeared to his fishing cottage to think on these things."⁴ Furthermore, Robbins goes on to state that: "He came back to London on 26 July, having authorized a new proposal for an ambassadorial conference in London."⁵ This observation conveys a slightly misleading impression. On July 26, Nicolson was left "in charge" of the Foreign Office and Grey acknowledges that: "He judged it desirable not to delay any longer the proposal for

1. Robbins, op. cit. p. 289.

2. Grey, op. cit. Vol. I. p. 314.

3. Ibid. p. 315.

4. Robbins, op. cit. p. 290.

5. Ibid. p. 291.

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a Conference, and sent it...I entirely approved of what Nicolson had done..."¹ While Grey may have "authorized" the proposal for a conference, it was done retrospectively.

Reference to the Cabinet meetings of 27 - 29 July is also instructive. Concerning the July 27 meeting, Robbins notes: "Although Nicolson and Crowe were now frankly suspicious of Germany's intentions, it was quite another matter for Grey to bring the Cabinet to a point of decision."² Yet, in a letter to the King dated July 28, Asquith observes of the previous day's Cabinet: "The first topic for discussion was the lamentable incident which occurred in Dublin on Sunday."³ The situation in Ireland was, at this stage, still the primary concern in the minds of most of the Cabinet. But, the letter of July 30 begins thus: "Mr. Asquith, with his humble duty to Your Majesty, has the honour to report that the meeting of the Cabinet yesterday was mainly occupied with the diplomatic situation."⁴ Clearly, not until this Cabinet meeting did continental European events begin to override domestic political problems.

Conclusions.

This evidence supports the view that July 29 was the earliest date on which the full Cabinet began to concentrate on European events, five days after the worsening situation was initially brought to its attention. Although the

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1. Grey, op. cit. Vol. I. p. 315.
 2. Robbins, op. cit. p. 291.
 3. Spender, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 80.
 4. Ibid. p. 81.

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difference between seven and twelve days might appear slight, it does mean that decision-makers engaged in crisis management for less than 60% of the time that was potentially available. It is suggested that this opportunity was not missed because of the pace of 'external' events. The shortness of the duration of this crisis was largely determined by the priorities and uncertainties of decision-makers themselves.

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Surprise in the Pre-Nuclear Era.

The element of surprise implies a lack of organisational and ministerial preparedness. While disarray in the face of an unforeseen problem may facilitate the adoption of novel solutions, Eugenia Nomikos and Robert North argue that decision-makers are greatly influenced by the forces of habit and memory. They state:

It should be evident that...the decisions and operational style of a national leader will be affected to one degree or another by personal habits, memories, attitudes, inclinations, and predispositions. Thus, in performing his decision-making role, he is to one degree or another influenced and constrained by his own personality, experience, and idiosyncrasies, as well as by demands and pressures from individuals and groups in the society.¹

Confronted by crisis, decision-makers fall back on preexisting assumptions and routines in order to minimise uncertainty rather than search for untried, novel solutions. In their analysis of the crisis preceding the first world war, Nomikos and North note:

Given the basic assumptions, imperatives, goals, and traditional responses of Great Powers to external threat, all these various considerations and crisis effects made the option for escalation and war highly probable - though not inevitable. Historically, war had tended to be a normal, more or less habitual response of states and empires to certain types of situation. Against that background, the fears, anxieties, uncertainties, and other tensions of crisis

1. E.V. Nomikos and R.C. North, International Crisis. The Outbreak of World War I (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976).
p. 21.

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encouraged stereotyped behaviour on the part of the various European leaderships, and this behaviour - combined with the 'pre-programmed' schedules of the Schlieffen Plan, the Anglo-French military agreements, the Russian mobilization plans, and other such arrangements - set the escalation in motion toward war.¹

Throughout the literature concerned with crisis management in the nuclear age, there is comparatively little consideration given to the influence of habit on the decision-making process. A reason for this may lie in the commonly accepted assumption that the possession of nuclear weapons caused a radical shift in the relationship between the superpowers. For many analysts, the destructive potential of these weapons is so great that preexisting governmental habits and routines have been swept away.

To accept this idea without reservation, however, may prove to be an overestimation of the impact of nuclear weapons. Obviously, the awesome power of these weapons forced superpower decision-makers to reevaluate their attitudes towards war. But, this reevaluation was certainly not universal. Even during the Cuban crisis of 1962, for example, there were those among President Kennedy's advisers who favoured more warlike, escalatory option. Also, when confronted by unforeseen problems such as those encountered during the Suez crisis of 1956 and the Falklands conflict of 1982, decision-makers did attempt to ameliorate their problems by a resort to arms. It is argued, therefore, that the impulse to actively search for novel alternatives is largely dependent on the way individuals define the structure of the conflict in which they are engaged. In the absence of

1. Nomikos and North, op. cit. p. 31.

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a mutually perceived upper threshold of mass destruction, which is a characteristic of sub-nuclear crises, decision-makers may find the adoption of short-run, proven policy options more attractive than trying to formulate novel, uncertain solutions.

The Element of Surprise: July 1914.

Keith Robbins, in his biography of Edward Grey, states: "If war was spoken of in the early months of 1914, most people at once thought of Ireland."¹ Robbins reiterates this point later: "The obsession with Ireland was no doubt due to the intrinsic fascination of the subject, but it also reveals the extent to which international affairs were felt to be relatively quiet."² In their biography of the Prime Minister, Spender and Asquith observe:

Asquith and his colleagues were often reproached in after days for not having foreseen the coming of war, and if it is meant that they did not expect war in August 1914, the charge may be admitted. They had at least three times in the previous eight years come up to the edge of the precipice ; they had lived from year to year in an atmosphere of danger, and a large part of Asquith's own time and thought had been given to the working out in the Committee of Imperial Defence of the measures which would need to be taken, if war came. But in the first months of 1914, the European situation seemed to be less dangerous, and British and German relations easier than at almost any period in the previous six years.³

1. Robbins, op. cit. p. 278.

2. Ibid. p. 283.

3. Spender and Asquith, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 78.

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Spender and Asquith maintain that, as late as July 31 - August 1, British decision-makers were unsure about German intentions: "Belgium now overlapped the general issue but up to this point it was still only a hypothesis that the Germans would invade Belgium."¹ As is now known, the nature of German mobilisation was such that, once initiated, war was certain to follow. When discussing the extent of Grey's prior knowledge of German plans, Luigi Albertini is of the opinion that: "This was a fact, however, which Grey only realized after war had broken out. He can hardly be blamed for his ignorance seeing that even the German Navy Minister, Tirpitz, did not know the German plan of campaign."² The Belgian question was first discussed during the Cabinet meeting of July 29, but at this stage no decision was made. Thus, according to Spender and Asquith, not until the Cabinet learned of Luxembourg being invaded on the morning of 2 August did the "hypothesis" become a "staring reality".³

Cameron Hazelhurst does not agree with Spender and Asquith about the extent of prior knowledge of German intentions. He states:

...it cannot be argued that the probable route of a German attack on France was a secret. To say, as Asquith's official biographers did, that until Luxembourg was invaded, it was only a 'hypothesis' that Germany would invade Belgium, is to give a misleading impression. A similarly false

1. Spender and Asquith, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 89.

2. Luigi Albertini, The Origins of the War of 1914 Volume III. Translated by Isabella Massey. (London: Oxford University Press, 1957).
p. 391.

3. Spender and Asquith, op. Cit. Vol. II. p. 89.

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emphasis is given by Crewe's statement, in 1936, that the invasion of Belgium was 'likely...[but] by no means certain'...¹

For Hazelhurst: "The truth is that, until the necessity for a plausible casus belli was perceived, Belgium was not the focus of attention."²

There is continuing debate as to the precise extent of decision-makers' prior knowledge of German mobilisation plans. However, Grey was sufficiently worried by developments on the continent to bring the attention of his Cabinet colleagues to the worsening situation as early as 24 July. In this sense, unlike the Suez crisis of 1956, decision-makers in 1914 were not suddenly confronted with a fait accompli. They had at least five days warning that a potential crisis was looming. While Ministers might not have been aware of the exact pattern which events were to follow, well before July 29 they were certainly informed that some form of major conflict was imminent and this makes identification of surprise a difficult task.

Given the complex nature of surprise at events, were the policies adopted 'novel'? Edward David observes:

The suddenness of the crisis took the British Cabinet by surprise. Preoccupied by the violence of Howth rather than of Sarajevo, the Cabinet were startled into awareness by Grey's dire account of the European situation. Eventually the issue of Belgian neutrality provided the legal fiction and popular excuse for British intervention. In

1. Hazelhurst, op. cit. p. 71.

2. Ibid. p. 75.

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fact, closely tied diplomatically and strategically to France as she was, and facing the age-old threat of an expansionist Continental enemy to the Low Countries and the Channel Coast, Britain reverted to her traditional policy in such circumstances and went to war to redress the balance of power.¹

According to this view, policy selection during the crisis of July 1914 was heavily influenced by preexisting assumptions about Britain's role in maintaining the stability of the balance of power system. As such, the decision to intervene was not a particularly novel crisis management response.

In pre-nuclear crisis management terms, a recourse to violence was not necessarily a symptom of 'failed' crisis management techniques and it might be possible to argue that the pre-war crisis was eventually 'successfully' resolved by the defeat of Germany four years later. Of course, the weakness of this argument is that, when envisaging British intervention in a continental European war, contemporary decision-makers neither correctly predicted nor controlled the sheer scale of the conflict to come. Edward Grey's autobiography was published seven years after the war ended and contains the following observation of the week leading up to 4 August:

What was said or done by me will be most clearly explained and best understood by stating the considerations and convictions that were dominant in my mind throughout that week...

...that a great European war under modern conditions would be a catastrophe for which previous wars afforded no precedent. In old days nations could only collect portions of

1. David, op. cit. p. 178.

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their men and resources at a time and dribble them out by degrees. Under modern conditions whole nations could be mobilized at once and their whole life-blood and resources poured out in a torrent.¹

Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the extent to which Grey's 'convictions' were tinged by hindsight. But, it is reasonable to argue that the full Cabinet had no clear idea of what British intervention would actually involve. Hazelhurst is of the opinion that:

...probably more than half of the cabinet acquiesced in the ensuing developments on the basis of a limited and erroneous conception of what British in a European war would mean. The cabinet discussions of August 2 and 3 rested on the premise that the British role in the war, if there were to be a British role, would be on the high seas...For reluctant interventionists, the consequences of taking a hard line over Belgian neutrality seemed, henceforth, more circumscribed. The worst contingency was a naval commitment which the Germans might prudently decline to challenge.²

And Edward David notes:

The scale of this war dawned slowly. It is obvious from Hobhouse that 'business as usual' remained the dominant sentiment...For the moment they muddled through. Despite the tensions, in most areas of policy the old answers still seemed adequate for the new questions the war was posing.³

1. Grey, op. cit. Vol. I. pp. 311-312.

2. Hazelhurst, op. cit. pp. 90-91.

3. David, op. cit. pp. 178-179.

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Conclusions.

A recourse to violence in the pre-nuclear era is regarded as a 'rational' and legitimate part of a state's repertoire of actions and so does not automatically signify that a crisis has been badly managed. However, in reference to the crisis preceding the first world war, the decision to intervene cannot be regarded as 'successful' or 'effective' crisis management because decision-makers of the period did not realise what British intervention would actually entail. They did not accurately predict the potential scale of the war and singularly failed to limit the scope of conflict. Thus, it is suggested that decision-makers of the period were functioning according to the concepts of 'limited war' when the reality was to be 'total war'. As such, even in pre-nuclear crisis management terms, they are guilty of mismanaging the crisis.

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The Structure of the Decision-Making Group: July 1914.

Britain's entry into the first world war is regarded as being largely the product of political compromise. Reference to the bargaining games which took place within the decision-making group should prove useful in determining why intervention, rather than non-intervention, was the option selected.

Although crisis management in the nuclear era is observed to be the responsibility of small specialist decision-making groups, the crisis of July 1914 was not managed in this fashion. Delegation of decision-making did not take place and the full Cabinet remained the main crisis management forum.

Initially, opinion in the Cabinet was divided. Cameron Hazelhurst states:

We may take as a starting point Lord Crewe's comment on the account written by Lord Morley:

'He seems to have thought that the Cabinet was divided between those who, like himself, were determined to keep out of war at any price, and those who were only anxious to find an excuse for taking part in it. Whereas the great majority belonged to neither class.'

From the contemporary records of Asquith and his colleagues, it is possible to be a little more precise than Crewe. It is true that there were few out-and-out neutralists, and probably no determined warmongers. Up to August 1, Asquith saw Grey, Churchill and himself on the one hand, Morley and Simon on the other, as marking the extreme positions.¹

1. Hazelhurst, op. cit. p. 49.

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At this time the Cabinet consisted of nineteen members.¹ This is a number not that much larger than the membership of the group responsible for the management of the Cuban missile crisis, but a key difference between the groups is that the EXCOM² was a specialist unit, whereas the Cabinet of 1914 was not. Albertini notes:

...Lloyd George writes that during the eight years before the war when Sir Edward Grey was head of the Foreign Office the Cabinet devoted a ridiculously small percentage of its time to the consideration of foreign affairs. The 1906-14 Governments and Parliaments were engrossed in a series of passionate controversies over home affairs. Certain aspects of foreign policy were familiar to those Ministers who attended the Committee of Imperial Defence, but the Cabinet as a whole was never called into genuine consultation upon the fundamental aspects of the foreign situation.³

In the years preceding the first world war, the Foreign Secretary was allowed a surprising degree of autonomy in the formulation of foreign policy. Hazelhurst observes: "The greatest burden of 1914 was on the shoulders of Sir Edward Grey. People habitually spoke not of Asquith's foreign policy, or even of the government's [sic] policy, but of Grey's policy."⁴ A.J.P. Taylor disagrees with this view: "In Great Britain decision lay with the Cabinet and beyond that with Parliament. Grey could not conduct an independent foreign policy even if he had wished to do so. He had to

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1. K.G. Robbins, "Foreign Policy, Government Structure and Public Opinion." Chapter 31 in Hinsley, op. Cit. p. 532.
 2. Executive Committee of the National Security Council.
 3. Albertini, op. cit. pp. 364-365.
 4. Hazelhurst, op. cit. p. 50.

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carry the Cabinet with him."¹ Taylor's observation surely oversimplifies the relationship between the Foreign Secretary and Cabinet. The Cabinet devoted a very small proportion of its time to the assessment of foreign affairs and K.G. Robbins describes Edward Grey's position in the Liberal Government as "impregnable".² Given most of the Cabinet's lack of knowledge of foreign affairs and Grey's obvious prestige, the task of 'carrying' the Cabinet was not as difficult a task as Taylor's comments imply.

Once the crisis developed, it is suggested that those Cabinet members who were responsible for foreign affairs prior to July 29 occupied a very strong position within the decision-making group. Indeed, between July 24 and August 4, Edward Grey enjoyed a freedom of action which might not be granted the Foreign Secretary in the nuclear age. Albertini, for example, notes the following report of Grey's 'warning' to the German ambassador on 31 July:

I said to German Ambassador [sic] this morning that if Germany could get any reasonable proposal put forward which made it clear that Germany and Austria were striving to preserve European peace, and that Russia and France would be unreasonable if they rejected it, I would support it at St. Petersburg and Paris and go the length [sic] of saying that if Russia and France would not accept it, His Majesty's Government would

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1. A.J.P. Taylor, War By Time-table. How the First World War Began (London: Macdonald and Co. Ltd., 1969). p. 104.
 2. K.G. Robbins, "Public opinion, the press and pressure groups." Chapter 3 in Hinsley, op. Cit. p. 72.

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have nothing more to do with the consequences; but otherwise, I told the German Ambassador that if France became involved we should be drawn in.¹

According to Albertini: "these words of Grey's...were spoken without the approval of the Cabinet, which on the 31st was still in the main set on neutrality. Nevertheless, Grey spoke them, and this is proof that he could do so."² Taylor himself claims that on at least one occasion Grey acted unilaterally. When examining the events of August 3, Taylor observes:

The Cabinet met during the evening and resolved to ask the Germans for an assurance that they would respect Belgian neutrality. There was no threat of war, no time limit. No decision actually to go to war was ever made by the British Cabinet...
...Grey did not again consult the Cabinet. He may have consulted Asquith. The King was not informed. Essentially Grey acted on his own.
At 2 pm on 4th August he dispatched an ultimatum to Germany...³

However, the size of the grouping initially opposed to intervention was certainly large. Hazelhurst states:

In estimating the size and composition of this group ten names are usually listed: Lord Morley, John Burns, David Lloyd George, Lewis Harcourt, Lord Beauchamp, Sir John Simon, J.A. Pease, Walter Runciman, Herbert Samuel and T. McKinnon Wood...Of the remaining nine members of the cabinet, only one, Hobhouse, should be added.⁴

1. Albertini, op. cit. pp. 367-368.

2. Ibid. p. 368.

3. Taylor, op. cit. pp. 109-110.

4. Hazelhurst, op. cit. p. 54.

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Although the size of this grouping was large, opinion within it does not appear to have been unified. Hazelhurst is of the opinion that:

...the members of this group appear to have shared little more than a reluctance to renounce the pacific and isolationist positions with which they were publicly identified...To label them as a 'peace' or 'anti-war' group blurs the distinctions between their views. It is also an injustice to those of their colleagues who were no less peacefully inclined but were readier to accept the logic of events over which they had little control.

...It is easier and more accurate to describe the group's behaviour than its motives. What they all did, whatever their reasons, was waver.¹

A further important weakness, which perhaps reflects internal diversity of opinion, was the group's lack of a central figure of sufficient stature to lead it in full Cabinet meetings. Hazelhurst notes:

Several varieties of opinion were represented in the waverers' camp. What remains to be discovered is how, from this diversity of views, a common intention emerged...The answer is not to be found in leadership. For one of the most striking features of the group is that it was leaderless.²

Of course, the one member of this group who could have conceivably led the anti-war coalition was David Lloyd George, but it appears that the Chancellor never assumed the role of champion of the non-interventionist cause. Hazelhurst observes:

1. Hazelhurst, op. cit. pp. 56-57.

2. Ibid. p. 60.

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While he did nothing which could be construed as a move to take command of the neutralist forces, Lloyd George unashamedly took whatever credit accrued to one who was supposed to be inspiring a peace group. Yet the recollections and contemporary records of those who were present show conclusively that he neither organized nor directed the thinking of the waverers. He readily joined the discussions of those who were least prepared to support British intervention. But the evidence is clear that he did not dominate the group.¹

This group had two key structural weaknesses: a lack of singularity of opinion except for a common distaste for intervention and the absence of a single champion in the full Cabinet. Furthermore, the members of this group were also well aware that the future of the Liberal Government, and even of the Party itself, would be in jeopardy should the full Cabinet fail to face the crisis in a unified fashion.

The crucial alignment in Cabinet was between Asquith and Grey. Spender and Asquith state that the Prime Minister's colleagues, "knew that he would deal evenly and fairly between them, that he would not engage in cabals behind their backs, or endeavour to force them to a conclusion against which their judgement or their conscience rebelled."² Yet, Spender and Asquith also note that: "His own mind was already made up that he would act in the end with Sir Edward Grey against the strong party which up to that time had opposed intervention of any kind."³ It is difficult to accept the views of Spender and Asquith without question. First, they

1. Hazelhurst, op. cit. p. 63.

2. Spender and Asquith, op. Cit. Vol. II. p. 101.

3. Ibid. p. 89.

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are not justified in using the word "strong" to characterise the anti-war grouping. Second, while the Prime Minister might have given the impression of fairness and evenness when dealing with his colleagues, his own unmistakable alignment with Grey surely played a significant role in the political bargaining games occurring within the Cabinet. An alliance between the the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary can only be regarded as being a very powerful combination, despite the apparent size of the grouping ostensibly opposed to intervention. Therefore, Grey's high status and unmistakable solidarity with Asquith are considered as powerful advantages. Wilson states: "On 2 August Grey, as we have seen, returned to the attack; he was joined by Asquith - a combination the 'power' of which Morley was later to recall."¹

Grey was also not averse to using his high status in order to gain political leverage. For example, one tactic which the Foreign Secretary employed was to threaten to resign should Cabinet opt for non-intervention. But, Spender and Asquith do not agree with this view:

Lord Morley's suggestion that Lord Grey said early in the day that 'he was not the man for neutrality' is denied by Lord Grey and does not accord with the memory of his colleagues. Neither he nor Asquith ever threatened their colleagues with resignation or attempted to force their hands in any way.²

1. Wilson, op. cit. p. 154.

2. Spender and Asquith, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 95.

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Again it is difficult to agree with Spender and Asquith. There is evidence to suggest that Grey did threaten resignation during the crisis and that this threat was used as a coercive tool. When discussing the events of 1 August, Robbins notes:

Asquith later recorded that at this stage he was still not quite hopeless about peace, but felt that if war came, some split in the Cabinet could not be avoided, with possibly disastrous consequences. According to the Prime Minister, 'if an out and out uncompromising policy of non-intervention at all costs is adopted' Grey would go. As so often, this typically negative statement was tactically adroit. Although in an emotional state....Grey had not lost his facility for getting decisions in his own favour.¹

During the crisis, a high priority of the decision-making group was to maintain unity, as is illustrated by Spender and Asquith's observation of the Prime Minister's aims: "There is general agreement that Asquith's first preoccupation was to keep the Cabinet and the party - which meant keeping the nation - together."² Such concerns were clearly on the minds of every member of the Cabinet and it was this fear which Grey's resignation threat was designed to fuel.

The fact that members of the Cabinet were feeling threatened by the prospect of the collapse of the Government meant that the letter from the Opposition to the Cabinet (dated 2 August) was of greater influence than is admitted by Grey. He states:

1. Robbins, op. cit. p. 295.

2. Spender and Asquith, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 295.

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It was at one of these last Cabinets that a message was read to us saying definitely that the Conservative front Opposition benches were ready to support a decision to stand by France...the message was first read and laid aside ; it could have no influence then on our discussion.¹

It is unlikely that, at this stage in the crisis, the letter could have been laid aside with no further thought. Wilson certainly believes that this letter was important:

...the letter from Bonar Law and Lord Lansdowne, with its emphasis on supporting France and Russia, finally cut the ground away from beneath the feet of the non-interventionists: there was now no way in which the country could avoid war. The conditions that were gone into and the formulae that were produced in the course of the day represented the Cabinet's accommodation to its recognition of the implications of this coincidence of political circumstances.²

Hazelhurst suggests that:

Perhaps the most effective political weapon in the Prime Minister's armoury was the threat of coalition... Addressing himself to the waverers, Asquith argued that, if they went, coalition might be necessary. To Churchill, and perhaps Grey, coalition might have been acceptable. But the Prime Minister himself put forward the view that the Conservatives were neither led by, nor included amongst their number, men competent to direct the nation's affairs at a time of crisis.³

1. Grey, op. cit. Vol. II. pp. 10-11.

2. Wilson, op. cit. p. 154.

3. Hazelhurst, op. cit. pp. 114-115.

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Whether this estimation of the competence of members of the Opposition was accurate or not is open to debate. However, what should be noted is that the Prime Minister used the fear of the loss of Liberal control of government to forge Cabinet unity. Wilson observes:

The Cabinet's dilemma was summarized in Samuel's letter to his wife of 2 August:

Had the matter come to an issue, Asquith would have stood by Grey in any event, and three others would have remained. I think all the rest of us would have resigned. The consequence would have been either a Coalition Government or a Unionist Government either of which would certainly have been a war ministry.

This theme - the avoidance of these consequences - is unmistakably present throughout that day and the day following.¹

Conclusions.

Prior to August 2, a substantial part of the membership of the Cabinet was ostensibly against intervening in the European conflict. Despite the size of this group, intervention was eventually accepted as the policy option. By Sunday evening the decision to intervene had been made and the Cabinet had lost only two members: Morley and Burns. This reversal of opinion appears to have surprised some Cabinet members themselves. According to Wilson:

On 4 August Lloyd George told C.P. Scott of the Manchester Guardian that 'up to last Sunday only two members of the Cabinet had been in favour of our intervention in the War...'. There can be no doubt that he was referring to Winston Churchill and Edward Grey.²

1. Wilson, op. cit. pp. 154-155.

2. Ibid. p. 152.

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An axiom of theories of crisis and crisis management is that decision-making during crisis is delegated to small, ad hoc groups. This did not take place in the crisis of July 1914. Responsibility for policy formulation lay with the full Cabinet. Yet, it is observed that during the crisis a great deal of power was wielded by individual statesmen. In particular, the Foreign Secretary enjoyed a surprising autonomy of action. Group decision-making implies collective deliberation and responsibility, but, to an extent, this masks the 'reality' of the process of crisis management during late July and early August 1914. As Wilson states:

The conditions on which Britain would enter the war, and the terms in which the Cabinet formulated its policy on 2 August were, in effect, those on which Edward Grey would stay and the ministry not break up. Grey admitted his responsibility when he said 'how unhappy it made him to be the cause of such dissent and trouble among such friends'...The decision rested on the grounds on which Grey wanted it to rest - on the policy of the entente.¹

1. Wilson, op. cit. pp. 155-156.

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Multipolarity and the Role of Allies in the Pre-Nuclear Era.

The perceived systemic context within which crisis takes place is of prime importance in determining how international crises are managed. Obviously, to undertake an extensive survey of the structure of the international system of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would be a mammoth task far beyond the scope of this study. However, it is necessary to discuss a number of systemic characteristics which are of interest.

Unlike the superpower relationship, the European balance of power subsystem was multipolar. Its stability rested on the shifting alliance commitments of the various members. A state of diplomatic isolation was considered, as George and Smoke observe:

...to have one's deterrent capacities undermined, and to isolate one's opponent was the prerequisite to going to war against him. Russia was isolated in this way in 1853, partly by accident, prior to the Crimean War. And Bismarck, before launching his major wars, carefully isolated his intended victims with great deliberation: his Biarritz conference with Napoleon in October 1865 had (unknown to Napoleon) no other real purpose than to insure that France would not join Austria in the imminent war; in 1870, besides his escalation threat to Austria already alluded to, Bismarck employed a well-orchestrated series of moves to insure British neutrality.¹

The need for alliance, and the imperative to avoid being isolated, meant that the lesser members of an alliance could exert a disproportionate degree of leverage on the senior

1. George and Smoke, op. cit. p. 17.

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partners. This is in marked contrast to the superpower subsystem which, as Coral Bell has noted, is characterised by "an unambiguous" recognition of "leadership"¹. Therefore, it is suggested that diplomacy in the pre-nuclear age, especially in the pre-1914 balance of power system, occupied a more crucial role in terms of maintaining the security of the state than is perhaps the case in the superpower subsystem. In reference to the crisis preceding the first world war, Glenn Snyder notes:

Alliance relations in this crisis can be instructively compared with the high degree of control which the United States was able to exercise over its allies in the Suez and Formosa Straits crises, or Soviet control over its subordinate ally in the successive Berlin crises.²

As well as ensuring the security of the state, diplomacy in the balance of power age functioned as an important prelude to violence. In this era it was necessary to mount extensive diplomatic campaigns in order to 'isolate' prospective opponents as much as possible before initiating hostilities against them. Effective diplomacy could both limit the potential scale of violence and increase the probability of success. In a rigidly bipolar system, which is clearly and overwhelmingly dominated by two superpowers, the need for allies and hence the need for such diplomatic strategies is lessened.

Although some analysts might consider the Soviet Union and the United States to have been hegemonic powers pursuing 'imperial' policies during the cold war, it is suggested

1. Bell, op. cit. p. 25.

2. Snyder, op. cit. p. 221.

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that a further distinguishing characteristic of the balance of power era was the overtly imperialist nature of the Great Powers. The European nations maintained a vast network of colonies. According to Geoffrey Barraclough, they assumed that:

...the world was at the disposal of the white powers, to be divided up between them as they thought best; and the business of diplomacy, what it existed for and was paid to do, was to sort out the differences and arrange compensation so that everyone (except the victims) shared in the benefits. In this it had the virtually unanimous support of the bourgeois electorate, for whom the maintenance of the privileged position of the metropolis was the very foundation of its prosperity.¹

For Barraclough, the pursuit of self-interest with scant regard for the victims was:

...a Machiavellian doctrine, but it was accepted without question by even the most honourable people of the age. Grey, for example, knew that the Italian invasion of Libya in September 1911 was an act of blatant aggression. But he argued that 'neither we nor France should side against Italy' for fear it would be driven over into the arms of Germany.²

Such an observation might imply that there existed a tacit form of 'imperial' common interest between the Great Powers and a total lack of common interest between a Great Power and an underdeveloped nation. But, Barraclough states:

1. Geoffrey Barraclough, From Agadir to Armageddon. Anatomy of a Crisis (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982).
p. 68.

2. Ibid.

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It has sometimes been argued that the peace of Europe in the generation before 1914 was purchased at the expense of Africans and Asians. In reality, rivalry in Africa and Asia - the search for exclusive concessions and spheres of interest - poisoned the relations of the European countries, and made them more aggressive and less accommodating...¹

The validity of this idea of the imperial 'safety valve' preserving European peace is open to debate. However, what is important to note is that distinctions were made between competition between the white, European nations and competition with non-white, non-European powers. In reference to Egypt, for example, Ronald Hyam characterises Lord Cromer's approach as "paternalistic". A view which:

...inescapably led to the conclusion that Egyptians were hopelessly incompetent. He could not see that they were much better than the peoples of Afghanistan. To give power to the nationalists was, he wrote, 'only a little less absurd than the nomination of some savage Red Indian Chief to be Governor-general of Canada'. At any rate, so long as the British occupation lasted, to suppose that they could 'leave these extremely incompetent Egyptians to do what they liked about local affairs' was in Cromer's opinion completely impossible and 'little short of madness'.²

Indeed, a paternal approach to empire was merely a lesser manifestation of the racist attitudes underlying nineteenth century European attitudes to empire.

1. Barraclough, op. cit. p. 69.

2. Ronald Hyam, Britain's Imperial Century. 1815-1914. A Study of Empire and Expansion (London: B.T. Batsford, 1976). p. 258.

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It should also be noted that the age of empire was to last well into the twentieth century. Hyam observes:

The end of the empire was protracted. It carried the sentence of death within itself at least from the 1890s [sic]...yet immense powers of resilience were repeatedly displayed. A great of effective patching-up was achieved between 1900 and 1914... Paradoxically the overriding concern in Europe with the German problem from 1908 to 1948 had the effect of masking and delaying the end...Still the British refused to believe that the empire was dead - and after 1945 fresh exertions were made to build up the east and central African section of the imperial bastion. And yet essentially Britain's imperial century came to an end, if not actually with the shots at Sarajevo in 1914, then in 1915 in the mud of Flanders.¹

Whatever the precise date one wishes to assign as marking the end of the 'reality' of empire, the underlying attitudes and associations formed during the 'imperial century' are regarded as functioning well into the twentieth century. And, it is suggested, they influenced the way in which post-World War Two British statesmen sought to manage at least one sub-nuclear crisis: Suez 1956.

Multipolarity and the Role of Allies: July 1914.

Some analysts are of the opinion that the weaknesses and tensions inherent in the balance of power system were a primary cause of the first world war. For example, Glenn Snyder states:

The crisis preceding World War I, for instance, was very heavily influenced by the power structure of the international system

1. Hyam, op. cit. p. 377.

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in 1914, a structure of decentralised multipolarity organized in a two-alliance confrontation. The virtual equilibrium between the two alliances, and the substantial power contribution of the lesser alliance members, meant that the lesser and least responsible allies were able to call the tune; the alliance leaders (Germany and France) were unable to exert enough leverage on the lesser allies (Austria and Russia) to prevent them from carrying the crisis into war because they needed the lesser allies too much and, therefore, were unable to make the ultimate threat of withdrawal of support. The eruption of this crisis into war was largely determined by systemic factors - system structure and military technology - as well as rigid military plans over which the statesmen could exercise only limited control.¹

While there is validity in such a view, it is argued that threat perceptions throughout the crisis were not the sole product of a clearly recognised danger to the existing strategic balance. With the possible exception of the Treaties concerning the neutrality of Belgium, Britain was not formally committed by treaty or alliance to intervene on one side or the other. Indeed, at least until 30 July, the Belgian question was considered to be one of 'policy' rather than one of 'obligation'. Furthermore, the agreements reached in the Anglo-French naval and military conversations were not in themselves treaty obligations. During the early stages of the crisis, most decision-makers certainly believed they had considerable room for manoeuvre.

Nomikos and North observe that: "In November 1912 Britain agreed that if there were danger of war, the two governments would discuss what to do. If they decided to act, collaborative plans worked out on the staff level would be

1. Snyder, op. cit. p. 221.

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adopted."¹ Nomikos and North fail to specify which decision-makers made these agreements, or whether they were formally agreed by Cabinet, but there is ample evidence to support the view that the full Cabinet, and beyond that Parliament and the public, had not been kept informed of the extent of British foreign policy commitments in the years before the war. For example, in 1904, the details of the Anglo-French agreement were not released to Parliament. According to K.G. Robbins:

The majority of political agreements were signed and ratified without the assent of Parliament, though they were normally published soon afterwards. The exclusion of certain articles from the published version of the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 was an exception to the normal practice of publishing the terms of treaties in full.²

Senior Foreign Office officials were not always aware of the current state of the British foreign policy position. When analysing the Anglo-French naval conversations in 1912, K.A. Hamilton notes:

The attention of the Foreign Office was first drawn to the progress of these conversations by Paul Cambon, who on 4 May 1912 suggested to Nicolson that they should be resumed, and that Britain might join France and Russia in a naval convention. He said that what his government desired was that the British government should look after the Channel and France's northern coasts, while the French should undertake the care of the Mediterranean. Both Grey and Churchill were insistent that any such talks should await the completion of the government's

1. Nomikos and North, op. cit. p. 14.

2. K.G. Robbins, "The Foreign Secretary, the Cabinet, Parliament and the Parties." Chapter 1 in Hinsley, op. cit. p. 3.

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consideration of the Admiralty's proposals, but Nicolson was surprised and irritated by Cambon's reference to conversations about the extent and nature of which he knew nothing.¹

In the pre-war years, the distance which was maintained between the realms of foreign policy and domestic politics allowed a comparative handful of decision-makers a surprisingly large degree of freedom in the formulation of foreign policy. Even members of the Cabinet itself were not fully cognizant of developments. In an analysis of the Agadir crisis of 1911, M.L. Dockrill states that during the Cabinet meeting of 17 August:

Asquith evidently made no mention of a forthcoming meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence either then, or at subsequent cabinet meetings in August. Morley...Loreburn, Harcourt and Burns, were not invited, an omission that enraged Morley and the others later when they found out.²

Their outrage is understandable, since Dockrill goes on to observe:

The Committee of Imperial Defence met on 23 August, in order to consider, in Asquith's words, 'action to be taken in the event of intervention' in a Franco-German war. Asquith, Grey, Haldane, Churchill, Lloyd George, McKenna and the service chiefs were present. Both General Wilson and Sir William Nicholson, the C.I.G.S., outlined the plans of the general staff, which envisaged the despatch of 160,000 troops to France

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1. K.A. Hamilton, "Great Britain and France, 1911-1914." Chapter 17 in *Ibid.* p. 329.
 2. M.L. Dockrill. "British Policy During the Agadir Crisis of 1911." Chapter 14 in Hinsley, *op. cit.* pp. 280-281.

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immediately on the outbreak of war. The committee was informed that tactical and organisational problems had already been carefully worked out.¹

As is implied by Dockrill's comments, the military plans which had arisen from the series of pre-war 'conversations' were inflexible. Nomikos and North state:

Within the European environment of competition, arms race, and conflict the Great Powers...tended to 'pre-program' their military responses in order to facilitate rapid movement in the eventuality of war. Over the years both Russian and German mobilization plans had been worked out ahead of time in all their details. And increasingly, with the growth of the Entente, France and Britain had developed collaborative responses to an hypothesized attack by Germany.²

A.J.P. Taylor, in the aptly entitled War By Time-Table, notes:

Major-General Edward Spears, who himself watched the French mobilisation in August 1914, has left a classic account of the problems involved:
'...The time factor.. makes it essential that the armies, once mobilised, should find themselves exactly where they can at once take up the role assigned to them. There is no opportunity for extensive manoeuvres: mobilisation is in itself a manoeuvre at the end of which the armies must be ready to strike according to the pre-arranged plan. The plan is therefore obviously of vital importance.'³

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1. Dockrill, op. cit. p. 281.
 2. Nomikos and North, op. cit. p. 16.
 3. Taylor, op. cit. p. 16.

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In the event of war, the British Expeditionary Force was to take up its position on the French left flank. According to Taylor:

The civilian statesmen insisted that there was no firm promise involved in these conversations, and their insistence was accepted. The statesmen did not realise that, in a sense, they were committed all the same.¹

This tacit pre-war commitment of the British Government to 'pre-programmed' plans was to have serious consequences for the outcome of the crisis.

Conclusions.

Systemic factors undoubtedly play a part in explaining the escalation of the crisis into war. However, it is argued that certain commentators have overstressed the irresistibility of such factors in order to mask policy failure. It has already been noted that the perceived threat to British interests was not as clearcut as authors such as Grey would have us believe. Furthermore, Britain was not under any binding formal commitments to aid France, or for that matter Belgium. Thus, the key failure on the part of British decision-makers was to allow a small body of individuals, prior to the war, to formulate British foreign policy. When faced with an uncertain situation, in which available time for decision-making was limited, the full Cabinet found itself under pressure to accept the views of these statesmen and acquiesce in the initiation of pre-programmed responses.

1. Taylor, op. cit. p. 28.

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The selection of the intervention option was undoubtedly a product of multipolar alliance concerns during this period. But, the nature of British 'strategic requirements' within the 'international system', which gave rise to inflexible pre-war contingency plans, was dictated by the cognitions of individuals who functioned relatively free of extensive domestic debate and control. What follows, therefore, is a discussion of the impact which this was to have on the practice of effective crisis management motivated by a duality of purpose.

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Duality of Purpose in the Pre-Nuclear Era.

While being engaged in a competitive relationship, decision-makers during superpower crisis must also limit their risk-taking in order to avoid potential escalation to nuclear war. Williams states:

It is apparent therefore that the basic prerequisite for an attempt at crisis management is the assumption on the part of all the antagonists that they have more to lose than they have to gain by going to war against one another.¹

Such a perception is not generally regarded as being a fundamental characteristic of the balance of power era. For almost a hundred years prior to 1914, war had been employed in a limited manner in the pursuit of circumspect political aims. Statesmen did not assume that the risks involved in a resort to arms undermined its use as a rational tool of policy.

But, this does not imply that relations between the Great Powers of the period were marked by no definition of common interest. Osgood argues:

Where mutual restraints have operated between belligerents, they have evolved from the practice of war and politics in a congenial political, social, and moral environment. In general, this environment has been characterized by three primary conditions, aside from the inherent physical limits of the military means available: (a) a political system based upon the mutual self-interest of all nations in limiting their pursuit of power; (b) the existence of habitual personal and group loyalties transcending state boundaries; and (c) general agreement among

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 54.

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states as to the rational and moral validity, that is, the legitimacy, of the rules by which they regulate their conduct in politics and war.¹

During the period 1815 - 1914, the conduct of relations between states was left in the hands of a remarkably small number of statesmen. Geoffrey Barraclough states that such 'circles':

...varied, naturally, a little from country to country, not quite the same mixture in Britain as in France, or in France as in Germany; but what all had in common, rather like the feudal aristocracy of medieval Europe, was a consciousness, irrespective of nationality, of belonging by right, birth,² or prescription to a privileged ruling class.²

When analysing these elites, Osgood identifies:

...a consciousness of kind, rooted in the close personal and family ties of the aristocracy - a sense of corporate identity apart from national identity, which enabled them to conduct the affairs of state somewhat in the spirit of members of the same sporting club.³

For Osgood, this "corporate identity" exerted a moderating influence in the conduct of international relations. Although war was still regarded as a rational act, such elites practised restraint both in formulating the scope of their aims and in the means they employed to achieve them.

1. Osgood, op. cit. p. 76.

2. Barraclough, op. cit. p. 55.

3. Osgood, op. cit. p. 83.

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Osgood notes that even up to the outbreak of the first world war, statesmen could still profess a certain amount of supranational empathy. Therefore, while war was not eradicated in the balance of power era, the sense of cross national identity and the comparative lack of national fervour or ideology limited its use. Statesmen indulged in the politics of 'expediency' and would go to war confident that the violence would neither escalate uncontrollably nor result in the mass destruction of society.

An implication of this characterisation of the balance of power period is that the realms of foreign and domestic politics were more sharply divided than in the contemporary world of mass communications, multinational corporations, international financial markets and intergovernmental organisations. The boundaries between foreign and domestic politics have become increasingly eroded by the forces of technology, industrialisation and mass participation in the political process. But, during the balance of power era, the forces of participatory democracy and industrial development were comparatively weak. Osgood observes:

Democracy and nationalism worked hand in hand undermining the restraints of the old regime. The Industrial Revolution uprooted the common man from his familiar patterns of existence; the spread of democracy dissolved his traditional loyalties and taught him that he was master of his fate. Having been liberated from the old regime, the people recovered a sense of purpose and belonging by identifying themselves with a national entity, believed to possess distinct characteristics of exclusive virtue...¹

1. Osgood, op. cit. p. 84.

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It is naive to suggest that the spread of mass communications and popular participation in the political process has totally invalidated the idea of foreign policy 'elites' acting in an arcane world of 'international relations'. However, prior to the crisis of 1914, the conduct of foreign policy was left in the hands of small numbers of specialists who conducted foreign affairs with more autonomy and with far less public debate than is the case today.

Although such factors may have moderated the scale of interstate competition early in the balance of power era, they are also regarded as contributing to the mass destruction of the first world war. Foreign policy elites failed to recognise how the forces of nationalism, technology and industrialisation were changing the nature of warfare. In the decade before the war, British foreign policy specialists were allowed to establish a complex range of tacit pledges and pre-programmed routines with other European powers as a response to their perceptions of British strategic interest. Yet, they did so under the illusion that, in the event of German mobilisation, Britain would not be under any sort of 'obligation' to intervene. Furthermore, they formulated such plans without informing either their colleagues or the public of the scope of British intervention which was envisaged.

This state of affairs on the eve of the crisis was to have a profound influence on the prospects for duality of purpose in crisis management.

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Duality of Purpose: July 1914.

Of all the analytical methods used to examine crisis and crisis management, content analysis is perhaps the one most concerned with patterns of information flows. In Crisis Escalation War, Ole Holsti states that his argument is based on written data obtained from a "sub-set" of documents:

...written by or on behalf of designated top-ranking foreign-policy officials...Persons occupying such positions as head of state, head of government, or foreign minister were included, unless there was a clear indication that they had no part whatsoever in the formulation of policies. Several other persons who played a prominent part during the crisis were added to this list.¹

Holsti lists these players in tabulated form.² For the five nations in this table, Holsti cites less than thirty people as being responsible for the formulation of foreign policy between June and August 1914. In no country was the unit of analysis larger than eight (Austria-Hungary). A.J.P. Taylor observes:

On the continent the decision lay in the hands of individuals: the foreign minister, the ruler, and to some extent the chief-of-staff. In Austria-Hungary, it was Berchtold and Franz Joseph; in Russia, Sasonov and the Tsar; in Germany, Bethmann and Wilhelm II. The question hardly arose in France where there was no decision to make. But even here Viviani settled policy so far as there was one, with encouragement from Poincare. If any of these foreign ministers had acted differently, the decisions would have been different. The councils of ministers, where

1. Holsti, op. cit. pp. 43-44.

2. Ibid. p. 45.

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they existed, were rarely informed and never consulted. For all practical purposes, they played no part in the crisis.¹

It has already been noted that some analysts make a distinction between the way decisions were made on the continent and in Britain. But, given the structure of the decision-making group, it is argued that the task of persuading the Cabinet was less difficult than has been implied. The prospects for crisis management motivated by a duality of purpose were, therefore, largely determined by the attitudes of individual decision-makers. Because one of the most important and influential of these was Sir Edward Grey, analysis will concentrate on the Foreign Secretary's concerns during this period and should yield some interesting insights into why the crisis degenerated into a total and catastrophic war.

First, it must be noted that such observations are not intended to convey the impression that Grey acted in a total vacuum, completely divorced from the concerns the Cabinet. Between July 29 - August 1 his colleagues were deeply divided, and according to Robbins, Grey's "reticence" at this stage was, "due to the delicate balance of opinion within the Cabinet."² Grey himself states: "It was clear to me that no authority would be obtained from the Cabinet to give the pledge for which France pressed more and more urgently, and that to press the Cabinet for a pledge would be fatal."³ Indeed, Robbins argues that: "Left to himself, he would

1. Taylor, op. cit. p. 104.

2. Robbins, op. cit. p. 294.

3. Grey, op. cit. Vol. I. p. 334.

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probably have been more forthcoming."¹ At this stage, Grey appears to have been engaged in a precarious sort of juggling act. He had to balance the conflicting demands of the European powers with division in Cabinet.

Nevertheless, during the crisis, Grey did act with a surprising amount of independence. This is illustrated, for example, by the unofficial and unauthorised issuing of a 'warning' to Lichnowsky on July 29. Furthermore, when commenting on the German bid for neutrality, Grey states:

The proposal made to us meant everlasting dishonour if we accepted it...If it was dishonouring and impossible to accept the price and the conditions here offered, what other price or conditions could they require in British interests that were not dishonouring to Britain? The answer was clear - there were none.²

The reply was drafted by Grey on 30 July and begins: "His Majesty's Government cannot for a moment entertain the Chancellor's proposal that they should bind themselves to neutrality on such terms."³ Grey notes:

I took this to Asquith in 10 Downing Street. There was to be a Cabinet that afternoon, but we agreed that the answer might be sent without waiting for the Cabinet. Time pressed, and it was certain that the Cabinet would agree that this bid for neutrality could not be accepted.⁴

1. Robbins, op. cit. p. 294.

2. Grey, op. cit. Vol. I. pp. 326-327.

3. In *ibid.* p. 327.

4. *Ibid.* p. 329.

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What is of interest is not the acceptability of the German proposals, but the speed with which Grey and Asquith acted. Keith Robbins considers that: "It is right to stress that Grey did feel a sense of moral obligation, though it is too simple to suppose that his calculations in this crisis can be reduced in any easy fashion..."¹ Surely, the formulation of a response to this request for neutrality ought to be regarded as a proper concern of the full Cabinet, no matter how 'dishonourable' Grey, and presumably Asquith, thought it might be.

Robbins also goes on to note that: "The sense of moral commitment was real but it was...allied to a strong calculation of interest."² However, for other members of the Cabinet, threat to the strategic balance was far from uniformly or clearly perceived. On which criteria, therefore, did Grey base this "strong calculation"? In the wake of Germany's veto of the Conference proposal, Grey notes:

...now something that had always been an uncomfortable suspicion in the background came to the front and took more definite and ugly shape. There were forces other than Bethmann-Hollweg in the seat of authority in Germany...The precedent of 1870 was ominous ; we all knew how Prussian militarism had availed itself of this time and season of the year at which to strike. The same time and season of the year were now approaching. From the moment that Bethmann-Hollweg vetoed a Conference, without qualification, without condition or reservation suggested on which a Conference might be agreed to, I felt that he would not be allowed₃ to make a peaceful end to the negotiations.³

1. Robbins, op. cit. p. 297.

2. Ibid.

3. Grey, op. cit. Vol. I. pp. 322-324.

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Yet, similar fears appear to have concerned Grey long before the advent of the crisis. Chapter XIX in Volume II of Twenty Five Years, is entitled: "Could War Have Been Prevented?"

Reference to the subtitles listed at the start of this chapter is instructive:

Difficulties of dealing with Germany -
Absence of Good-Will - Persistence of Naval
Competition - Imputation of Hidden Motives -
The Atmosphere of Militarism - The Vicious
Circle of Armaments - Creating Fear...¹

Clearly, in the decades before the war, Grey had been motivated by a perception that Germany was a competitor. In contrast to the superpower relationship, the recognition of such competition was not marked by definitions of common interest. Grey argues that ill-will, mistrust, militarism and the naval arms race, "were the conditions that made it impossible for British and German minds to have real contact."² These assumptions contributed both to Britain's tacit pre-war entanglement in pre-programmed military plans and to Grey's, "almost fatalistic attitude" during the crisis. Hazelhurst states that:

Grey's critics later attributed his almost fatalistic attitude to the crippling effect of his policy from 1906 to 1914. Why did he refuse to state plainly, even on August 3, terms on which Great Britain would either join in or stand apart from a continental war?...

...When the facts relating to the Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian naval and military conversations were made public, it was possible to interpret Grey's unenterprising

1. Grey, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 47.

2. Ibid. p. 50.

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diplomacy in another way. Parliament had been told in response to repeated enquiries, that there were no engagements restricting Britain's freedom of action in Europe. Clearly, if there were no engagements, no pledge of assistance could be given to France or Russia. But, as Grey revealed on August 3, the government's obligations obviously went further than had ever been admitted...His own, and Asquith's lack of candour about pre-war policy, not any constitutional nicety, was the stumbling block.¹

In this sense, despite last minute attempts to avert war, it was always likely that that Grey's own actions would in the end be influenced both by his sense of 'honour' and his knowledge of Britain's tacit promises. As a result, the search for solutions other than intervention and subsequent attempts to limit and control the scope of conflict were severely restricted.

Conclusions.

Effective crisis management based on duality of purpose is regarded as involving a comprehensive search for alternatives and the maintenance of political control over the needs of military logic. The extent of autonomous action before and during the crisis restricted the functioning of these requirements. The cognitions of individuals defined both moral obligation and strategic interest and this led to the inflexible pre-programming of responses. Thus, Britain had become locked into a military schedule which, once initiated, immediately assumed an irresistible logic of its own. British decision-makers failed to prevent the crisis from escalating into war and they failed to recognise the

1. Hazelhurst, op. cit. p. 51.

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consequences of intervention. By allowing a handful of statesmen to conduct policy prior to July 1914, they had fatally undermined the prospects that, when the crisis developed, effective crisis management, based on a duality of purpose, would occur.

It was observed earlier that foreign policy elites during the pre-nuclear era exercised a moderating influence in the conduct of interstate relations. The irony of the crisis of July 1914 is that these very elites were responsible for dragging their colleagues, and their nations, into a vastly destructive war.

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The Nature of Threat.

Threat perceptions during the crisis were far more mixed than some authors have suggested. Of all the British decision-makers (with the possible exception of Churchill), Edward Grey most clearly perceived a severe strategic threat arising from the European situation. His efforts to secure a peaceful solution to the European problem in late July should not be overlooked, but when faced by the prospect of German mobilisation, and being cognizant of British 'understandings' with other nations, he actively (if somewhat fatalistically) supported intervention on the French side.

Such clarity of threat perception cannot be identified in the attitudes of many of Grey's Cabinet colleagues. There is ample evidence to suggest that, at least until August 1, a significant element of the Cabinet clung to the hope that Britain need not get involved. For these members of the Cabinet, external events were less crucial than was the threat to the continuation of the Liberal Government. In this sense, intervention not so much a response to perceived strategic problems as it was a product of political bargaining within Cabinet. Intervention was largely a compromise policy designed to ameliorate domestic political problems.

The Impact of Limited Time.

Seven days is regarded as being the length of the crisis preceding the first world war. Such a duration is considerably shorter than either the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 or the Suez crisis of 1956. Thus, while there are obvious technological disparities in communications and

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weapons systems between the pre-nuclear and nuclear ages, the emphasis remains on periods of hours, days and weeks rather than months or years.

The timespan of the crisis adversely affected the comprehensive search for alternative policies. But, this duration was not solely a product of the uncontrollable pace of external events. Although the Cabinet was warned on July 24, it did not engage in crisis management until 29 July. A significant increase in decision-making time was available, yet, for a full five days, statesmen appeared content to leave the Foreign Secretary in control of the direction of policy.

The Element of Surprise.

Unlike those involved in the Suez crisis or the Falklands conflict, decision-makers in 1914 were not confronted by an unforeseen fait accompli. As has been noted, they were first informed of increasing tension in Europe on 24 July. While they might not have been aware of the precise pattern which events were to follow, it is suggested that they were given a clear warning well in advance of the advent of the crisis.

An aspect of the surprise criterion which has been discussed earlier is the idea that novel events might facilitate the adoption of innovative solutions. However, during the crisis, decision-makers did not adopt any 'new' procedures. In the face of high threat and limited time, they fell back on preexisting habits and attitudes in deciding to intervene. Furthermore, they did so with an astonishing lack of regard for the consequences of their action.

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Structure of the Decision-Making Group.

The full Cabinet remained the central decision-making group. Its lack of specialisation and the structural weakness of the non-intervention grouping meant that the preferred policies of a numerically inferior coalition were selected.

Although the Cabinet was the formal centre of decision-making, this should not be allowed to mask the fact that individual statesmen enjoyed a surprising degree of autonomy of action. Hence, the inordinate powers such decision-makers wielded restricted the functioning of 'collective' decision-making.

Duality of Purpose in the Balance of Power System.

Systemic factors certainly play a part in explaining why the crisis of July 1914 escalated uncontrollably into full-scale war. But, blaming the 'march of events' totally on inherent weaknesses in the balance of power system is not as convincing an argument as some authors would have us believe.

The inflexible structure of British military plans was certainly a product of the dominant military rationale of the period. Strategic threat to the security of the state required rapid, mass mobilisation and immediate entry into the continental war in a prearranged manner. While in this sense the systemic context was of crucial influence, the definition of British interests was formulated prior to the crisis by a handful of decision-makers who were largely divorced from domestic debate and control. In the past, foreign policy elites may have moderated the scale of interstate conflict. In the decade before the first world war, they failed to recognise that the forces of industrialisation, advances in technology, the spread of mass

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participation in the political process and the rise of nationalism had brought about a profound change in the nature of war. Autonomy, and the apparent willingness of other statesmen to delegate responsibility for foreign affairs, directly led to the tacit establishment of a complex set of pre-arranged routines in order to counter the perceived threat of German dominance on the continent.

Thus, the 'march of events' during the crisis of July 1914 was irresistible because of the failure on the part of decision-makers in the pre-war years, not because of inherent weaknesses in the structure of the balance of power system. The estimation of British strategic interests was left in the hands of a very few individuals who failed to appreciate the increasing destructive capability of the European states. As a result, when the crisis erupted, most decision-makers had little idea as to the nature and of British military commitments. The inflexibility of these plans restricted the search for alternatives that might avert conflict and, once they were initiated, automatically limited the extent to which effective political control could be maintained.

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The Nature of Threat: Suez 1956.

During this crisis, identification of the nature of threat perceptions proves to be a complex task. The nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company in 1956 cannot be said to have elicited perceptions of strategic threat in the same sense as did, for example, the American discovery of the building of Soviet nuclear missile bases on Cuban soil in 1962. When comparing the nature and level of threat perceptions between these two crises, it becomes apparent that one is dealing with completely different orders of magnitude. The logic of deterrence demands a stable balance. Attempting to alter that balance risks entering into a process of escalation, the final threshold of which may well be the awful spectre of all-out nuclear war between the two superpowers. For American policy-makers, this was a perceived risk during the Cuban missile crisis. In 1956, the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company did not elicit anything like such fears in the minds of Eden's Cabinet.

Nationalisation was not even carried out violently. In reference to Nasser's speech of 26 July, Lloyd observes:

Then followed...the reference to 'de lesseps' which was the code word for the occupation of the Suez Canal Company's property, by force if necessary, the nationalisation of the Company, the proclamation of military law in the Canal Zone, and the order that the company's [sic] employees, including foreigners, must remain at their posts under threat of long terms of imprisonment if they failed to do so. Egyptian troops and police proceeded to take the planned action.¹

1. Selwyn Lloyd, Suez 1956. A Personal Account (London: Jonathon Cape, 1978).
pp. 73-74.

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There is little doubt that had Egyptian forces met with resistance bloodshed would have ensued, but the rapidity of nationalisation prevented this from occurring. In these senses, nationalisation neither militarily threatened the continued existence of British society nor was it carried out in such a way that British lives and property in Egypt were destroyed. Yet, the fact remains that force was used, while during the Cuban missile crisis, when threat perceptions were clearer and greater, a military engagement was avoided.

The most obvious aspect of threat perceptions arising from the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company was economic. The Suez Canal was a major artery for the transport of imports to Britain as well as being an avenue to the remaining bases in the Far East. Hugh Thomas notes:

Britain was the country most affected since the Government owned a controlling interest (forty-five per cent) of the shares in the Company...Slightly less than a quarter of British imports came through the Canal. A third of the ships passing through the Canal were British (4,358 out of 14,666 in 1955). Eden believed that Britain had in July about six weeks' reserves of oil, at most, though in this matter the Prime Minister...was misinformed.¹

Whether Eden was misinformed or not is less crucial than the observation that the nationalisation of the Canal Company was perceived to be a serious threat to the future economic wellbeing of the country. A concern shown in the telegram sent by Eden to Eisenhower on 27 July:

1. Hugh Thomas, The Suez Affair (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967). pp. 31-31.

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The immediate threat is to the oil supplies to Western Europe, a great part of which flows through the Canal. We have reserves in the United Kingdom which would last us for six weeks; and the countries of Western Europe have stocks, rather smaller as we believe, on which they could draw for a time....Apart from the Egyptians' complete lack of technical qualifications, their past behaviour gives no confidence that they can be trusted to manage it with any sense of international obligation.¹

These early fears for the security of Western oil supplies appear to have become greater as the crisis progressed. Eden's communication with Eisenhower, dated 6 September, states:

There are some who doubt whether Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait will be prepared even for a time to sacrifice their oil revenues for the sake of Nasser's ambitions. But if we place ourselves in their position I think the dangers are clear. If Nasser says to them, 'I have nationalized the Suez Canal. I have successfully defied eighteen powerful nations including the United States, I have defied the whole of the United Nations in the matter of the Israel blockade, I have expropriated all Western property. Trust me and withhold oil from Western Europe. Within six months or a year, the continent of Europe will be on its knees before you.' Will the Arabs not be prepared to follow this lead?²

Eden was not alone in making such assessments. David Carlton observes:

It is right to state...that extreme assessments of what was at stake in the Autumn of 1956 were then widely held in Great

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1. In David Carlton, Britain and the Suez Crisis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988). Appendix I. pp. 113-114.
 2. Ibid. Appendix I. p. 122.

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Britain. Much of the popular press, for example, makes extraordinary reading with the hindsight of more than three decades. And so does a perusal of the speeches of many Conservative MPs, and not only members of the 'Suez Group'. And even among Eden's closest associates in the Cabinet apocalyptic views were clearly held.¹

However, the accuracy of such "apocalyptic views" were not universally acknowledged. For example, in the reply to Eden on 8 September 1956, the President states:

... you are making Nasser a much more important figure than he is... Further you apparently believe that there would soon result an upheaval of the Arab nations out of which Nasser would emerge as the acknowledged leader of Islam. This, I think, is a picture too dark and is severely distorted...²

Eisenhower clearly believed that the significance of Nasser's nationalisation of the Canal Company was being exaggerated in the United Kingdom. If we assume that British decision-makers of the period were thinking rationally, how can this apparent exaggeration be explained? It might be argued that the key to understanding the nature of the threat perceived by British decision-makers rests neither in the military nor purely economic implications of the Egyptian action, but in the political.

Egyptian opposition to British influence in the Middle East had been demonstrated prior to the advent of the Suez crisis. Of the meeting between Nasser and Eden on 20 February 1955, David Carlton notes:

1. Carlton, op. cit. p. 45.

2. Ibid. Appendix I. p. 123.

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...an ominous failure to agree on a central issue. The fundamental divergence arose over Eden's obvious approval of the conservative-minded government of Iraq led by Nuri es-Said, which had just forged with Turkey an agreement, which had come to be known as the Baghdad Pact. The British obviously intended to adhere to this Pact - they did so formally in April 1955 - and hoped then to recruit other Middle Eastern states as well as the United States. At his Cairo meeting with Eden, Nasser made it unmistakably clear, however, that Egypt would not praise the Pact let alone join it and that he resented Iraq being built up into such a central regional role.¹

According to Carlton, the Pact was something of an obsession for Eden who, "saw it as the key to the security of the entire Middle East"² against potential penetration of the Soviet Union. Concerns about the growth of Soviet influence in the Middle Eastern area must also have been fuelled by the announcement in September 1955 of the Egyptian-Czechoslovak arms deal. Lloyd states that:

...Egypt was to receive MIG fighters, Ilyushin jet bombers, Stalin Mark III tanks, Czech T34 tanks and other heavy equipment. This dramatically changed the balance of power in the Middle East....The Arabs attributed Egypt's defeat by Israel in 1948 to the failure of Farouk's corrupt regime to arm the Egyptian Army with modern weapons. The Western powers had been stingy in doling out arms to them since. Therefore, the prospect of vast quantities of modern weapons from behind the Iron curtain delighted them.³

1. Carlton, op. cit. pp. 23-24.

2. Ibid. p. 24.

3. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 28.

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Not only was Egypt under the Nasser regime regarded as forging dangerously close links with the Eastern bloc, it was also considered to be actively organising opposition to British strategies designed to curtail Soviet penetration into the region.

Egyptian resistance to the Baghdad Pact was to have a variety of effects on the power structure of the Middle East. In reference to the Cairo meeting between Eden and Nasser, David Carlton observes:

That Egypt would stand out was something Eden initially felt able to live with, and hence he did not at first see the Cairo meeting as a total failure. But what astonished him in the ensuing months was that Egypt proved capable of mobilizing vocal opposition to the Pact throughout the Middle East and was able to use nationalistic broadcast propaganda with such sophistication that not one Arab state could be persuaded to join Iraq in membership. For Iraq this was a catastrophe. It not only meant the eventual collapse of the security arrangement Iraq had pioneered, it also had serious domestic implications. The conservative monarchy in Baghdad was gradually to be destabilized and was eventually overthrown in a bloody coup in 1958. The exclusive association with the British-sponsored Pact proved fatal for the regime.¹

The Egyptian regime was thought to be responsible for the undermining of British influence in other 'client state' relationships. On 1 March 1956, King Hussein of Jordan dismissed General Sir John Glubb from his position as head of the army. The dismissal of Glubb was regarded as a sign that the Jordanian Government was distancing itself from British influence in order to appease internal pro-Nasser elements.

1. Carlton, op. cit. pp. 24-25.

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Glubb, the last of the pashas, had become something of a symbol of the dependent status of Jordan on the United Kingdom. His dismissal, therefore, was yet another blow to British prestige in the region. Carlton states:

What caused dismay to Eden, however, was not the dismissal per se. What led him to overreact were two particular aspects of the matter. One was the abrupt and undiplomatic manner in which so distinguished a soldier had been treated. Secondly, and more important, was the belief that the hand of Nasser was behind the move.¹

Prior to the events of July 1956, the behaviour of the Egyptian government had been fuelling fears about the undermining of British prestige and the growth of Eastern bloc influence in the region. Thus, Nasser's rise to prominence in the Arab world was already a matter of serious concern for British decision-makers.

Indeed, the nationalisation of the Canal Company, coming as it did after a series of setbacks in British policy, represented a threat to the personal political position of Eden himself. According to David Carlton: "Eden could only endure a limited number of further such humiliations before his future as Prime Minister would be brought into question."² Besides the dismissal of Glubb, Eden was also subject to criticism, primarily from the so-called 'Suez group' of backbench Conservative M.P's, for the 'scuttle' from the Suez military bases which had been completed in June

1. Carlton, op. cit. p. 28.

2. Ibid. p. 30.

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1956. Nationalisation, therefore, occurred at a particularly bad time for a Prime Minister already vulnerable to charges of weakness and indecisiveness in his style of leadership.

But, Robert Rhodes James notes:

...at no point in his long career had he been anything but unsympathetic to extreme right-wing Conservative Imperialism now once again typified by the Suez Group and its adherents in the Party outside Westminster. He did not remotely belong to the same political school as the MP Captain Charles Waterhouse or the Jingo sections of the British press, and he had no reason to feel any gratitude to, or respect for, these elements, who had worked so sedulously to portray him as weak and ineffectual. He was certainly not prepared to court them; to have their ringing endorsement and support...was not particularly welcome.¹

Although James does concede that it would be wrong to entirely rule out personal political considerations, he argues that these pressures arose not so much from the need of an embattled leader to maintain his position than from the personal feelings of the man. James is of the opinion that the Prime Minister:

...had a detestation of dishonest and dishonourable politicians...
Thus, in Eden's eyes, what Nasser had done was a callous betrayal of his solemn pledges and agreements, which was despicable in itself, and he was clearly a man without integrity or reason. He now posed a grievous threat to British and Western interests that was intolerable. As all close to him quickly realized, Eden was now consumed with a real personal hatred of Nasser and all he represented...Like the French, from the outset of the Suez Canal crisis he was

1. R.R. James, Anthony Eden (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986). pp. 456-457.

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determined to destroy this new Mussolini. How this was to be achieved was a more complex matter, but this was his objective.¹

Yet, Carlton states:

...nobody becomes a British Prime Minister without possessing acute instincts for political survival. Hence historians are entitled to wonder whether Eden failed to overcome his phobia about Nasser and to give sufficient weight to Eisenhower's powerful counter-arguments essentially for reasons of personal political calculation. For the fact was that a repetition in the Suez context of his conduct over the Glubb affair - initial rage followed by cooler second thoughts - might well have been fatal to his entire authority.²

Conclusions.

The nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company, in July 1956, was considered by those responsible for the formulation of policy to be a situation which threatened not only the high priority interests of the state, but also their own political positions. For the Prime Minister in particular, it represented a serious personal attack. However, such political considerations have roots in the earlier behaviour of the Nasser regime. In this sense, the act of nationalisation did not create perceptions of political threat, it exacerbated existing perceptions of political threat.

Therefore, the nationalisation of the Canal Company was seen as an opportunity for Eden and his colleagues to rid themselves, once and for all, of the menace of Colonel

1. James, op. cit. p. 457.

2. Carlton, op. cit. p. 46.

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Nasser. Analysis of threat perceptions must take into account the temptation, in the minds of key decision-makers, to exaggerate the level of threat in order to justify the implementation of policies which were actually intended to achieve objectives other than merely restoring the Canal to British control. This observation is reinforced by reference to the Cabinet minutes of 9 August:

It would be highly embarrassing, to say the least, to have to invite Parliament to approve a proposal to launch a military operation against Egypt. If the issue were put to Parliament at that stage, such division of opinion as there was in the country would tend to be accentuated. It would not be easy for the Government to proceed with their intentions on the basis of a relatively narrow majority in a division in the House of Commons. These considerations seemed to point to the conclusion that any military act against Egypt should be launched in retaliation against some aggressive or provocative act by the Egyptians.¹

At this stage, the Cabinet was aware that military action was not justified as a response to the Egyptian fait accompli. Yet, it also appears that the desire to use force against Nasser was, nonetheless, firmly rooted.

The combination of these factors supports the view that a resort to arms was not entirely a response to perceptions of threat arising from the act of nationalisation. Furthermore, threat perceptions were not solely the product of strategic concerns. They were far more mixed and far from uniformly perceived. In this sense, military action was not a means to achieve clear or circumspect aims. It is suggested

1. In Carlton, op. cit. p. 44. CAB 134/1216 (Confidential Annex), PRO.

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that force was initiated in order to bring about the downfall of the whole Nasser regime and that nationalisation was used as a political excuse to escalate the conflict between British and Egyptian decision-makers. An implication of this is that the Suez affair became a crisis, and the probability of use of force increased, because a number of British decision-makers wanted it so.

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The Impact of Limited Time: Suez 1956.

On 26 July 1956, the Suez Canal Company was nationalised by the Egyptian Government. This is the date which marks the 'beginning' of the Suez crisis. Immediately after this date, some significant changes occurred in the process of decision-making in Britain. According to Selwyn Lloyd, on 27 July the Cabinet, "agreed that an Egypt committee should be set up."¹ This committee was to function as the specialist decision-making unit responsible for the management of the Suez problem. Thus, the nationalisation of the Canal Company and the rapid changes in the structure of British decision-making processes are clear indications of the advent of the crisis.

The date which marks the 'end' of the Suez affair is less clear. There are arguments to be made for selecting 9 January 1957, when Eden resigned, or 24 April 1957, when the Suez canal was reopened. However, 6 November 1956 stands out as a key temporal boundary because after this date British decision-makers had lost effective control. Although the Egypt Committee continued to meet and British forces did not pull out of Egypt until December, after 6 November the policy selected by British decision-makers in response to nationalisation had failed. As David Carlton states: "it is doubtful whether the British Cabinet in reality had had [sic] any practical alternative other than to agree to a ceasefire as matters stood on 6 November."²

Admittedly, the proposed length of the Suez affair (26 July to 6 November) is quite long when compared with other crises. Unlike the Cuban missile crisis, it appears that

1. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 85.

2. Carlton, op.cit. p. 85.

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there was no clearly perceived imperative to fashion a response by a particular date. Had Nasser, for example, issued an ultimatum announcing the impending nationalisation of the Canal Company, British decision-makers would have been placed under considerable pressure to intervene before such action occurred. But, Selwyn Lloyd's account of how he first learned of Nasser's nationalisation of the Canal Company is revealing:

I was at the dinner at No. 10 Downing Street given by Eden in honour of the King of Iraq when the news came through....The views of the Iraqis about Nasser were very close to Eden's and mine, and we had reached the stage of complete distrust of him. I had had a word or two with Nuri. His advice was that we should hit Nasser hard and quickly. The story that the dinner broke up before it was over, in confusion and alarm, is shown to be nonsense by a curious little anecdote...After our Iraqi guests had left, we were to go a meeting in the Cabinet Room. Salisbury had to go up to Kilmuir and say, 'Are you coming to the meeting?' When Kilmuir replied that he was, Salisbury said, 'You realise that no one can leave the room until the Lord Chancellor does?' Protocol rather than panic, apparently, was still the order of the day.¹

Other than a recognition of the need to react 'quickly', the initial timespan of the Suez affair was dependent entirely upon which options British decision-makers decided to select. This is very different from a situation such as the Cuban missile crisis, during which the available time for response was largely determined by estimates of the speed with which the Soviet Union could complete the construction of the missile bases.

1. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 74.

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Early considerations about the nature of the British response to Nasser's nationalisation of the Company included the prospect of employing military action, as illustrated, for example, by Anthony Eden's telegram to Eisenhower on 27 July:

As we see it we are unlikely to attain our objective by economic pressures alone...My colleagues and I are convinced that we must be ready, in the last resort, to use force to bring Nasser to his senses. For our part we are prepared to do so. I have this morning instructed our Chiefs of Staff to prepare a military plan accordingly.¹

Although Eden stresses that the use of force was to be a "last resort", one cannot help but wonder whether he would have authorised immediate military action had the resources been at hand. Of course, such a question can never be answered, since by the Cabinet meeting of that morning it had become apparent that the rapid deployment of a large military force could not be carried out immediately. Eden notes some of the problems:

Unless the action could have been carried through exclusively by airborne troops, there was no alternative to an expedition from Malta. Unless we could fly all the forces needed, they had to swim. The nearest place from which to swim was Malta, a thousand miles away. Cyprus has no sufficient harbour for landing-craft or transports. There is no escape from these logistics. We had nothing like enough airborne troops for an operation of this kind. The French had more, but together we could not have mustered a full division with artillery support. The follow-

1. Anthony Eden, Full Circle (London: Cassell and Co., 1960). p. 428.

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up would have taken several weeks to organize, even with the most brilliant improvisation.¹

The state of British preparedness on 27 July is of interest because it gave British decision-makers a temporal framework within which other non-violent options could be explored, or at least be seen to be explored.

Selwyn Lloyd strongly emphasises that various options were considered by the Cabinet and the Egypt Committee. When discussing the meetings of 31 July, he observes: "Looking at the records of a day like this made me laugh at the idea subsequently canvassed that Eden, without thought or consultation with his colleagues, plunged the country into military operations against Nasser."² However, David Carlton is of the opinion that:

Eden's initial privately expressed desire at the end of July to use force, unilaterally if necessary, to reverse Nasser's seizure of the Canal is of course undoubted. Indeed, on 30 July at a meeting of the Egypt Committee...the Prime Minister and his closest advisers agreed that their aim should not just be settling their Canal grievance but the removal from power of Nasser himself.³

Both observations should be considered in the light of the realisation that military action could not be initiated for a period of at least several weeks. No matter how strong was Eden's "desire" to resort to arms, he could not immediately 'plunge' the country into hostilities against Egypt. But,

1. Eden, op. cit. p. 430.

2. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 94.

3. Carlton, op. cit. p. 36.

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even if one accepts that there was an initial bias on Eden's part towards a military operation, there still remains a substantial time lag between the earliest possible use of force and actual military engagement.

A factor which contributed to this disparity was that the military plan itself was subject to constant delays. The original aim of attacking Alexandria had been decided on by 10 August, and planning had been developed with this objective in mind. In early September this goal was revised. James notes:

At this point the Chiefs of Staff and the military force commanders made a remarkable volte-face, which has never been fully explained. The Port Said option had been definitely abandoned, and all planning had been for the Alexandria landing. Now, on 7 September, in a paper circulated by Monckton on their behalf...they had returned to the Port Said option. This had been the first, and rejected, proposal of the British Joint Planning Staff, and its unexpected resurrection caused Eden and the Egypt Committee understandable consternation.

It has frequently been alleged that this was a political decision made by Eden on grounds of national and international opinion, whereas exactly the opposite was the case.¹

If the source of the revision was indeed the military, it would have been hard for members of the Egypt Committee to ignore the advice of both the Chiefs of Staff and the Minister of Defence. 'Musketeer revise' was accepted by the Egypt Committee on September 10. The revised plan was to be further dogged by delays right through until early November, as James states:

1. James, op. cit. pp. 507-508.

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The plan to land airborne troops at El Kantara on the 4th in advance of the general assault on Port Said on the 6th was now deemed too hazardous in view of the Egyptian build-up...

This was disclosed at a meeting of the Egypt Committee at 2.00 p.m. on Saturday 3 November in Eden's room at the House of Commons, as the House was still in turbulent session.

It almost defies belief that, after four months of planning for the operation, the Chiefs of Staff - all present at this meeting - should come up with major changes at this stage...¹

The length of time was actually less than four months, yet James' incredulity is understandable.

Although one might assume that the lack of immediate military capability and the series of revisions in the plan would act as pressures to avoid the selection of this option, it is observed that the military preparations had a certain inner momentum of their own. When describing his concerns in the latter half of October, Lloyd observes:

The military position was worrying. D-Day for the original plan, Musketeer, was 15th September. That had been postponed again and again in the hope of a peaceful settlement. Then Musketeer Revise had had to be substituted for it. This plan was considered to be feasible up to the end of October. By 16th October it was becoming clear that it could not be postponed further. Equipment loaded in the ships was deteriorating. Batteries were running down. Vehicles were becoming unserviceable. Equally important, the reservists were understandably becoming restive.²

1. James, op. cit. p. 564.

2. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 170.

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Having gone so far down the military road, it became more and more difficult to turn back. The advanced state of preparations must have served as a stimulus to overcome planning difficulties and proceed with implementation. Thus, the nature of the military option was itself a source of conflicting pressures on key decision-makers.

A further feature of the time lapse between the Egyptian fait accompli and the military response was that domestic political influences began to intrude. In this sense, the Suez crisis is very different from both the Cuban missile crisis and the crisis preceding the first world war. The initial domestic political reaction to the seizure of the Canal appears to have been one of unanimous indignation and rejection. However, as the crisis progressed, Eden was to be faced with increasing dissent from the Opposition in the House of Commons. During August, for example, Labour Party attitudes began to change in complexion. James notes that:

While ministers - especially the Egypt Committee - grappled with the increasingly complex situation, there were conflicting impressions of Opposition attitudes. Bevan had emerged as strong a denunciator of Nasser as Gaitskell, the latter recording after a Shadow Cabinet meeting that Bevan 'was in no doubt about Nasser being a thug'...But on 24 August Gaitskell had given Dulles the clear impression that half the country would not support the use of force and instead favoured international control, without describing how this might be achieved in the face of Nasser's intransigence. In an interview in the Manchester Guardian at the end of the month, Gaitskell said that 'Nasser is an ambitious military dictator..But, so far, what he has done does not justify armed retaliation'....¹

1. James, op. cit. p. 513.

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In response to reactions from the left of the Party, Gaitskell had to modify his original position and state his disagreement with the proposed military action. The changed mood of the Opposition is illustrated by the reception which was given to Eden's announcement of the Suez Canal User's Association (SCUA) proposal in the House of Commons on 12 September. James states:

Eden ended his speech to a thunderous Conservative ovation and Opposition tumult. Gaitskell, who had known nothing about the User's Association beforehand, protested at the clear threat in Eden's speech, demanded a pledge not to use force contrary to the Charter, and called for more negotiation.¹

As well as opposition in the Commons, the Prime Minister also had to face an increasing division in the ranks of the Conservative Party. As has been observed, some back-benchers already considered Eden to be responsible for the 'scuttle' from the Egypt military bases and he had come under strong attack from the right of the Conservative Party. According to Hugh Thomas, with the advent of the nationalisation crisis:

The pressures on Eden to take a tough attitude were strong. It was not only the Right of the Conservative Party. The Party as a whole had come out of its fifteen-year domination by Churchill specially prizing the bulldog reputation. Further, the nationalisation of the Company seemed to have proved that the old Suez group led by Amery and Waterhouse had been right and that Eden and the moderates had been wrong...²

1. James, op. cit. p. 514.

2. Thomas, op. cit. p. 37.

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Even within the Cabinet and the Egypt Committee, Eden was faced with at least one senior figure, in the person of Harold Macmillan, who constantly pressed for extreme action. Furthermore, those members of the Cabinet and Egypt Committee who had reservations concerning the direction which British policy was taking failed to adequately express their doubts. Monckton, for example, appears not have alerted Eden about his concerns until late in September, as James notes:

On 24 September Monckton wrote to Eden to say that, on the grounds of health alone, he felt he could not continue, but there were other factors, principally differences with colleagues over the size and cost of the armed forces, and the handling of the Suez crisis.¹

After the departure of Monckton, Head was appointed Minister of Defence. James describes him as, "an enthusiast rather than a doubter."² The removal of a moderate and the appointment of a member favouring stronger action might have been a response to the balance of opinion within the Party. It certainly had the effect of distorting the balance of the Egypt Committee and strengthening the impetus towards the adoption of violent measures.

Conclusions.

The period from 26 July - 6 November 1956 does correspond to the formulation of time criterion discussed in previous chapters in that it is a recognisable and relatively short period of time. It should also be noted, however, that such a duration is considerably longer than that of other

1. James, op. cit. p. 524.

2. Ibid. p. 525.

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crises. When assessing the effect that the duration of the Cuban missile crisis had on policy selection, Phil Williams comes to the conclusion that:

...there could be an optimum length of time for the deliberations themselves: sufficiently long for cool assessments of the situation and calculated consideration of alternatives to be made but not so long that the concentration of policy-makers lapses or the decision-making group is subjected to the distorting influences of bureaucratic or domestic politics.¹

Reference to the Suez crisis appears to confirm the idea that there exists both a lower and an upper time limit beyond which effective crisis management becomes increasingly difficult.

In part, the long duration of the Suez crisis was determined by the length of time required to assemble and despatch the armed forces. However, the eventual timespan of was even greater than that originally envisaged by the military schedule. The series of revisions in the plan and conflicting domestic political problems are regarded as two factors which contributed to this delay. Yet, it is suggested that the extent to which such factors influenced the duration of this crisis was dependent on both a lack of clarity in political aims and a failure of political will. Of course, it would be unreasonable to suggest that should military force have been used at the earliest possible juncture the outcome of the Suez affair would have been different. But it is argued that a failure to formulate clear and circumspect

1. Williams, op. cit. p. 75.

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political objectives caused British decision-makers to waver in their commitment to the rapid use of force. This facilitated the intrusion of influences which lengthened the crisis and lessened the chances that effective sub-nuclear crisis management would occur.

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The Element of Surprise: Suez 1956.

There is clear evidence to support the view that nationalisation of the Canal Company surprised British decision-makers. Hugh Thomas observes:

No one seems to have anticipated this move, except, presumably, The Times who on 27 July smugly remarked that it was 'not entirely unexpected'. But between 19 July and 26 July Suez Canal Company shares had actually gone up. In the traditional end-of-session debate in the House of Commons on foreign affairs on 24 and 25 July, only Mrs.¹[sic] Castle had mentioned the Aswan Dam.

As evidence that the Egyptian fait accompli was planned in secret, Selwyn Lloyd notes that on 10 June:

An agreement was signed providing for certain new financial arrangements between the company and the Egyptian Government to come into force, and reaffirming the concession to the company, lasting until 1968...it was important that Britain should have no idea of what he planned..²

It must be stated that this agreement was signed over a month before the United States announced that it would not be providing financial assistance for the Aswan Dam project. Whether the plan to nationalise the Canal Company was prepared prior to this date has not been ascertained, but Lloyd's account implies that the act of nationalisation was a carefully premeditated strategy. A similar idea occurred in the minds of other Western officials. Robert Murphy is of the opinion that:

1. Thomas, op. cit. p. 26.

2. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 70.

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Nasser had used the cancellation of the Aswan deal as his excuse for expropriating the Suez Canal...Our government, however, believed that the seizure and subsequent efficient administration of the Canal gave evidence of considerable forethought. This operation could not have been accomplished on a sudden whim and therefore should not be regarded as retaliatory.¹

Although the validity of this perspective might be open to debate, for the present purpose it is sufficient to accept that the nationalisation of the Canal Company on 26 July 1956 came as a surprise to those responsible for the formulation of British policy.

Given that ministers were surprised at events, were subsequent policies novel? Certainly there are aspects of the management of the Suez affair which merit the use of this term. For example, on 25 September, Eden and Lloyd flew to Paris to confer with French decision-makers. Hugh Thomas notes:

Whatever was decided about Israel, the regular Foreign Service would not be told or consulted. No minutes were kept of these meetings. Eden had...been relying for information about Egypt on a number of dubious secret sources. Now he began to cut himself off from the advice of most of those ambassadors and civil servants with whom he had been working all his life. So far as can be seen only three civil servants were informed fully - the Head of the Foreign Office (Kirkpatrick); the Secretary of the Cabinet (Brook); and the Deputy Under Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, Patrick Dean...In the course of the next weeks, therefore, the British leaders entered into a somewhat unreal world which, though

1. Murphy, op. cit. p. 466.

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doubtless effective when blowing up a train in the Resistance, had certain disadvantages when it was a question of committing 100,000 men to a conventional war.¹

Obviously, the difficulties faced in the management of crises may demand a degree of secrecy in governmental deliberations. Yet, what is interesting about the Anglo-French negotiations from late September is both the extent of such secrecy and the nature of the course of action which was being planned. In reference to the meeting at Chequers on 21 October, Carlton states:

The upshot was the astonishing decision that Lloyd should travel incognito to Paris on the next day, 22 October, to meet French and Israeli leaders. This was probably the most seminal move made by Eden and his colleagues throughout the entire Suez Crisis. For it meant that they were in effect prepared to enter into a direct tripartite conspiracy against Egypt.²

Carlton is entirely justified in using the word "astonishing" to describe such a decision. This is by no means the only example of unusual processes of decision-making. Carlton observes:

On the following day, 23 October, the full Cabinet...was told that: 'From secret conversations which had been held in Paris with representatives of the Israeli Government, it now appeared that the Israelis would not alone launch a full-scale attack against Egypt.' What was not apparently made clear, however, was that Lloyd had personally met Ben-Gurion or that he had discussed terms on which Israel might attack Egypt. Thus,

1. Thomas, op. cit. pp. 91-92.

2. Carlton, op. cit. p. 63.

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perhaps for the first time in the Suez Crisis, the Cabinet was being deceived on what appears to be a major point.¹

Not only were certain British decision-makers secretly conspiring with representatives of other states, they also appear to have been engaged in misleading their fellow Cabinet members.

However, despite the curious nature of such actions, it is argued that the conspiracy was anything but an innovative approach to the management of the Suez crisis. By engaging in secret negotiations and tacitly forging a multipolar alliance, decision-makers were behaving in a manner which would not be out of place in the balance of power era. Furthermore, in the absence of a perceived upper threshold of mass destruction, a challenge to British interests was (unsuccessfully) countered by a resort to arms. In the analysis of the crisis of July 1914 it has been observed that the force of habit played a significant role in the development of policy. When faced with threat, decision-makers in 1914 fell back on preexisting assumptions and routines in adopting the intervention option. It might be argued that a similar process occurred in 1956. In a letter to Eisenhower on September 6, Eden states: "We have many times led Europe in the fight for freedom. It would be an ignoble end to our long history if we tamely accepted to perish by degrees."² A similar attitude was shared by Macmillan. Herman Finer notes:

1. Carlton, op. cit. pp. 65-66. Cabinet quote taken from CAB 128/130 (Confidential Annex), PRO.

2. In *ibid.* Appendix I. p. 123.

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...around September 26, when Macmillan was in Washington, he told General Bedell Smith, one of Eisenhower's favorite friends, that England would go down against Egypt with flags flying rather than submit to the Suez despoliation.¹

Hugh Thomas is of the opinion that, during September: "The shadow of Munich hung...over both the British and French Governments..."² Clearly, Eden and Macmillan were determined not to make the same mistakes as the Chamberlain administration in 1938. But, in formulating a response to nationalisation, British decision-makers adopted a style of policy that was inappropriate to the 'cold war' era. Robert Murphy observes:

...I shared British indignation over Nasser's high-handed action in seizing control of the Canal in defiance of international agreements. But I knew that United States policy opposed the type of eighteenth-century strategy which was in the minds of our friends...³

Conclusions.

Surprise at events is identified in relation to the Suez crisis. However, the response formulated to Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company cannot be regarded as a particularly novel strategy. The secret collusion between British, French and Israeli decision-makers in the plan to retake the Canal bears more of a resemblance to

1. Herman Finer, Dulles Over Suez (London: Heinemann, 1964). p. 278.

2. Thomas, op. cit. p. 84.

3. Murphy, op. cit. pp. 463-464.

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pre-nuclear age crisis behaviour than it does to the management of sub-nuclear crisis. Thus, the singular failure of policy in 1956 was not due to the fact that military action was envisaged, but that it was planned and executed in a fashion entirely at odds with the imperatives of the cold war international system. Britain was a junior partner in an alliance subsystem rigidly controlled and dominated by the United States, it was no longer an imperial power able to engage in gunboat diplomacy at will.

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The Structure of the Decision-Making Group: Suez 1956.

Unlike the crisis of July 1914, the management of the Suez crisis was delegated to a specialist decision-making group. Analysis of the structure of this group should provide some interesting insights into the manner in which decision-makers sought a response to Nasser's nationalisation of the Canal Company, since, as Allison's "Governmental Politics" model illustrates, option selection is profoundly influenced, "not by a single, rational choice but by the pulling and hauling that is politics."¹

The Egypt Committee was established following the Cabinet meeting of 27 July. It was a rapid response to the nationalisation crisis, but British decision-makers at that time had little experience in the construction and running of such a committee. Hugh Thomas notes that: "This special committee of the Cabinet on foreign affairs was, though Eden did not seem to remark the parallel, the first of its sort since the little group of Ministers set up by Neville Chamberlain to run foreign affairs in 1938."² Selwyn Lloyd describes the membership of the group:

Its members were to be Eden, Salisbury, Macmillan, Home, Monckton and myself. In practice, the membership was very fluid; Butler, Thorneycroft, Lennox-Boyd and Watkinson were frequent attenders, and towards the end Heathcoat-Amory.³

1. Allison, op. cit. p. 144.

2. Thomas, op. cit. p. 41.

3. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 85.

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When examining the membership of the Egypt Committee it should be noted that the long duration of the crisis must have been of influence. For example, the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (EXCOM), formed to manage the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, was not subject to any particular degree of personnel fluctuation. However, it is easier for a group of fifteen high-level officials to maintain attendance over a period of thirteen days than over a period of three months. Yet, despite this consideration it appears that the fluidity of membership of the Egypt Committee was inordinately large. Seymour-Ure states:

Different accounts suggest that at least sixteen people attended frequently at one period or another, including apparently peripheral Ministers such as the Ministers [sic] of Agriculture (Heathcoat-Amory) and of Housing and Local Government (Sandys). Eden described the Committee as having six permanent members plus himself and the Chiefs of Staff. There certainly seems to have been a common core, but Eden's description needs glossing. The core was smaller than six in fact, and it was not the same core throughout. The idea of a single, well defined committee is misleading.¹

The following comment by R.R. James illustrates a further feature of the Egypt Committee:

At least one Cabinet member later considered that Eden was very ill served by his senior ministers - Macmillan, Butler and Monckton - recalling that Macmillan was excessively vehement about military action...that Monckton was not only timid but did not share his lack of enthusiasm with his colleagues; and that Butler 'did nothing at all - he

1. Seymour-Ure, op. cit. pp. 4-5.

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simply distanced himself and gave no opinion one way or the other. The rest of us were not only junior, but were overawed by Eden, not because he was the Prime Minister but because of his great reputation in these areas. And so we went along with what we thought was wholly agreed by our seniors'...¹

This group not only had an inner core of senior ministers (which was itself subject to personnel changes), it also had an outer circle of more junior members whose contributions may have been inhibited by the reputations of their senior colleagues.

A marked contrast to the functioning of the Egypt Committee can be found in Allison's reference to Theodore Sorensen's observations of the EXCOM:

The President charged this group to 'set aside all other tasks to make a prompt and intensive survey of the dangers and all possible courses of action. The group functioned as 'fifteen individuals on our own, representing the President and not different departments.' As one of the participants recalls, 'The remarkable aspect of those meetings was a sense of complete equality. Protocol mattered little when the nation's life was at stake. Experience mattered little in a crisis which had no precedent. Even rank mattered little² when secrecy prevented staff support.'...²

It is difficult to accept Sorensen's account without reservation, since the EXCOM was itself subject to internal political games. But, it is suggested that such comments are illustration of a perceptible difference in the degree of gamesmanship at work in the two units.

1. James, op. cit. pp. 494-495.

2. Sorensen in Allison, op. cit. p. 57.

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In analysing the membership of the Egypt Committee, and in particular the inner core of this group, one must call into question the rationale for the selection of certain members. The reasons for the inclusion of Eden (Prime Minister), Macmillan (Chancellor of the Exchequer), Lloyd (Foreign Secretary), Home (Commonwealth Secretary) and Monckton (Minister of Defence) are self evident, however, can one explain the inclusion of Butler and Salisbury in terms of either ministerial responsibility or expertise in relations with Egypt? In fact, Butler was not originally included in the Committee, as Hugh Thomas notes: "The membership of the Suez Committee did not include Butler. He arrived at the group's first meeting and of course was allowed to stay. But in the minutes he was listed as 'Minister in attendance'."¹ Butler was to remain in the Committee throughout the crisis and Seymour-Ure observes:

...by the time the invasion neared he was one of the inner most [sic] group of five Ministers - with Eden, Lloyd, Macmillan and Head (plus Mountbatten, the Chief of Staff) - who took the effective decision to issue an ultimatum to Egypt and Israel. The inclusion of Salisbury, similarly, is to be explained less by his diplomatic experience than by Eden's need to carry the full Cabinet and the party with him.²

It appears that the inclusion of Butler and Salisbury was determined mainly by their internal standing within the Party. Therefore, membership of the Egypt Committee was not solely dictated by the need to manage the external crisis, it was also affected by domestic political considerations.

1. Thomas, op. cit. p. 41.

2. Seymour-Ure, op. cit. p. 5.

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The political determinants in personnel selection, the fluidity of personnel, the existence of a senior inner core and a junior periphery are all factors which cumulatively serve to reinforce the opinion that there were severe imbalances and distortions in the structure of the Egypt Committee. Far from being a forum for the comprehensive analysis of goals, alternatives and consequences, the inherent imbalances apparent in the structure of the Committee meant that it did not function as an efficient crisis management unit.

A potential danger of delegating decision-making to small groups is that it may facilitate the operation of what Phil Williams identifies as, "groupthink"¹ and Seymour-Ure terms, "tunnel vision".² Williams states that:

...crucial shortcomings and imperfections of group decision-making can have a disruptive influence, seriously damaging the quality of the policy that emerges. Although it was suggested...that one of the advantages of a small group was its cohesiveness, this carries with it certain dangers. It can be a drawback as well as a benefit.³

Williams goes on to discuss the possibility that certain members of a decision-making group may suppress their own doubts and reservations in order to safeguard their personal positions and preserve unanimity. This creates a tendency to take greater risks and introduces wider scope for miscalculation.

1. Williams, op. cit. See Chapter 5. Especially pp. 78-83.

2. Seymour-Ure, op. cit. p. 21.

3. Williams, op. cit. p. 78.

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In terms of the Egypt Committee, it is suggested that the functioning of "groupthink" was facilitated not by the cohesiveness and stability of the group, but by its relative fluidity. When this was combined with an uneven power structure there existed considerable pressure towards agreement with, and acceptance of, the policies preferred by the dominant actors. Therefore, the concept of groupthink or tunnel vision, as it has been formulated by Williams and Seymour-Ure, can be a product both of a decision-making group being overly cohesive and also of the decision-making group being insufficiently static. Members who attended meetings of the Egypt Committee intermittently, or were included later in the crisis, would have been under pressure to concur with the judgements of their more senior, longer serving colleagues and the most senior of all was, of course, Eden.

As well as being structurally imbalanced, the role of the Egypt Committee was not clearly defined. For example, Anthony Eden states:

On Saturday morning, July 28th, there was a meeting of the ministerial group which had been set up on the previous day to keep in contact with the situation on behalf of the Cabinet...In the months ahead we held many meetings and the Cabinet were kept in touch with our work.¹

Hugh Thomas is similarly vague: "In London on 27 July a Cabinet committee ('The Suez Committee') with Eden was set up to control the situation."² Given the uncertainties of the situation, a lack of clarity concerning the precise role of

1. Eden, op. cit. p. 432.

2. Thomas, op. cit. pp. 40-41.

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the Egypt Committee during the early stages of the crisis is understandable. A Committee whose role is not exactly defined might be an apt response to an unpredictable international situation. However, this vagueness is of political significance. Seymour-Ure notes:

Such flexibility was bound to increase the Prime Minister's room for political manoeuvre...Vague terms of reference strengthened the Committee as a whole: the fluctuating composition strengthened Eden within it. Suez was 'Eden's War' in a way that Korea could never have been Attlee's, so long as Attlee worked through the clearly organised and regulated Defence Committee.¹

By working through an ad hoc committee that did not function according to standard operating procedures, nor have a clear institutional relationship with the full Cabinet, Eden could exercise even greater personal control over the process of decision-making.

What was the relationship between this ad hoc group and the full Cabinet to be? As early as the meeting on 27 July, the Egypt Committee was making executive decisions, as is illustrated by Lloyd's observation: "That evening the first meeting of the Egypt Committee took place. Orders were authorised under the Exchange Control Act, and a direction under regulation 2(c) of the Defence (Finance) Regulations to control Egyptian assets."² Although these measures are relatively minor, it is suggested that by this date the Cabinet was already willing to delegate the day-to-day handling of the crisis to the Egypt Committee. Was this characteristic of the way the more important decisions were

1. Seymour-Ure, op. cit. pp. 5-6.

2. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 86.

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made? An example which might illuminate this relationship is the decision to accept Dulles' proposals for the formation of a Suez Canal User's Association (SCUA). According to James, these proposals were handed to Roger Makins on September 4.¹ James goes on to state:

Eden was, understandably, astonished, asking Makins if Dulles was really serious; Makins replied that he was, but the more Eden looked at it the more attracted he was...Although the French, still calling for action, were sceptical, Eden was very anxious to push this plan, despite the reservations of Lloyd and Macmillan, who saw it merely as a delaying device.²

Hugh Thomas notes:

On 11 September, Eden persuaded first the French and his own government to accept SCUA. Many were dubious: one Minister thought it 'too good to be true'. Macmillan appeared the leader of the war party. Lloyd thought it better to go straight to the UN. But in the Cabinet of the afternoon of 11 September Eden the great negotiator triumphed. Most of the Cabinet were really relieved.³

James and Thomas do not extensively discuss the nature of the debate concerning the SCUA proposal between 4 September, when the proposal was presented, and 11 September, when the full Cabinet accepted the idea at the insistence of Eden. Lloyd, in reference to the meetings of the Egypt Committee between 9 August and 11 September, merely notes: "By 10th September we had decided to recommend to the Cabinet the acceptance of

1. James, op. cit. p. 511.

2. Ibid.

3. Thomas, op. cit. pp. 76-77.

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Dulles' SCUA plan."¹ This somewhat vague observation appears to support Seymour-Ure's view that, "the Egypt Committee was the forum in which acceptance of the idea was (sceptically) agreed..."² The lack of information concerning the internal debate on SCUA in early September makes it difficult to draw clear conclusions. But, the idea was endorsed by Eden, after an initial reaction of astonishment, and was then debated in the Egypt Committee. Despite the reservations of two senior members, Lloyd and Macmillan, the Committee decided to present the plan to the full Cabinet on 11 September. During this Cabinet meeting, although Lloyd and Macmillan again expressed their reservations about the plan, it was accepted by the full Cabinet and was subsequently announced in the House of Commons.

Therefore, the functioning of the Committee in relation to this decision was that of a forum in which extensive debate was undertaken. Its findings were then presented to the full Cabinet for consideration. However, it is clear from the Cabinet minutes that SCUA was not enthusiastically endorsed by all the members of the Egypt Committee and it was the political skills of Eden which were instrumental in securing support for the proposal.

Analysis of the manner in which the military option was considered and developed presents a clearer picture of the role of the Egypt Committee in the process of decision. During the Cabinet meeting of 27 July, the military options available to the British were first discussed. It was

1. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 134.

2. Seymour-Ure, op. cit. p. 18.

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realised that there was no possibility of military intervention for a period of several weeks. Selwyn Lloyd observes:

Nevertheless the Cabinet were unanimous that if economic and political pressure did not lead to the desired result we must be prepared to use force. The threat of it might be enough. Failure to preserve the international character of the Canal would lead to the loss one by one of all our interests and assets in the Middle East. Even if we had to act alone, we should not stop short of using force to protect our position if all else failed and in the last resort. Accordingly, the Chiefs of Staff were ordered to make the necessary military preparations.¹

The original directive came from the full Cabinet. After this date it appears that the Chiefs of Staff reported direct to the Egypt Committee. The range of possible military options was, according to Lloyd, presented to the Committee on August 10. There were four suggested strategies to secure the Canal:

- (a) a full-scale assault on Port Said and the capture of Abu Sueir airfield, fifty miles to the south, by airborne landing;
- (b) a full-scale assault on Alexandria, seizing port and airfield, followed by an advance to the Suez Canal via the Cairo area;
- (c) limited operations against Port Said, followed by a major assault on Alexandria;
- (d) limited operations at Alexandria and a major assault on Port Said.²

Lloyd's account of the discussion taking place within the group concerning which of these plans should be selected is not detailed, yet he does state:

1. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 84.

2. Ibid. p. 108.

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Methods (c) and (d) were discarded on the grounds that a sure and early was needed, and limited forces must be kept concentrated. Method (a) presented difficulties. Although coast defences were light, the beaches were shallow and unloading facilities at Port Said were very limited - mostly by lighters - therefore there would be a slow build-up.¹

The rationale for not selecting these options consisted of a mixture of political imperatives and military requirements. However, in reference to the option which had been selected, Lloyd notes: "Method (b) was easier and safer. Although it would take longer to reach the Canal, it might deal with Nasser more quickly."² If the ultimate political objective was to restore the Canal to British control, why choose an option which would "take longer" to do so? It is suggested that "method (b)", far from being militarily "easier" to implement, was selected because it was perceived as being the best way of removing Colonel Nasser from power.

There is also evidence to support the view that both the extent and the purpose of the Egypt Committee's military preparations were not released to the full Cabinet. James observes of the Cabinet meeting of 14 August:

Selwyn Lloyd intervened to tell the Cabinet - most of whose members had had no access to the workings of the Egypt Committee - that 'It was important to avoid giving the impression that the [London] conference had been called merely to endorse decisions already taken to employ force against Egypt.'

1. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 108.

2. Ibid. p. 109.

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But Eden was considerably more frank when he told his colleagues that military preparations were being completed...¹

The fact that Eden's biographer feels the need to compare the 'frankness' of the Prime Minister's comments with those of the Foreign Secretary during a Cabinet meeting is revealing in itself. James goes on to note: "It would have been far better if the full Cabinet had been circulated with the records of the Egypt Committee in spite of the security risks - which surely could have been overcome - but not a single member of the Cabinet who was not on the Committee raised the point."² The Cabinet was allowed only limited access to information and those decision-makers not directly involved apparently accepted this without serious question.

Throughout the crisis and without extensive debate, the full Cabinet accepted the recommendations of the Egypt Committee in both military policy and diplomatic strategy. During crisis, it is understandable that the chances of the conclusions of the specialist decision-making group being disregarded by the full Cabinet is slim. However, the peculiar unevenness in the distribution of information between the Egypt Committee and the full Cabinet can only have served to reinforce this tendency. When one considers this observation in relation to the imbalanced structure of the Egypt Committee itself, it is apparent that the personal preferences of a very limited number of key actors were to have an inordinate weight in the formulation of policy.

1. James, op. cit. p. 497.

2. Ibid. p. 498.

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Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that information was not fully and uniformly distributed to various members of the Committee itself. When discussing the flow of information, James notes:

The only senior minister who, in my judgement, had legitimate cause for complaint on this score was Butler...

But there was no question of Eden deliberately excluding Butler from the inner circle. The sheer accident that Butler was unwell had meant that he was not present at the early meetings, and his lack of departmental responsibilities virtually automatically excluded him from the Egypt Committee. But Butler should have insisted on complete information, and, although he did not, Eden should have ensured he received it.¹

It is suggested that Butler was not the only Minister to have grounds for legitimate complaint. The whole affair appears to have been dominated by excessive amounts of secrecy, bordering at times on misrepresentation. Both the fluidity of personnel and the uneven distribution of information between members of the group are not regarded as being factors contributing to efficient or successful crisis management.

Conclusions.

The structure of the Egypt Committee was subject to a variety of imbalances. It was composed of a senior inner core and a more junior periphery. Membership of the group was excessively fluid and the rationale for the inclusion of certain members was due more to Party political considerations than specialist expertise. The role of the Committee was never precisely defined, which made it both a

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1. James, op. cit. p. 498.

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powerful and malleable political tool. There was also a surprising unevenness in the distribution of information. During the crisis, the full Cabinet and even members of the decision-making group itself enjoyed varying degrees of access to information.

The combination of these factors reinforced a tendency towards groupthink and restricted the extent to which effective crisis management occurred. Although the military option was ostensibly a response to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company, its selection is regarded as being a means of pursuing very different and far less limited objectives. The structure of the decision-making group was such that it did not facilitate the functioning of informed, efficient crisis management. Instead, it aided the adoption of the preferred policies of a small number of decision-makers.

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Multipolarity and the Role of Allies: Suez 1956.

Unlike the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the structure of the state's alliance commitments was to play a significant role in the outcome of the Suez crisis. In this sense, the Suez crisis bears a closer resemblance to the crisis of July 1914 in that both were multipolar in nature. However, in 1956 the restraints imposed by the systemic context within which decision-makers functioned proved to be very different to those encountered by their balance of power counterparts.

After World War Two it became increasingly, if at first slowly, apparent that the dominant actors in the international arena were to be the United States and the Soviet Union. Britain's pre-war position in the international system could no longer be sustained. The war had diminished British economic power and hastened the process of dismantling of the Empire. As a result of the decline in Britain's economic capability and global commitments the armed forces were to be reduced in size.

In the new post-war order, the key strategic concept was to be the forging of a 'special relationship' with the United States. The role of the military was to be primarily that of protecting the British mainland from the threat of a Soviet advance through Europe. British 'power' on the world stage was to be replaced by British 'influence'. Therefore, when faced with Nasser's challenge in 1956, British decision-makers quickly realised that the state of British forces not only precluded an immediate military strike against Egypt, but also required the material assistance of another ailing colonial power with post-imperial problems in Africa: France.

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In its most important post-war alliance relationship, Britain was no longer a 'senior' power. Both militarily and economically, Britain was playing a subordinate role to the United States. Indeed, the so-called 'special relationship' was regarded as a vital pillar for the maintenance of British influence in world affairs in that it provided a measure of security without having to shoulder the burden of maintaining commensurate military capability. Thus, during the Suez crisis, the opinions of American decision-makers were to figure highly in the deliberations of those responsible for the formulation of British policy, since to risk jeopardising the relationship with the United States would be to risk the very foundations of the post-war British strategic and economic order.

The central role of allies in the Suez crisis is in stark contrast to that played by allies during nuclear-armed superpower crises. The massive military capability of the Soviet Union and the United States meant that the material assistance which could be given by their respective allies was of more marginal value. It is suggested that allied forces were incorporated into American actions during this period to achieve political rather than military aims. The Korean war, for example, was supposedly a United Nations undertaking, but when one examines the nationality of the Commander in Chief, and the overwhelmingly American component of United Nations forces, it appears that Korea was a United Nations action in name only. As well as military capability, both superpowers also had the power to unilaterally deploy their forces rapidly. With their vast military resource and advanced weapons technology, force could be projected to the other side of the globe within a matter of minutes. This minimised the role of allies and is a further contrast

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between the needs of decision makers during, for example, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and those responsible for the management of both the Suez crisis and the Falklands conflict of 1982.

The Cuban missile crisis of 1962 occupied a timespan of thirteen days. Such a duration is regarded as being of sufficient length for American decision-makers, should they have perceived the need, to engage in consultation with their allies. But, the role of allies in the process of decision appears to have been small. The location of the blockade was moved as a result of the opinion of the British ambassador, as Allison observes:

On Tuesday evening, British Ambassador David Ormsby-Gore, who had attended a briefing on the details of the blockade, suggested to the President that the plan for intercepting Soviet ships far out of reach of Cuban jets did not facilitate Krushchev's hard decisions. Why not make the interception much closer to Cuba and thus give the Russian leader more time?¹

However, this influence should be ascribed more to the respect and personal liking that Kennedy had for Ormsby-Gore, rather than concern about British interests. Furthermore, the blockade option had been chosen and then the British Ambassador was 'briefed' about the details. While a British diplomat influenced the location of the blockade, he did not contribute to the selection of the option in the first place.

Thus, in the literature concerned with crisis and crisis management, the role of allies in superpower crisis has not been emphasised as a vital influence on the process of

1. Allison, op. cit. p. 129.

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decision. When the role of allies has been discussed, it is more in reference to pre-nuclear crises. Although the reasons for the importance of allies in the Suez affair have been regarded in terms of the relative decline of British power in the post-war international system, the theories which help us to recognise and explain this influence may be found less in the study of nuclear age crises than in analysis of the pre-nuclear era.

The diplomacy of the Suez crisis resembles the style of pre-nuclear diplomatic strategies in that its objectives were to seek support for, or at least acquiescence to, British military action. In this sense, it is argued that the convening of the London Conferences and acceptance of the SCUA proposal were more a product of the perceived need to be seen to have explored alternative options than they were serious attempts to resolve the conflict without a resort to arms.

Yet, unlike the balance of power era, the junior alliance partner could be subjected to a high degree of control exerted by its more powerful ally. When British military action elicited threatening signals from the Soviet Union, the stability of the central nuclear balance was perceived to be at risk and this caused American decision-makers to place severe pressure on their British counterparts to cease hostilities. Therefore, an interesting 'explanation' for the failure to effectively manage the Suez crisis is that British diplomatic strategies were pre-nuclear in style, and thus simply incongruous with the structure of the cold war systemic environment.

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Throughout the Suez crisis, representatives of the French Government were to consistently assert their view that Colonel Nasser must be brought down by the use of military force. Indeed, as the weeks went by, French decision-makers became more and more uneasy about the apparent lack of British resolution. James observes that by early September:

...impatience had developed into intense frustration. The French wanted Nasser smashed militarily, as quickly as possible, and were not much troubled about the legal or moral niceties, a mood exactly reflected in Israel. While the British, pressured by the Americans and with increasing doubts within the Cabinet, hesitated, and appeared to the French to be dithering, exasperation grew in Paris. The unilateral abandonment of Musketeer for Musketeer Revise by the British was merely another source of grievance and worse to the French, but even before this they had begun to look elsewhere for more resolute and more ruthless allies.¹

Both Pineau and Mollet ascribed to this view, however, as illustrated by the decision to abandon Musketeer for Musketeer Revise, the influence of such opinions should not be overstated. Furthermore, although pressure for action from the French must have been of some influence on British decision-makers, the need to court Britain's American allies remained the paramount concern.

The divergence of opinion between British and American decision-makers became apparent soon after the advent of the crisis. Eisenhower urged for caution and moderation in response to the nationalisation of the Company. In his reply to Eden on July 31, for example, Eisenhower states:

1. James, op. cit. p. 510.

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..early this morning I received the messages, communicated to me through Murphy from you and Harold Macmillan, telling me on a most secret basis of your decision to employ force without delay or attempting any intermediate and less drastic steps.

We recognize the transcendent worth of the Canal to the free world and the possibility that eventually the use of force might become necessary in order to protect international rights. But we have been hopeful that through a Conference in which would be represented the signatories to the Convention of 1888, as well as other maritime nations, there would be brought about such pressures on the Egyptian government that the efficient operation of the Canal could be assured for the future.

For my part, I cannot over-emphasize the strength of my conviction that some such method must be attempted before action such as you contemplate should be undertaken.¹

While the use of force has not been entirely ruled out, this letter clearly indicates that Eisenhower was strongly in favour of pursuing a policy of negotiation. Doubts about the attitude of American decision-makers were an important influence in the formulation of policy during the early stages of the crisis. As David Carlton notes:

Certainly nobody in Eden's Cabinet could plausibly have claimed in the days following Nasser's coup that the immediate despatch of an ultimatum to Cairo would have been acceptable to the United States. Hence the real choice at that point was between a policy of going ahead with such an ultimatum in any case - something the French would almost certainly have welcomed - or one of merely making military preparations while seeking to win over the Americans to at least acquiescing in the despatch of such an

1. In Carlton, op. cit. Appendix I. pp. 114-115.

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ultimatum at a later date. In spite of all the robust language behind closed doors, the latter broad choice was the one favoured by Eden and all his principal colleagues.¹

Yet, it should also be noted that both Eisenhower and Dulles, at key moments during the process of international negotiations, succeeded in undermining the very diplomatic strategies they themselves wished to see adopted. For example, at a press conference on 2 October, Dulles made the following statement on the SCUA: "There is talk about teeth being pulled out of the plan, but I know of no teeth: there were no teeth in it so far as I am aware."² Whether or not the SCUA was merely a delaying device in the first place is open to debate, but such signals from the Secretary of State was bound to kill any chance of the plan being accepted by the Nasser regime.

The problem for British decision-makers was that American interests were not severely threatened by the Egyptian nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company. As Murphy notes: "France and Britain had very substantial holdings in the Canal Company. American holdings were insignificant. France and Britain were directly dependent on the flow of Middle East oil. The United States was not."³ The key failure of British policy was that, throughout the crisis, they consistently failed to accurately assess American perceptions of the importance of Nasser's action. When discussing the events of 31 July, Robert Murphy observes:

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1. Carlton, op. cit. p. 38.
 2. In Lloyd, op. cit. p. 152.
 3. Murphy, op. cit. p. 467.

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On Tuesday I lunched with Sir Anthony Eden, Lord Salisbury, Selwyn Lloyd, Macmillan, and three Americans. No Frenchmen were present but there was nothing like the frank discussion of issues which I had heard on my first evening in London. The British seemed to feel that if a firm stand were taken at the outset, all maritime powers would support it, but there was no suggestion of imminent military activity. There was confident assumption, however, that the United States would go along with anything Britain and France did. As Eden expressed it, there was no thought of asking the United States for anything, 'but we do hope you will take care of the Bear!' A neat way of saying that Britain and France would take care of the Egyptians, but in case of intervention by the Russian Bear, it was anticipated that the United States would step in. It seemed to me that Eden was labouring under the impression that a common identity of interest existed among the allies. That was not the American view,¹ and I gave no encouragement to the idea.¹

While the nationalisation of the Canal Company had little damaging effect on American interests, two important concerns were threatened by the initiation of hostilities against Egypt. First, Presidential elections were scheduled for the next November, and as Murphy states: "Eisenhower himself was running for re-election, and he was confronted with a situation in which three friendly nations, two of them allies, had decided to wage war without a word of consultation with him."² Also, these allies were engaged in an adventure reminiscent of the 'colonialism' to which the U.S was vehemently opposed. Second, the outbreak of hostilities prompted the Soviet Union to make threatening signals. Murphy notes: "The big question was what the

1. Murphy, op. cit. pp. 464-465.

2. Ibid. p. 477.

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Russians would do...The Soviet Union declared that it might resort to force, threatened that the conflict could spread into general war, and hinted of nuclear bombs."¹ Therefore, the outbreak of hostilities in the Canal zone became a source of perceived threat to the central nuclear balance. As a result, the Eisenhower administration was motivated by the need to prevent the escalation of the crisis into "general war".²

Consequently, the United States forced British decision-makers to cease hostilities. On 6 November, having implemented the policy of invasion, statesmen found themselves facing critical economic pressure. As James observes:

...when Macmillan telephoned Washington early on the morning of 6 November to ask for assistance he was bluntly told that it would be available only if a cease-fire were arranged before midnight. Only in that eventuality would the United States support a loan from the International Monetary Fund and give other assistance.³

This refusal to support a loan was in effect a veto on the prospect of any help from the I.M.F. The "other assistance" mentioned by James should not be overlooked because, with the Suez Canal blocked and the Syrian oil pipeline severed, the British economy was vulnerable to the threat of oil sanctions. The spectre of sanctions had been raised at the meeting of the Egypt Committee on 4 November, as Lloyd reports: "It was at this meeting that a report came in from

1. Murphy, op. cit. p. 475.

2. Ibid.

3. James, op. cit. p. 573.

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Dixon that there had been some discussion in New York about oil sanctions. Macmillan threw his arms in the air and said, 'Oil sanctions! That finishes it.'.."¹

Conclusions.

It is suggested that the Suez crisis of 1956 was marked by a curious mixture of pre-nuclear and nuclear-age variables. The absence of a perceived imperative to limit the scale of conflict below an mutually unacceptable threshold, and the need to call on the assistance of allies, are all features identified authors such as Williams, Bell and Snyder, as belonging to the pre-nuclear age. Furthermore, the apparent willingness on the part of British policy-makers to resort to arms in order to ameliorate perceived political problems, and the secret collusion with other actors in the international arena, is also reminiscent of the behaviour of decision-makers in the balance of power era. However, the subordinate role of Britain in the cold war forced statesmen to assiduously court the approval of its senior ally. While the nationalisation of the Canal Company was not regarded as being damaging to American interests, British decision-makers failed to realise that military action in a sensitive geopolitical area would generate perceptions of serious threat to the stability of the nuclear balance. Thus, the nuclear age priorities of the United States coupled with the high degree of control to which British statesmen could be subjected, were factors which profoundly influenced the eventual outcome of the crisis.

1. Lloyd, op. cit. p. 206.

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The 'failure' of the policies adopted by British decision-makers may be largely assigned to the fact that, when faced with a sub-nuclear crisis, they instinctively fell back on a style of crisis management which had become outmoded due to a decline in unilateral power and the relatively junior alliance status of Britain. In this sense, the Suez crisis was a pre-nuclear anomaly in a nuclear-age world. The inadequacy of the British response to the nationalisation of the Canal Company was caused by the failure of the men responsible for the formulation of policy to adjust to the new constraints imposed upon them by the development of the post-war order. The intranational pressures to adopt a policy of force to "bring Nasser to his senses"¹, and the imbalances in the decision-making unit, cumulatively functioned as pressures to fashion a pre-nuclear age response to a pre-nuclear age crisis. The failure of British policy occurred in that the structure of the post-war international system, and particularly the alliance subsystem with the United States, was such that there was no longer any room for these kinds of moves to be made.

1. In Carlton, op. cit. Appendix I. p. 114.

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Duality of Purpose: Suez 1956.

For Phil Williams, the existence of a superpower crisis relationship marked by a duality of purpose:

..constitutes a fundamental difference with pre-nuclear crises. For although ambitious and unscrupulous politicians like Hitler were prepared to obtain their objectives without war, they were not averse to going to war if all else failed. Of course, there may have been brief periods when none of the major powers in a crisis felt sufficiently confident of its military superiority to adopt a reckless policy, but these were fortuitous exceptions rather than the rule.¹

Williams' comments about the nature of pre-nuclear crises can certainly be applied to British action during the Suez crisis, despite the fact that it took place during in an international system dominated by nuclear-armed superpowers.

The comparison with earlier crises was evident at the time of the Suez affair itself. Hugh Thomas observes:

It was a Labour MP, R.T. Paget, who first compared Nasser's act with Hitler's 'week-end technique' (he later withdrew the comparison). Many people, particularly the old, the war-weary, the veterans of the Somme as much as (if not more than) those of the Western desert, began like Eden and Mollet to see in the nationalisation of the Canal Company another occupation of the Rhineland, foreshadowing that Empire from Agadir to Karachi, of which Nasser had already dreamily talked, just as the Rhineland had foreshadowed the armed pursuit of the Greater Reich.

The most curious side of this identification of a present threat with a

1. Williams, op. cit. p.54.

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past bogey was that it followed...a long period of unsuccessful appeasement by both Britain and France as well as the USA.¹

R.R. James notes that during the debate in the House of Commons on 2 August, Hugh Gaitskell stated: "It is all very familiar. It is exactly the same that we encountered from Mussolini and Hitler in those years before the war."² Selwyn Lloyd himself argues:

The First World War began on 4th August 1914, a fight against Prussian militarism. The United States joined in April 1916. The Second World War against Hitler began on 3rd September 1939. The United States joined in December 1941. We had lost countless lives and spent the accumulated wealth of more than a century to defend freedom. Here we were confronted with what we regarded as another megalomaniac dictator, leader of a less powerful nation but with much easier targets to attack, a man who if unchecked would do infinite damage to Western interest...³

It is clear that British decision-makers felt no imperative to limit the escalation of the crisis below a use-of-force threshold. Indeed, the nationalisation of the Company was seen by some as an opportunity to use force to bring down the Nasser regime.

Effective sub-nuclear crisis management requires that decision-makers employ limited force in the pursuit of clear and circumspect political aims. In 1956, statesmen singularly failed in this task. Selwyn Lloyd, when discussing the Cabinet meeting of July 27 states:

1. Thomas, op. cit. p.52.

2. In James, op. cit. p.481.

3. Lloyd, op. cit. p.90.

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The impression has been widely given that at this first Cabinet meeting we decided to use force against Nasser as quickly as possible, and it was the United States Government which hauled us back from the brink and stopped us. This is quite untrue. Our position was clearly laid down: rejection of Nasser's action, economic and political pressure, the threat of force and, in the last resort only, the use of force. Our views were sent by Eden to Eisenhower in clear and simple terms that afternoon.¹

However, it had become apparent during this meeting that an immediate military reaction was beyond British capabilities. Yet, when faced with the challenge posed by Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company, it is evident that many in the Conservative Party felt that there was a need to wrest control away from the Egyptians and bring down Nasser into the bargain. In reference to Macmillan's views, for example, Hugh Thomas observes:

As with most Conservatives, and as with Churchill, there was no insincerity in Macmillan's belief that the nationalisation of the Canal Company was a challenge to Britain which could only be met by Nasser's humiliation, either by force or not.²

Reference to the Cabinet Minutes of 9 August supports this view:

...It would be highly embarrassing, to say the least, to have to invite Parliament to approve a proposal to launch a military operation against Egypt. If the issue were put to Parliament at that stage, such division of opinion as there was in the country would tend to be accentuated. It would not be easy for the Government to

1. Lloyd, op. cit. p.85.

2. Thomas, op. cit. p.51.

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proceed with their intentions on the basis of a relatively narrow majority in a division in the House of Commons...

These considerations seemed to point to the conclusion that any military action against Egypt should be launched in retaliation against some aggressive or provocative act by the Egyptians.¹

The ostensible political problem was to retake the Canal, but the desires of decision-makers went far beyond this. Although the Cabinet was aware that nationalisation of the Canal Company was not a justifiable reason to take military action, they did, nevertheless, view it as an excuse to use force against the Nasser regime.

Therefore, British attempts at diplomatic negotiation to resolve the crisis were motivated less by the need to maintain control over the escalation of the crisis than by the need to court American acceptance of a resort to arms. When this was not forthcoming, Eden and Lloyd embarked upon the disastrous strategy of entering into a conspiracy with representatives of the French and Israeli Governments in a plan for the invasion of Egypt, the retaking of the Canal, and the overthrow of Nasser.

Thus, a duality of purpose cannot be identified in the actions of British decision-makers. However, it can certainly be identified in the actions of their American allies. Faced with a potential threat to the nuclear balance, the United States turned what Coral Bell has termed an "adversarial" into an "intramural"² crisis. Rather than risk a

1. Quoted in Carlton, op. cit. p.44. CAB 134/1216 (Confidential Annex), PRO.

2. Bell, op. cit. See pp. 7-10.

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confrontation with the Soviet Union, they exerted pressure on Britain to cease engaging in behaviour which threatened to destabilise the superpower balance of terror.

Conclusions.

A duality of purpose as identified in the management of superpower crisis cannot be observed in the management of the Suez crisis of 1956. British decision-makers were not threatened by an upper threshold of mass destruction because Egypt was not a nuclear-armed power and did not have the capability to threaten the British mainland with vast, punishing military strikes. Consequently, British decision-makers were simply not under the same kind of pressure to prevent escalation of the crisis as was the Kennedy administration in 1962.

Furthermore, British policy in 1956 should not be termed effective sub-nuclear crisis management. British decision-makers failed to formulate clear and circumspect political goals. In the wake of nationalisation, statesmen such as Eden sought the removal from power of Nasser himself. This escalation of political aims, therefore, calls into question the seriousness of the search for solutions other than a resort to arms and also of attempts to limit the scope of violence. This failure is compounded by a lack of political will to support the military option once it had been initiated. In the face of mounting domestic and international pressure, decision-makers wavered in their commitment to Musketeer and Musketeer Revise.

The final result of British policy during the Suez crisis was that Nasser's reputation was augmented, British influence in the region declined and the Canal remained firmly in Egyptian hands.

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The Nature of Threat.

Identification of the nature of the threat criterion is a complex problem in the analysis of the Suez crisis. The most obvious aspect of the threat was economic. The perception of the importance of the Canal as an artery for British imports and exports - especially for oil supplies - was clearly in evidence. The Canal was also of strategic importance in that it was the major route to the military bases in the Far East.

However, the key to understanding the nature of the perceived threat lies not so much in economic or strategic considerations, but in political concerns. Prior to 26 July, British policy in the Middle East had suffered a series of humiliating setbacks. More importantly, these setbacks had been assigned partly to the machinations of the Nasser regime and partly to a weakness in the Eden Government. The Prime Minister was under pressure both from the Opposition and from within the ranks of his own Party. Thus, the nationalisation, coming as it did on the heels of the 'scuttle' from the Suez bases, occurred at a particularly unfortunate time for Eden. Given the decline in British prestige in the area, the fears about Soviet penetration, and the rise in status of Colonel Nasser, the nationalisation of the Canal Company was widely regarded as being yet another unresisted challenge to British interests. The nationalisation of the Canal Company had been met by a strong response if only to safeguard the personal political positions of those within the Cabinet.

A less easily measured factor lies in the personality of the Prime Minister himself. His memories of past dictators and the failure of policies of appeasement may have led to an exaggerated perception of Nasser as a leader in the style of

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Hitler and Mussolini. Certainly, comparisons to fascist leaders were widespread. Eden may have been personally motivated by the idea that appeasement had failed in the past, perhaps force would work in the present.

It appears that nationalisation, as well as threatening the state's high priority interests, was regarded as the final straw which would break the camel's back in terms of the political survival of Eden's premiership. Thus, the use of force was designed not only to take control of the Canal away from Egyptian hands, but to bring down the entire Nasser regime. In this sense, nationalisation was both a source of threat and one of opportunity.

The Impact of Limited Time.

The time criterion in the definition of crisis requires that the time available for decision-makers to formulate policy be limited. During the Suez crisis, British decision-makers were not faced with a perceived imperative to fashion a response by a certain date. For example, had an Egyptian ultimatum been issued before nationalisation occurred, British decision-makers would obviously have had to react prior to the date stipulated. While the *fait accompli* was perceived as requiring 'rapid' response, a precise date was unspecified. The implication of this observation is that the initial timespan was governed by the options available to British decision-makers. Of particular relevance was the early realisation that a military response to nationalisation would take several weeks.

The fact that the Suez crisis was to last well beyond several weeks may be due to the fact that the time lapse between the act of nationalisation and the earliest possible

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use of force was so long that the process of decision became subject to a variety of political pressures which delayed, as well as revised, the implementation of policy. But, it was largely the assumptions and attitudes of decision-makers themselves which facilitated the extent of such intrusion, since they failed to restrict the extent of their political aims and wavered in their resolution to implement the policies which had been selected.

The Element of Surprise.

There appears to have been widespread and genuine surprise among British decision-makers responsible for policy-making, as well as among Opposition and public, at Nasser's nationalisation of the Canal Company.

However, the management of the Suez crisis cannot be regarded as particularly novel. In response to nationalisation, British decision-makers opted for a resort to arms. While a use of limited force is not in itself a 'failure' of sub-nuclear crisis management, policy selection during the Suez crisis should not be regarded as 'successful' crisis management. The style with which British decision-makers pursued their policies is more reminiscent of management strategies observed in the pre-nuclear era. As events were to prove, such an outmoded response to the Egyptian fait accompli achieved none of the desired objectives.

The Structure of the Decision-Making Group.

The structure of the decision-making group was to have a profound influence on the subsequent development of the Suez crisis. The Egypt Committee was characterised by an excessive fluidity of membership. Personnel changes in the Committee

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had a detrimental effect on the functioning of effective crisis management. The fluctuating membership allowed for a bias towards the preferred policies of the Prime Minister. This tendency was reinforced by the relative silence of Eden's closest advisers and the acquiescence of the more junior personnel to their seniors.

Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that information was not distributed evenly within the group. The most extreme example of which was, of course, the lack of information about the extent of collusion with representatives of the Governments of France and Israel. This unevenness must surely have been a further factor contributing to the relative power of the Prime Minister. The unevenness in the flow of information is also apparent when one observes the relationship between the Egypt Committee and the full Cabinet. Crucial pieces of information were not passed from the Egypt Committee to the larger forum. This could only have served to augment the power of the Committee's recommendations, and hence the likelihood that Eden's preferred policies would be adopted.

The imbalances in the structure of the Egypt Committee and its imprecise, ill-defined role in relation to the full Cabinet must be considered as adversely affecting the functioning of informed, rational decision-making. These imbalances cumulatively functioned to give the preferred policies of a single man an inordinate weight in the formulation of a response to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company.

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The Pre-nuclear Crisis Management of a Sub-Nuclear Crisis?

Although occurring in the cold war era, the Suez crisis was marked by an absence of a 'conventional' duality of purpose, no perceptions of an upper threshold of mass destruction in the minds of British decision-makers, and a multipolar structure.

The lack of any common interest between British decision-makers and those in Egypt, as well as the failure to identify a threshold above which escalation was unthinkable, meant that a recourse to the use of force was considered a rational crisis management option. Yet, the policies adopted during the Suez Crisis must be regarded as ineffective. The objectives of British decision-makers were unclear and far from circumspect. The avowed aim was the retaking of the Canal, but the actual desires of key decision-makers also included the overthrow of the Egyptian Government. Furthermore, none these aims were achieved. Diplomatically, international acceptance of the use of force was not secured. Militarily, control of the Canal was not achieved. And politically, the Nasser regime remained in power.

Senior British decision-makers of the period failed to reconcile the demands of the cold war era with the pre-nuclear style of policy they wished to adopt. They did not accurately assess the perspective of their senior alliance partner, and, when American support was not forthcoming, they engaged in a conspiracy with another declining imperial power. American outrage at this apparent duplicity was then compounded by threatening signals emanating from the Soviet Union. Once the central nuclear balance became destabilised, nuclear age imperatives overrode all other considerations.

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The Nature of Threat: Falklands 1982.

Although nuclear weapons did play a role in determining the outcome of the Suez affair the latter is, nevertheless, regarded as an example of a sub-nuclear crisis. The main protagonists - the United Kingdom and Egypt - could not mutually threaten nuclear war. Britain had conducted its first atomic test as early as October 1952, and as John Baylis notes: "By 1956 the British thermonuclear programme was well under way."¹ Thus, during this period Britain's nuclear weapons programme was still very much in the developmental stage and there is no evidence to suggest that the Egypt of 1956 possessed any nuclear weapons.

In reference to the conflict of 1982, George Quester states that: "Argentina has signed but not ratified, the Latin American Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (LANFZ), the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which establishes a wide area within which the possession and use of nuclear weapons has been banned."² However, he goes on to observe: "Even if the Argentines had ratified the Treaty, they would not have been bound by it until ratification by all the other states of the region."³ Argentina, along with Brazil, "vehemently denounced the Non-Proliferation Treaty from the outset as a grossly unfair

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1. John Baylis, Anglo-American Defence Relations 1939-1984 (London: Macmillan, 1984).
p. 72.
 2. George H. Quester, "The Nuclear Implications of the South Atlantic War" Chapter 7 in R.B. Byers (ed)., The Denuclearisation of the Oceans (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1986).
p. 122.
 3. Ibid.

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treaty..."¹ Despite the stance in regards to these two Treaties and the comparatively advanced state of Argentina's technological development, there is little evidence to suggest that in 1982 Argentina was a possessor of nuclear weapons.

Britain, on the other hand, did possess a substantial nuclear capability. Duncan Campbell discusses one of the more bizarre aspects of the conflict:

The Navy has its own, relatively small stock of nuclear depth bombs. For some time after the Falklands War, they were not allowed to take them to sea. Ministers had belatedly discovered that the admirals had sent three quarters of the total British naval nuclear stockpile towards the South Atlantic battle zone.²

The inadvertent despatch of nuclear weapons should be attributed more to governmental confusion and Naval standard operating procedures than any desire to escalate the conflict. This 'oversight' might have had much more serious consequences given the later losses the Task Force was to sustain, but Campbell points out that:

...- the Oversea and Defence Committee (South Atlantic) - were warned that most of the Navy's nuclear weapons would soon cross the equator..

...The OD(SA) committee ordered that all nuclear weapons be taken off the task force after it reached Ascension Island. A Royal

1. Quester in Byers, op. cit. pp. 130-131.

2. Duncan Campbell, "Too Few Bombs To Go Round." An article in New Statesman, November 29, 1985.
p. 12.

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Fleet Auxiliary vessel collected them.

There were thus no tactical nuclear weapons on board the surface ships sent south to the Falklands.¹

Undoubtedly, Britain could have initiated nuclear strikes against the Falkland Islands or the Argentine mainland should it have so wished. However, the evidence concerning the erroneous despatch of naval nuclear forces confirms that decision-makers in London were (somewhat tardily) concerned with preventing the introduction of nuclear weapons into the region.

Peter Calvert makes the following comment about a failure of British nuclear weapons to deter an attack:

...the Falkland [sic] conflict marks a milestone which we should do well to ponder. It is the first occasion since 1945 when a nuclear power has been attacked by a non-nuclear power. In view of the fact that...no one in Britain at any stage during the crisis suggested using nuclear weapons against Argentina, it seems likely that a conventional attack is more probable, and a nuclear response less probable, than many strategists have thought.²

When faced by a conventional attack from a smaller power, and hence by the implicit failure of nuclear deterrence, British decision-makers did not seriously consider nuclear retaliation. The response they did select was conventional. The marginal role that nuclear weapons played in this affair, therefore, places the Falklands conflict firmly in the 'sub-nuclear crisis' category.

1. Campbell, op. cit. p. 12.

2. Peter Calvert, The Falklands Crisis: The Rights and the Wrongs (London: Frances Pinter Ltd., 1982).
p. 158.

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What was the nature of the threat perceived by British decision-makers in the wake of the Argentinian invasion?

Richard Lebow states:

...Britain had important interests and commitments throughout the world that would have been seriously compromised by passive acceptance of the Falklands invasion. Many of these interests, as were the Falklands themselves, were carryovers from the days when Britain had been a great empire...¹

Lebow cites a possible linkage to British commitments in: Gibraltar, Hong Kong and Diego Garcia. He also points to a serious weakening of the position in Belize should Britain accept the loss of the Islands. Although these concerns are perfectly valid, it is not entirely certain how much weight should be attached to them. In reference to Belize, Lebow himself notes that: "The country was protected by a small British force which the Thatcher Government had been seeking to withdraw because of its cost."² In regard to Hong Kong it should be observed that Britain's lease runs out in 1997, which makes it difficult to accept that the Chinese would seriously think about invading the territory when it shortly reverts back to Chinese ownership. Also, given the military power of the Chinese armed forces, it is questionable whether Britain could mount an effective attempt to retake Hong Kong should it be overrun.

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1. R.N. Lebow, "Miscalculation in the South Atlantic: The Origins of the Falklands War." An article in The Journal of Strategic Studies, March 1983, Vol. VI. No. 1.
p. 27.
 2. Ibid.

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The Falkland Islands prior to April 1982 were not of great strategic value to British decision-makers. The whole thrust of the 'no out of area' rationale that has come to dominate British strategic thinking in fact downgrades the importance of such post-imperial relics. Indeed, despite protests from the Foreign Office and the Falkland Islanders themselves, the Navy had offered HMS Endurance as a sacrifice in response to the demands of Nott's defence review in 1981. Dillon comments on this decision:

Ultimately Mrs Thatcher had to arbitrate and in doing so she had to exercise her political judgement, by running risks and signalling priorities, as well as making calculations of cost and benefit within the wider context of Government policy and under the pressure of its business. In the event, the Prime Minister elevated financial stringency above the minimum expenditure necessary for the successful management of a long-standing and potentially dangerous international dispute.¹

Such an apparent lack of interest, coupled with a much higher level of value attached to the Islands by Argentina, appears to correspond to the fundamental asymmetries of interest that are necessary if an attempt at crisis management is to be made. Unfortunately, the invasion of the Islands transformed this situation. The invasion was greeted with uproar in the House of Commons. As Hugo Young, Mrs. Thatcher's biographer, notes:

At its start, the war wasn't Thatcher's war but Parliament's. This became stunningly apparent on 3 April. The Commons, after hearing incredulously that British territory had been occupied, met in a mood of bulldog

1. G.M. Dillon, op. cit. pp. 36-37.

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outrage. In the memory of those present, including this writer, that scene survived as an occasion of terrifying but irresistible power.¹

Tam Dalyell observes of Mrs. Thatcher:

In particular, she was confronted with the outraged gut reaction of those back-benchers and those sections of the press who had made her Leader of the Conservative Party...She must have realised that her own political skin was in grave danger...²

Significant elements in the Labour Party were also clamouring for the Government to take firm action in response to the invasion. For example, Michael Foot in a speech in the House of Commons on April 3 made the following comments:

There is no question in the Falkland Islands of any colonial dependence or anything of the sort. It is a question of people who wish to be associated with this country and who have built their whole lives on the basis of association with this country. We have a moral duty, a political duty and every other kind of duty to ensure that this is sustained.³

These domestic political circumstances immediately invested the Falklands Islands with a much greater political value and a much higher potential political cost.

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1. Hugo Young, One of Us. A Biography of Margaret Thatcher (London: Macmillan, 1989).
p. 264.
 2. Tam Dalyell, One Man's Falklands... (London: Cecil Woolf, 1982).
p. 110.
 3. This extract from Michael Foot's speech is taken from Lawrence Freedman and Virginia Gamba-Stonehouse, Signals of War. The Falklands Conflict of 1982 (London: Faber and Faber, 1990).
p. 122.

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Lawrence Freedman states that a failure to successfully repossess the Islands would have had dire political consequences:

..the episode would have been held to confirm Britain's post-war decline as a major power, would have raised questions with regard to other residual colonial or post-colonial commitments, such as Belize, and would have led to a painful reassessment of Britain's overall military effort. In domestic terms it could well have meant the end of the Conservative Government led by Margaret Thatcher after only three years in office, at a time when the economy was only just beginning to recover from a deep recession.¹

The cause of such a strong domestic reaction and the resulting political need to take action is not to be found in the strategic value of the Islands. It resides in something which is much harder to quantify. In the years prior to the conflict, the firm and often avowed wish of the Islanders to remain British subjects had been a constant 'problem' for decision-makers. For example, in 1980 Lord Carrington despatched Nicholas Ridley to the Islands in order to, "discuss with the islanders a number of different options...these included the concept of a 'sovereignty freeze', and the idea of leaseback."² According to Freedman and Stonehouse, the response of the Islanders was "unenthusiastic".³ On Ridley's return to Britain, Carrington notes:

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1. Lawrence Freedman, Britain and the Falklands War (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).
p. 4.
 2. Lord Carrington, Reflect On Things Past (London: Collins, 1988).
p. 356.
 3. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. p. 15.

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[Ridley] reported to the House of Commons. His reception was hostile. He was told that there was in the Falklands deeply felt suspicion of British politicians and of the Foreign Office. He was told that any leaseback proposals weakened our title in international law. He was told that the Foreign Office had wanted to get off the Falklands for years - a mischievous misrepresentation...He was asked, in effect, that we should break off negotiations with Argentina...¹

This desire to remain part of Britain contributed to the fact that the occupied Islands took on a symbolic meaning far in excess of their material worth. Freedman observes: "The conflict demonstrated that people are prepared to fight for goals related to the essence of nationhood; that is, in the face of a direct threat to British territory and British people and British values."² In reference to public opinion during the crisis, Dillon states:

Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands provoked such a wide range of national sentiments comprising so much of Britain's defence culture that what is best described as a drama of national credibility ensued.³

The perception that the Argentinian Government had somehow violated the 'essence' of British 'nationhood' meant that forceful and immediate reaction was required if the Government was to survive. Indeed, one of the ironies of the crisis is that the legal status of the Falklanders had been modified in, "a new Nationality Act which denied British

1. Carrington, op. cit. p. 356. [Name] added.

2. Freedman, op. cit. p. 91.

3. Dillon, op. cit. p. 116.

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citizenship to Falkland Islanders".¹ After the invasion it appears that for Parliament and public such legal nuances were not important. In the face of this severe political threat any previous asymmetry of interest vanished. Phil Williams describes this transformation:

..it was impossible for the British government not to make a serious attempt to regain the Falklands. Although the Islands had a low priority in British thinking prior to the crisis, the reaction to the invasion both in Parliament and in the press was unequivocal, to say the least....Indeed, the depth of feeling on the issue in Parliament gave the government little choice other than to attempt to restore the status quo. It also meant that the asymmetries of interest, which are another precondition of crisis management were destroyed.²

Conclusions.

The invasion did not constitute a threat to the material wellbeing of the State, since the Islands are of little strategic or industrial value. The main aspect of threat was political. The Argentinian action represented a blow to British prestige; to that vague, yet powerful sense of 'nationhood'. Because the Islands assumed an importance far in excess of their material worth and asymmetry of interest was destroyed, decision-makers of the period were faced with

1. Michael Charlton, The Little Platoon. Diplomacy and the Falklands Dispute (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).
p. 116.

2. Williams article, op. cit. p. 148.

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a highly emotive, value-laden issue. Therefore, not only was the nation's 'pride' under threat, so was the Government's own survival. A failure to secure anything less than the complete withdrawal of Argentine forces would have disastrous political consequences for the Government.

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The Impact of Limited Time: Falklands 1982.

G.M. Dillon, in his study of the Falklands conflict, identifies:

...two distinct periods under the Thatcher administration. The first ran from May 1979, when the Government took office, to January 1981, when it decided to abandon sovereignty negotiations. The second ran from January 1981 to 2 April 1982, when Argentina seized the Islands.¹

The present concern is primarily with this second period, of which Dillon observes:

A diplomatic crisis in Anglo-Argentine relations had existed since about Christmas 1981 and it continued to deepen throughout the early months of the new year. On 2 April it was succeeded by the invasion crisis that Argentina's seizure of the Islands precipitated..²

While diplomatic relations did deteriorate from Christmas 1981, there is no evidence to suggest that the worsening situation elicited perceptions of high threat until at least mid 1982. Dillon's characterisation of the "invasion crisis" of April 2 onwards seems to correspond more accurately with the understanding of the term arrived at in earlier chapters. Yet, it is argued that the crisis developed earlier than Dillon suggests. When discussing the events of late March, Eddy and Linklater note:

On Monday, March 29, four days before the invasion, the JIC [Joint Intelligence Committee] did report. Its assessment...was

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 21.

2. Ibid. p. 91.

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given to Thatcher and Carrington as they flew to Brussels for an EEC meeting. At last, light began to dawn, for it was almost certainly at this point that a decision was finally taken to send a nuclear-powered submarine to the South Atlantic.¹

Richard Luce is of the opinion that Carrington was aware of the impending crisis slightly before this date. He states:

The scene was escalating all the time. I remember, the weekend before the invasion, talking late on Sunday night [28 March] on the telephone to Lord Carrington and coming up on the Monday morning with my walking stick. I only take my walking stick with me if I think there is trouble...I talked to one of my ministerial colleagues on the Monday night and he asked, 'Why the walking stick?' I said, 'Because trouble is coming.' I knew, Lord Carrington knew, we all knew, that we were in grave difficulties by that stage...²

If, as Luce would have us believe, there was a widespread perception of a crisis among decision-makers at the time, why did the foreign secretary go to Israel on 31 March? Eddy and Linklater observe that: "Carrington's departure for Israel, early on March 31...suggests that even at this stage he did not appreciate the the political magnitude of the threat."³ This is reinforced by Carrington himself when he discusses the intelligence estimates of 30 - 31 March:

Our advice that day - 30 March - was that some sort of Argentine military initiative might be expected some time during April

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1. The Sunday Times Insight Team, The Falklands War. The Untold Story (London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1982). P. 79. [Name] added.
Referred to by the names of its editors: Paul Eddy and Magnus Linklater.
 2. Richard Luce in Charlton, op. cit. p. 186. [Date] added.
 3. Eddy and Linklater, op. cit. p. 80.

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...There was still no positive indication that Argentina intended major military action - at least in the near future. And the following day (by which time I was out of the country) the Joint Intelligence Committee assessed that the South Georgia incident had not formed part of any deliberate Argentine plan.¹

According to Carrington, not until the afternoon of March 31 did intelligence assessments begin to warn that a large-scale Argentine military operation was imminent.

The hastily convened meeting between the Secretary of Defence and the Prime Minister can be taken as further evidence pointing to this date as marking the advent of the crisis. Freedman and Stonehouse note:

When, late in the afternoon of Wednesday 31 March, the intelligence became compelling, Secretary of Defence John Nott asked to see the Prime Minister. They met with Foreign Office and Defence officials, at her rooms in the House of Commons. A critical member of the group was Admiral Sir Henry Leach, First Sea Lord, who had gone to the Commons in search of Nott.²

Despite the fact that neither the Foreign Secretary nor the Chief of Staff was present, it is reasonable to regard this meeting as the embryonic formation of the specialist decision-making group which was to manage the crisis. It was at this gathering, for example, that the option of using military force was first mooted. Leach observes:

1. Carrington, op. cit. p. 367.

2. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. pp. 122-123.

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I think the Prime Minister was very worried, because I think her gut feel was that we were going to have to do something. I think that I sensed, when I went in, that the sort of advice she had been getting prior to that had tended to deflect her from doing anything beyond negotiating....When I said really quite the opposite, and even took it a bit outside my terms of reference, nobody else spoke a word. That is why I deduced that this was perhaps different advice from what had been going on.¹

Leach's arguments appear to have convinced the Prime Minister that there was a realistic possibility of being able to pursue options other than negotiations. Although no firm commitment was given, orders were issued to begin mobilising the Task Force. The manner in which this decision was made, by a small, hastily convened group, has all the hallmarks of decision-making during crisis.

The apparent lack of urgency prior to March 31, the modified intelligence estimates during the afternoon of that day and the meeting in the evening, are all factors which point to this date as being a fairly clear boundary marking the 'beginning' of the Falklands crisis.

Identifying the date which marks the 'end' of the crisis poses less of a problem. Although Peter Calvert states: "The fall of President Galtieri, it can now be said, marked the end of the Falklands crisis."² June 14 is, nevertheless, regarded as being the date marking the resolution of the crisis. According to Freedman and Stonehouse: "When the Argentine High Command heard at 09.00 on 14 June that the

1. Leach in Charlton, op. cit. p. 189.

2. Calvert, op. cit. p. 144.

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position at Tumbledown could no longer be sustained this confirmed its growing suspicion that the battle was lost and it began to prepare for surrender."¹ They go on to note:

The surrender document was actually signed at 21.15 14 June local time and 00.15 15 June GMT. To avoid having to put two dates on the document, it was decided to keep matters simple and time the formal surrender at 20.59 and 23.59 14 June.

In London the War Cabinet had few decisions to take...They expected the war to conclude on 14 June.²

At this point, the option selected by the decision-making group had been implemented. Argentine forces had yet to be removed, but the Falkland Islands were once again under the control of the Government in London.

The duration of the Falklands affair is considerably longer than the timespans of both the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and the crisis of July 1914. A closer comparison is the Suez crisis of 1956 which had a duration of approximately fifteen weeks. Yet, it has been observed that the excessively long duration of the Suez crisis facilitated the intrusion of conflicting political influences which had a detrimental influence on the functioning of effective crisis management. This intrusion would have been more limited had the crisis been shorter.

An obvious implication of this observation is that, in order to 'successfully' manage a crisis, decision-makers must ensure that it does not drag on for too long. However, the

1. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. p. 401.

2. Ibid. p. 410.

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forging of a balance between the need for both considered action and avoidance of delay is a difficult task and is in part subject to factors beyond the control of policy-makers. In reference to the early stages of the Falklands crisis, G.M. Dillon states:

Although the War Cabinet immediately made it clear that it required the removal of all Argentine forces from the Islands, only the commitment of the Task Force to battle would make it equally clear whether Britain was capable of implementing its ultimatum. From Argentina's perspective the military sanction behind the ultimatum appeared to lack both credibility and capability until a very late stage in the campaign. It was not an immediate threat, its advance took some weeks and its commitment to battle was a three-staged affair...The military schedule was thus the ultimate constraint on British decision-makers.¹

The time lag of several weeks between fait accompli and military response allowed decision-makers time for the exploration (or the apparent exploration) of alternative crisis management options. As Henderson notes: "During the considerable time that elapsed between the despatch of the task force from the United Kingdom and its readiness to repossess the islands, there was a need for something to fill the diplomatic vacuum."² The analysis of the Suez affair reveals that the decision-makers of the time came under increasing domestic and international pressure between the advent of the crisis and military action in Egypt. As time

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 104.

2. Sir Nicholas Henderson, "America And The Falklands. Case study in the behaviour of an ally." An article in The Economist, November 12, 1983.
p. 60.

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progressed, Eden found himself facing increasing Labour Party opposition to the use of force. Within the ranks of his own Party, the 'Suez Group' of M.P.'s persistently called for the taking of a tough line against Nasser. In the international arena, French decision-makers appeared impatient and, at times, exasperated by the apparent indecision in London. Eisenhower and Dulles, for their part, cautioned against the use of force although this was confused by a surprising amount of ambiguity in their signals to Eden. The combination of these factors undoubtedly contributed to the wavering of British decision-makers at crucial stages during the crisis. Both in the international and domestic political context of 1982, the decision-making group was far more successful in securing the conditions favourable to the use of force.

The durations of the Suez crisis and Falklands conflict were both initially determined by the military schedule, but the former crisis was subject to excessive delay because decision-makers failed to formulate limited and precisely defined political goals. Force was not employed to achieve clear or circumspect aims. In reference to the Falklands conflict, Coll and Arend observe, "the coherence and comprehensiveness of British strategy after 2 April 1982 provide valuable lessons for future policy-makers..."¹ However, Tam Dalyell is of the opinion that in 1982: "The Task Force sailed because something had to be done. As to

1. Alberto R. Coll and Anthony C. Arend, The Falklands War. Lessons for Strategy, Diplomacy and International Law (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985).
p. 235.

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clear objectives, there were none. Policy was made up as we went along."¹ There is a measure of truth in Dalyell's assertion, since in the wake of invasion decision-makers were undoubtedly in the grip of uncertainty. Yet, Admiral Lewin states:

The attitude of most people of my generation to Suez was that it was a political disaster of major dimensions because the military were not allowed to finish the job....

Suez entered my thoughts very much more, as the days went by, from the point of view of the relationship between the politicians and the military. I was determined that we should not make the mistakes of Suez. The military must have a clear operational directive from ministers as to what they expected us to do, and we would carry it out. I went to the very first meeting of the War Cabinet determined to get an objective...²

For Lewin, the lessons of Suez were clear. He goes on to note:

[Lewin] I went to the first meeting of the war Cabinet. At some stage in the discussion going on, I said, 'Look, could I know what the Government's objective is?'...Everybody agreed that it was a good thing to have an objective. I said, 'Well, we have written one out, will this do?' I read it out, and everybody thought that it was splendid. We stuck to it for the next seventy days. And we achieved it.

[Charlton] In other words, the views of the war Cabinet were not solicited? You presumably went armed with your own draft believing they were unlikely to produce a coherent one?

1. Dalyell, op. cit. pp. 110-111.

2. Lewin in Charlton, op. cit. p. 193.

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[Lewin] Yes I did, because I do not think that the ministerial machine, divided as it is between the various ministries, is organised to produce operational directives.¹

It appears, therefore, that the avowed political aims of the War Cabinet were actually drafted by a military specialist. Even so, the irony of this episode should not be allowed to mask the fact that decision-makers very rapidly recognised the need to formulate a clearly defined and limited objective. According to Charlton this was, "to bring about the 'withdrawal of the Argentine forces and to restore the British administration' of the Islands..."²

Conclusions.

Although the Falklands affair does satisfy the time criterion as it has been formulated in earlier chapters, the timespan is a fairly long one, similar to that of the Suez crisis. It is argued that a key difference between the Falklands conflict and the Suez crisis was that decision-makers in 1982 were more successful in resisting the political pressures that intrude the longer a crisis continues. Part of this success can be ascribed to the fact that they were aware of the mistakes of Suez. In 1982, decision-makers formulated much clearer objectives and remained comparatively firm in their public determination to use force should other means fail.

1. Lewin in Charlton, op. cit. pp. 193-194.

2. Ibid. p. 194.

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The Element of Surprise: Falklands 1982.

There is evidence to support the view that the Government was caught unawares by the events of late March - early April 1982. For example, when invasion was recognised as being imminent many key decision-makers were not actually in London. They were, instead, scattered all over the globe. Charlton observes:

All unsuspecting, Britain's political and military leadership was dispersed when the full awakening came. The foreign secretary, Lord Carrington, was in Israel. The chief of the defence staff, Admiral Lewin, was on the other side of the world, in New Zealand. The defence secretary, John Nott, had only just returned from a Nato meeting in Colorado Springs.¹

Surely, had there been adequate prediction these figures would not have been in so many different places.

Further evidence pointing to the total surprise of decision-makers was the initial confusion after the invasion took place. Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins state:

The first emergency cabinet after the Argentine invasion met in the morning of Friday, 2 April....It was a miserable and inconclusive gathering...no firm decisions could be taken because the cabinet had no information beyond that issuing from Buenos Aires. It could only stand by and await news...

...The cabinet had wholly lost touch with events.²

1. Charlton, op. cit. p. 190.

2. Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, The Battle For The Falklands (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1983). pp. 75-76.

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Hugo Young also identifies a scarcity of information in the wake of invasion. He notes:

When a BBC radio producer, having heard rumours of an invasion, rang the Foreign Office in the middle of the night, the duty officer reassured her. 'Believe me,' he said, 'if anything was happening, we would know about it.' A woeful failure of communications with the South Atlantic left it unclear for several hours whether an invasion had in fact occurred.¹

According to Hastings and Jenkins, this 'communications hiatus' on 2 April meant that:

...news of the crisis came exclusively from Buenos Aires for at least seven hours. The result was that the British cabinet was unable to confirm its key retaliatory decisions. It simply did not know what was happening and was unable to provide clear leadership. As one minister said grimly, 'We did not know enough to be able to resign.'...²

These factors support the view that decision-makers were surprised by the Argentine fait accompli in 1982. A more difficult question is whether this failure in prediction was a source of blame? In the study of the Suez crisis of 1956 it was observed that decision-makers were not criticised for failing to predict Nasser's nationalisation of the Canal Company. Indeed, in a speech in the House of Commons on 2 April 1956, Gaitskell stated: "...while I have not hesitated to express my disagreement with the Government in their policy in the past, I must make it abundantly plain

1. Young, op. cit. p. 264.

2. Hastings and Jenkins, op. cit. p. 330.

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that anything they have done or not done in no way excuses Colonel Nasser's action.."¹ Examination of the contemporary debate of 1982 reveals a similar lack of blame. The Franks report of that year observes:

There is no reasonable basis for any suggestion - which would be purely hypothetical - that the invasion would have been prevented if the Government had acted in the ways indicated in our report. Taking account of these considerations, and of all the evidence we have received, we conclude that we would not be justified in attaching any criticism or blame to the present Government for the Argentine Junta's decision to commit its act of unprovoked aggression in the invasion of the Falkland Islands on 2 April 1982.²

In subsequent studies of the Falklands conflict one finds some very different conclusions. For example, Phil Williams notes of the Franks report:

Although the Franks report argues that there was no intelligence failure by the British government, this is not entirely convincing - not least because the report fails to draw a distinction between the timing of the invasion...and the likelihood of such an action.....there seem to have been very serious shortcomings in British assessments of the Argentine approach to the Falklands dispute in the first few months 1982.³

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1. Gaitskell in Thomas, op. cit. Appendix I. p. 177.
 2. Rt. Hon. The Lord Franks (Chairman), Falkland Islands Review. Report of a Committee of Privy Councillors, Command Paper 8787. (London: H.M.S.O., January 1983). pp. 89-90. para. 339.
 3. Williams article, op. cit. p. 146.

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The Government's failure to correctly perceive the 'signals' coming from Argentina is a constant theme running through the works of a substantial portion of the authors mentioned in this study. R.N. Lebow, for example, lists twelve separate instances of these signals which range from 2 March - 2 April.¹ Eddy and Linklater also note at least one instance of British Intelligence obtaining hard information about a potential invasion prior to its occurrence, and significantly earlier than the date chosen as marking the advent of the crisis:

...British intelligence sources in Buenos Aires, on March 24, picked up definite information that an invasion was in train. Not only was that information passed back to London. It was partly confirmed by further intelligence possibly gathered by Sigint, the signals intelligence headquarters at Cheltenham in the West of England.²

Eddy and Linklater continue:

That Wednesday, March 24, the subject for assessment was the growing feeling that something was up, and specifically that the Argentinian naval manoeuvres currently taking place were a prelude to invasion in the Falklands. Evidence from various naval ports suggested that these were more than just ordinary exercises...Through sources in the US embassy, checks were carried out which convinced the British that invasion plans were indeed underway.

After comparing notes with their opposite numbers at the American embassy, the British concluded that it was all for real.

1. See Lebow, op. cit. pp. 7-8.

2. Eddy and Linklater, op. cit. pp. 77-78.

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They even predicted the exact date of the invasion. And they were right.

All this was apparently passed back to London.¹

This information appears to have been subsequently ignored. Thus, it might be argued that during this period decision-makers in London were guilty of failing to correctly interpret clear signals of intent. Lebow is of the opinion that:

In fairness to the Foreign Office, the JIC and the Prime Minister, all of these 'signals' only became clear in retrospect. At the time, they were also consistent with a strategy of bluff...

One must feel some sympathy for policymakers caught in this bind. However, the problem of repetitive threat neither excuses nor fully accounts for the poor judgement of the British Government. Faced with the prospect of recurring crises it was incumbent upon the British to develop indicators to help distinguish bluff from the real thing. This they failed to do.²

The invasion revealed that besides failing to correctly assess Argentine intentions, British decision-makers were guilty of demonstrating insufficient commitment to the Falklands. This reinforced the Argentine perception that the Islands were not highly valued by the Government. Perhaps the clearest illustration of this is the decision to withdraw HMS Endurance. Dillon observes:

Of all the British actions which were thought to have influenced the Argentine decision to invade the Falklands, the announcement that HMS Endurance was to be withdrawn was considered decisive. In fact, it was only

1. Eddy and Linklater, op. cit. p. 78.

2. Lebow, op. cit. p. 8.

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one in a series of important decisions and omissions remarkable for their political insensitivity.¹

The whole defence posture of the United Kingdom, in relation to the Falkland Islands prior to April 1982, should be thought of as a failed exercise in deterrence. In an attempt to address this question, Lord Carrington argues that:

...complete deterrence - the deployment of a force strong enough to defeat an attempt at invasion - had always been regarded as excessively expensive and disparate to the interests at stake...it would mean our other priority commitments would be neglected..and - a factor given weight in the Intelligence assessments - it might provoke the very adventure it would be intended to deter.²

Carrington's objections to the maintenance of a 'Fortress Falklands' are understandable. He goes on to state: "there are degrees of deterrence. A balance has to be struck."³ In the months before April 1982, decision-makers attempted to walk a very fine deterrence line. Against a background of strict spending limits they sought to maintain a posture which was strong enough to deter Argentine encroachments, but was not of a sufficient size to provoke Argentine escalation. In the light of events, this 'balance' failed in all of its objectives.

Clearly, British decision-makers were guilty of miscalculation and Lebow comes up with an interesting reason for this lack of foresight. He considers that policy-makers

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 35.

2. Carrington, op. cit. p. 359.

3. Ibid.

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in London were engaged in "defensive avoidance". Faced with the apparently incompatible policy goals of maintaining deterrence without risking escalation, decision-makers, "...convince themselves..that all, or almost all, of the 'facts' of the case and their own interests point to one or the other of the options open to them."¹ The illusions of Ministers were to be shattered by the events of April 2 and their policies failed to prevent the Falklands 'problem' from becoming a crisis.

There are grounds, therefore, for assigning a measure of 'blame' for the lack of anticipation of the crisis on the decision-makers involved. Fortunately for them, the pace of events between March and June 1982, coupled with the eventual success of the Task Force, masked these doubts until some time after the crisis was over.

In response to the surprising events of late March 1982 there appears to have been a limited discussion of a variety of options other than a military operation to retake the Islands. Perhaps the most realistic alternative being that of mounting a naval blockade. However, it is argued that the nature of the threat perceived by the decision-makers responsible for managing the crisis functioned as a pressure against the search for novel solutions. The Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands destroyed any asymmetry of interest. Thus, the time lag between invasion and military response allowed for the pursuit of a diplomatic solution. However, if the Government was to survive, British sovereignty over the Islands had to be restored. Dillon states that:

1. See Lebow, op. cit. pp. 16-19.

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Facing a monumental political crisis at home, and assailed by doubts about the reliability and political intentions of the Junta, the War Cabinet prepared for the probability that it would have to undertake one of the most dangerous of military operations. Despite the dualism of War Cabinet decision-making, Britain's political leadership was ultimately concerned with the formulation and implementation of war policy.¹

For Dillon, the whole question of the Government's search for alternatives becomes negated because of the structure of the crisis itself. He observes:

Several preconditions are required if decision-makers are to control the dynamics of crisis and retain any prospect of preserving peace. In the first instance both sides must fear war and the loss of control over the situation more than they do the loss of whatever is at stake in their confrontation. Clearly neither Argentina nor the United Kingdom subscribed to this condition...

Second, crisis management also depends on the operation of tacit norms and conventions that have been established between adversarial partners through a competition which has been conducted over a long period and a wide range of issues....There was, however, no acknowledgment by Britain and Argentina of what Philip Williams has called 'the rules of the game which have played such an important part in resolving super-power confrontations.'...

...Trust is a third precondition...It derives in the first place from the rules of adversarial diplomacy, but it also depends upon the integrity of communications...in the Falklands example the integrity of communications was fundamentally compromised from the outset...

A fourth precondition of crisis control is freedom of choice...Once more the capture

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 113.

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of the Islands subverted this precondition because, by invading British sovereign territory, Argentina had taken the most decisive step of all; a step which even the absence of British casualties could not disguise. It had crossed the threshold of conflict.¹

As was observed in earlier chapters, Dillon believes that the constraints imposed upon decision-makers by the structure of the crisis meant that the despatch of the Task Force was not an exercise in crisis management. Instead, it was a "rite of passage"² from peace to war. Similarly, Phil Williams notes:

...military considerations became dominant, especially as it became clear that the establishment of an exclusion zone around the Islands by Britain was not part of a coercive bargaining process, but a prelude to a traditional contest of military force....Once the Argentines had resorted to force, it was almost inevitable that Britain would do the same. In the absence of the preconditions for crisis management, a peaceful outcome which left both sides reasonably satisfied was almost impossible to achieve. Thus the conflict in the South Atlantic demonstrated very clearly the limited applicability of notions and practices of crisis management developed by the two super-powers.³

In terms of concepts of crisis and crisis management derived from the study of superpower crisis, the observations of Dillon and Williams are valid. Having failed to predict the invasion, British decision-makers found themselves engaged in a crisis the structure of which seriously

1. Dillon, op. cit. pp. 91-93.

2. Ibid. p. 101.

3. Williams article, op. cit. p. 149.

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hampered any attempts at preventing escalation. The despatch of the Task Force was not an attempt at managing the crisis, it was a prelude to war.

Yet, military action in the Falklands was not the result of a mismanaged crisis between two, nuclear-armed superpowers. Nuclear weapons played a peripheral role in the conflict and neither side was threatened with mass destruction. In this sense, the Falklands conflict is similar to the Suez crisis and bears more of a resemblance to crises which occurred in the pre-nuclear era than superpower crises. Dillon himself notes: "The model, if there has to be one, was August 1914 rather than Cuba 1962."¹ In the study of pre-nuclear crisis it has been observed that statesmen could go to war because, in the past, such conflict had been both limited and controllable. When assessing the 'success' of pre-nuclear age crisis management, one's judgement should not be based on whether statesmen prevented war. Instead, one ought to examine whether they managed to secure the conditions favourable to waging a successful campaign. It is suggested that a similar perspective be adopted in the analysis of the Falklands conflict. The nature of threat perceptions in 1982 was in many ways akin to those occurring in pre-nuclear age crises. Although it is accepted that the option selected in 1982 was not novel in that force was merely met with force, it is quite clear that the despatch of the Task Force and the diplomatic strategies prior to its engagement were, nevertheless, sub-nuclear crisis management techniques.

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 101.

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Conclusions

Decision-makers of the period were surprised at the events of late March - early April 1982. As such, the third definitional criterion is satisfied and the Falklands affair may be labelled a 'crisis'.

It might be argued that, prior to the advent of the crisis, there were a variety of signals which were incorrectly interpreted. Such failings were not a source of damaging criticism until some time after the affair was concluded. The pace of events masked these errors and, therefore, decision-makers did not have to face contemporary domestic debate about their competence.

In terms of 'conventional' notions of crisis management, it is accepted that decision-makers failed to formulate a novel response to an unforeseen situation. By allowing the crisis to degenerate into armed conflict they totally failed to successfully manage the crisis at all. The despatch of the Task Force and the diplomatic campaign were nothing more than mere preludes to a war to retake the Islands.

Even in sub-nuclear terms the response was not innovative, since invasion was countered by military action. However, this does not signify the absence of effective sub-nuclear crisis management. The time lag between mobilisation and engagement presented decision-makers with both an opportunity to explore alternative solutions, and a requirement to secure the conditions most favourable for the successful use of limited military force.

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Structure of the Decision-Making Group: Falklands 1982.

The initial decision to mobilise the Task Force was made during the meeting between Mrs. Thatcher, John Nott and Admiral Leach on 31 March. The structure of this group gives rise to two interlinked observations. First, due to surprise at events, the meeting was convened in an ad hoc fashion. It took place at the Prime Minister's rooms in the House of Commons and several key decision-makers were not present simply because they were scattered across the globe. Second, one must not understate the influence that the presence of the First Sea Lord, Sir Henry Leach, had in securing the early decision to mobilise the Task Force. Charlton notes: "It is not hard to imagine that the Admiral's arrival at the House of Commons this night was not just 'timely' to the prime minister but, in the words of the old hymn, a case of 'his presence shall my wants supply'."¹ From the Admiral's account, it would seem that he got there almost by chance.² His intervention provided a crucial counterbalance to the advice which the Prime Minister had been receiving. Freedman and Stonehouse state:

When he arrived in the Prime Minister's room discussion was under way on how to respond to the latest, disturbing intelligence. The advice being proffered to Mrs. Thatcher tended to follow that developed in the Ministry of Defence a few days before: a task force would take a long time to assemble and travel to the South Atlantic and could then fail in its task...Leach argued that something could be done....A full task force with logistic support would be required, not just a small squadron. It could be put

1. Charlton, op. cit. p. 189.

2. See Leach in Ibid, pp. 187-188.

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together by the weekend. By three weeks it could get to the Falkland Islands....

Leach was told to begin to prepare the force...¹

The despatch of the Task Force would require the approval of the full Cabinet, but had Leach not been present at this meeting the decision to at least mobilise may not have been made.

Leach's contribution to the process of decision-making also demonstrates that, even at this early stage in the crisis, the opinions of the specialist members of the decision-making group were accorded a certain weight by the Prime Minister. Throughout the conflict, the relative importance of the specialist element was to be a key structural feature of the decision-making group.

The formation of the decision-making group proper did not take place until April 5. Hastings and Jenkins note that:

The Prime Minister spent at least part of the weekend [3 - 4 April] making her governmental dispositions...

Prompted by Harold Macmillan and guided by the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, Mrs. Thatcher decided that the conflict did not merit the implementation of the full wartime contingency machinery, but it did require a small steering group of ministers. Sir Robert's quaint solution was a sub-committee of the OD committee, dubbed ODSA (for South Atlantic). It swiftly became known as the war cabinet, but the initials ODSA appeared on its papers throughout...²

1. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. p. 123.

2. Hastings and Jenkins, op. cit. pp. 80-81. [Date] added.

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This group had an eleven strong membership. There were six 'specialist' advisers and five politicians in attendance.¹ Unlike the Egypt Committee of 1956, the ODSA was not dominated by fluidity of personnel. Once formed, its membership remained fairly consistent. As has been noted in the previous chapter, Eden manipulated the fluidity of the membership of the Egypt Committee in order to facilitate the adoption of certain policies. Such a technique was not employed by Mrs. Thatcher, yet this does not mean that domestic political considerations played no part in determining initial membership selection. Dillon states:

Its membership was determined by several factors. First, it had to include those Ministers whose departmental responsibilities were directly involved. Second, it had in addition to provide appropriate professional advice from military and civilian specialists. Consequently, the initial membership selected itself. Finally, other individuals were incorporated to provide a measure of political and professional balance.²

Whitelaw and Parkinson, the "other individuals" to whom Dillon refers, were not included as a result of specialist expertise or ministerial relevance.³ Colin Seymour-Ure observes: "Whitelaw, the Cabinet's elder statesman, was an essential member from the point of view of helping to maintain Cabinet and backbench confidence in the handling of

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 108.

2. Ibid.

3. Although it is noted that Whitelaw had experience of military action in that he served in the second world war.

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the war."¹ The appointment of Whitelaw, therefore, parallels the inclusion of Butler and Salisbury in the Egypt Committee of 1956 in the sense that their presence was not solely dictated by the need to manage the external crisis, it was also influenced by the need to orchestrate domestic political conditions. Although it is an established concept that domestic political accountability is lessened during crisis, the rationale for such appointments clearly shows that both Eden and Thatcher were well aware of the need to placate their domestic political audience.

Similarly, the appointment of Parkinson was an attempt at forging a domestic political balance. In this case, rather than satisfying the Cabinet, Party or Commons, the rationale for his selection was to provide the Prime Minister herself with a measure of support within the decision-making group. Colin Seymour-Ure notes:

Parkinson was the subject of particular remark, since he was a Cabinet lightweight. He was first referred to as having been 'called in' to join the inner group of Ministers on April 19th (e.g. on BBC TV news). He was given special responsibility for keeping the party [sic] and public in touch with the Government's policy. This was no doubt fair enough, in view of his position as chairman of the Conservative Party. But he was generally regarded in fact as being in the War Cabinet primarily to provide unswerving support for the Prime Minister, should Mr. Whitelaw or Mr. Pym...step out of line.²

1. Colin Seymour-Ure, op. cit. p. 8.

2. Ibid. pp. 7-8.

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Of all the potential internal divisions within the decision-making group, the greatest and most persistent danger in the Prime Minister's eyes was the new Foreign Secretary, Francis Pym. Eddy and Linklater suggest:

In a perfect world the prime minister would not have given Pym the job in the first place. They had never really got on. While preserving the niceties of behaviour they were in reality less like colleagues than rivals, circling watchfully around each other in a state of constant mistrust. In the sudden vacuum created by Carrington's departure, Pym, strong within the Party and the House, was in the end the obvious candidate. But he was far from ideal in Thatcher's eyes.¹

One should not overestimate the power of Pym's challenge because the appointment of Parkinson and the increasingly close rapport Mrs. Thatcher was establishing with her military advisers meant that the personal political position of the Prime Minister within the ODSA became stronger and stronger. Furthermore, when commenting on the events of mid-May, Freedman and Stonehouse observe:

..public opinion was clearly behind the task force and the Government. Thatcher now dominated the War Cabinet and the other ministers present backed her view that, as the aggrieved party, Britain was under no obligation to make any concessions at all.²

The combination of such factors served to enhance the power of the Prime Minister within the group. In the light of such

1. Eddy and Linklater, op. cit. p. 169.

2. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. pp. 303-304.

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observations, Leach's comment about the Prime Minister's "gut feel"¹, when it was realised that invasion was imminent, assumes greater significance.

Another key element in the structure of the ODSA, which had an important effect on the process of decision, was the strength of the military specialists within the group. As has already been stated, the input of Admiral Leach during the meeting of 31 March was a major factor in securing the initial decision to mobilise the Task Force. Illustration of the weight accorded military opinion can also be found in reference to ODSA discussions of the blockade option. Hastings and Jenkins note that there was a debate concerned with:

..the feasibility of a naval blockade of the islands as an alternative - or sustained preliminary - to a landing. Blockade appealed to a number of politicians, including John Nott, who were deeply concerned by the risks of an opposed landing² followed by a land war in a hostile climate.²

The advantages of such an option were that the land force element of the Task Force would not have to sail past Ascension and more time would be available for an attempt to find a diplomatic solution. Resistance to this policy came primarily from within the specialist component of the decision-making group. Freedman and Stonehouse observe:

There was some political support for the idea of a blockade, for example from Defence Minister John Nott. This could put diplomatic pressure on Argentina while reducing the

1. Leach in Charlton, op. cit. p. 189.

2. Hastings and Jenkins, op. cit. p. 125.

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risks of war. Nott recognized too that once Britain had put forces in great numbers on to the Islands it would, thereafter, be difficult to get them off. A permanent Falklands garrison, he believed, was not in Britain's long-term defence interests.

The military would have none of this. Admiral Lewin was insistent that a blockade would be difficult to sustain, because of enemy action and the weather, while excessive delay could render an eventual landing impossible because of the problem of maintaining the task force in increasingly stormy and inclement weather over an extended period.¹

Despite the enthusiasm of senior Ministers from both the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Office for this option, it was discarded because of military objections.

It is open to debate whether the problems in mounting a blockade were any worse than those of launching a full-scale amphibious landing followed by an assault on entrenched Argentine forces. Unfortunately, it is not possible to gain access to the minutes of ODSA meetings, which would reveal in detail the extent to which the problems involved in the two options were debated. However, it should be noted that only William Whitelaw had any direct military experience. He had been awarded the Military Cross for his service during the second world war. In this sense, the Egypt Committee and the ODSA are similar in that the members of both groups selected 'forceful' policies without having extensive prior experience of the problems inherent in implementation. Effective sub-nuclear crisis management requires that decision-makers limit the scale of violence and it is suggested that during both

1. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. p.323.

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the Suez crisis and the Falklands conflict this difficult task was made even harder because most members of the decision-making group had never previously attempted such a political task.

While military operations are regarded as having a dangerous 'inner logic' over which political control must be maintained, understanding any logical progression requires rationality and this involves prior recognition of the problems and consequences of each option. The crisis of July 1914 is a stark illustration of the risks incurred in selecting a military response to a political problem without adequate assessment of the consequences of such a choice. It is suggested that the very distinction between 'specialist' and 'politician' ensures a high degree of reliance on the operational expertise of the military advisers in the decision-making group and this has important implications for the use of force as a 'tool' of politics.

In 1956, political objectives were escalatory in that they went beyond the retaking of the Canal. Four military plans were placed before decision-makers and the option selected, although considered to be the slowest method of restoring the Canal to British control, was the most likely to bring down the Nasser regime. Political aims were comparatively circumspect in 1982, however, a lesser range of military plans was presented to the decision-making group. The plan advocated by the military specialists was in fact probably the closest to the maximum use of force within these given limits. Military recommendations were also presented to the ODSA in a centralised manner. Hastings and Jenkins observe that such an information flow, "was subject to one limitation: it tended to conceal from the war cabinet the nature of military doubts about the efficacy of the

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operation."¹ Thus, non-specialist elements in the ODSA may have not been fully aware of the scale of military risk they were running when accepting the suggestions of the specialist component of the ODSA.

In the light of such observations it is relevant to note that during the meeting of March 31, and in subsequent ODSA meetings, the chief spokesmen for the armed forces were Admirals. It might be argued that the Falklands crisis was both a situation of threat and one of opportunity in that it was a chance for the Navy to demonstrate its continuing need to maintain a large surface fleet capable of performing 'out of area' operations. Tam Dalyell states:

As soon as the assembly of the task force was announced, I began to make discreet enquiries....as to what on earth the Chiefs of Staff had said. The word I got back was that the Army was relatively content with its role, once a reasonably successful landing had been completed. The Navy wanted to go to the South Atlantic, not least to justify its belief that there was a future for capital ships of the kind the Government either wished to sell...or to scrap altogether. However, on the actual feasibility of conducting a successful operation at the end of an 8,000-mile supply line, the Navy were said to be less sanguine.²

Leach's own account of the meeting of 31 March does not mention that he fully explained to the other decision-makers who were present the potential problems associated with the

1. Hastings and Jenkins, op. cit. p. 106.

2. Dalyell, op. cit. p. 31.

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despatch of the Task Force.¹ Charlton addresses the question of whether Leach saw the invasion as an opportunity for the navy:

[Charlton] ...at that moment, to the Prime Minister, you were not just sizing up for her the risks, but you were also seizing the opportunity to demonstrate what the Royal Navy could do?

[Leach] I'm aware of that and of course it is a possible allegation. People can believe it or not as they wish, but it was not actually in my mind at the time. There was no question of, 'Oh here's an opportunity to put the navy on the map', although patently the whole navy virtually was going to be involved, if it were to be done.²

Leach's denial is not convincing. It is difficult to believe that such thoughts did not cross his mind at some point during this stage of the crisis.

The structure of the military information channel was centralised and the spokesmen were naval officers. These factors masked the potential shortcomings in the plan to despatch the Task Force and were pressures acting against the selection of alternatives such as the blockade option. When this is combined with the Prime Minister's perception of a political imperative to make a serious effort to regain the Islands and the comparative lack of military expertise among the politicians, one begins to understand the reason for the comparative dominance of military logic in the decision-making group.

1. Leach in Charlton, op. cit. pp. 187-190.

2. Ibid. p. 189. [Names] added.

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What was the relationship of the ODSA to the full Cabinet? Day-to-day management of the crisis was left to the decision-making group. Cabinet meetings to discuss the crisis only occurred on a weekly basis. Seymour-Ure observes:

...'Many of the decisions', to quote Geoffrey Smith in The Times (April 24th, 1982, some three weeks after the invasion), 'are being made by the small inner group dealing with the Falklands, but this is not resented by other ministers who accept that crisis management cannot be conducted effectively by large numbers and that for security reasons tactical military assessments cannot be passed up and down Whitehall'. Cabinet meetings were typically described in The Times as 'stocktaking' (e.g. April 29th)...¹

There were times when full Cabinet backing was required to give legitimacy to certain decisions, but Seymour-Ure notes:

Special sessions [of the Cabinet] were only summoned at Downing Street to endorse War Cabinet decisions: on 2nd April, before the Task Force sailed; on 5th May to approve the Peruvian concessions; and on 18th May to receive the full chief-of-staffs' presentations three days before the San Carlos landing.²

Ministers not directly involved in the crisis were kept at a certain distance. Seymour-Ure states:

...at least one Senior Cabinet Minister [sic] was heard to say during the Falklands crisis that for once he could get on with the job of running his Department without either distractions or interference. In other words,

1. Seymour-Ure, op. cit. p. 20.

2. Ibid. pp. 20-21. [...] added.

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he was not running the crisis, and its importance made it an exclusive concern for those who were.¹

The Cabinet was not the forum for debate on the crisis. This debate took place within the ODSA and its findings were then presented to the wider body. Dillon observes: "None of the arguments and discussions which took place in the War Cabinet seemed to have been carried over into the Cabinet itself, either for further discussion or resolution."² Awareness of this style of presentation is important because, according to Hastings and Jenkins.

Thatcher's cabinet remained remarkably united throughout the war. Unlike the war cabinet, it had little raw material on which to base internal disagreement and certainly little on which to base dissent from what was always a collective presentation to it by the war cabinet.³

Preserving the harmony of the Cabinet was perhaps a more important consideration than some authors have suggested. Alexander Haig argues:

I have to tell you that, rightly or wrongly, my impression after my first meeting with Mrs. Thatcher, in Number 10 Downing Street, following the outbreak of the crisis, was that she was, with the exception of her minister of defence, and the chief of the defence forces, Terry Lewin, somewhat isolated within her Cabinet.⁴

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1. Seymour-Ure, op. cit. p. 24.
 2. Dillon, op. cit. p. 110.
 3. Hastings and Jenkins, op. cit. p. 168.
 4. Alexander Haig in Charlton, op. cit. p. 177.

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If the Prime Minister did perceive a sense of isolation in Cabinet she acted very quickly to ameliorate the problem.

Freedman and Stonehouse note:

It was only late in the evening of 2 April, with Argentine forces now on the Falklands, that the full Cabinet met and agreed that the task force should sail. Each member was asked by name whether he supported this decision, thus binding in the Government as a whole. Only John Biffen, then Trade Secretary, is said to have dissented.¹

Of the three special Cabinet sessions mentioned earlier, this was the most crucial. The vote taken was a key one, since by obtaining Cabinet support for the decision to send the Task Force the Prime Minister also succeeded in placing restraints on the potential for Cabinet dissent in the future. Once the Task Force was despatched, the collective nature of ODSA presentations to Cabinet coupled with the high prestige its members enjoyed severely limited the full Cabinet's scope for extensive and possibly divisive debate on the crisis.

The decision-making group also had to orchestrate public support for its policies. The commonly accepted concept of decision-makers being relatively secure from domestic political accountability is suggested to be the product of the study of crises which had relatively short durations. In comparison to other crises, the timespans of both the Suez affair and the Falklands conflict are fairly long. It is reasonable to assume that, as time goes by, decision-makers responsible for managing crisis inevitably begin to pay more heed to a potential increase in domestic dissent than has previously been acknowledged in the literature concerned with crisis and crisis management.

1. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. p. 124.

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During the Falklands crisis, controlling the flow of information became a crucial factor in the maintenance of domestic support. Valerie Adams in The Media And The Falklands War, notes:

The last major mobilisation of British forces to fight a war overseas prior to 1982 had been the Suez expedition of 1956. The Falklands War was thus Britain's first taste of a campaign fought in the full glare of modern media attention.¹

As the crisis progressed, the relationship between the Government and the media became strained to say the least. In the foreword to Valerie Adams' study, Lawrence Freedman observes:

The control exercised by the Ministry of Defence over the dissemination of information from the South Atlantic led to immense frustration in London. The supply coming through was not sufficient to satisfy the appetite of the media, which grew with the size of the 'story'.²

It is suggested that decision-makers attempted to exert a high degree of control over the media because of fears about the impact that detailed and graphic reporting might have had on public opinion. The Glasgow University Media Group are of the opinion that decision-makers, "regarded television as a potentially dangerous weapon in lowering morale."³ Dillon argues that the level of control which was imposed:

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1. Valerie Adams, The Media And The Falklands Campaign (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986). pp. 5-6.
 2. Lawrence Freedman in the foreword to Ibid. p. VIII.
 3. Glasgow University Media Group, War and Peace News (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985). p. 8.

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...revived the debate about whether the United States had lost in Vietnam as a consequence of the media coverage of the war there, and subsequently raised the argument that censorship and media manipulation played an important part in Britain's victory.¹

For Daniel Hallin, a lesson of Vietnam was, "that no 'televised war' can long retain political support..."² and he goes on to state that this perception, "motivated the British government to impose tight control on news coverage of the Falklands crisis."³ Thus, manipulation of the media was recognised as being an important tool of crisis management. In an attempt to maintain domestic political support (and suppress dissent), decision-makers deliberately sought to impose a high degree of control over television and press coverage of the conflict.

Conclusions.

Within the decision-making group, military opinion was accorded significant weight in debate and there are several instances of military concerns taking precedence over political needs. The strength of military advice was augmented by the perceived political need to react strongly to the Argentine invasion, hence a close rapport was established between the Prime Minister and her military advisers.

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 123.

2. Daniel Hallin, The 'Uncensored War': the Media and Vietnam (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
p. 4.

3. Ibid.

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The power of the military was also enhanced because the flow of military advice to the ODSA was centralised. Furthermore, other members of the ODSA lacked military experience. These information flow characteristics had a masking effect in that military doubts about the ability of the Task Force to carry out its mission were suppressed.

However, the decision-making group was dominated by the Prime Minister and in this sense the ODSA and the Egypt Committee are similar. In 1956, Eden manipulated the Egypt Committee by ensuring a high degree of fluidity of personnel. He was also at the centre of an inner circle of more senior members. These factors had the effect of stifling the inputs of lower ranking members of the group. Mrs. Thatcher, on the other hand, carefully manipulated initial personnel selection in order to ensure that potential rival factions within the group would be countered by a caucus on whom she could rely. Thereafter, the personnel within the group remained static.

In the ODSA's relation to the full Cabinet, one can also observe skilful political manipulation. Presentations were made collectively to the Cabinet which meant that any internal divisions of opinion were not revealed in the wider forum. The Prime Minister had effectively minimised the scope for Cabinet resistance to ODSA recommendations by securing the vote to despatch the Task force on 2 April. After this date the Cabinet was kept at a distance. Decision-makers also attempted to manipulate information flows to the wider domestic arena. In particular, by restricting media access to information, they sought to maintain public support for the campaign in the South Atlantic.

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Information distribution within the decision-making group is harder to analyse. More light may be shed on this question in the future when those closely involved in the management of the crisis publish their memoirs. Further evidence is probably contained in ministerial documents. Unfortunately, they will not be released for many years to come.

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Multipolarity and the Role of Allies: Falklands 1982.

Lawrence Freedman characterises the Falklands conflict in the following terms:

It was a textbook example of a limited war - limited in time, in location, in objectives and in means...

In the character of the military operations, the clarity of the issues at stake and the unambiguous outcome, it was a curiously old-fashioned war.¹

In the wake of the gradual withdrawal from empire it was a type of war which nobody thought Britain would ever again have to fight. Yet, the Argentine invasion forced British decision-makers to face precisely this possibility.

Although the nature of the conflict might have looked "old-fashioned", it took place in an international system dominated by the bipolar, nuclear-armed superpower subsystem. The failure to reconcile sub-nuclear concerns with the restraints imposed by the structure of the cold war international system was one of the key causes of the disastrous outcome of the Suez affair of 1956. The memory of that failure had not been forgotten in 1982. Charlton notes:

As Clarissa Eden said, the Suez Canal 'flowed through the living room' of 10 Downing Street when Anthony Eden was there in 1956, and it was still much more than a trickle in 1982. The name was on the lips of all the actors in the Falklands drama.²

1. Freedman, op. cit. p. 1.

2. Charlton, op. cit. p. 157.

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With the advent of the crisis in late March, British decision-makers found themselves faced with a complex range of diplomatic problems. Dillon observes:

Janus-like, Mrs. Thatcher and her colleagues had to look to both peace and war. This fundamental ambiguity was the defining characteristic of the War Cabinet's predicament and it influenced all aspects of the invasion crisis...the War Cabinet had to develop two separate but closely related policies, one designed to serve diplomatic goals, the other to serve military objectives. Each was governed by its own dynamics and each was produced by its own combination of authors, although the members of the War Cabinet provided a common link. The structure of the crisis and the political leadership of the War Cabinet ensured, however, that military policy had priority and that diplomacy was ultimately subordinate to the requirements of the military campaign. The intense search for a diplomatic solution, therefore, was also a preparation for conflict...¹

During this sub-nuclear crisis, British diplomacy served a dual purpose. It was both a means of exploring peaceful solutions and a method of securing international support for the campaign to retake the Falkland Islands. Of the several diplomatic arenas in which these goals were sought, two are of particular interest: the U.N. and, perhaps most important, the U.S.A.

The diplomatic effort at the U.N. was the responsibility of Sir Anthony Parsons. Hastings and Jenkins observe:

Throughout the war, Parsons's strategy was dominated by two considerations. The first was to secure a UN demand for Argentine withdrawal, to 'legitimise' Britain's

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 130.

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military response; the second was to avert any subsequent demand that Britain stall or recall the task force.¹

The first consideration was accomplished by the adoption of resolution 502 on April 3. It is testimony to the professionalism of Anthony Parsons that the resolution was adopted with only one nation (Panama) voting against and four abstentions (Poland, Spain, China and the U.S.S.R.).² The adoption of this resolution meant that the invasion of the Islands was characterised as a breach of the peace rather than an issue of decolonisation. Dillon notes: "As a consequence, the international discourse about the invasion crisis considerably favoured the British position."³ The use of British military force was, therefore, implicitly sanctioned under Article 51 of the United Nations charter. Charlton states: "Sir Anthony Parsons bestowed the dramatically important United Nations victory on Mrs [sic] Thatcher as the task force set out. It was a reversal of what had happened at Suez."⁴

Having achieved this initial objective, British diplomacy subsequently attempted to maintain a consensus of opinion favourable to British action. This element of the diplomatic campaign was to prove difficult because British diplomats had to contend with the growing erosion of international support as events unfolded, particularly in the wake of the sinking of the Belgrano. Anthony Parsons recalls some of the problems involved:

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1. Hastings and Jenkins, op. cit. p. 99.
 2. See Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. p. 140.
 3. Dillon, op. cit. p. 132.
 4. Charlton, op. cit. p. 203.

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When actual hostilities were beginning, as the task force was getting closer to the Islands, and there were air attacks by our aircraft on Port Stanley, the Security Council kept on wanting to issue declarations calling on both sides 'to exercise restraint'. As if it were some kind of game! I remember saying, very heatedly, in these consultations, 'How do you translate a request to exercise restraint to the pilot of a British aircraft who sees himself attacked by an Argentine aircraft? Does he think "I must exercise restraint", or does he think "I am fighting a war"?' It was very difficult to persuade them that the real thing was going on down there.¹

The diplomatic situation at the U.N. deteriorated to the extent that Britain, on 4 June, was forced to veto a proposed ceasefire resolution.

However, British diplomacy should not be regarded merely as a tool for the validation of a use of force. Dillon notes: "Initially the United Kingdom seems to have been engaged in a genuine exercise in dual diplomacy, designed to explore the opportunities for a peaceful solution without prejudicing the prospects of the Task Force."² He goes on to state:

Once the military schedule had caught up with diplomatic developments at the end of April, however, the subordination of diplomacy to the demands of military policy became irresistible. Thereafter, in support of the Task Force's counter-invasion, diplomacy was devoted to resisting any ceasefire proposals which did not amount to the unconditional surrender and eviction of all Argentine forces from the Falklands.³

1. Parsons in Charlton, op. cit. p. 203.

2. Dillon, op. cit. p. 140.

3. Ibid.

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Dillon's comments imply that, by late April, the British diplomatic position had irrevocably hardened. But, following the successful Argentine strike against HMS Sheffield on 4 May, there was a shift in the Cabinet's stance. Freedman and Stonehouse observe:

Whereas at the start of that day the problem had appeared to be of appearing too much like bullies - to the extent that Pym had told Parliament that no military humiliation of Argentina was sought - now the risks to the task force had been brought home. On 3 May the War Cabinet had authorized Henderson to explore further the Peruvian initiative. On 5 May the full Cabinet met. According to one account:

Pym's arguments, which before had been tedious obstacles on the path to glory, now seemed to many a ray of hope. All talk was now of Peru. Was a third-party interim administration acceptable? Could the Commons swallow only a vague reference to self-determination in the longer term? Was a balanced withdrawal quite what they had envisaged at the start?...¹

British proposals, based on Belaunde's initiative, were communicated to Argentine officials late on May 5. According to Francis Pym:

The story of those proposals has become ludicrously confused by the Belgrano, and all the allegations that have been made about the Belgrano. But the point is that those proposals were refined, between the 1st May and the 6th of May [sic], to the second set of proposals, which the Cabinet were prepared to go along with, and which were put to Argentina, and which they refused.²

1. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. pp. 289-290. Quoting Hastings and Jenkins, op. cit. pp. 167-168.

2. Pym in Charlton, op. cit. p. 206.

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Although there were still serious differences between the British and Argentine positions, it might be argued that at this stage British decision-makers did adopt a more conciliatory approach. Therefore, while British policy was undoubtedly concerned with securing the most favourable international conditions for the use of force, the search for conciliation should not be ignored.

The diplomatic position of the United States was of crucial concern for British decision-makers. In 1956, the combination of displeasure at an ally's seeming duplicity and threatening signals emanating from the Soviet Union caused the Eisenhower administration to put pressure on British decision-makers. Faced with the prospects of oil sanctions and a run on the Pound, Eden and his colleagues saw themselves as having no choice other than a humiliating reversal of policy. Of the diplomatic events of early April 1982, Eddy and Linklater observe:

Success at the United Nations marked the start of an extraordinary British propaganda campaign throughout America. It was masterminded from the Washington embassy, and was aimed at winning over opinion, both public and political, to the view that Britain was entitled to repossess the Falklands, and that Argentina should withdraw. This in its turn was intended to encourage the United States to provide material support for the British military campaign - should it come to that - and to put pressure on the Argentinian junta to pull out.¹

As the single leading member of the Western alliance the United States could exert a high degree of control over its junior partners. For British decision-makers engaged in the

1. Eddy and Linklater, op. cit. p. 113.

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management of this crisis, it was essential that the approval or at least the acquiescence of the senior partner be obtained.

A factor which influenced the obtaining of such support was that of personality. During the Suez crisis, the relationship between Dulles and Eden deteriorated. Hugh Thomas notes:

Eden now regarded Dulles as almost as much a personal enemy as he did Nasser. He was not alone in the Cabinet in wishing to prove that England could still act independently of the US. No doubt too some Ministers were impressed...by the sheer audacity of the plan, which had the advantage of apparently presenting the Government with the need for an immediate decision - so avoiding the need to consult with the US...¹

Such an approach was to have a disastrous effect on the subsequent outcome of the crisis. In contrast, when questioned about the relationship between the Prime Minister and the President in 1982, Sir Nicholas Henderson makes the following comment:

The relationship established between them from the time President Reagan entered the White House was important. I do not, frankly, think it was the decisive thing over the Falklands. It would have made it very difficult for Reagan to have criticized us or come out openly against us. The people pushing for positive action, and indeed sympathy, in support of us were largely Haig himself and the secretary of defence, Caspar Weinberger.²

1. Thomas, op. cit. p. 96.

2. Henderson in Charlton, op. cit. p. 196.

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Henderson's observations are somewhat contradictory. He states that the rapport between the Prime Minister and the President was "not decisive" while also acknowledging that it was "important" and "would have made it very difficult for Reagan to have criticized us." Furthermore, Charlton asks:

[Charlton]...how easy or difficult was it to persuade the United States that Britain saw it as an issue of principle and not just a question, for example, of saving Mrs. Thatcher's face?

[Henderson] It was not altogether easy. 'To save the prime minister's face' is an interesting point. Haig often saw it as 'Galtieri, or Mrs. Thatcher': one is going to fall, both of them cannot survive.¹

Whatever the weight one wishes to assign to the importance of individual relationships and biases, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that they do have a substantial influence on the way events develop. As Henderson's observations imply, decision-makers often perceive crisis in very personal terms. Their actions are not solely motivated by 'objective' cost/benefit calculations. In this sense, effective crisis management depends on an unquantifiable and largely circumstantial element: human personality. Indeed, thanks largely to the efforts of Henderson himself, support for Britain did build up both in terms of Congressional and public opinion. Freedman and Stonehouse note:

The British embassy in Washington mounted a major public relations campaign to persuade American opinion to support Britain, which could be presented as not only the aggrieved party but also democratic and a close and long-standing friend and ally. Ambassador Henderson made regular appearances on television and radio...

1. Charlton, op. cit. p. 196. [Names] added.

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...Within Congress pressure grew for a more pro-British stance. Contact with British officials..and the influence of anglophile members of the Administration and of key Senators led to the drafting of a resolution supportive of Britain. On the evening of 28 April...[the] resolution was passed 79 - 1.¹

The success that the British had in the courting of United States backing is also a product of the lack of ambiguity of signalling between the two groups of decision-makers. During the Suez crisis, Macmillan believed, "Ike will lie doggo until after the election"². Of course, events were to prove this to be a mistaken assumption. Furthermore, British decision-makers did not signal their determination to take forceful action clearly enough and so were exposed to American accusations of duplicity. In contrast, during the Falklands conflict, a high level of communication was maintained throughout the crisis. British resolve was firmly and repeatedly affirmed, as Henderson states: "Mrs. Thatcher left Haig in no doubt at the very first meetings that she wanted a diplomatic solution but that force would be used if necessary."³ Therefore, the combination of diplomatic strategies in relation to the U.S. can be labelled as 'successful' sub-nuclear crisis management. To overcome initial American 'even-handedness' in the wake of the invasion, British decision-makers undertook an active and vigorous campaign to ensure that American public and political opinion would be favourable to British military action.

1. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. pp. 237-238. [...] added. Senate Resolution 382. April 29, 1982.

2. In Thomas, op. cit. p. 95.

3. Henderson article, op. cit. p. 53.

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It should also be noted that the U.S 'tilt' towards Britain was facilitated by factors which were beyond the influence of British diplomatic strategies. Most importantly, the U.S.S.R. refrained from becoming too closely involved in the conflict. Several months before, the Soviet Union had switched the bulk of its grain purchases from Argentina to the United States. Thus, Soviet interests were not served by supporting Argentina. Calvert observes: "The crisis demonstrated therefore that for the Soviet Union the importance of good relations with the United States remained paramount..."¹ This is dissimilar to the Suez crisis of 1956, during which the behaviour of the U.S.S.R. had a direct influence on the failure of policy.

Lawrence Freedman is of the opinion that, in 1982, the United States could not exert as much leverage on the two protagonists as in the past. According to Freedman: "Neither participant was economically or militarily dependent enough to put the United States in a position to turn off the military action."² How far one should pursue this argument is uncertain. Undoubtedly, Britain was in a much more financially secure position in 1982 than it was in 1956, but the vigour of British diplomacy reinforces the view that the support of the United States was considered to be vital to the success of the Task Force. Had the United States signalled strong disapproval of British intentions it is unlikely that the South Atlantic campaign would have gone ahead. The events of 1956 had already demonstrated the folly of such a policy.

1. Calvert, op. cit. p. 150.

2. Freedman, op. cit. p. 79.

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Conclusions.

When engaged in sub-nuclear crisis management, decision-makers have important international diplomatic objectives to achieve in order to secure favourable conditions for the use of the state's armed forces. In the international arena, British decision-makers partially succeeded in their aims. U.N. resolution 502 provided a basis for claiming that retaking the Islands by force was a legitimate action. Having achieved this initial support, subsequent strategy attempted to resist calls for a ceasefire. However, international support at the U.N. did erode and the British were forced to veto a ceasefire resolution in early June.

In the courting of the support of its main alliance partner, the United Kingdom succeeded in 1982 and this is perhaps the greatest contrast to 1956. The perceived characteristics of the international system within which decision-makers functioned put a premium on securing U.S. support. Having achieved this, statesmen could then proceed with a resort to arms. During the Suez crisis, Eden failed to balance pre-nuclear age assumptions with the imperatives of the cold war era. In 1982, British decision-makers by a combination of vigorous diplomacy and beneficial circumstances enjoyed a far greater degree of success.

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Duality of Purpose: Falklands 1982.

One of the preconditions for an attempt at crisis management is that statesmen perceive themselves as having more to lose than they have to gain by going to war with each other. Obviously, if the states involved happen to be nuclear-armed superpowers the potential costs of war are massive, consequently, there exists an imperative to limit superpower competition below a use of force threshold.

For authors such as Dillon and Williams, this imperative was absent during the Falklands conflict. Williams argues: "The first precondition for crisis management, the fear of war, does not seem to have been a major factor."¹ It has been observed that the role of nuclear weapons was peripheral and mass destruction of either state was not perceived to be a realistic possibility. Therefore, a 'conventional' duality of purpose is not regarded as functioning. Dillon notes:

..by invading British sovereign territory, Argentina had taken the most decisive step of all; a step which even the absence of British casualties could not disguise. It had crossed the threshold of conflict.

Of all the conditions necessary for crisis management and the avoidance of war the threshold of violence is the decisive one. Once that threshold is crossed all cost-benefit equations are transformed by what theorists of crises call value escalation.²

The invasion of the Islands by Argentina destroyed any possible asymmetries of interest. Their value was suddenly transformed and decision-makers found themselves required to

1. Williams article, op. cit. p. 147.

2. Dillon, op. cit. pp. 93-94.

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make a serious effort to restore British sovereignty. The cost of failing was just too great. The nature of the threat perceived by British decision-makers meant that the chances of avoiding conflict were small.

According to Phil Williams: "Although both sides would have preferred to avoid hostilities, they also recognized that a military engagement would be a strictly limited affair."¹ The absence of an overriding imperative to avoid war does not mean that a type duality of purpose did not exist. A crisis management 'task' which faced decision-makers was to limit the scale of hostilities. There are, after all, many different thresholds of violence. Once the decisive first threshold between violence and non-violence has been crossed, there is still scope for managing the crisis to ensure that the level of subsequent violence remains under control.

Of course, the problems of maintaining control over the course of events are many and complex. During a superpower crisis, the risk of failing to limit violence once it has been initiated is vast. Should a crisis be allowed to escalate into war, the extent of destruction would be massive, thus there is a mutually perceived need to prevent the outbreak of violence from occurring. Such is not the case in a sub-nuclear crisis because an upper threshold of mass mutual destruction simply does not exist. Sub-nuclear crisis managers do cross thresholds of violence while at the same time trying to limit the scope of conflict. However, the

1. Williams article, op. cit. p. 147.

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'success' of these attempts varies and throughout the Falklands crisis there were examples of both effective and ineffective sub-nuclear crisis management strategies.

An obvious but, nevertheless, valid point is that nuclear weapons were kept out of the South Atlantic zone. By retrieving these weapons at Ascension Island, British decision-makers were, somewhat belatedly, practising a form of self-denial. Although the Task Force had the potential of being nuclear-armed, decision-makers in London refrained from allowing their commanders this level of military capability. They also resisted pressures to extend the area of operations. For example, Hastings and Jenkins note:

One...option was forcefully urged by some members of the task force, both senior officers and rank and file: an attack by Vulcan bombers, or more plausibly by a team of saboteurs from the Special Air Service, on the enemy's mainland air bases....It was the old 'gloves off' argument that, at a more dramatic level, caused the Americans to consider invading North Vietnam at the height of the war in Indochina. Yet the difficulties of carrying out a bombing attack with any likelihood of success were overwhelming. And, despite the British government's resolute commitment to retaking the Falklands, there was an equally determined and persistent resolve to limit the conflict.¹

Consequently, targets on the Argentine mainland were not subject to military strikes.

While these observations are illustration of some of the 'successes' that decision-makers achieved in their attempts at maintaining control over the course of events, there are

1. Hastings and Jenkins, op. cit. p. 162.

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other features of the conflict which demonstrate that the relationship between military logic and political imperatives was far more complex. Freedman and Stonehouse observe that:

...in order to maintain some political control over military operations, the forces were required to follow rules of engagement. These varied in scope from strategic to detailed tactical instructions. They defined the freedom of action of the commander on the spot rather than controlled matters directly through precise instruction. The military interest is normally to encourage the enemy to assume that the commander's freedom is greater than it actually is. So, in addition to the rules sent to the task force command, the British Government issued a series of public statements which defined the terms under which it would take action against Argentine forces.¹

These statements included the issuing of 'warnings' and declarations of the establishment of 'exclusion zones' around the Falkland Islands. Freedman and Stonehouse go on to note:

As British forces drew closer to the South Atlantic the potential scope and intensity of hostilities grew. In the weeks before the bulk of the task force arrived all the British could do was inhibit Argentine reinforcements. This was the purpose of the Maritime Exclusion Zone (MEZ) announced on 7 April to take effect from 12 April. The military would have been content to call it a blockade, but this created problems under international law, and so the more neutral terminology was adopted.²

1. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. p. 248.

2. Ibid.

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Surely, the issuing of public declarations stressing the limited intent of British action can be considered as 'crisis management'. Indeed, such concern with terminology bears a resemblance to the management of the Cuban missile crisis. Although the U.S. naval action around Cuba was to all intents and purposes a blockade, Graham Allison notes that it was, "euphemistically called a quarantine to circumvent the niceties of international law..."¹ The comparison can be taken further, Allison observes:

All that was required was for the United States to bring to bear its strategic and local superiority in a way that demonstrated American determination to see the missiles removed, while at the same time allowing Moscow time and room to retreat without humiliation. The naval blockade...did just that.²

The essence of superpower crisis management, which differentiates it from appeasement, is the notion that decision-makers are are ready to escalate the level of competition should it be required. An implication of this argument is that had the Soviet Union not been deterred by the blockade the U.S. would have resorted to more forceful military measures. In reference to the Falklands crisis, G.M. Dillon states:

Publicly the War Cabinet maintained that it was acting in accordance with Article 51 of the UN charter, which specifies the right of self-defence. Action in support of self-defence is also governed by international legal requirements concerning the nature and the immediacy of the attack and the proportionality of the response to the seriousness of it...

1. Allison, op. cit. p. 57.

2. Ibid.

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...By claiming that it was acting with the minimum of force, the War Cabinet deliberately encouraged the suggestion that the exercise of military power would be a closely controlled process of escalation.¹

It is observed that during both of these crises, decision-makers were attempting to pursue policies which demonstrated commitment, while simultaneously limiting the scale of competition.

Yet, one should not overstress such a comparison. The Cuban quarantine and the British declarations concerning 'exclusion zones' and 'rules of engagement' were based on very different premises. Allison observes that during the Cuban crisis, "American local superiority was overwhelming."² This military flexibility gave the EXCOM a variety of policy options which ranged from doing nothing, through to an invasion of Cuba itself.³ The establishment of the Cuban quarantine was not an automatic 'prelude' to further hostilities. American military power was such that the quarantine could be established and maintained over a period of time without affecting the capability of the U.S. military to pursue further options should the need arise. In this sense, political freedom of action was not hampered by military fears concerning the operational durability of the forces at their disposal. Hence, the blockade of Cuba satisfied the need to demonstrate commitment and at the same time allowed the political decision-makers of the U.S.A and U.S.S.R. room for manoeuvre.

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 175.

2. Allison, op. cit. p. 57.

3. See Ibid. pp. 58-60.

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During the Falklands conflict, statesmen were faced with a very different strategic problem. British decision-makers did not have the same vast level of military capability which was available to their American counterparts. According to the advice of the military specialists, the Task Force could not mount a sustainable blockade of the Falkland Islands nor could it remain in the South Atlantic indefinitely. As the crisis progressed, the needs of the military, therefore, assumed greater importance. The operational capability of the Task Force and its strategic requirements as it came closer to Argentine forces were inflexible, as Dillon observes:

Above all the Task Force was engaged in what the commander of 3 Commando Brigade graphically described as 'a one-shot operation': 'It couldn't be like Dieppe, where if we tried and it didn't work, we could make sure we did better next time. We had to get it right in one go'...¹

That the imperatives of military logic assumed an increasingly dominant position in the process of decision is illustrated, for example, by reference to the speed with which the decision to change the Rules of Engagement on 2 May was made. Dillon states:

Unlike almost all other ROE decisions this final revision was not considered by the 'Mandarins' Committee'. Neither was it considered by the full War Cabinet in formal session. According to the minority report of the Foreign Affairs Committee's inquiry into the Belgrano affair, it was considered at 'an informal gathering before lunch of some of those summoned to the War Cabinet meeting'. By all accounts the discussion was short.

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 177.

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Woodward believed that the decision 'was achieved in remarkably short order, reputedly in the entrance porch at Chequers'...¹

Freedman and Stonehouse note: "The change agreed was 'to permit attacks on all Argentine naval vessels on the high seas, as had previously been agreed for the 25 De Mayo alone'. Again no need was seen for this change to be communicated immediately to Argentina"² The sinking of the Belgrano was not a product of a desire to undermine the Peruvian peace initiative, as Freedman and Stonehouse go on to observe:

There was little time to consider the implications of the step beforehand. The discussion itself took fifteen to twenty minutes. One account suggests a rather comprehensive discussion, but in practice it appears to have been more perfunctory, with a general unwillingness to challenge the military judgement. Whitelaw later recalled it as 'one of the simplest decisions that I personally found myself involved in' once he understood the risk of losing contact with the Belgrano if the Conqueror were not allowed to attack.³

Military necessity led to the extension of the ROE on 2 May. It was not a political device designed to put diplomatic pressure on the opponent. Indeed, the sinking of the Belgrano, coming as it did outside of the Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ), caused a significant erosion in international support for the British position. Some decision-makers were of the opinion that the 'warning' of 23 April constituted sufficient notice of the escalation, however this is a weak

1. Dillon, op. cit. p. 213.

2. Freedman and Stonehouse, op. cit. p. 267.

3. Ibid. p. 266.

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argument. The majority report of the Belgrano enquiry observes, "there was at the very least, considerable doubt amongst Ministers as to whether the 23 April warning was fully understood in those terms in Argentina or elsewhere in the world."¹ At this stage of the crisis, military necessity had priority over the requirements of alternative strategies.

The decision of 2 May should be regarded as an example of political mismanagement in the sense that political logic had become subordinate to immediate military concerns. In terms of duality of purpose, the impulse to explore alternatives other than a use of force had become less strong than the pressure placed on decision-makers by the operational needs of the Task Force. When discussing military policy during the crisis, Dillon states:

Its public rationale relied upon the principle of the minimum use of force, but its strategic design demanded the maximum use of the forces available to optimise the prospect of achieving military victory. The one was still partially intent on pursuing the logic of politics, in the hiatus between Argentina's invasion and the arrival of the Carrier Group off the Falklands, while the other was dictated by the logic of conflict.....such a contradiction was tolerable only as long as the two dimensions of policy were kept separate, but the momentum of conflict ensured that they would ultimately clash. When they did so, over the weekend of 30 April- 2 May, 'minimum force' became the maximum use of force consistent with the Carrier Group's operational plans, to the consequent political embarrassment of the War Cabinet and the near ruin of its diplomacy,² as well as much of its political rhetoric.²

1. In Dillon, op. cit. p. 224.

2. Ibid. pp. 182-183.

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Conclusions.

It appears that a notion of duality of purpose derived from the study of superpower crisis does not function in relation to the Falklands affair of 1982. Neither state feared war more than the consequences of losing the Islands.

This observation does not mean that a duality of purpose did not exist. The structure of sub-nuclear crisis is such that a recourse to force is not necessarily a sign of mismanagement. Once a use of force is envisaged, decision-makers find themselves faced with the crucial management 'task' of attempting to control the scope of hostilities. During the Falklands affair, British decision-makers had both successes and failures. The Clausewitzian dictum that war is the "instrument"¹ of policy underpins the notion of sub-nuclear crisis management. Yet, as the despatch of the Task Force in 1982 illustrates, it is not an easy instrument to wield. The strategic limitations of the Task Force, and thus the demands of military logic, increasingly functioned as a restricting influence on the process of decision. The ambiguity in the handling of the declarations concerning the 'exclusion zones' and the public 'warnings' between late April - early May was a result of the dominance of military necessity. In operational terms, the sinking of the Belgrano was regarded as necessary. In political terms, Britain lost considerable international support because of it.

An implication of these observations is that there exists an inherent tension in the management of sub-nuclear crises by military means. 'Successful' sub-nuclear crisis

1. Clausewitz, op. cit. p. 125.

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management depends on the extent to which political control is maintained over the scale of military action, but, in the implementation of 'forceful' policy options, the logic of conflict assumes a powerful inner momentum which becomes progressively more difficult to resist.

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The Nature of Threat.

There is no evidence to suggest that Argentina was a nuclear-armed power in 1982. While Britain did possess such weapons, decision-makers refrained from allowing them to be taken into the South Atlantic zone. This act of self-denial ensured that neither state would consider itself to be threatened by weapons of mass destruction.

The Falkland Islands themselves should be regarded as being of little economic or strategic value. In material terms, their loss would not be highly damaging to British interests. Indeed, there is an interesting irony to be found when comparing the worth of the Falkland Islands to that of the Suez canal. In 1956, the Suez canal was regarded as being much more vital to Britain's economic and security needs than were the Islands prior to 31 March 1982. However, the invasion of the Islands transformed their value in less quantifiable, but no less important ways. Faced with uproar in Parliament and public indignation in response to Argentine actions, decision-makers found themselves faced with a grave political threat. By occupying the Islands, Argentina was perceived to have somehow violated the essence of British 'nationhood'. If the Thatcher Government was to survive, a resolute response to the invasion was required.

The Impact of Limited Time.

The Falklands crisis is regarded as beginning on 31 March 1982. Before this date there was a notable lack of urgency in diplomacy. One cannot identify perceptions of high threat or short decision-time in negotiations. Consequently, British diplomacy went no further than, as Sir Williams has

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observed, "a general Micawberism."¹ The afternoon of 31 March also witnessed the revision of intelligence estimates to include the view that Argentine military action was imminent. This is in contrast to previous assessments which, although not excluding the possibility of some form of aggression, estimated that Argentine actions would be preceded by a 'graduated escalation' in tension. A further piece of evidence pointing to this date is the meeting held in the Prime Minister's rooms in the House of Commons. The manner in which this meeting was convened, its membership and the decisions which were made, all correspond to previously discussed notions of decision making groups in crisis. These factors are regarded as being good indications that high-level Ministers had finally realised they were facing a crisis.

The date marking the end of the crisis is simpler to identify. On 14 June, Argentine forces occupying the Falklands surrendered and the immediate political problem of responding to the invasion of April 2 had been resolved.

The total timespan of the crisis was around ten weeks (31 March to 14 June). While this is a fairly long period, it satisfies the requirement that 'crises' are of a duration of hours, days and weeks. In this respect it bears a resemblance to the Suez crisis of 1956 except that, during the Falklands conflict, decision-makers were more successful in resisting the intrusion of distorting political influences which such a timespan facilitates.

1. Sir Anthony Williams in Charlton, op. cit. p. 126.

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The Element of Surprise.

Surprise at events can be quite clearly identified in March 1982. The fact that when the Argentinians invaded many key decision-makers were not present in London, and the hiatus in communications immediately after the Islands were occupied, is clear evidence that policy-makers had been caught unawares by the Argentine action.

If decision-makers were surprised at events, were they then blamed for a failure in prediction? The contemporary debate does not blame the Government for such errors, for example, despite the evidence contained within it, the Franks report concludes by exonerating the Government. However, subsequent analyses have come to a very different set of conclusions. While it is accepted that accurate interpretation of 'signals' is far easier with the benefit of hindsight, it is still fair to regard British decision-makers as incorrectly assessing a whole series of intelligence observations. Decision-makers also failed to deter Argentine occupation of the Falklands by not demonstrating sufficient commitment. The decision to scrap HMS Endurance is the clearest single piece of evidence to support this argument. Therefore, prior to March 1982, British decision-makers were guilty of both miscalculation and misperception.

In terms of novelty, the response to the Argentinian invasion was not particularly original in that force was met with force. A reason for this lies in the perceived structure of the crisis itself. The political imperative to retake the Islands and the absence of a mutually perceived upper threshold of violence restricted the chances that alternatives to the use of force would be selected. Yet, the response to the Falklands crisis of 1982 may be a novel one

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in the sense that, unlike 1956, British decision-makers were more effective in securing conditions favourable to the successful use of the Task Force.

The Structure of the Decision-Making Group.

The ODSA was subject to a large degree of political manipulation. In terms of membership, the inclusion of Whitelaw was a result of the Prime Minister's perceived need to maintain Cabinet and Party unity. The appointment of Parkinson was a response to the need to counter potential opposition to the Prime Minister within the group itself. These factors, coupled with the rapport which developed between the Prime Minister and the specialist advisers, meant that her personal political position within the ODSA was strong.

A further feature of the structure of the group was the particular weight accorded the opinions of the specialists. Given that the Prime Minister was faced by a political imperative to regain the Islands and that the tool initially selected to ameliorate the problem was the Task Force, ensuring the success of the fleet became of prime importance. Consequently, the specialist members of the group could wield enough influence to ensure that, for example, the option of blockade (which was favoured by some politicians) was abandoned.

A distance was maintained between the full Cabinet and the decision-making group. The full Cabinet met once a week to discuss the crisis. Three other special sessions were convened, but only for the purpose of approving crucial ODSA decisions. This distance and the high prestige of the decision-making group functioned to suppress any detailed

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analysis of the crisis within the full Cabinet. The comparative lack of debate was further enhanced by the nature of ODSA presentations to the larger body. ODSA decisions were presented collectively which meant that internal arguments were not carried on in full Cabinet. As such, the Cabinet played a fairly minor role in the actual process of decision. It mainly functioned to endorse rather than make decisions.

The flow of information within the decision-making group does not appear to be as imbalanced as was the case in the Egypt Committee. To date, there is no evidence to suggest that information was withheld from members of the ODSA. There are, however, some interesting information flow characteristics which should be noted. First, most of the political members of the group had no military experience. Second, the way that military information was presented to the group was centralised. Furthermore, the key specialist spokesmen were naval officers. The structure of this information flow had the effect of masking any potential weaknesses in the plan to despatch the Task Force. It also suppressed debate about alternative options for the Force's use, other than a full scale operation to retake the Islands.

Duality of Purpose in a Multipolar Environment.

Nuclear weapons played only a minor role in the development of this crisis and the mutual fear of total war which is at the heart of the 'conventional' concept of duality of purpose was not present. Furthermore, any fundamental asymmetries of interest were destroyed by the Argentine invasion of 2 April.

However, once engaged in sub-nuclear crisis, there are still important 'tasks' for the decision-making unit. International conditions favourable to the state's use of

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force must be secured. In 1982, British diplomacy at the U.N. was successful in that it secured the adoption of Resolution 502. Subsequent attempts at preventing amendments to the resolution, or calls for a ceasefire, were less effective. International support at the U.N. was to steadily erode as military action progressed. Diplomacy in regards to the U.S. was more effective. The active campaign of Henderson, the transmission of firm resolve and, not least, the personalities of key decision-makers combined to ensure eventual U.S. support for British action in the South Atlantic.

Even in the absence of a mutually perceived upper threshold of mass destruction, the scale of violence must be controlled. During the Falklands affair it is possible to identify several instances of decision-makers taking steps to limit the scope of hostilities. There are also instances of the mismanagement of this process, for example, although the sinking of the Belgrano may have been a rational decision based on operational needs, the actual circumstances of its loss caused a significant erosion of international support. This illustrates a fundamental tension in sub-nuclear crisis management. A resort to arms, once initiated, assumes an inner logic over which political control becomes increasingly difficult.

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Sub-Nuclear Crisis: An Ambiguous Concept?

'International Crisis', as the term itself implies, is regarded as occurring between actors who are members of the community of states. Crisis management is a term applied to modes of behaviour during such periods. It is reasonable to acknowledge that, for the actors concerned, international crises are periods of relative instability, or at least of potential destabilisation, and that they are a persistent occurrence within the international system. The study of crisis and crisis management is, therefore, an analysis of the state's pragmatic maintenance of order in a system implicitly accepted as being susceptible to forces of disorder.

The aim of this thesis has been to generate a paradigm of crisis management for use as an explanatory tool in the analysis of a type of crisis which has been defined as 'sub-nuclear'. It is an attempt to expand previous notions of crisis management in order to incorporate observed modes of state behaviour which have, hitherto, not been classed as 'successful' crisis management.

While international crisis is regarded as arising between states, definition in this study requires the identification of three component criteria which rest on the perceptions of decision-makers within the state. Similarly, the study of the process of policy formulation during crisis concentrates on the workings of intranational decision-making units and is regarded as a product of political bargaining, rather than the result of the functioning of a unitary agent endowed with comprehensive rationality.

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Of course, the adoption of such an approach creates a number of problems not the least of which is that, by concentrating only the perceptions of British decision-makers, the analysis is inevitably somewhat one-sided. Furthermore, access to information is a persistent problem. Documents are subject to a high degree of restriction and the memoirs of decision-makers are often selective and, perhaps, more concerned with exonerating an individual's role than with presenting an accurate picture of events. It is also unlikely that any written documents, be they Cabinet minutes, memoirs, or even studies such as this could ever really impart the 'mood' of debate within the decision-making groups responsible for managing particular crises. By definition, an 'observer' perspective is removed from events which leaves one wondering whether it is possible to ever fully understand what it is to be a member of a small group in a tense, highly stressful situation responsible for the making of decisions which, literally, might be of life and death importance for others?

Another problem in the search for explanation through the study of processes of decision-making is that the observer becomes faced with what can only be described as a range of unquantifiable variables. This is due to the fact that the innate subjectivity of the human personality lies at the heart of decision-making. Graham Allison, with to my mind more than a passing sense of irony, entitles his study of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Essence of Decision. In the preface, Allison draws one's attention to the "insight" of John F. Kennedy's observation:

The essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer - often, indeed, to the decider himself.....There will always

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be the dark and tangled stretches in the decision-making process - mysterious even to those who may be most intimately involved.¹

Such a view might imply that crisis management is little more than improvisation, determined by personality and subjective perceptions of the structure of the instance. Certainly, there is a measure of truth in this argument. One of the themes of this study is that existing ideas of crisis and crisis management are of limited applicability in the understanding of 'sub-nuclear' crisis because such notions have been formulated from observation of superpower crises, which are in many ways a unique class of international crisis.

Yet, one does not dispute the validity and utility of 'conventional' ideas of crisis management in terms of the explanation of such crises. Superpower decision-makers, despite the uncertainty and subjectivity of their perceptions, do not randomly select policy options from a universe of possibility. They fall back on a limited repertoire of actions which is dependent upon a remarkably consistent and identifiable concept of the structure of the superpower subsystem. During the Cuban missile crisis, the awful spectre of total nuclear warfare and the need to maintain the stability of the central deterrence balance both defined the nature of perceived threat and imposed restraints on the manner of response. But, recognition of these characteristics is facilitated by the starkness of the superpower relationship. Although George and Smoke are concerned with deterrence theory in general, the following observation is relevant in terms of crisis management:

1. Allison, op. cit. Preface, p. VI.

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In the postwar period the convergence of several new factors - the capability of vast destruction, the deterrent potential of the threat of such destruction, and the emergence of bipolarity - strongly encouraged the development of a theory and practice of deterrence that focused upon extremely polarized situations and problems. The fact that the logic and requirements of deterrence proved to be the simplest in such cases further enhanced this tendency.¹

However, during the Cuban missile crisis there was a measure of ambiguity in perceptions. For example, a number of decision-makers were in favour of the United States pursuing a far more forceful policy, with the option of a 'surgical' air strike being the most strongly advocated. Allison notes that: "Initially, the President wanted a clean, surgical air strike."² Indeed, for Allison, the selection of the blockade option was the product of a variety of organisational and bureaucratic political factors rather than the sole result of simple strategic calculations.

The structure of sub-nuclear crises are even less well defined. They are not as starkly bipolar and not characterised by the recognition of an upper threshold of mass destruction. For the decision-makers involved, definition of the structure of crisis is a complex task. Perceived restraints on the use of force are not determined by the identification of potential escalation to total war should events be mishandled. One of the implications of these observations, supported by reference to the three historical crises which form the subject matter of the case studies, is that force is persistently regarded as a rational means of

1. George and Smoke, op. cit. pp. 32-33.

2. Allison, op. cit. p. 202.

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ameliorating political problems. Among decision-makers faced with sub-nuclear crises, there exists a fundamental, widely shared belief in the utility of a resort to arms as a technique of crisis management.

This assumption has, therefore, been incorporated into the concept of 'sub-nuclear crisis management'. Without disregarding the search for alternative courses of action, 'effective' crisis management is also characterised by the limited and controlled use of force in a favourable international environment. Even according to this wider formulation, the degree of success in the management of the case studies is varied. A host of reasons contribute to this variability, of which many are circumstantial and beyond the control of policy-makers, yet two interlinked factors of great importance are at least partially subject to the influence of decision-makers.

(i) The dangerous inner logic of force.

In all of the case studies, force was observed to have a certain inner momentum over which political control proved a difficult task. The clearest failure of control must be the crisis of July 1914. Once the decision to intervene had been made, the will of decision-makers rapidly became subordinate to the 'pre-programmed' nature of British military plans. In effect, political control was lost and the crisis escalated into a terrible and bloody war.

Thus, there is an inherent tension in the characterisation of sub-nuclear crisis management as the simultaneous pursuit of both 'peaceful' and 'forceful' policies. This is clearly illustrated, for example, by reference to the decision to sink the *Belgrano* during the

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Falklands crisis of 1982. In terms of military logic, it might be argued that this decision was a necessary and rational response to a source of military threat. However, it has also been noted that this decision contributed to the failure of Peruvian peace initiative and so lowered the prospects for a peaceful resolution to the Falklands conflict. What is revealed, therefore, is the extent to which the requirements of military logic, at this stage in the crisis, had come to dominate the process of decision. Although effective crisis management requires that political control of a resort to arms remains paramount, the case studies demonstrate that, once force is initiated, subsequent limitations become increasingly difficult.

(ii) Clarity in the formulation of political aims.

The successful use of limited force is regarded as being dependent upon the clarity and circumspection of political objectives. Such aims are dictated by participant perceptions of the nature of crisis. Because sub-nuclear crises are not starkly bipolar, with an easily recognisable upper threshold of mass destruction, it is suggested that the goals of decision-makers are far more mixed and uncertain than might otherwise be the case. In order to explore the relationship between definition, aims and means, reference to the component criteria of the term 'crisis' is instructive.

The Impact of Limited Time.

This criterion has been defined in terms of hours, days and weeks. It is regarded both as a source of stress and as a crucial constraint on the functioning of rational decision-making. Effective crisis management is regarded as entailing

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the striking of a balance between avoidance of delay while allowing adequate time for deliberations. Within this broad spectrum, the timespans of the case studies are observed to be variable.

In part, the duration of crisis is dependent on a range of uncontrollable factors, but the idea that decision-makers are merely generating policy within a temporal framework somehow imposed upon them is misleading. For example, it has been suggested that the crisis of July 1914 developed so quickly that the statesmen of the period did not have sufficient time in which to engage in effective crisis management. Such a view underpins the 'march of events' argument adopted by, among others, Edward Grey. Yet, there is evidence to suggest that Grey first informed his colleagues of the worsening European situation at a Cabinet meeting on 24 July, at least five days prior to the date selected as marking the advent of this crisis. While it might be argued that events had already passed beyond effective control by July 24, it cannot be denied that less than 60% of the potential time available for decision-making was utilised. Therefore, despite the views of some authors, the eventual length of the crisis is not considered to be totally dependent on external events. The perceptions of the statesmen involved functioned as a crucial factor in determining how much time was available for crisis management.

The Suez crisis and Falklands conflict were of a fairly long duration. Following both the Argentine invasion of the Islands and the Egyptian nationalisation of the Canal Company, decision-makers were not constrained by the pace of external events to the same extent as were, for example, their American counterparts during the Cuban crisis of 1962.

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The military schedule involved in the improvised projection of limited resources over large distances provided the initial temporal framework. However, the eventual length of the Suez crisis was far longer than that originally envisaged, and is in marked contrast to the Falklands conflict. Although this was partly due to the delay caused by a series of revisions in the military plan to retake the Canal, Admiral Lord Lewin observes that in 1982:

The attitude of most people of my generation to Suez was that it was a political disaster of major dimensions because the military were not allowed to finish the job...

Suez entered my thoughts very much more, as the days went by, from the point of view of the relationship between the politicians and the military. I was determined that we should not make the mistakes of Suez. The military must have a clear operational directive from ministers as to what they expected us to do, and we would carry it out. I went to the very first meeting of the war Cabinet determined to get an objective out of it.¹

For Lewin, the "mistakes" of Suez were quite clearly the result of unclear political aims. Of course, one is not implying that had force been employed more rapidly in 1956 the outcome would have been more successful. But, it is not unreasonable to suggest that excessive delay contributed to the eventual failure of crisis management during this crisis, and such delay was the product of a failure in political direction.

1. Lewin in Charlton, op. cit. p. 193.

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The Element of Surprise.

It possible to identify genuine surprise at events in all of the case studies. However, errors in the transmission and interpretation of signals contributed to the advent of both the crises of July 1914 and the Falklands 1982. It should be noted that similar observations have been made many times in other retrospective studies of crises, therefore, while I am in no way formulating an apologist position at this juncture, it is recognised that decision-makers are fallible. Indeed, the mistakes made during historical crises leads one to the conclusion that similar errors will continue to occur in the future.

Finding themselves in a novel situation, decision-makers in all cases did not select a novel response in the sense that forceful policies were implemented. Furthermore, the process of mobilising military resources was initiated quickly. This has implications for the functioning of sub-nuclear 'duality' of purpose. The search for innovative procedures, which do not require a resort to arms, is regarded as a characteristic which distinguishes sub-nuclear crisis management from pure value maximising. The extent to which the pursuit of peaceful alternatives occurs is also observed to be restricted by two factors. First, the structure of sub-nuclear crises is such that a use of force is perceived to be of utility. Second, once military operations are intitiated, the demands of military logic become increasingly difficult to resist.

The case studies also demonstrate that perceived utility is often at odds with eventual benefits. Although statesmen are willing to cross thresholds of limited violence in response to immediate political problems, the crises of 1914

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and 1956 reveal that they do so with an incredible lack of awareness of consequences. In 1914, decision-makers selected the option of intervention without anything like accurate preconception of the totality of the war which resulted. Similarly, in 1956, decision-makers opted for a resort to arms with a surprising lack of understanding of the consequences of their actions. Even during the Falklands crisis, in which force was employed with a far higher degree of political control, the sinking of the Belgrano and the political wavering in the wake of the loss of the Sheffield, shows the difficulty involved in using military force as a 'rational' instrument of policy.

The Nature of Threat.

Analysis of the case studies reveals that participant threat perceptions are not solely dependent on strategic calculation. A variety of other factors, including Party and personal political concerns, are also of significance.

It is argued that, during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the attempted emplacement of Soviet nuclear missiles on Cuban soil elicited comparatively clear perceptions of strategic threat. However, reference to crises which are not perceived as being a source of potential destabilisation to the central nuclear balance illustrates that the nature of threat is far more ambiguous. For example, during the crisis of July 1914 it has been observed that the 'march of events' was less a factor in the decision to intervene than was the need to preserve unity in Cabinet. As such, participation in the continental European war was largely a response to Party political concerns. Prior to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company in 1956, Egypt under the Nasser regime was perceived to be forging dangerously close links with the

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Eastern bloc and as being instrumental in organising opposition to British influence in the Middle East. Furthermore, Eden had for some time been subject to criticism for a supposed ineffectual maintenance of British interests in the region. The nationalisation of the Canal Company exacerbated such perceptions and thus represented a serious challenge to the Prime Minister's personal political position.

As a result, it is suggested that nationalisation was simultaneously perceived by Eden as a source of both threat and opportunity. It provided a pretext for the initiation of hostilities, but for a very different aim than that of retaking the Canal. Nasser's action was a chance for the Eden administration to, "destroy this new Mussolini"¹ once and for all. As such, the decision to use force was motivated by personal political considerations. In this sense, the formulation of political aims was anything but clear and circumspect.

An implication of this argument is that the nature of threat perceptions not only vary between crises, they vary between decision-makers ostensibly faced with the same crisis. The perceptions of individual decision-makers are not regarded as being homogenous. During the Suez crisis of 1956, the most obvious aspects of threat perceptions were economic and strategic. The Suez Canal was a major artery for the transport of imports as well as being an avenue to the military bases in the Far East. However, there is evidence to suggest that the 'apocalyptic' assessments being made by British decision-makers were not universally shared. According to Eisenhower, Eden was, "making Nasser a much more

1. James, op. cit. p. 457.

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important figure than he is."1 Furthermore, Parliament itself became divided over the justification of using force to retake the Canal and the policies of the Government came under increasing attack from the Labour Party.

The Argentine invasion of the Falklands in 1982 did not represent a particular economic or strategic threat. Prior to invasion they were considered to be of little material worth. British strategic thinking had become more and more dominated by the Soviet threat in Europe and the Islands were something of an imperial relic. That they were not a defence priority is shown by the Navy's decision to withdraw HMS Endurance from service following the 1981 defence review. The invasion transformed the political worth of the Falklands because the Argentinian action was perceived as having somehow violated the essence of British 'nationhood'. Of course, the irony of this is that policy in 1981 had involved the sponsoring of the Nationality Act which withdrew the Falklanders' rights to full British citizenship. Yet, in terms of domestic political and public reaction, such legal niceties were not important. Consequently, the Thatcher administration was put under intense political pressure to restore the Islands to British control. Failure to do so would have had dire consequences for the future of the Government.

However, reference to Leach's account of the informal meeting with the Prime Minister on 31 March 1982, when invasion appeared to be imminent, is instructive. Leach states: "It did seem to me that if this invasion came about,

1. Telegram from Eisenhower to Eden, 8 September 1956. In Carlton, op. cit. Appendix I. p. 123.

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then we would have to do something."¹ Leach is of the opinion that such advice was contrary to the advice that Mrs. Thatcher had previously been receiving, presumably from John Nott. Leach believes that the Prime Minister's, "gut feel was that we were going to have to do something."² This divergence of opinion, and the very vagueness of Leach's reported speech, does not lead one to conclude that at this stage of the crisis the nature of threat was clearly or uniformly perceived. Such confusion, in fact, led to the bizarre situation in which British political aims were actually drafted by the chief of the defence staff, Admiral Lord Lewin. Furthermore, there is evidence to support the view that the invasion of the Falklands was perceived to be an opportunity for the Navy. It was a chance for the Admiralty to demonstrate the need to maintain a large surface fleet capable of performing more than its proposed NATO role.

Such a view of the nature of sub-nuclear threat perceptions must also be considered in the light of the changes which take place in the decision-making process. The decision-making groups in all of the case studies were subjected to a variety of political bargaining games. During the Suez crisis and the Falklands conflict, initial membership selection and personnel fluidity were manipulated, as was the flow of information. In all cases, the process of decision-making was eventually dominated by a mere handful of policy-makers within these groups. These observations illustrate the limited degree to which ideal models of rational decision-making function. They are also indication of the extent to which power becomes centralised in crisis. In reference to the Suez crisis and Falklands conflict, it is

1. Leach in Charlton, op. cit. p. 189.

2. Ibid.

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observed that although the Cabinet remained the 'formal' centre of decision-making, 'ostensible' power was delegated to ad hoc groups. Within these groups 'actual' power was wielded by, and according to the aims of, individual decision-makers.

Sub-Nuclear Crisis Management:

Duality of Purpose in a Multipolar Environment.

This study has attempted to generate a concept of sub-nuclear crisis management in which statesmen are regarded as simultaneously exploring both peaceful and violent policy options. Thus, sub-nuclear crisis management is a dualistic exercise.

As a result, sub-nuclear crisis diplomacy itself pursues dual aims. It is the method by which decision-makers attempt to arrive at peaceful solutions to a particular problem and is also a means by which favourable international conditions towards the state's use of force is secured. In relation to the Suez crisis and Falklands conflict, diplomacy is observed to be vital since the structure of such crises was multipolar and, in comparison to earlier eras, Britain occupied a relatively junior role in the international arena.

Unfortunately, the case studies demonstrate that the management of international crises rarely conforms to such ideal notions of sub-nuclear crisis management. Of course, the crisis of July 1914 occurred in the pre-nuclear era, therefore, to apply judgements of 'success' and 'failure' based on sub-nuclear criteria may be inappropriate. Yet, decision-makers in 1914 appear to be guilty of gross mismanagement whatever the criteria one wishes to adopt. The majority of the Cabinet had little idea as to the nature and extent of British foreign policy commitments prior to the

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outbreak of the crisis and they were content to allow the cognitions of a comparatively small number of decision-makers to determine the nature of British interests in the international arena. Consequently, Britain had become tacitly enmeshed in a series of complex, pre-programmed routines which, when the crisis developed, seriously impeded any real search for alternative courses of action. Furthermore, they functioned under the assumption that intervention would be limited, when the reality was to be very different.

During the Suez crisis, there appears to be little duality of purpose on the part of British decision-makers. The threat posed by the nationalisation of the Canal Company was also considered an opportunity to remove the Nasser regime from power. As such, political ends were anything but circumspect and this calls into question the seriousness of attempts to find either a negotiated solution or a solution that did not involve a resort to arms. In the international arena, diplomacy also failed to secure support for a military operation and in regards to the United States, British decision-makers did not accurately assess American domestic and strategic concerns. A form of effective crisis management, motivated by a conventional duality of purpose, can be identified. It was practised by American decision-makers. As Coral Bell observes, when faced with a source of potential threat, they turned an "adversarial" into an "intramural"¹ crisis.

Force was also employed during the Falklands crisis of 1982. In contrast to Suez, it was used to achieve strictly limited political aims. While it might be argued that the particular geography of the conflict facilitated a "textbook

1. See Chapter 1 of Bell, op. cit.

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limited war"¹, there is evidence to suggest that serious efforts were made to restrict the scale of conflict in that self-denial in weaponry and targeting was practised. However, the attempt to maintain political control over the use of force was only partially successful, as the sinking of the Belgrano and the consequent scuppering of the Peruvian peace initiative bears testimony. Therefore, attempting to pursue dualistic sub-nuclear crisis management in a multipolar environment is observed to be an extremely complex task. All too often, statesmen fail to formulate clear and circumspect aims. Because sub-nuclear crises are not easily defined, political goals are determined by a wide range of factors and strategic calculations in the formulation of such objectives may be of only secondary concern. It is observed that force is consistently regarded as being of utility in ameliorating perceived political problems. In periods of uncertainty a resort to force is seen as something of a short-run cure all. Indeed, decision-makers often select military options with an astonishing lack of consideration of consequences. A use of force has been referred to as a 'rational' tool of sub-nuclear crisis management. However, the case studies demonstrate that the processes of decision-making which give rise to such policies often bear little resemblance to ideal models of rational decision-making.

1. Freedman, op. cit. p. 1.

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Sub-Nuclear Crisis Management in the Post-Cold War System?

It might be argued, and with some grounds, that trying to speculate on future events from such a small body of evidence is a rather rash enterprise. But, such an exercise is, nevertheless, interesting.

Currently, there is much debate on the structure of the world order in the aftermath of the collapse of the former Soviet Union. Whether we are moving towards a new, unipolar, order of states dominated by the United States, or even towards a period in which the state no longer functions as the basic unit of community is not clear. What is certain is that the states of the present will continue to face crises and tensions in their relations with others. Therefore, analysis of methods of crisis management is still of great relevance. In fact, given the uncertainties now being faced by members of the international community, the study of crisis is perhaps of more importance than ever before.

A lesson derived from the study of sub-nuclear crises is the danger inherent in uncertainty of cognition. Although a prevalent view of the future international pattern has yet to be formulated, what is already apparent is that the assumptions of the starkly bipolar, nuclear-armed, cold war balance no longer apply. Faced with having to manage sub-nuclear crises, decision-makers assumed that, in the perceived absence of upper thresholds of mass destruction, force was of utility. It is logical, therefore, to suggest that such an attitude will persist in the post-cold war international environment. The collapse of the restraints imposed by the superpower relationship may mean that the international system is now even more prone to outbreaks of violence.

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When discussing the recent Gulf crisis, J.E. Spence notes that the American "appetite for the 'quick kill' was overwhelming."¹ Obviously, decision-makers in the United States fully embraced the notion of the utility of limited force in the absence of a Soviet Union willing and capable of playing a superpower role. Interestingly, there was much debate prior to 'desert storm' about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. In order to minimise the risk that such weapons would be used, the U.S. employed the logic of deterrence. Countering a potential source of threat by hints of a willingness to escalate. However, in comparison to cold war scenarios, Iraq's capability to deploy weapons of mass destruction was limited. There was no perceived possibility of missile attacks on the continental United States. Thus, it is argued that, while potential higher thresholds of violence were recognised, they were of a lower order than those perceived at the height of the cold war.

The comparison to sub-nuclear attitudes can be taken further. J.E. Spence states:

...there are grounds for an indictment of Coalition policy in the Gulf crisis. President Bush, for one, was inconsistent and muddled in his definition of the Coalition goals. On the one hand, he stressed the limited objective of expelling Iraq from Kuwait; on the other hand, he more than hinted at the desirability of destroying Iraq's military capability, actively encouraged Saddam Hussein's opponents to topple their oppressor and appeared to support the creation of a war crimes tribunal to try the erring Iraqi leadership.²

1. J.E. Spence, "Quick Kill?" An article in Reality. Volume 23, Number 3. May 1991. (Pietermaritzburg: Reality Publications Ltd., 1991).

2. Ibid.

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This lack of clarity is essentially the same as observed in the case studies. Force is recognised and used as an instrument of policy. But, the question is, which policy?

A close analysis of perceptions of threat, time and surprise during the Gulf crisis is beyond the scope of this study. Yet, it is interesting to speculate that the uncertainty of Coalition aims were the result of competing definitions of what was at stake. Spence observes that, during the crisis, "interest and moral principle were...pulling in opposite directions."¹ The behaviour of Hussein's regime represented a challenge to state order and to American values of justice. The Bush administration was, therefore, caught between conflicting perceptions and these were translated into conflicting aims.

What 'desert storm' achieved was the removal of Iraq from Kuwait. In this sense, military means were employed to achieve circumspect, short-run aims. A disparate coalition was maintained. Kuwaiti sovereignty was restored and the hegemonic ambitions of Hussein were dealt a major blow. What the operation did not achieve was the removal of an unjust and repressive Iraqi regime. Thus it is possible to suggest, that the Bush administration eventually fell back on fairly traditional attitudes towards the pragmatic maintenance of security amongst states, rather than risk the uncertainties inherent in pursuing the goal of justice.

This was facilitated by the perceived structure of the Gulf crisis. A sovereign state's territory was invaded and occupied. Since Kuwait was clearly the 'victim' of Iraqi aggression, the crisis resembled a 'traditional'

1. Spence, op. cit. p. 16.

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international dispute. When faced with opposing impulses and uncertainty, it might simply have been easier to define this crisis in terms of threat to state interest. Such a view leads one to observe that existing attitudes towards the management of international crisis (both observer and participant) are limited. The challenges of the post-cold war order require vision and courage, but, faced with new uncertainties, statesmen have already shown themselves willing to fall back on very old habits.

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