



Kristoffer Rystad

The Suez Crisis and British Colonial Policy

How the Suez Crisis accelerated the
Decolonisation of the British Empire

Master's thesis in English - Teacher Training Programme

Supervisor: Ane Øien-Vikaune

Trondheim, May 2018

Abstract

The thesis is an analysis of how and why British colonial policy changed after the Suez Crisis in 1956. The thesis is centred around British colonial policy but takes into account a range of other factors influenced by the crisis, such as British economy and international standing, economy of the Empire, British loss of prestige at Suez, Anglo-American relations, anti-colonialism in the United Nations, European decolonisation in Africa, the Cold War and African nationalism. The crisis was a watershed for British colonial policy because the crisis made the British accelerate the process of decolonisation. In cooperation with the US, the British wanted to secure an informal Empire by continuing their influence in former colonies. Fear of Soviet intervention in Africa and pressure from colonial nationalist and the United Nations, external factors that were reinvigorated by the Suez Crisis, threatened to sabotage plans of an informal Empire and turn former colonies towards the Soviet Union. Combined with the economic struggles of Britain, the Suez Crisis and the effects of it was central to changes in British colonial policy, and therefore the Suez Crisis was a watershed that accelerated the process of decolonisation heavily.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents and siblings who have helped me through the process of writing this thesis. Without their help and motivating words it would have been hard and close to impossible to finish the thesis. Last, but not least, I feel a huge amount of gratitude towards my supervisor, Ane-Øien Vikaune who has helped me all the way through the process. The help I received in writing the thesis has inspired and motivated me and made the process more fun and enjoyable. Thank you!

Kristoffer Rystad

Trondheim, May 2018

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Historiography	2
1.2 Delimitation and thesis question	3
1.3 Method, sources and structure	4
2. British international standing and economy	7
2.1 Economic power and international power	7
2.2 Special economic relationship	9
2.3 Economic diplomacy	11
2.4 Economic consequences of the crisis	12
2.5 British international standing	16
2.6 A watershed for British international prestige and economy?	18
3. British colonial policy before and after Suez	19
3.1 Economy of the Empire	19
3.2 Colonial policy in the Empire after Suez	22
3.3 Informal Empire and the Commonwealth	26
3.4 British colonial policy after the Suez Crisis	28
4. The Suez Crisis, the United Nations, African nationalism and British colonial policy	31
4.1 British colonial policy and the U.N.	31
4.2 Nationalism and British colonies	37
4.3 The Suez Crisis, the Cold War and decolonisation	39
5. Conclusion	43
6. Bibliography	45
Appendix: Relevance for the teaching profession	49

1. Introduction

The Suez Crisis in 1956 was an event that shook not only the countries involved but the rest of the world as well. After Egypt had wrestled control of the canal from Britain and France, the two European powers colluded with Israel in an elaborate scheme in order to regain control of the strategically vital canal. My thesis question is concerned with the consequences of the crisis; To what extent was the Suez Crisis a watershed for British colonial policy? I argue that the state of British economy, along with changes triggered by the crisis: growing nationalism and Cold War rivalry for influence in colonies and ex-colonies, sped up the process of decolonisation. Therefore, the Suez Crisis was a watershed for British colonial policy.

Britain's economy after the Second World War was frail; the years of 'affluence' after the war and the expense of running a welfare state proved to be costly, as did retaining the empire. These two conflicting priorities presented British policy makers with a difficult dilemma; they could not afford both.¹

To make matters worse for the British, on the 26th of July in 1956 President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal, which from 1875 had been in British and French hands. For Britain it was critical to maintain access to the canal; they relied on the canal to transport sterling-bought oil from the Persian Gulf.² Therefore, after failing to find a peaceful way to regain control of the canal, the British decided to use military force. According to Anthony Gorst and Lewis Johnman, a small group of British cabinet members and Prime Minister Eden, along with French and Israeli authorities, signed the Protocol of Sèvres on the 24th of October 1956.³

Israeli forces entered Egypt three days after the signing of the Protocol and soon British and French forces landed in Egypt under the pretence of trying to keep the peace between Israeli and Egyptian force. The real objective was however to regain control of the canal. The US, the UN and the Soviet Union quickly revealed the plan for what it was, and the US applied economic diplomatic pressure on Britain and France to abort the attack and withdraw from Egypt, which they did on the 23th of November the same year. The crisis

¹ John Darwin, *The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970*. (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 575.

² Nicholas J. White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 2nd ed., (New York: Routledge, 2014.), 109.

³ Anthony Gorst & Lewis Johnman, *The Suez Crisis*. (London: Routledge, 1997.), 100.

caused an humiliating defeat for the British, who were used to conducting themselves autonomously and without interference from others in international and colonial matters.

1.1 Historiography

The effects of the Suez Crisis are widely debated by historians even today. On one side, historians such as Brian Lapping argue that the crisis was the starting point of the end of the Empire and a decline in British worldwide power and influence. The other side, represented by historians such as Anthony Low, argues that Britain's loss of Empire was inevitable and that the Suez-crisis had little or almost no effect on that inevitability or the pace at which the British Empire was decolonised.

Low points towards racial tensions, other European powers leaving their African colonies and thus creating continental instability, and British economy as factors that, without influence from the Suez Crisis, led to decolonisation.⁴ Decolonisation that happened before the Suez Crisis has also been pointed out as something that indicates the insignificance of Suez. The Gold Coast/Ghana was decolonised in 1957 and that was scheduled before the Suez Crisis, so was Malaya (1957) and Nigeria (1960).

Lapping argues that the Suez Crisis was “the single most significant initiative that sped up the end of empire process.”⁵ One of his main arguments is that Nasser became the leader of a new anti-colonial movement and a symbol of how the British had fallen from the position of the world's mightiest nation to a second rank power far inferior to the US.⁶ Other historians, such as Michael Beloff, have argued that the Suez Crisis revolutionised the policy of the Conservatives and that they had to choose “the path of safety”, which was to always follow the lead of the Americans when it came to foreign policy and move away from imperial ambitions and focus on European integration and influence.⁷ Steven G. Galpern has argued that the Suez Crisis resulted in Britain shifting focus from maintaining and increasing its imperial commitments to seeking more influence in Europe.⁸ It is important to point out that Britain did not apply for membership to the EEC until 1961, five years after the crisis. Anthony Gorst and Lewis Johnman argue that the reasons for the British application were

⁴ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 116.

⁵ Lapping in: Brian Lapping & Anthony Low, “Controversy: Did Suez hasten the end of empire?” *Contemporary Record*, 1, No. 2, (1987): 33.

⁶ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, “Controversy: Did Suez hasten the end of empire?”, 32.

⁷ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 114.

⁸ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 115.

mainly economic and not a consequence of the Suez-crisis.⁹ Britain wanted to be the bridge between the US and Europe, and feared that if Britain was not part of it, the US could go directly to the EEC to form an alliance.

In my thesis, I argue that the Suez Crisis was indeed a watershed for decolonisation and that it accelerated the British decolonisation process. However, I argue that the factors that Low has pointed out as proving the insignificance of the Suez Crisis; racial tensions, other European powers leaving their African colonies and thus creating continental instability, and British economy¹⁰ were all influenced by the Suez Crisis and sped up the decolonisation process.

Of the two extremes, Lapping and Low, my argumentation leans slightly towards Lapping's side, but my argumentation differs on central points. Lapping claims that "Suez brought the United States into Africa."¹¹ While I do not disagree that the Americans renewed their interest in Africa after the crisis, I disagree that this was something that sped up decolonisation. William Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson argue that the US often preferred that the British stayed in control of their colonies; the Americans feared that if the British left their colonies abruptly, then that might open up for communism and the Soviet Union to start spreading their influence throughout Africa. On the other side, both Britain and the US feared that staying in power in the colonies too long would turn local populations against Britain and the US and thus towards the Soviet Union. My main argument and what makes my thesis unique is that I argue that the Suez Crisis ignited the sparks of nationalism in African-colonies and therefore Britain had to get out, because of the fear of nationalists turning towards the Soviet Union for help.

1.2 Delimitation and thesis question

Throughout this thesis I will argue that Britain's economic position made it hard for the British to maintain the empire they needed to stay a great world power. Their economic situation made them dependent on the US, something that the Suez-crisis revealed to the rest of the world. Therefore, due to economy, losing the empire was inevitable but I will argue that the Suez crisis accelerated the process heavily. My thesis question is: To what extent was the Suez Crisis a watershed for British colonial policy?

⁹ Gorst & Johnman, *The Suez Crisis*, 160.

¹⁰ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 116.

¹¹ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, "Controversy: Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 32.

My thesis offers something unique to this field of research that many historians have discussed before me. I look through the eyes of British *colonial* policy, but in my analysis and argumentation I acknowledge that British colonial policy was influenced by other factors. I take into account a whole range of factors such as British economy, international standing and prestige, Britain's special relationship with the US, The Cold War, European decolonisation, African Nationalism and the UN. Throughout the thesis I argue for how these factors were influenced by the Suez Crisis and how these factors sped up decolonisation. This approach sets my assessment apart from other historians who have tackled the consequences of the Suez Crisis before me because of multiple perspectives that I have taken into consideration which allows me to make an extensive analysis in order to answer my thesis question.

By looking at British colonial policy instead of British foreign policy I have the possibility to go in depth when analysing how the Suez Crisis affected the aforementioned factors, which in turn influenced British Colonial policy. However, there are two major factors I have not taken into account in my thesis: European integration as a consequence of Suez and British popular opinion towards the Empire after Suez.

The scope of my thesis focuses on how British colonial policy was influenced by the Suez Crisis, therefore I deem the question of European integration, although linked, not at the core of the analysis at hand. The other factor is that of whether or not the British public changed their opinion of the Empire as a consequence of Suez. My analysis is based on government action and policies, although that is not to say that the British public did not influence British colonial policy, I deem that the international factors that I have mentioned and obviously also factors in colonies to be more important for British colonial policy.

1.3 Method, sources and structure

The Suez Crisis and its consequences have been analysed before, therefore it is important for me to use secondary sources as well as primary sources. When using primary sources I am able to interpret sources without the possibly predisposed view of another historian. I have aimed to find a balance between the two types of sources.

The primary sources are mostly government documents from the British government but also from American governments. There are some speeches and written statements by key decision-makers involved in the crisis and the subsequent British decolonisation process, most notably British Prime Ministers Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan and American President

Dwight D. Eisenhower. When dealing with statements from contemporaries, one has to consider the context; politicians need to align their statements with the ideals of the nation or political party he or she is representing, and some information or detail might be left out in order to preserve the good name of the person speaking. The viewpoint, the background and the contemporary situation of the person speaking makes the source subjective, something which has to be part of my interpretation of the source.

I believe this to be true of secondary sources too. As Richard J. Evans argues, no author can be truly objective: some subjectivity is part of any historical work since background will automatically characterise the choices a historian makes.¹² This is especially important for my thesis, as it is built on secondary sources with differing and contrasting views of the same historical events and primary sources. I have to acknowledge different viewpoints and use a range of secondary sources ensuring that my own argumentation is not only considering one side of a discussion. That is also why it is important to use both sources; by using the primary sources that secondary sources refer to as well as a balanced set of secondary sources I include not only my own, but many possible interpretations of the primary sources. I have used works by historians from different time periods to make sure I have the range and balance needed to tell the story as fully as possible. John Baylis sheds light on why: “Hindsight and contemporary preoccupations often have a powerful effect on the way that history is written.”¹³

The thesis is built up thematically, going through different aspects of the crisis and its aftermath and how they all influenced British colonial policy. Chapter 2 describes British economy and international standing and how the Suez Crisis was not a watershed for neither, but that the British loss of international prestige due to the Suez Crisis was significant. Chapter 3 describes changes in colonial policy and that the colonies were no longer profitable anymore. I argue that the British turned towards what I have called an informal Empire. In order to replace the formal Empire with an informal one decolonisation had to speed up. In chapter 4 I argue that the UN and a spread of nationalism in Africa were two major factors that led to decolonisation in Africa and that both factors were heavily influenced and amplified by the Suez Crisis. I will argue that, in order to ensure the informal empire and for other strategical and economic reasons it became important for Britain to decolonise sooner

¹² Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History*. (London: Granta Books, 1997.), 107-8.

¹³ John Baylis, ed. *Anglo-American relations since 1939: The enduring alliance*. (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 1997.), 2.

rather than later. Thus, my structure allows me to set the frame for the state of British economic and colonial policy before and after Suez in chapters 2 and 3, while in chapter 4 I prove why the Suez Crisis was a watershed that accelerated the decolonisation process of the British Empire.

2. British international standing and economy

Britain was from the end of The Second World War financially inferior to the US. In spite of this, the British did not abandon the role of a great colonial power that they had played for centuries before the Suez Crisis. This led to British dependency on the US for financial aid such as lending money and receiving grant aids. The British had therefore by 1956 put themselves in a situation where they were financially vulnerable. The US used economic sanctions effectively and Britain's economic standing forced them to obey the US. However, that did not come as a surprise for British politicians; they knew that they were vulnerable financially because of their dependence upon the Americans.

Therefore, my claim is that the Suez Crisis was not a watershed for British economy, and consequently neither a watershed for British international standing. Britain's international standing was already sealed by the economic standing of Britain, therefore the Suez Crisis was not an immediate turning point for British international standing, because the British redeemed the Anglo-American special relationship soon after the crisis. The state of British economy did not change permanently because of the Suez Crisis. Britain's international standing, relying on American financial support, was therefore not changed because of the Suez Crisis. But, the Suez Crisis made ripples in waters elsewhere, as for instance British loss of prestige, which had a major influence on the British Empire and international standing.

2.1 Economic power and international power

The Sandys White paper on Defence, which was published in April 1957, was significant for several reasons. I will point to what it was saying about economy and international power: "Britain's influence in the world depends first and foremost on the health of her internal economy and the success of her export trade. Without these, military power cannot in the long run be supported."¹⁴ This points to the correlation between economy and worldwide influence/power; economic means support military power, and not the other way around. The point seems to be made clear, that cutting military spending would lead to better internal economy and trade, and would thus be "in the true interests of defence".¹⁵ This is very relevant for the Suez Crisis itself. Because of economic shortcomings, the British could

¹⁴ British Government, "The Sandys White Paper on Defence", Defence: Outline of Future Policy, Parliamentary Papers, Cmd 124, April 1957.

¹⁵ British Government, "The Sandys White Paper on Defence".

not conduct the military operation that they wished to and were forced to retreat. After the crisis, the British understood very well the correlation between military power, physical power as in numbers, weapons etc. but also the autonomy to use military force, and economic stability and autonomy.

According to Foreign Office official, Sir Pierson Dixon, the British were quite aware of a third factor besides military force and economic power; international prestige. In a Minute report to the foreign office in 1952 Dixon writes: “Power, of course, is not to be measured in terms of alone money and troops: a third ingredient is prestige, or in other words what the rest of the world thinks of us.”¹⁶ Evidently, one can define international prestige as how the rest of the world saw Britain. Britain had for many years intimidated colonial subjects into avoiding resistance against Britain, believing Britain to be so powerful that resistance was futile. This was something that Britain had relied on for years, explaining how Britain could accumulate and remain in control of the vast territories that they did. The famous term “gunboat-diplomacy” came from how the British dealt with imperial subjects revolting in a fashion that intimidated and disheartened the rebels. The Suez Crisis showed the world that British gunboat-diplomacy did not work anymore, thereby Britain lost international prestige; they were no longer to be feared. Another aspect of British prestige was the myth of the racial superiority and invincibility of the Europeans compared to the peoples of Africa and Asia. But this aspect of British international prestige was already severely damaged by the time of the Suez Crisis of 1956. Britain’s imperial and international prestige suffered a humiliation during the Second World War when Japan invaded and took control of Singapore in 1942. Not only did Britain lose an important foothold in their far Eastern Empire, worse still, they lost it to a non-European power, something which challenged the myth of the invincible Europeans, something Britain and the rest of the world still believed at the time.¹⁷ Prestige was also important for the British in terms of economy. The strength of the British pound sterling was relying on the confidence it had internationally, if confidence in the sterling dropped, it would lead to selling of the pound and thereby an actual devaluation of the pound.

Ultimately, when it comes to influence and power in the world, economy seems more essential than military strength, as military strength depends on economic means. To find an

¹⁶ Dixon, Louis, “Minute by Dixon”, 23 January 1952, FO 371/96920.

¹⁷ Nicholas J. White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 12.

example of the potency of economic power one need look no further than to the Suez Crisis itself; the US forced Britain and France to withdraw by withholding economic aid and thereby bringing British economy to a breaking point. So, to understand Britain's economy and international standing one has to have insight into the larger picture of Britain's economic power relations worldwide. A fitting place to start would be the crisis and the economic relationship between the US and Britain, which played such a decisive role in the outcome of the crisis.

2.2 Special economic relationship

To explain Britain's economic and international standing in the time around the Suez Crisis, I have focused on the special relationship between the US and Britain. My hypothesis for the thesis is that the Suez Crisis sped up the process of decolonisation. The US was heavily involved in the crisis and the outcome of it. The US was also a great power who, due to the Cold War, had a strategic interest in all areas that could lean towards the Soviet Union. Among those areas was the traditional base of British international power; the Empire. The Americans were anti-imperialists and did not look favourably upon European overseas empires. However, fearing internal instability and Soviet intervention in colonial areas in Africa and Asia, the Americans did not invest a lot of resources in trying to dismantle European Empires immediately after the Second World War. The Americans were often happy to let European powers keep control, thus keeping the Soviet Union out. Emerging as the only country which became richer instead of poorer after the Second World War,¹⁸ and with forces stationed in North-Africa and Western-Europe, the US was becoming an international great power, usurping the British position of global influence, power and trade that Britain had enjoyed until the Second World War.

For Britain it was the other way around. Although Britain emerged victorious from the Second World War they found themselves nearly bankrupt. Britain was the richest and most influential power in the world, up to the Second World War. But the factors that British power rested on were outdated after the war. Power in the new "strategic landscape"¹⁹ of the post war world, was conditioned upon air-power and nuclear-power, Britain had traditionally been strong at sea, which had become less important after the Second World War. Britain was

¹⁸ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. (London: Fontana Press, 1988), 461.

¹⁹ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 86.

dependent on the US, both financially and militarily, to keep its empire.²⁰ Paradoxically, the British still viewed themselves as a great power. Consequently, it was difficult for the British to conduct their foreign policy in the new world order; a foreign policy that suited a Britain that was still a great power or a foreign policy better suited the economic reality of their situation?²¹ As Nicholas White argues, in the years 1945 to 1951, British policy-makers relied on the empire for both economic recovery and also keeping the Soviet Union's will to expand and assert their influence in Asia and Africa at bay.²²

In the light of British fears of Soviet expansion, one can understand the renewed interest in the empire. In hindsight, it seems obvious that Britain did not have the financial capacity for the Empire and would perhaps have been better off without. But, the British believed in the Empire's capacity to bring income. Nicholas White explains how in the post-war era the British colonies served as a counter weight for Britain when balancing payments to the US and earning Britain much needed dollars. The colonies produced valuable commodities that were sold in the US. The dollars earned were in turn bought by Britain, who had fixed exchange rates in their colonies. Britain could use their dollars and credit them to keep the balance of sterling, and keep the value of the pound from dropping.²³ Additionally, The British and the Americans had a common interest in keeping the Empire intact and the Russians out. This Cold War-alliance is only one of many aspects of the special relationship between Britain and the US. Due to the common interest of Soviet containment and American economic expansionism, the two countries formed, what I have chosen to call a 'Special Economic Relationship'.

According to historian Diane Kunz, Britain had become the world's largest debtor while the US was the world's largest creditor after the Second World War.²⁴ During the post war years, Britain obtained many loans from the US including "Lend Lease (1941–5), the Anglo-American loan agreement (1945), Marshall Aid (1948–50), and Defence Aid (1951–7)."²⁵ Britain borrowed a total of \$ 3.75 billion from the US in the aftermath of the Second World War.²⁶ Diane Kunz points out that "The British financial position continued to

²⁰ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 86-7.

²¹ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 472.

²² White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 12.

²³ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 13-14.

²⁴ Diane Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*. (The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 6.

²⁵ George C. Peden, "Suez and Britain's decline as a world power", *Historical Journal*, Vol.55, no. 4, (2012), 1080.

²⁶ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, 8.

deteriorate during the 1950s.”²⁷ More importantly, British dependence on American financial aid increased during the decade. Kunz points to three financial plights that made the British post-war economy overburdened; the cost of the social programs, hitherto referred to as welfare state policy in Britain, the cost of keeping military forces in the colonies and other places such as in Berlin and Britain and, finally, “the costs of maintaining the sterling area.”²⁸ All three were equally important but the last two factors slightly more significant in this context as British leaders viewed them as making up for what they lacked compared to the superpowers of the world.²⁹ Thus, the British tried to run their economy with insufficient reserves, thereby leaving themselves vulnerable to economic pressure and dependent on the US for financial aid.

2.3 Economic diplomacy

I have mentioned the paradox of British foreign policy; while financially and militarily weak compared to what Britain had been and therefore also dependent upon the US, the British still had illusions of grandeur and of themselves as a great power. Therein lies the source of conflict in the Suez Crisis: Britain tried to act unilaterally and without American consent and soon Britain and the rest of the world learned what happened when Britain did so.

The permanent secretary of the Treasury, Sir Edward Bridges warned Chancellor of the Exchequer Harold Macmillan explicitly against dealing with the nationalisation of the Suez-Canal without full support from the US.³⁰ The British were assuming that the US would support the British or remain neutral, in the event of military intervention.³¹ Historian George C. Peden provides further insight into how the US had a grip on Britain through economic dependency: “When the invasion and the concomitant interruption in Middle East oil supplies resulted in a run on sterling, the Americans were able to hold up assistance from the International Monetary Fund until Britain and France had agreed to withdraw from Egypt.”³²

The Sterling and the sterling area was already a major concern for Britain. During the

²⁷ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, 11.

²⁸ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, 13.

²⁹ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, 13.

³⁰ Bridges, Sir Edward, “Bridges to Macmillan, 7 Sept. 1956”, Treasury Papers, series 236, file 4188 (T 236/4118), TNA.

³¹ Diane Kunz “The Importance of Having Money: The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis.” in W. R. Louis and R. Owen (eds.), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and Its Consequences*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1989), 216.

³² Peden, “Suez and Britain's decline as a world power”, 1079.

crisis, Britain could not obtain essential oil from the Persian Gulf as the Suez Canal was blocked. This was oil that Britain could buy with sterling. Instead they had to use dollars to buy oil from the Western hemisphere. This would force the British to sell sterling to get more dollars, which in turn would lower the international confidence in sterling, leading to increased speculation and selling of the pound.³³ That was the situation where the British economy and the currency of the sterling was brought to its knees. Britain needed a loan either from the IMF or the US, but the Americans withheld such assistance. The main problem for Britain during the crisis was the dollar reserves. It was a widely held assumption by economic authorities and financial markets that if British dollar reserves dropped below \$ 2 billion it would have disastrous consequences for sterling and the sterling area.³⁴ During October and November the British saw their dollar reserves being drained and knew that they could not meet the balance of payments that were due early in November (Britain was still in debt to the US). The only option without American cooperation was to sell sterling reserves which, as mentioned, would probably be the end of sterling as a currency and the sterling area. Thus, in the start of December, Britain announced a ceasefire and that they would withdraw from the canal zone as soon as possible.

2.4 Economic consequences of the crisis

The British believed, advised by Chancellor of the Exchequer Harold Macmillan, that a swift resolution through military intervention in Egypt would be better for the economy than to not intervene and let the situation drag out. British decision-makers believed this would restore international faith in the sterling.³⁵ On the contrary, the decision to take military action put an even greater strain on the pound and “nearly ended the viability of sterling as an international currency”.³⁶ Nevertheless, while the crisis had some short-term impact on Britain’s economy, it did not have a lasting impact. British economy changed around the time of the crisis but not as a direct consequence of the crisis. Firstly, British politicians were already aware of their financial dependence on the US and the implications of that. Secondly, their economy soon recovered to its pre-Suez state.

Prime Minister Eden’s analysis of Britain’s economic situation proves my first

³³ Kunz “The Importance of Having Money: The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis.”, 219.

³⁴ Kunz “The Importance of Having Money: The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis.”, 226.

³⁵ Anthony Gorst & Lewis Johnman, *The Suez Crisis*. (London: Routledge, 1997), 130.

³⁶ Kunz “The Importance of Having Money: The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis.”, 216.

argument. In “The Lessons of Suez”, Eden was of the mind that Suez “had not so much changed our fortunes as revealed realities.”³⁷ British politicians were already aware of their economic dependency upon the US and limited autonomy in international affairs that accompanied the economic dependency. Eden had been aware of this since 1945 when he, as foreign secretary, wrote a memorandum concerning Britain’s economy and international standing called “The effect of our external financial position on our foreign policy”.³⁸ Already then, he pointed out that the British economy was over-stretched by having too many commitments and low reserves. The memorandum also stated that the financial dependence on the US made the relationship between Britain and the US extra important and something which had to be handled with extra care. This memorandum was circulated in the Foreign Office in 1946 and Eden was again reminded of the inequality of the Anglo-American relationship when returning to the foreign office in 1951. Several British economic crises in the decade after the Second World War and continued overseas commitments meant that the British still had to rely on the Americans for financial support in order for the sterling economy to survive and function. Thus, British decision-makers were aware of the need to align their foreign policy with that of the US. They knew that the US would have the upper hand in any matters where American and British interests differed, and, as Eden foretold, “the consequence would be diplomatic humiliation.”³⁹ In other words, the crisis was not a watershed for British politicians, because they were already aware of the economic inequality of ‘the Special Relationship’.

The British knew that to renew the ties to the Americans and seek economic support from them was the way to economic recovery. The Americans were very accommodating when it came to helping British economy back on its feet once the British yielded to pressure. Through their influence in the IMF, the Americans helped Britain borrow money and start improving their economy and the position of the sterling.⁴⁰ Now that Britain had yielded to American pressure, Britain received the help they needed to keep the sterling high and the sterling area intact, thereby Britain’s economic position was unaltered.

During the crisis, the pound was almost devalued, meaning that it was made freely

³⁷ Sir Anthony Eden, “Thoughts on the general position after Suez”, PRO PREM 11/1138, 28 December 1956.

³⁸ Sir Anthony Eden, “The effect of our external financial position on our foreign policy”, circulated by Eden on 30 Mar. 1945 and by Bevin on 11 Mar. 1946, and memorandum with same title circulated by Bevin on 12 Feb. 1947, FO 371/62420.

³⁹ Peden, “Suez and Britain's decline as a world power”, 1080

⁴⁰ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, 155.

convertible with all other currencies which would lead to the value of the sterling dropping. Then the countries of the sterling area would abandon sterling and effectively end the sterling area. One might think that such a fluctuation in the value of the pound might have more long-term implications for British economy and foreign policy, but I will argue that that was not the case.

Kunz points out that British post-war economy was already unstable. Economic crises riddled the period in the years 1947, 1949 and 1951.⁴¹ The sterling area was one of the factors that presented British governments with economic problems in the post war years.⁴² Nevertheless, it was important for Britain to keep the area intact as it acted as a counter inflationary cushion for sterling and also a dollar earner for Britain. And, as with the past economic crises in post-war Britain, the answer for Britain was to borrow money from the Americans. Harold Macmillan held meetings with Americans George Humphrey, Secretary of the Treasury, and John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, shortly after the crisis. Macmillan was promised that Britain would receive “massive support” from the United States in recovering their economy.⁴³ But, as Diane Kunz writes “both Americans wanted a reestablished special relationship as long as it was clear that the American government would take the lead in all important decisions. Macmillan’s words showed that he understood the situation very well”⁴⁴ British economy did not change in that respect after the crisis; British economy was still very much dependent upon the US to function. But, how much of an impact did the Suez Crisis have on the British economic policy?

White argues that “As the Governor of the Bank of England astutely recognised, at the time, Suez had merely made the weakness of sterling and the vulnerability of British reserves more widely known.”⁴⁵ As mentioned before, British economy was overstretched and therefore vulnerable, a problem that British politicians and economics had been aware of for quite some time. White argues further that “Suez simply underlined the importance of pushing onward with existing financial policy: restoring confidence in sterling abroad, initiating an expansion in reserves, and making sterling fully convertible (Johnman, 1989: 177–9). These policies had begun in earnest in 1955 before the Egyptian debacle, and had been Conservative Party policy since 1954.”⁴⁶ British economic policy did not change as a consequence of the

⁴¹ Kunz “The Importance of Having Money: The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis.”, 219.

⁴² Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, 13.

⁴³ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, 153.

⁴⁴ Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, 157.

⁴⁵ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 116.

⁴⁶ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 116.

Suez Crisis, if anything, the Crisis just made it clearer that Britain needed to continue its economic policy.

However, sterling and the sterling area was gradually declining in value to the British. This was due to several factors that had nothing to do with the Suez Crisis. The Gold Coast/Ghana and Malaya were decolonised in 1957, which was scheduled before the Suez Crisis and therefore not a consequence of the Suez Crisis. Therefore the sterling area was becoming less profitable and less valuable for Britain.

White argues that: “Colonial exports, such as rubber from Malaya and cocoa from the Gold Coast, had developed huge markets in the United States and were hence massive dollar earners.”⁴⁷ Meaning that two of the most profitable colonies were made independent as early as 1957. Furthermore, White argues that: “as part of the social modernisation project of the new imperialism of the post-war era, colonial trade unions had emerged demanding a slew of wage increases, welfare benefits and pension rights. The costs of late-colonialism were outweighing the benefits and it was better, from a British point of view, to now transfer the management of colonial labour to nationalist politicians (Cooper, 1996; Hyam and Louis, 2000, II).”⁴⁸ Moreover, during the 1950s there was a reallocation of economic priorities in British economic policy. White argues that: “From as early as 1953, British economic policy was focused on the UK’s own problems rather than those of the empire-sterling area as a whole. (...) Despite public pronouncements encouraging colonial investment, behind the scenes Treasury and Bank of England officials began to view free capital flows to the rest of the sterling area as a burden which starved domestic export industries of funds”⁴⁹ It became clearer and clearer that investment in colonies was becoming less profitable. This explains the economic aspects of British decolonisation, the economic benefits of keeping hold of the Empire were decreasing.

Consequently, Britain started phasing out the sterling area in 1957, but the decolonisation from 1960 and onwards was also partially influenced by economic factors and policy: “In 1957 the new Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan (...) called for ‘a profit and loss account for each of our Colonial possessions’ (Hyam and Louis, 2000, I: 1). The conclusions to this review, Hopkins (1997) argues, gave Macmillan what he needed; namely, an assurance that the empire could be dismantled without damaging British economic interests.”⁵⁰ When

⁴⁷ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 13.

⁴⁸ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 36.

⁴⁹ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 35.

⁵⁰ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 36.

two of the most profitable colonies, the Gold-Coast/Ghana and Malaya were made independent in 1957, the British had to assess the profitability of the colonies and the sterling area. Without those colonies and with the new expenditures in colonial rule, mentioned above, the sterling area was actually not profitable for Britain anymore. This led to “new directions in British finance and industry by the late 1950s, and complementary metropolitan government policies began to encourage domestic, European and North-American rather than colonial transactions.”⁵¹ and Macmillan started the process of disabling the Empire in 1959.⁵²

Furthermore, Eden’s “Lessons of Suez” from 1956 and the “Sandys White Paper on Defence” which was released in 1957 both marked intentions in British economic policy to spend less on military forces and rather downsize the forces and focus on a nuclear deterrent instead. My own argumentation reflects that of Anthony Gorst and Lewis Johnman; the changes in British economic priorities were not so much a direct consequence of the crisis but rather an acknowledgment of Britain’s economic limitations.⁵³ As discussed earlier, Britain’s economy was overstretched and neither Labour nor Conservative governments could prioritize keeping up imperial commitments at the expense of welfare state policies or social programs back home. Evidently, a downsizing in military spending was scheduled to fall from 10 to 7 % of GNP from 1957 to 1960.⁵⁴ So, as I claimed, British economy did change in the 1950s but it was mainly due to other factors than the Suez Crisis and British economic dependence on the US continued.

2.5 British international standing

Having looked at the economic aspect of the crisis it is natural to also look at the consequences the crisis had on Britain’s standing in the Middle East and the rest of the world. As I have argued, the economic position of Britain in the special relationship indicates that Britain now had limited autonomy in their decision making in the affairs of their foreign policy, being unable to make decisions without consulting the US.

In spite of this, historian Tore T. Petersen has in his article *Post-Suez Consequences: Anglo-American Relations in the Middle East from Eisenhower to Nixon* argues that Britain actually gained more autonomy in their affairs in the Middle East. The US was dependent on

⁵¹ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 35.

⁵² White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 36.

⁵³ Gorst & Johnman, *The Suez Crisis*, 156.

⁵⁴ Gorst & Johnman, *The Suez Crisis*, 156.

Britain as a cold war ally, as is evident in this quote from Dulles in a paper to President Eisenhower from March 1957: “The US needs the alliance for much the same reasons as does Britain. We rely on British help, both material and psychological, to implement our policies towards the Commonwealth, Eastern Europe, South Asia and some areas of the Far East. We recognize that the two acting in concert, with the aid of the Commonwealth, form a more persuasive combination than the US acting alone”⁵⁵ The Americans needed an ally in the Middle East and as Petersen explains “The US simply could not perform another Suez if it wanted to keep its friends”.⁵⁶ Therefore, the US strived to keep the British presence so neither the Russians or Arab nationalists could get a foothold.⁵⁷

According to John Darwin, Britain’s position in the Anglo-American relationship was important for Britain’s international standing.⁵⁸ The Americans backed Britain as they valued that their Cold War ally kept hold of power and influence in strategic areas. For Britain’s international standing this meant that Britain and the US cooperated in the defence of the Middle East and that Britain had some leverage in the relationship between the two nations, making it a little less unbalanced.

The part played by the Suez Crisis in this is that the Americans feared losing Britain as a Cold War ally. As I have said, Prime Minister Macmillan was very quick to patch up the Anglo-American relationship after the Suez Crisis. That is why British international standing was quite unchanged after the crisis; the US supported Britain financially in retaining their colonies and Britain thus kept up their international standing. For British international standing, the biggest difference after the crisis, was that the rest of the world were now fully aware of Britain’s dependence on the US. But, since the relationship was so quickly redeemed Britain could again rely on the economic backing of their American friends, and with that Britain’s international standing was maintained at the same level as before the Suez Crisis. As I have argued, the maintaining of the empire was what kept British international standing high, and with American financial backing Britain held most of their Empire for four years more after the Suez Crisis. Which means that British international standing was unchanged;

⁵⁵ Tore T. Petersen, “Post-Suez Consequences: Anglo-American Relations in the Middle East from Eisenhower to Nixon.” in Smith, Simon C. (ed.), *Reassessing Suez 1956, New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. (2008), 215-6.

⁵⁶ Petersen, “Post-Suez Consequences: Anglo-American Relations in the Middle East from Eisenhower to Nixon.”, 216.

⁵⁷ Petersen, “Post-Suez Consequences: Anglo-American Relations in the Middle East from Eisenhower to Nixon.”, 218.

⁵⁸ John Darwin, *The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970*. (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 592.

strong enough to keep hold of the colonies but not autonomous because British economy would not survive for long without American support.

2.6 A watershed for British international prestige and economy?

As argued above, Britain increased military operations and acted independently without American interference. British priorities in foreign and military policy towards the Middle East did not change until the Labour Party won the election in October 1964.⁵⁹ The definitive change in British policy came with the East of Suez decision in 1968 when Harold Wilson announced that all troops were to be withdrawn from the Persian Gulf by 1971.⁶⁰ Britain's international standing in other parts of the world can only be discussed after looking at decolonisation, which I will do in the next chapter of this thesis.

Furthermore, British balance of payments had worsened in the decade following 1955 and Britain could not afford to prioritize costly military campaigns to keep hold of overseas colonies. Indeed, as mentioned above, Britain did prioritize military interventions in the Middle East. Gorst & Johnman explains that Britain and the US had a series of 'understandings' that involved the British upholding their influence and military bases in the Middle East and the American government supporting British economy and upholding the value of the sterling.⁶¹ This corresponds with the earlier mentioned notion of the US wanting to keep the Russians out of the Middle East by supporting British influence in the area. Nevertheless, British economy suffered under the expenditures of the endeavours in the Middle East. That, the sterling being made fully convertible in 1958 and many other economic factors made British economy weak and declining. However, the Suez Crisis cannot take the blame for the negative trends in British economy.

However, British international prestige was suffering as a consequence of the Suez Crisis. Britain lost a lot of international prestige due to the humiliating defeat during the crisis. Britain seemed weak and dependent on the US. Britain showed weakness by losing at Suez, and lost international prestige which in turn encouraged local and international resistance towards British colonialism, something I will argue further in the next chapters.

⁵⁹ Petersen, "Post-Suez Consequences: Anglo-American Relations in the Middle East from Eisenhower to Nixon.", 219.

⁶⁰ Harold Wilson, "Speech to the House of Commons", 16 January 1968, Hansard, vol. 756, cols 1580-1581.

⁶¹ Gorst & Johnman, *The Suez Crisis*, 161.

3. British colonial policy before and after Suez

One of the most relevant questions, which is a natural point of departure for this chapter, is that of how British policy makers changed their views towards the Empire after the crisis. After the British humiliation at Suez, it was abundantly clear that some changes had to be made in British colonial policy. Britain had lost an enormous amount of international prestige and was branded “public enemy number one” by ex-colonies in the United Nations.⁶²

In his “Winds of Change” speech of 1960, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan addresses issues in British colonial and foreign policy in the time to come. For now, I will draw attention to how Macmillan points to the correlation between outside factors and British internal political decisions, when he says that “growth of national consciousness is a political fact. (...) Our national policies must take account of it...”.⁶³ This shows how British colonial policy was affected and shaped by outside factors. This speech can be seen as Macmillan foreboding the decolonisation of British colonies in Asia and especially Africa. As mentioned, the speech is from 1960, four years after the crisis of 1956. Still, it is very relevant for this thesis, as most of the decolonisation of British colonies happened from 1960 and throughout that decade.

British colonial policy changed after the Suez Crisis to some degree due to economic factors. Britain did not have much international prestige left to lose after the Suez Crisis and therefore Britain no longer needed the Empire to keep up the pretence of still being a great power in the world. The Suez Crisis had made it clear for both themselves and the rest of the world that Britain did not have the economic means to play the part of a great power in world affairs anymore. Therefore, the Suez Crisis was a watershed as it changed colonial policy by changing the way British decision-makers thought about decolonisation.

3.1 Economy of the Empire

Gorst and Johnman has argued that seeing the crisis as the only factor causing decolonisation is a too simplistic assumption.⁶⁴ As discussed earlier, the British were not in an economic position where they could afford to spend a lot on retaining and investing in their

⁶² Louis, Wm. Roger “Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71” in: *The British Empire in the 1950s, Retreat or Revival?* Lynn, Martin (ed.) (Palgrave Macmillan 2006), 192.

⁶³ Harold Macmillan, “Winds of Change-speech”, Speech by the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, to the South African Parliament, 3 February 1960.

⁶⁴ Anthony Gorst & Lewis Johnman, *The Suez Crisis*. (London: Routledge, 1997), 160.

colonies. Many colonies had been scheduled for independence before the crisis.

Decolonisation of the British Empire would have happened inevitably, but I will argue that the crisis sped up the process markedly.

Contradictory to what the British believed up to around halfway through the 1950s, freed colonies could not stand on their own feet in economic terms. This was evident in the case of the Gold Coast/Ghana, which, for many years after its independence in 1957, looked to Britain in need of free loans and economic aid to further its development. New states seemed to need more economic aid as their populations increased. Britain also believed that the private sector would invest in the economic development of new states but found that such interests in London's financial climate gradually cooled down.⁶⁵ There was also the question of the viability of the colonies. Britain felt a responsibility for newly freed colonies and had an interest in helping the country starting to develop their economy, as in the situation explained earlier involving the Gold Coast/Ghana. Therefore British politicians had to take into consideration if and when a colony could be decolonised. The prospect of Britain granting economic aid to the under-developed economies in ex-colonies beyond an initial start-up loan or grant was not something that seemed likely, given the state of the already strained British economy.

The economic strains were altering British military priorities as well. The Sandys White Paper of April 1957 attests to a reduction of armed forces and an increase in spending on the nuclear deterrent.⁶⁶ This was to aid the defence of Western Europe from the Soviet Union, and Britain received both financial and technological help from the US. A reduced military force also made Britain less able to keep control in the colonies. As R.F. Holland points out: conscription was cancelled in 1960.⁶⁷

Consequently, questions of the viability of colonies, economic strains and a reduction in military force led to Macmillan's re-evaluation of British economic colonial policy when he became Prime Minister after the Suez Crisis. Despite the viability-question, Holland argues that many colonies were quite hastily and abruptly made independent as Britain turned their foreign and economic policy towards Europe.⁶⁸ There were many reasons for this. Britain feared that France would take the helm in a Western-European economic cooperation and

⁶⁵ Roy F. Holland, "The Imperial Factor in British Strategies from Attlee to Macmillan, 1945-63." *The Journal of imperial and Commonwealth history*. 12, No. 2, (1984), 180.

⁶⁶ British Government, "The Sandys White Paper on Defence".

⁶⁷ Holland, "The Imperial Factor in British Strategies from Attlee to Macmillan, 1945-63.", 179.

⁶⁸ Holland, "The Imperial Factor in British Strategies from Attlee to Macmillan, 1945-63.", 182.

thereby occupy both that position and the position as the mediator of a Western-European and American trade and military alliance.⁶⁹

These findings lead us to look at Macmillan's Wind of Change speech in a different light. John Aldred argues that economic concerns were influencing the speech. Furthermore, the speech can be interpreted as a manifestation of Britain acknowledging and opening up for the decolonisation of their assets in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.⁷⁰ Macmillan had commissioned a review of the expenses versus the economic gains of keeping hold of the colonies. The report "showed that British investments in non-colonial markets were more profitable than in colonial ones".⁷¹ Hence, Britain would direct their investment into Western markets. Furthermore, Britain did not wish to be the only colonial power left in Africa, as French and Belgian decolonisation accelerated heavily around 1960. When France made offers of independence to their imperial assets in Africa in 1958, the British feared that it would destabilise their position in Africa as colonial powers traditionally had cooperated in keeping control of adjacent territories on the continent.⁷²

When considering the economic aspect of the crisis it is easy to see that Macmillan was motivated by economic factors that are mentioned nowhere in the speech itself. Clearly, it would suit the British to portray decolonisation as motivated by ideological and almost philanthropic factors. One might even say that the British wished to see decolonisation speed up, as Britain needed to direct its economic and political resources towards Western-Europe. Macmillan says in the winds of change-speech that "growth of national consciousness is a political fact. (...) Our national policies must take account of it...".⁷³ When re-examining this quote from earlier in this chapter, new interpretations come to mind. Instead of this only being a token of how British colonial policy was being affected by outside factors, it can also be seen as a result of how economy formed British colonial policy. Those same words in a public speech by a British Prime Minister would have been unthinkable in 1950 or even as late as 1955. It would have been a clear sign of weakness, and as I have argued, up to the late 1950s, Britain was preoccupied with keeping its colonies and keeping up the pretence of power and independence. However, there is little doubt that, in the wake of the Suez Crisis, there was not much left to lose for Britain by displaying weakness. Macmillan's words now seem to be an

⁶⁹ Holland, "The Imperial Factor in British Strategies from Attlee to Macmillan, 1945-63.", 182.

⁷⁰ John Aldred, *British Imperial and Foreign Policy, 1846-1980*. (Heinemann, 2004), 95.

⁷¹ Aldred, *British Imperial and Foreign Policy, 1846-1980*, 96.

⁷² Aldred, *British Imperial and Foreign Policy, 1846-1980*, 96.

⁷³ Harold Macmillan, "Winds of Change-speech".

admission of weakness and an invitation for nationalists in colonies to further their cause. In light of the aforementioned economic and political factors, one can understand Britain and Macmillan's reasons and motivation for doing so and this clearly shows how British colonial policy changed.

3.2 Colonial policy in the Empire after Suez

In light of this background concerning British economy and decolonisation, it is relevant to look at how Britain's humiliating display of inferiority to the US during the Suez Crisis influenced British colonial policy in the Empire. There is academic disagreement over how much Britain's humiliation in 1956 actually accelerated decolonisation by motivating nationalists in colonies to further their causes. One need look no further than to assess how Anthony Low and Brian Lapping argue about this issue. Anthony Low argues that the Suez Crisis did not speed up decolonisation. Low points out that there is "no evidence" to support the view that colonial nationalists were motivated to renew and reinforce their efforts by the Suez Crisis.⁷⁴ Instead, Low points to other reasons for decolonisation, such as the turmoil following Belgium's sudden withdrawal from the Congo, racial tensions in Central Africa, and the "erosion of multiracial constitutions in East-Africa".⁷⁵

Brian Lapping, on the other hand, argues that the Suez Crisis was a watershed that did speed up the process of decolonisation. Lapping argues that the newspapers in British colonial Africa were riddled with news about the Suez Crisis and Britain's defeat in it. One of Lapping's challenges to Low is to "look through the newspapers published in any British colony in Africa for the months July-December 1956".⁷⁶ Furthermore, Lapping points out that there were no ships coming from Britain to East Africa for the duration of the crisis. Lapping writes: "How could anybody in Britain's remaining colonies fail to get the message?"⁷⁷, arguing that Britain lost control in Africa and therefore lost control in the colonies which they could not reach now because of the crisis.

As for the effect of the Suez Crisis on colonial nationalists, Low argues that neither nationalists in the colonies or the colonial administrators on the British side has attributed decolonisation to the Suez Crisis.⁷⁸ Lapping's counter-argument is that they would not

⁷⁴ Low in: Brian Lapping & Anthony Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?" (*Contemporary record*, 1, No. 2, 1987), 31.

⁷⁵ Low in: Lapping & Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 31.

⁷⁶ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 33.

⁷⁷ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 33.

⁷⁸ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 33.

mention the Suez Crisis because they would wish to emphasise the autonomy of their causes rather than undermine it.⁷⁹ Lapping's concluding argument is that the British Empire's power rested on Britain's ability to exert power and strike down colonial insurgents. He draws a line and points to incidents where Britain used force successfully: Alexandria in 1882, Malaya in 1948-1955 and Kenya in 1951-54.⁸⁰

Lapping seems to imply that by one defeat, the British lost all that power and that nationalists in colonies looked at the Suez Crisis and thought that Britain did not have the force to react, and that the power in the colonies was theirs for the taking. Or maybe they thought Britain could not react with force, as if the US was going to prohibit that. The US was not in a position to further restrict Britain; as Petersen argues, the Americans needed their British ally and would not risk their alliance further.⁸¹ Additionally, the US definitely saw British imperialism as the lesser evil compared to Soviet expansionism. The Americans would not have anything to gain by tying Britain's hands and refusing them to use force in colonial matters. Besides, the Americans used military force themselves, as in Vietnam from 1955 and onwards, and thus could not appear morally superior to Britain. Besides, Britain had suffered defeats before Suez, when Japan invaded and took control of Singapore in 1942.⁸²

There is a high degree of uncertainty when trying to quantify the effect of the Suez Crisis on nationalists in the colonies. It seems that both Low's and Lapping's arguments, while both reasonable, apply to what they thought that the nationalists were thinking. So, one fruitful way to assess the effect of the Suez Crisis on nationalists is to look at colonial military action in the years after Suez, to see whether or not Britain used force and what other factors were significant for the colonies.

First, I would like to make the point that no decolonisation is the same; nationalist pressure is just one of many factors that varied greatly between colonies. In the Middle East, Britain kept on asserting their influence through the use of military force after Suez. As early as in July 1957, the UK dealt with nationalist rebels in Oman. Britain proved that they had both the power and American approval to intervene militarily. If not exactly approving, at least the Americans stayed out of it even if they secretly disapproved as they wanted to

⁷⁹ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 33.

⁸⁰ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 33.

⁸¹ Tore T. Petersen, "Post-Suez Consequences: Anglo-American Relations in the Middle East from Eisenhower to Nixon." in Smith, Simon C. (ed.), *Reassessing Suez 1956, New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath*. (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2008), 216.

⁸² Nicholas J. White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 12.

establish a good relation to King Saud.⁸³ Britain continued with military operations in Jordan in 1958, Oman in 1959, and Kuwait in 1961.⁸⁴ They did not gain formal power as in the colonies but rather asserted their influence by supporting regimes which they could cooperate with and keep the important oil access steady. Their opposition was often leaning towards Nasser and the Soviet Union, making the Americans a trusted ally. In other parts of the British Asian and African Empire the development was dissimilar. The conflicts in Kenya, Malaya and Palestine (Israel) happened before Suez, so there were no major armed conflicts in British territories after the Suez Crisis.⁸⁵ Ghana and Malaya were already scheduled for independence before the crisis so nationalists in those colonies did not need to intensify their efforts.⁸⁶

Evidently, Britain did not participate militarily to keep hold of the colonies. There are many reasons for this. Britain set up plans for decolonisation where it was due. As John Hatch points out “the colonies certainly had neither the economic nor military power to challenge British hegemony”.⁸⁷ But nationalists could fight the British using guerilla tactics; the conflict in Algeria and the Vietnam War showed how a colonial power could be drawn into a lengthy and costly war. Britain did not want similar situations in their colonies. Britain had showed earlier with India in 1947 that they would rather leave and keep a good relation to the colony than to fight and thus burn the bridge and hope of a future positive relation.

Again, economic factors are crucial. As mentioned, fighting wars to keep hold of a colony would be costly. Too costly, compared to the relative income of the colony. Hatch also points out that the most important resources in African colonies were under British control via companies that would continue to be in control when the British lost formal control.⁸⁸ The type of influence that Britain wanted was economic and subtle, as in the Middle-East where they, as mentioned, gained economic and strategical influence by supporting regimes intent on cooperation with Britain.

Therefore, I conclude that one cannot assess the effect of the Suez Crisis on nationalists in colonies based on the wars that were fought in British colonies after the crisis;

⁸³ Petersen, “Post-Suez Consequences: Anglo-American Relations in the Middle East from Eisenhower to Nixon.”, 218.

⁸⁴ Petersen, “Post-Suez Consequences: Anglo-American Relations in the Middle East from Eisenhower to Nixon.”, 218.

⁸⁵ David B. Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance, European Overseas Empires 1415-1980*. (Yale University Press, 2000), 147.

⁸⁶ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 119.

⁸⁷ John Hatch “The Decline of British Power in Africa” in Smith, Tony (ed.), *The End of the European Empire, Decolonization after World War II*. (D.C. Heath and Company, 1975), 73.

⁸⁸ Hatch “The Decline of British Power in Africa”, 79.

there were none. However, this does not rule out the possibility of nationalists being galvanised by the crisis. As Abernethy points out, Britain did not have a track record of fighting to keep hold of their colonies, as Portugal and France,⁸⁹ and there is therefore a possibility that Britain pulled out as a result of an increasing pressure from nationalists.

Brian Lapping points to Egypt and Nasser becoming a symbol for African nationalists on the rest of the continent. Cairo became a safe haven for nationalist exiles from all of Africa and the radio of Cairo broadcasted for four hours daily with anti-colonial propaganda.⁹⁰ Again, it is hard to extract any evidence of the effect of this on nationalism in the rest of Africa. Nonetheless, it cannot be denounced as insignificant either. Moreover, Lapping also points to the effect that the crisis had for France in Africa. Nasser's Egypt supported Algerian nationalists in their struggle against France. Lapping also claims that the crisis led to de Gaulle founding and becoming President of France's fifth republic in 1958. Two years later France abandoned the majority of their African Empire⁹¹. Unlike Britain, France had shown an interest and will to keep these colonies up to then, so when they gave independence to such vast territories, it is much easier to see this as a consequence of the Suez Crisis. Combined with the Congo crisis in 1960-63, it is evident that Britain risked being left alone as almost the only European power in a now very unstable Africa.

I argue in the next chapter that nationalistic movements grew, in African colonies especially, in the decade after the Suez Crisis. The amount of that growth which can be attributed to the crisis remains to be seen, as one needs to examine nationalism in more detail first. For now, knowing that nationalism grew and the state of British Economy at the time, it is easy to see that although Britain may have had the military power and the approval of the Americans they would not use military force to keep their formal power in Africa. They fought in the Middle East, but that only proves that the strategical and economic value of the region was higher than that of Africa.

Consequently, the British saw the futility and economic expense in fighting wars to keep their African colonies after Suez. They had to look no further than to their neighbour, France. On the contrary, the British saw the benefit and importance of keeping a positive relation to their colonies in order to maintain trade and economic possibilities. They occasionally sought to keep some informal power and influence; clearly they did not want to

⁸⁹ Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance, European Overseas Empires 1415-1980*, 148.

⁹⁰ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 32.

⁹¹ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 32.

provoke colonies and ex-colonies to turn to the Soviet Union, as it would turn the tide in the Cold War against Britain and the US. This brings us to the notion of an informal empire and how that relates to the Suez Crisis.

3.3 Informal Empire and the Commonwealth

The official policy on decolonisation in Britain can be seen as being shaped prior to the crisis. This quote from a British official committee from as early as 1954 attests to that: “No Party in this country can afford to have it said that, though it promised independence, it never meant to concede it. Any attempt to retard by artificial delays the progress of Colonial peoples towards independence would produce disastrous results. Among other consequences it would ensure that, when power had eventually been transferred, it would be handed over to a local leadership predisposed towards an anti-British policy.”⁹² This shows how the British, at an early stage, showed an understanding of the inevitability of decolonisation of their Empire and the manner in which it was done. They were aware that if they struggled to keep hold of their colonies, against the will of the inhabitants of their colonies, the British might end up turning the local population against themselves. For my hypothesis, that the Suez Crisis sped up the process of decolonisation, this means that the British were inclined to let their colonies go if it meant that informal ties of economic and strategic value to the British could be made. It also means that British colonial policy by the mid 1950s had become flexible; instead of wanting to hold on to colonies at any cost, as Britain wanted to do in 1945-51 and as other European powers e.g. Portugal did, the British always assessed the value of a colony and saw decolonisation as a viable option. The British were sensitive to both international opinion towards themselves and the opinion of their colonial subjects. Ensuring that Britain remained popular in new ex-colonial countries by decolonising was often a far better option than being hated for not letting go of the colony. Consequently, British colonial policy was influenced by external factors, and that is important for the what I will argue further; the Suez Crisis was a watershed for British colonial policy because they had to decolonise sooner than they first thought in order to preserve informal ties to the colony after decolonisation.

When Malaya and the Gold-Coast/Ghana gained independence in 1957, Britain signed

⁹² British Committee on Commonwealth Membership, “Nationalism and the Pace of Constitutional Development”, Report by the Official Committee on Commonwealth Membership, 21 January 1954.

defence and economic arrangements with the new states, keeping them as strategic military outposts in the Cold War and also keeping the economic relations that Britain needed. It was a deliberate strategy of the British throughout the 1950s and 60s to keep their ties to former colonies through such agreements. Obviously, Britain knew that new states would want allies and it was important that they did not turn to the Soviet Union but stayed in the Anglo-American fold. The British knew that by accommodating nationalists they could support a regime that was friendly towards Britain. As this document from the Committee on Commonwealth Membership from 1954 says: “Countries which maintain the British connection are less likely, in the period of their political immaturity, to pass under the influence of hostile Powers.”⁹³

Both before and after Suez the British were aware of the importance of keeping the Russians out of newly freed colonies. As Nicholas White argues “after 1957 the British increasingly worked in concert, rather than in conflict, with the Americans to manage decolonisation and to keep Soviet influence in the emerging Third World at a minimum.”⁹⁴ Britain had experienced what happened when relations soured with Egypt, who then turned to the Soviet-Union for economic assistance. As Lapping argues, the Suez Crisis was what gave the Soviet-Union “their first foothold on the continent.”⁹⁵ So, a direct consequence of the Suez Crisis was that Britain could not delay too long in the decolonisation processes in African-colonies. Britain and their ally the US feared that this would make African-nationalists turn towards the Soviet-Union for support, both in the struggle for independence and the nation building that would follow.

Conclusively, Britain might have abandoned the idea of the commonwealth replacing the Empire because of the Suez Crisis. But, it was more important than ever for Britain and the US, who thus came to work closely in decolonisation, to keep informal power after decolonisation because of the Suez Crisis. Because of this, the Suez Crisis must be seen as accelerating the decolonisation process in order to keep and build an Anglo-American informal empire.

⁹³ British Committee on Commonwealth Membership, “The Advantages of the Commonwealth” in: “The Future of Commonwealth Membership”, Report by the Official Committee, 21 January 1954.

⁹⁴ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 94.

⁹⁵ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, “Did Suez hasten the end of empire?”, 32.

3.4 British colonial policy after the Suez Crisis

The Suez Crisis occurred in the middle of changes in colonial, economic and military policy, but how much of the change can be ascribed as a direct consequence of the crisis?

One has to look at how British colonial policy changed after the Suez Crisis. A.J. Stockwell argues that the Suez Crisis had exposed the liability of British economy, especially the perils of low reserves, which ultimately caused the British humiliation in the crisis.⁹⁶ Macmillan and his government had to cut overseas expenditures, but that was a realisation which had been made before the Suez Crisis. Yet again, one cannot help but think that the Suez Crisis was a powerful reminder to British decision makers that recklessness in either retreat or intervention could have dire consequences for British prestige and position in the world. Indeed, as an economic evaluation showed, the colonies were self sufficient in economic terms, neither draining money from Britain nor bringing in. Macmillan stressed that all decisions of decolonisation would not only be based on economic factors but also “the political and strategic considerations in each case”.⁹⁷ The British were, as ever, aware of the importance of international prestige and position. Macmillan rendered that to redeem British prestige and global reputation they could not leave their colonies before they were ready for independence. British decision makers were also aware of the tension between the white settlers and the indigenous population in their African colonies. This was a source of conflict that would reflect badly upon the British, if they did not handle it well. Distributing the power equally between the ethnic groups and keeping them happy was no easy task, especially when considering that such a disproportionate amount of power and resources had been reserved for the white-settler minority since Britain colonised Africa.

However, Britain started decolonisation at quite a rapid pace in 1960. Historian RF. Holland argue that the British did not have difficulties holding on to their colonies, but that it was no longer profitable to keep hold of them.⁹⁸ If so, one would think that the argument that nationalists in colonies were encouraged by Britain’s humiliation during the Suez Crisis, is no longer valid. However, one can of course not say for certain that Britain had no trouble in containing nationalism; indeed, as I have argued, the growing nationalism was one of the things that made the keeping of colonies too expensive for Britain.

⁹⁶ Anthony J. Stockwell, *Suez 1956 and the Moral Disarmament of the British Empire*. in Smith, Simon C. (ed.). *Reassessing Suez 1956, New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath*. (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2008), 234.

⁹⁷ Harold Macmillan, “Personal minute from the Prime Minister to the Lord President of the Council (Lord Salisbury)”, 28 January 1957, TNA, CAB 134/1555.

⁹⁸ Holland, “The Imperial Factor in British Strategies from Attlee to Macmillan, 1945-63.”, 183.

Even more central to my thesis is the argument that: the Suez Crisis brought the Soviet Union and The Cold War into Africa, and thereby also the Anglo-American fear of the Soviet Union supporting nationalists and gaining informal influence in new African states. Holland points out the intensifying Cold War struggle around 1960; the US and the Soviet Union searched to win new states and colonies, “soon to be-new states” as one can call them in this context, over to their side.⁹⁹ The Soviet Union, as the US, was also financially stronger than Britain, or Belgium and France for that matter. This created a scenario in which the Soviet Union saw the opportunity of supporting nationalism in colonies in order to win over these “soon to be-new states”, and the European powers were in no position to match the great powers in economic terms, and were thus effectively outbid. This explains why Britain would commit to a close cooperation with the US when it came to decolonisation and continued influence after decolonisation. It was a logical alliance; Britain had the connections with local authorities, resemblant of British colonial methods from long ago, and the US had the economic means to buy the loyalty of the ex-colonies. In short, Britain had the know-how while the US provided the money. The Soviet Union provided nationalists in British colonies with leverage in their struggle against their colonisers; the British feared that the nationalists would seek help from the Soviet Union and thereby side with the Soviet Union in the Cold War when the colony emerged as a new nation. Therefore, because of the Suez Crisis, which encouraged nationalists to challenge a British rule that had lost prestige, Britain had to decolonise before they initially had planned. By keeping the formal colonial rule for too long the British risked not only losing the informal ties to the new country but also turning the new countries towards the East in the Cold War conflict.

Conclusively, there is some continuity in British colonial policy post- and pre-Suez, and economic factors seem to be predominant in the decolonisation of the British Empire. But, the pace of decolonisation was accelerated by external and strategic factors, as I have argued here and will continue to argue in the next chapter.

⁹⁹ Holland, “The Imperial Factor in British Strategies from Attlee to Macmillan, 1945-63.”, 182-3.

4. The Suez Crisis, the United Nations, African nationalism and British colonial policy

The Suez Crisis accelerated the process of decolonisation, by making the colonies less financially profitable and also introduced the intense Cold War rivalry for influence between the US and the Soviet Union in Africa. Thus, even though the British were in control of decolonisation, pressure from these external factors made Britain accelerate the process. My main argument throughout this chapter is that the process of decolonisation of the British Empire sped up because of the Suez Crisis. The crisis stirred up and motivated anti-colonialism in the U.N., nationalism in African colonies and European withdrawal from Africa. All of the above mentioned factors, in one way or another, made it a better choice for the British to decolonise than to stay in control. And, many of these factors were highly influenced by the Suez Crisis, meaning that the Suez Crisis was a watershed that accelerated the process of decolonisation.

4.1 British colonial policy and the UN

The United Nations was a significant external factor that influenced British decolonisation in the years after the Suez Crisis. Spearheaded by the former colonies that were part of the UN by 1957 and the newly decolonised states that joined the organisations in the years after the Suez Crisis, the UN was trying to accelerate the process of decolonisation.

According to historian William Roger Louis, the United Nations had not until 1956 interfered significantly with Britain and its Empire. Louis argues that Britain became “Public-enemy number one” in the United Nations for a decade and a half after the Suez Crisis.¹⁰⁰ The British had from the birth of the organisation in 1945 agreed to cooperate by reporting information on social and educational development in the colonies. Britain also agreed to plan for the independence of each colony, at the insistence of the Afro-Asian member states.¹⁰¹ Already then, the British, while agreeing to the majority of the U.N.’s opinion, envisioned the colonies being part of the Commonwealth rather than being independent from Britain altogether.

Colonial powers in Britain feared that “pressure by the United Nations would cause

¹⁰⁰ William Roger Louis, “Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71” in: *The British Empire in the 1950s, Retreat or Revival?* Lynn, Martin (ed.) (Palgrave Macmillan 2006), 192.

¹⁰¹ Louis, “Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71”, 187.

the British to grant independence before adequate political, economic, social and educational preparation".¹⁰² The feeling shared in the Colonial Office was that the U.N. was an organisation that blindly supported independence for colonies, with a bias against British colonialism. The British perspective was that there was a mythology of colonialism in the U.N. that heavily favoured independence; social injustice and poverty in colonies were consequences of dependency, which would be automatically bettered with independence. Another one of those myths was that war was a result of dependency and that altruism was only a mask for Europeans wanting to exploit colonial subjects of other ethnicities.¹⁰³ During the Suez Crisis, Britain and France broke the Charter of the U.N. In the eyes of the U.N., the British were now considered as ruthless as the Soviets in their use of force in colonial matters. Consequently, during the 1950s the U.N. became an organisation with decolonisation as one of its main intentions, now prioritised alongside peace and multiculturalism. British colonialism was now seen as a force that threatened peace, as Britain had violated the intentions of the organisation they once had participated in founding. Louis argues that "British credibility had been destroyed in 1956".¹⁰⁴ The British had shown willingness to accommodate colonies in gaining independence before, as with India in 1947. Now, former colonies and present Commonwealth countries, such as India, were among the countries fighting most stubbornly for independence of the colonies in the U.N. Britain was also prepared for decolonisation but they thought that most of their African colonies would be decolonised around 1970-5. Resolution 1514 in the U.N. demanded that all colonies were to be liberated immediately.¹⁰⁵

The British felt that there was a double standard in the U.N., where they were themselves judged harshly for having colonies while e.g. the Soviet Union, with its Iron Curtain and imperial-like conduct in the world, was not as harshly judged. The Soviet Union's attack on the Hungarian uprising of 1956 was not as heftily criticised in the U.N. as Britain's conduct in the Suez Crisis, for instance. This can be ascribed to the former colonies' memory of being oppressed. India is known as one of the countries who fought most rigidly for decolonisation in the U.N. India, as we know, sided with Egypt in the Suez Crisis. Thus, India had fresh incentive to further their anti imperialist cause against Britain because of the Suez Crisis, which they could channel through the U.N.

¹⁰² Louis, "Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71", 188.

¹⁰³ Louis, "Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71", 190.

¹⁰⁴ Louis, "Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71", 192.

¹⁰⁵ Louis, "Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71", 195.

As mentioned, the British were expecting that African-colonies would be decolonised in the first half of the 1970s. In 1960, Resolution 1514 in the U.N. was issued, demanding that all colonies be decolonised immediately. The Committee of 17 was formed in 1961 to see the Resolution through. The Committee consisted of former colonies and other countries and became the most persistent opposers in the U.N. of European and especially British colonialism. The Committee wanted to visit British colonies, something the British did not like, as they feared such visits would invigorate nationalism in colonies and cause violence.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, Britain, while intending to be part of the U.N. and therefore having to comply with its policy, still had to consider the question of the viability of independence in the colonies. Stockwell argues that: “The Suez Crisis proved that recklessness in either intervention or retreat ran the risk of national humiliation and international isolation; it reinforced in the official mind the importance of a measured approach to ending empire.”¹⁰⁷ As mentioned, Britain did not immediately decolonise, not after the Suez Crisis in 1956 or after the Resolution in 1960. This shows that Britain, despite of pressure from external factors such as the U.N. and colonial nationalism, had some degree of control. But, the Suez Crisis set in motion increasing nationalism in the U.N. and elsewhere which made the British inclined to decolonise sooner rather than later in many colonies. As argued prior, the British were aware of the importance of timing, and the right time to decolonise came sooner than first expected for Britain because of the Suez Crisis.

A quick review of British decolonisation after 1960 shows that Sierra Leone and Kuwait were decolonised in 1961. Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and Uganda in 1962. Malaysia, Kenya, Zanzibar in 1963. Malta, Zambia and Malawi in 1964. Gambia and the Maldives in 1965. Botswana, Lesotho, Barbados and Guyana in 1966. Yemen in 1967. Swaziland and Mauritius in 1968.¹⁰⁸ This shows that there were a lot of British colonies still not decolonised after the resolution of 1960, and that it happened at a steady pace in the years 1961-68. However, decolonisation of British colonies started prior to 1960, with Sudan in 1956 and Malaya and Ghana in 1957. Quite noteworthy, no British colonies were decolonised in the years 1958-59. Ronald Hyam argues that Macmillan, while eager to decolonise when he came to power in 1957, was held back two years by pro-Empire government members.

¹⁰⁶ Louis, “Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71”, 196.

¹⁰⁷ Anthony J. Stockwell, *Suez 1956 and the Moral Disarmament of the British Empire*. in Smith, Simon C. (ed.). *Reassessing Suez 1956, New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath*. (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing ltd. 2008), 237.

¹⁰⁸ David B. Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance, European Overseas Empires 1415-1980*. (Yale University Press, 2000), 141.

Macmillan's power was then renewed with a strong election victory in 1959. By then Macmillan had had time to prepare for decolonisation, how to do it, and more significantly, when to decolonise.¹⁰⁹ Again, this points towards further asserting the claim that Britain was capable of setting the pace of decolonisation themselves. However, that does not rule out that external factors spurred by the Suez Crisis played a major part.

Nevertheless, the year of 1960 stands out as a year when many colonies were decolonised; Cyprus, Cameroon (both British and French parts), Nigeria, Somalia (both British and Italian parts). Additionally, a large proportion of French colonies in Africa were decolonised in 1960; the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo (both French and Belgian parts), Dahomey, Gabon, the Ivory Coast, the Malagasy Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo and the Upper Volta.¹¹⁰ Thus, Britain was left almost as the only European power still in control of considerable territories in Africa after 1960.

As for the influence of the U.N. on British policy, the fact that Britain's decolonisation was so spread out during the 1960s implies that the British were successful in opposing the committee's wish to decolonise immediately in 1960. The U.N. and the committee were not very influential on British decolonisation. Nevertheless, one cannot devalue the U.N. as having no impact. Britain set the pace for their decolonisation but their policies were determined by economic and strategical factors. The Suez Crisis had some impact on the U.N., most notably spurring India and other ex-colonies to join the anti-imperialist cause in the U.N.

In an official document from Sir J. Martin in the Colonial office to N. Pritchard in the Commonwealth Relations Office as early as 1953, the role of India is discussed. It seems that the British assumed that India was trying to "embarrass" the "Colonial powers".¹¹¹ Martin also points out that India is one of the most powerful new anti-colonial leaders in the U.N and that "she [India] has had so much intimate experience of our susceptibilities on Colonial issues that she is able to put a finger on our weak spots with unerring accuracy".¹¹² Louis also argues that India was one of the most important countries in the alleged anti-British bias in the U.N.¹¹³ According to White "The Tory vision of a multiracial, British-led Commonwealth as a

¹⁰⁹ Ronald Hyam, "Introduction" in Ronald Hyam and William Roger Louis (eds), *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1957-1964* (London: The Stationary Office, 2000), xxviii.

¹¹⁰ Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance, European Overseas Empires 1415-1980*, 140.

¹¹¹ Sir J. Martin, "Anti-colonialism in the United Nations: The Role of India.", Sir J. Martin, Colonial Office to N. Pritchard, Commonwealth Relations Office, 7 August 1953.

¹¹² Martin, "Anti-colonialism in the United Nations: The Role of India."

¹¹³ Louis, "Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71", 195.

surrogate for empire had been dashed by the President of India, Nehru, who identified with Egypt, not Britain, during the crisis.”¹¹⁴ This shows that the British were aware of India’s opposition to Britain’s colonial-policy in the 1950s before Suez. Britain’s involvement in the Suez Crisis did not make India more accepting towards Britain’s colonial-policy either; it increased the tension between the former oppressed and oppressor and made India further opposed to the continuation of British imperialism. However, there must be other external factors that made a bigger impact on British decolonisation, especially considering that decolonisation was already started before the Resolution 1514 of 1960.

As for the tendency that decolonisation had already begun prior to U.N.’s Resolution 1514 in 1960, I will argue that the U.N.’s policy is an extension of what was happening already in decolonisation, but that the U.N. was important for decolonisation as it united newly freed colonies.

Britain decolonised three colonies as early as 1956-57. Besides, the Resolution was issued four years after the Suez Crisis, and it was fuelled partly by newly freed colonies joining the U.N. Those new states became part of the Committee of 17, which expanded and became the Committee of 24.¹¹⁵ Those new states reinforced the alleged bias of the U.N. against British-colonialism. Thus, it can be described as a domino effect when newly freed colonies joined the U.N. and put pressure on Britain to decolonise.

Louis argues that the one of the most prominent countries in the Committee of 24 was Tunisia. As an ex-colony of France, they looked at the struggle for independence in other colonies as an image of their own and their neighbour, Algeria’s struggle for independence.¹¹⁶ A prime example of a newly freed colony fighting for decolonisation through the U.N., Tunisia was decolonised as early as in March 1956 (approximately half a year before the Suez Crisis), while Algeria was fighting France in their struggle for freedom from 1954 until 1962. The role of France is still something that will be discussed in greater detail later in the thesis. For now, I will point out that, when Britain cooperated with France, as they did in the Suez Crisis, countries such as Tunisia turned their ill will against France towards Britain as well. Some of the intent and will to expedite decolonisation in the Committee of 24 and the U.N. is therefore a consequence of the Suez Crisis.

By participating in the Suez Crisis with France, it became natural for ex-colonies to

¹¹⁴ Nicholas J. White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 2nd ed., (New York: Routledge, 2014), 114.

¹¹⁵ Louis, “Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71”, 196.

¹¹⁶ Louis, “Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71”, 199.

view Britain in the same way as France. Although there were not as many incidents in British colonies as in the French, the British were also remembered for the quite recent colonial-war in Kenya. Britain was not by any means viewed as pacifistic when it came to use of force in their colonies, before Suez either. Lapping points out British use of military force in Malaya in 1948-55 and Kenya 1951-54.¹¹⁷ This explains why the British were so unpopular in the UN and amongst ex-colonies, they had used force before. However, when Britain used force in the Suez Crisis it became clear that use of military force in colonial matters did not work as well as before. This means that the Suez Crisis was a watershed for British colonial policy as it served to turn not only former colonies of Britain, such as India, against them but also former colonies of France, such as Tunisia, against them. Thus uniting the anti-colonial forces against Britain and putting more pressure on the British to decolonise

However, this also shows that decolonisation prior to the Resolution of 1960 had an impact on British decolonisation in the 1960s; old colonies, as Tunisia and India, were prime advocates for decolonisation, and India was reinvigorated in their anti-imperialist cause against Britain because of the Suez Crisis. The U.N. and the Committee of 17/24 was significant for decolonisation as it was a forum in which newly freed colonies could make common cause against Britain and other colonial powers. As shown, Britain did slow down the tempo that the U.N. set for decolonisation with the Resolution of 1960, but considering the initial plan, or thoughts that the British had for when to decolonise, there is no doubt that the U.N. accelerated the process heavily. This shows how the Suez Crisis markedly sped up the process of decolonisation of British colonies, with the U.N. as the link between the Crisis and decolonisation.

Another aspect of the U.N. and decolonisation is the role of the other Europeans and their decolonisation. Did France decolonise in 1960 because of Resolution 1514 or were there other reasons? Lapping argues that de Gaulle was the most important factor as he was offering referendums on independence to all the colonies that were freed in 1960. U.N.'s Resolution 1514 was, as I have argued, also a consequence of the Suez Crisis, as the Suez Crisis turned former colonies, India a.o., and therefore the U.N., against continued European colonialism. Regardless of whether or not de Gaulle, Resolution 1514, or both, was the main reason behind the sudden French withdrawal from Africa, it undoubtedly caused instability that reached over the borders into British colonies.

¹¹⁷ Lapping in: Brian Lapping & Anthony Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?" *Contemporary record*, 1, No. 2, (1987), 33.

As argued earlier, the British would rather withdraw and transfer power than to be involved in a costly war to keep hold of a territory. Not only did France's departure stir up the pot in Africa but it also freed more countries who could participate in the anti-colonial cause in the U.N. In light of this, the U.N.'s role in British decolonisation must be viewed as significant, even if the U.N.'s direct influence on Britain seems to be limited, it increased the speed of British decolonisation in Africa, by forcing other European powers to withdraw from Africa. And, the Suez Crisis set the decolonisation movement in the U.N. in motion, demonstrating that the Suez Crisis was a watershed for British colonial policy.

4.2 Nationalism and British colonies

Anti-colonialism in the U.N. has already been discussed, but there was a lot of anti-colonialism or nationalistic movements in African colonies and former colonies. Ghana's 1st President Kwame Nkrumah often said: "no part of Africa would be truly free until all of Africa was free."¹¹⁸ Additionally, there is of course the role of Nasser's Egypt itself. British involvement in the crisis stirred up anti-colonialism in the newly freed colonies of the U.N. And as I will argue, it stirred up nationalism in British colonies as well.

Abernethy argues that: "Ghana's direct influence in Africa was even more substantial than India's or Indonesia's in Asia (...) The All-African People's meeting (in 1958) convened activists from many colonies, among them leaders in the struggle against three metropolises: Tom Mboya (Kenya), Holden Roberto (Angola), and Lumumba (Belgian Congo)."¹¹⁹ This, in turn, influenced nationalism in those colonies, giving them renewed energy in their struggle for peace. Furthermore, this leads me to revisit the discussion on the Suez Crisis as the main factor behind the decolonisation of the British Empire in Africa.

Ghana's independence was not caused by the Suez Crisis; it was planned before the crisis and happened in 1957 like it was supposed to. When Belgian Congo was decolonised in 1960, Abernethy claims that one of the main factors behind that was Lumumba's trip to Ghana three years prior, that also led to the formation of his political party, the Mouvement National Congolais.¹²⁰ Nationalism in Belgian Congo were influenced by the French Congo where de Gaulle had eased the firm grip of France.¹²¹ In the case of Belgian Congo, it is

¹¹⁸ Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance, European Overseas Empires 1415-1980*, 169.

¹¹⁹ Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance, European Overseas Empires 1415-1980*, 169.

¹²⁰ Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance, European Overseas Empires 1415-1980*, 169.

¹²¹ Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance, European Overseas Empires 1415-1980*, 157.

important then to point out that the U.N. and Resolution 1514 was not the most important factor for independence but rather nationalistic inspiration from other African countries such as their neighbours in French Congo and Ghana. This provides us with another example, as with India, Tunisia and Egypt itself, that a former colony, Ghana, was important for the decolonisation of other colonies in Africa. Evidently, nationalism in Africa seemed to grow in strength as new states were decolonised in Africa: “The newly independent African states, particularly Tanzania, Zambia, Congo-Kinshasha, Senegal and Guinea, offered the African guerrilla forces what Tunisia and Morocco had offered the Algerian freedom fighters in the 1950s and early 1960s, namely, refuge, training and assistance.”¹²²

This point supports my previous argumentation, claiming that decolonised states supported decolonisation in neighbouring colonies, thus creating a domino effect. India and Tunisia were among the most eager member states in the UN in the struggle to rid the world of colonialism. Nkrumah also said that he supported other African nationalists and put his words into deeds when hosting his aforementioned conference in Ghana. Additionally, there was the African states mentioned above which also supported neighbouring peoples still under colonial rule by offering training and refuge. This is significant because it does put British decolonisation in a perspective where decolonisation before the Suez Crisis, such as in India and Ghana, and Tunisia in 1956, was important for decolonisation after the Suez Crisis. The snowball of nationalism and decolonisation was already rolling before the Suez Crisis, but it picked up speed after the crisis.

Louis and Robinson argue that: “Anticipations of Soviet intervention and fears of an alliance between Nkrumah’s pan-Africanism and Nasser’s pan-Arabism multiplied the significance of local nationalist agitation.”¹²³ As we know, the Suez Crisis brought the Soviet Union into Africa, but Suez also made Nasser someone the British had to be aware of, and especially the possibility of Nasser and the Soviet Union joining forces. Empowered by the victory in the Suez Crisis; Nasser became a feared enemy for Britain, this had an effect on British decolonisation. The British believed that they had to pull out of colonies sooner rather than later to keep the goodwill of the nationalist leader they supported. They feared Nasser and Nkrumah; the longer the British remained in formal control of colonies the higher the likelihood of nationalism growing among more people in the colonies, and that nationalist

¹²² Yassin El-Ayouty, “The United Nations and Decolonisation, 1960-70.”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 8, No. 3 (1970), 464.

¹²³ William Roger Louis & Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Decolonization”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 22 no. 3, (1994), 487.

leaders and their supporters would turn to Nasser or Nkrumah in their search to rid themselves of British rule.

To conclude the section on African nationalism one has to assess the role that the Suez Crisis played in the reinvigoration and spreading of nationalism in Africa. Nasser's Egypt was one of the main safe havens of nationalist rebels from colonies all over Africa.¹²⁴ African colonies that were decolonised joined the cause, and Egypt became free to do just that in 1956. My point is that decolonisation can be compared to a snowball; as it rolled it grew bigger, and the bigger it grew, the faster it rolled. So, when Egypt joined in the struggle for decolonisation of all of Africa, as they could do wholeheartedly, after publicly challenging and beating Britain in the Suez Crisis, the snowball of nationalism started rolling. But, decolonisation was already set in motion with Ghana in 1957, scheduled for independence before the Suez Crisis. However, the Suez Crisis sped up the process, because Nkrumah and Nasser were friends and allies. Lapping claims Nkrumah drew inspiration from Nasser's victory at Suez and Nkrumah even married an Egyptian lady from Nasser's circle to seal the alliance between them in what Lapping calls "the movement to rid Africa of colonial rule".¹²⁵ The Suez Crisis was important in spreading nationalism throughout the African continent.

4.3 The Suez Crisis, the Cold War and decolonisation

I mentioned the Congo's role earlier in the sub-chapter about African nationalism. Nationalism was stirring in 1959 when the Belgians decided to pull out of their colony. However, Belgian Congo is significant for British decolonisation for other reasons as well. The newly freed colony was from the onset a split nation. White argues: "The sudden Belgian scuttle from colonial responsibility threatened the disintegration of the Congo in which radical nationalists in the capital Leopoldville (Kinshasa) vied for Soviet support, while the pro-Western and mineral-rich provinces of Katanga and Kasai attempted to secede."¹²⁶ Britain feared that this instability would spread to other parts of Africa, that neighbouring colonies would become unstable. Britain also feared that the Soviet Union would take advantage of the disorder and gain a foothold in the new states of Africa, as they tried to do in the Congo. Hence, the British believed in backing out and thus accommodating nationalist groupings inclined towards the West. Britain hoped to secure that, while no longer under formal British

¹²⁴ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 32.

¹²⁵ Lapping in: Lapping & Low, "Did Suez hasten the end of empire?", 32.

¹²⁶ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 95.

rule, new states in Africa leaned towards Britain and its Cold War ally the US rather than to the East.

The Cold War and British decolonisation was linked in this way and other ways, but how was the Suez Crisis linked to the Cold-War? Anthony Gorst and Lewis Johnman argues that the Eisenhower Doctrine from 1957 (only one year after the Suez Crisis) can be interpreted as the US going into Britain's traditional zones of influence in Africa and the Middle East.¹²⁷ I will argue that the Doctrine is more of a pre-emptive strike towards possible Soviet expansion in those areas. The Americans were dependent upon the British keeping their influence, and there was compact Anglo-American cooperation both in the Cold War and decolonisation, which was very much two closely-related matters after the Suez Crisis. For Britain and the US, decolonisation was a matter of keeping a positive relationship to the powers to be, or making sure that the ones who had the power were friendly disposed towards Britain and the US. The British and the Americans were both afraid of newly freed colonies turning towards the Soviet Union. The Suez Crisis was, as argued, a factor that brought the Cold War into the Middle East and Africa.

Britain showed weakness when withdrawing from Egypt; it was to be seen as a defeat to Nasser. The Soviet Union would surely be encouraged by Britain's defeat in their search for influence in the Middle East; a strategically important area in the Cold War due to its Mediterranean shores and economically potent due to the rich flow of oil from the area around the Persian Gulf. The increasing Soviet interest in Africa and especially the Middle East called for a closer cooperation between Britain and the US in the area and perhaps in the Cold War altogether. White argues that "Despite strains in the 'special relationship' during the 1950s (and especially during Suez), by the early 1960s Anglo-American friendship was resurrected, epitomised by the close relations of President Kennedy and Prime Minister Macmillan."¹²⁸

In light of that, I will point out that the Suez Crisis eventually brought Britain and the US closer. I have argued earlier that the US was happy to let Britain keep its zones of influence in the Middle East, even supporting Britain economically for them to be able to do so. As the Suez Crisis brought the Cold War into the Middle East, Britain and the US were to a higher degree than hitherto united against a common Cold War enemy. In light of this, it seems likely that The Americans might have been involved in defending the continued

¹²⁷ Anthony Gorst & Lewis Johnman, *The Suez Crisis*. (London: Routledge, 1997), 158.

¹²⁸ White, *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 142.

existence of the Empire at the U.N. Pearson argues: “Although the American representatives to the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee were clear about their support for the idea of self-determination, they also feared that the potential fragmentation of the African continent would leave it open to the influence of the Soviet Union, a fear that colonial representatives hoped they could use to their advantage.”¹²⁹ Furthermore, in 1956, the American assistant secretary for African Affairs, George Allen, wrote: “All of the so-called colonial powers represented on the continent of Africa are our friends and allies in the worldwide contest between the free and Communist worlds.”¹³⁰ Pearson argues that “He and others within the State Department thus emphasised a cautious and moderately paced progression toward independence, and helped the colonial powers negotiate a middle ground in the debates on the U.N.’s role in Africa and the rest of the colonial world.”¹³¹ So, the Americans shared the view of the British on decolonisation that it must be done in a moderate pace, to ensure that the new states did not turn to the Soviet Union when becoming independent.

Consequently, the rising tide of nationalism in Africa and Anglo-American fears of Nasser, Nkrumah and the Soviet Union gaining influence forced the British and the Americans to work closely together towards decolonisation and assert Anglo-American influence in the new informal empire. Nasser and the Soviet Union were significant factors, as they came into the picture of decolonisation because of the Suez Crisis; therefore the Suez Crisis was a catalyst that sped up decolonisation.

In conclusion, how did the Suez Crisis affect the U.N., the US, the Cold War and African Nationalism? The role of the U.N. was to speed up Belgian and French withdrawal from Africa; the British found that this caused instability in Africa, which sped up the need for the British to decolonise. The instability was also something that made the British and Americans fear that the Soviet Union would reinforce their search for influence in Africa by supporting African nationalists. This made the British and the Americans work closely together in decolonising by keeping informal power in the former colonies, and they had to do

¹²⁹ Jessica Lynne Pearson, “Defending Empire at the United Nations: The Politics of International Colonial Oversight in the Era of Decolonisation”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 45 no. 3, (2017), 539.

¹³⁰ George V. Allen, “United States Foreign Policy in Africa”, by George V. Allen, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, Department of State Bulletin, 30 April 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Office of Dependent Area Affairs, Records Related to the United Nations Committee Four, 61D 118, RG59, NARA.

¹³¹ Pearson, “Defending Empire at the United Nations: The Politics of International Colonial Oversight in the Era of Decolonisation”, 541.

it sooner rather than later. The Suez Crisis brought the Cold War into Africa and that was what sped up decolonisation the most. India, Ghana and Tunisia also played their parts in decolonisation, as I have argued, so there were some factors that sped up decolonisation that started before the Suez Crisis. But, the Suez Crisis sped up the process of decolonisation by adding fuel to the fire of the decolonisation movement. The Suez Crisis and subsequent introduction of the Cold War to Africa was what had the most impact on the acceleration of the decolonisation process. All of these factors sped up decolonisation in one way or another and to various degrees, highlighting the impact of the Suez Crisis.

5. Conclusion

The Suez Crisis was a watershed for British colonial policy because it sped up the process of decolonisation. It was not a watershed for British economy or international standing, but it was a watershed for colonial policy because it greatly affected external strategical and financial factors. These factors changed colonial policy from being based on the assumption that large parts of the Empire would not be decolonised until the start of the 1970s¹³² to decolonising most of the Empire in the first half of the 1960s.

Through the loss of international prestige caused by the Suez Crisis British decision makers realised that having such an overburdened economy made them vulnerable; this made the British less obsessed with keeping the colonies. And the argument that the colonies were important for British international standing was turned on its head; instead, the cost of the colonies made Britain vulnerable and could cost Britain international prestige and international standing, as it did in the Suez Crisis. After Suez, Britain was humiliated, the Empire was no longer something they needed to keep up the pretence of being a great power in the world, as no one believed Britain to be a great power after the British defeat at Suez.

After Suez, British policy makers understood that economic revival was of paramount importance, much more so than the strategic value of keeping all colonies under British control or playing an independent part in the world. Paradoxically, one of the main motives behind the reckless Suez intervention was the British wish to keep playing an autonomous part in the world. When Macmillan became Prime Minister in 1956 he assured himself that dismantling the Empire would not have severe economic consequences for Britain. There were many factors that pointed towards decolonisation; Britain's need to cut spending, the realisation that colonies were no longer the profitable economic assets they used to be.

Macmillan and his government were also faced with the daunting prospect of growing nationalism in the colonies, which did not combine well with the British need to spend less on maintaining colonies; fighting wars was expensive. Britain did also need to downscale their military spending as the Duncan Sandy White paper of 1957 made explicitly clear. The prospect of increased expenditures in keeping hold of colonies that were not themselves financially profitable through force, was not worthwhile for a country in Britain's financial position. Especially when it was deemed much more profitable to invest in other advanced

¹³² William Roger Louis, "Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71" in: *The British Empire in the 1950s, Retreat or Revival?* Lynn, Martin (ed.), (Palgrave Macmillan 2006), 194-5.

economies such as the European and American economies instead of the still underdeveloped economies of colonies and ex-colonies.

As I have argued, Britain's economic situation did not change dramatically due to the crisis, but the crisis revealed to every British politician the need for the country to re-evaluate its economic priorities. Britain had in all fairness had economic trouble since the Second World War, but back then it was unthinkable for British politicians to even think of starting to dismantle the Empire. What was the major difference between 1946 and 1956? The Suez Crisis. Yes, admittedly, British economy screamed for dismantling the Empire before the crisis as well. But, the incident that removed all doubt in every British politicians' mind was the Suez Crisis. After the reinvigoration of nationalistic movements in Africa and anti colonialism in the U.N. decolonisation was essential for decision makers in British colonial policy, both financially and strategically. Financially because growing nationalism in the colonies heightened the chance of violent uprisings Britain, something which Britain could not afford to fight, especially considering the declining profitability of the colonies. Strategically because Britain in cooperation with the Americans saw the importance and advantages of forming an informal empire. Because of nationalism and fear of the Soviet Union gaining influence in Africa, both factors growing because of the Suez Crisis, the British had to speed up decolonisation; staying in formal control too long would only turn African leaders and people against them. The sum of those factors changed the thinking of British colonial decision makers and clarified the need to decolonise sooner rather than later.

British economy had since the end of the Second World War pointed towards decolonisation and a more modest role for Britain to play in global power politics. But, while decolonisation was inevitable, the Suez Crisis sped up the process by the influence it had on external factors: the pressure from the U.N., destabilisation in Africa due to the departure of France and Belgium, African nationalism that spread throughout the continent, and last but not least, Cold War rivalry combined with Anglo-American fears of African nationalists turning towards the Soviet Union. All those external factors greatly affected British colonial policy, because they made the prospect of keeping the colonies more expensive because of unrest in the colonies, and more perilous because of fear of agitating local populations to the point where they turned away from the Western powers to seek help from the Soviet Union. The Suez Crisis set these external factors in motion, thereby speeding up the process of decolonisation drastically. The Suez Crisis was therefore a watershed for British colonial policy

6. Bibliography

Primary sources:

Allen, George V., "United States Foreign Policy in Africa", by George V. Allen, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, Department of State Bulletin, 30 April 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Office of Dependent Area Affairs, Records Related to the United Nations Committee Four, 61D 118, RG59, NARA.

Bridges, Sir Edward, "Bridges to Macmillan, 7 Sept. 1956", Treasury Papers, series 236, file 4188 (T 236/4118), TNA.

British Committee on Commonwealth Membership, "Nationalism and the Pace of Constitutional Development", Report by the Official Committee on Commonwealth Membership, 21 January 1954.

- - - , "The Advantages of the Commonwealth" in: "The Future of Commonwealth Membership", Report by the Official Committee, 21 January 1954.

British Government, "The Sandys White Paper on Defence", Defence: Outline of Future Policy, Parliamentary Papers, Cmd 124, April 1957.

Dixon, Louis, "Minute by Dixon", 23 January 1952, FO 371/96920.

Eden, Sir Anthony. "The effect of our external financial position on our foreign policy", circulated by Eden on 30 Mar. 1945 and by Bevin on 11 Mar. 1946, and memorandum with same title circulated by Bevin on 12 Feb. 1947, FO 371/62420.

- - - . "Thoughts on the general position after Suez", PRO PREM 11/1138, 28 December 1956.

Macmillan, Harold. "Winds of Change-speech", Speech by the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, to the South African Parliament, 3 February 1960.

- - - . "Personal minute from the Prime Minister to the Lord President of the Council (Lord Salisbury)", 28 January 1957, TNA, CAB 134/1555.

Martin, Sir J., "Anti-colonialism in the United Nations: The Role of India.", Sir J. Martin, Colonial Office to N. Pritchard, Commonwealth Relations Office, 7 August 1953.

Wilson, Harold. "Speech to the House of Commons", 16 January 1968, Hansard, vol. 756, cols 1580-1581.

Secondary sources:

Abernethy, David B., *The Dynamics of Global Dominance, European Overseas Empires 1415-1980*. Yale University Press, 2000.

Aldred, John. *British Imperial and Foreign Policy, 1846-1980*. Heinemann, 2004.

Baylis, John, ed. *Anglo-American relations since 1939: The enduring alliance*. Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 1997.

Darwin, John. *The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

El-Ayouty, Yassin. "The United Nations and Decolonisation, 1960-70." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 8, No. 3 (1970): 462-68.

Evans, Richard J. *In Defence of History*. London: Granta Books, 1997.

Gorst, Anthony & Johnman, Lewis. *The Suez Crisis*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Hatch, John, "The Decline of British Power in Africa" in Smith, Tony (ed.), *The End of the European Empire, Decolonization after World War II*. D.C. Heath and Company, 1975.

Holland, R.F., "The Imperial Factor in British Strategies from Attlee to Macmillan, 1945-63." *The Journal of imperial and Commonwealth history* 12, No. 2, (1984): 165-86.

Hyam, Ronald. "Introduction" in Hyam, Ronald and Louis, Wm. Roger. (eds), *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1957-1964*. British Documents on the End of Empire, Book Set. London: The Stationary Office, 2000.

Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. London: Fontana Press, 1988.

Kunz, Diane. *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

- - - . "The Importance of Having Money: The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis." in W. R. Louis and R. Owen (eds), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and Its Consequences*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1989.

Lapping, Brian & Low, Anthony, "Controversy: Did Suez hasten the end of empire?" *Contemporary Record* 1, No. 2, (1987): 31-33.

Louis, Wm. Roger. "Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the Dock at the United Nations, 1957-71 in Lynn, Martin (ed.). *The British Empire in the 1950s: Retreat or Revival?* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Louis, Wm. Roger & Robinson, Ronald. "The Imperialism of Decolonization", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22 no. 3, (1994): 462-511.

Pearson, Jessica Lynne. "Defending Empire at the United Nations: The Politics of International Colonial Oversight in the Era of Decolonisation", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45 no. 3, (2017): 525-549.

Peden, George C. "Suez and Britain's decline as a world power", *Historical Journal* 55, no. 4, (2012): 1073-96.

Petersen, Tore T. "Post-Suez Consequences: Anglo-American Relations in the Middle East from Eisenhower to Nixon." in Smith, Simon C. (ed.), *Reassessing Suez 1956, New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2008.

Stockwell, A.J. *Suez 1956 and the Moral Disarmament of the British Empire*. in Smith, Simon C. (ed.). *Reassessing Suez 1956, New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2008.

White, Nicholas J. *Decolonisation and the British Experience since 1945*, 2nd ed., New York: Routledge, 2014.

Appendix: Relevance for the teaching profession

Writing the master thesis concludes my education at the teacher-training programme at NTNU. It is therefore relevant to look at how writing this thesis is relevant for me as a teacher. I have analysed and interpreted primary and secondary sources, using a variety of historical sources with often differing viewpoints. The process has made me confident in my ability to teach my students how to find reliable sources and how to use such sources to build independent argumentation where their own voice shines through. One of the competence aims of the English subject in Upper Secondary deals with source criticism and use: “evaluate different sources and use contents from sources in an independent, critical and verifiable manner.”¹³³ By writing this thesis I have a better understanding of how to teach this to my students.

My thesis deals with the Suez Crisis. Although not a major conflict as e.g. the Second World War, it is a conflict which played an important part in other major historical events such as the decolonisation of the British Empire, the Cold War and Anglo-American relations in the 20th century. The Suez Crisis in itself is an example of an international conflict as it involved Britain, the US, Egypt, France, Israel, the U.N. and others. A learning aim in the Upper Secondary level elective subject ‘Social Studies English’ is relevant for my thesis: “international conflict in which at least one English-speaking country is involved.”¹³⁴ By studying the conflict in depth and also seeing it in the perspective of other major themes in British and American history I feel more confident in myself as a teacher, especially seeing how my own thesis is closely related to many of the learning aims taught in Norwegian schools.

During the process of writing the thesis I feel I have learned a lot about the writing process of larger and smaller parts of texts. More importantly I believe that working with a supervisor has provided me with many new ideas and approaches for how to develop my own skills as a supervisor and teacher. Being supervised and guided has inspired me in my own writing process and I hope to achieve the same for my students when teaching, something I now have a better chance of accomplishing.

¹³³ Udir online: [https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Kompetansemaal/competence-aims-after-vg1- %E2%80%93-programmes-for-general-studies-and-vg2-%E2%80%93-vocational-education-programmes?lplang=http://data.udir.no/kl06/eng](https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Kompetansemaal/competence-aims-after-vg1-%E2%80%93-programmes-for-general-studies-and-vg2-%E2%80%93-vocational-education-programmes?lplang=http://data.udir.no/kl06/eng) (Accessed on 09.05.2018)

¹³⁴ Udir online: <https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG4-01/Hele/Kompetansemaal/social-studies-english-?lplang=http://data.udir.no/kl06/eng> (Accessed on 09.05.2018)