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SIR PHILIP DE ZULUETA¹

It is perhaps one measure of the perceived importance of the position of private secretary for foreign affairs to the Prime Minister at the time that the first mention of Sir Philip Francis de Zulueta in *Who's Who*, that listing of the great and good, was in 1964 after he had moved on from that situation to more lucrative opportunities in the City.² This, however, is not necessarily surprising. Being a private secretary had, after all, long been a very junior position in the diplomatic service, often combining the duties of secretarial support with those of a general factotum.³ What won Philip the attention of *Who's Who* was not his job but the knighthood he was given in 1963: within the hierarchy of the Foreign Office he remained a comparatively young man in a commensurate role. Philip had only just turned 39 when he embarked on what turned out to be a high-flying second career in business, having been born on 2 January 1925 in Oxford.

Both diplomacy and business might be said to have been in the blood. The de Zuluetas were a Basque family who became established as bankers and traders in the southern Spanish port of Cadiz in the mid-eighteenth century. There they became embroiled in the tumultuous Spanish politics during and immediately after the French revolutionary wars. Philip's great-great grandfather, Pedro Juan, was briefly president of the *Cortes de Cadiz* in the summer of 1823 just before a French invasion enabled Ferdinand VII to repudiate the liberal constitution of 1812 and turn on his enemies.⁴ Pedro Juan fled to Liverpool and re-established his banking and shipping interests there and in London. At the end of the 1820s there was an application for British citizenship on the grounds that Zulueta & Co was now well-established in the City, whence they had come in order more effectively to carry on their commerce with the newly-independent colonies of South America than was then possible from their native Spain.⁵ After Ferdinand's death in 1833, however, Pedro Juan came back into favour in Spain, being appointed Condé de Torre Diaz in 1846.

¹ I am grateful for the assistance of Vernon Bogdanor, Max Egremont, Sir Guy Millard, Walter Rønning, D. R. Thorpe and Lady de Zulueta in the preparation of this chapter.

² *Who's Who* (London: A. & C. Black, 1964), p.3389.

³ See Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh *Descent to Suez: Diaries 1951-56* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), pp.4-6.

⁴ *British and Foreign State Papers 1822-1823*, (London: J. Harrison, 1828), pp.981-2.

⁵ The National Archives, London [henceforward TNA]: HO 1/10/22.

By then Zulueta & Co was being run by his eldest son, Philip's great-grandfather, Pedro José. He had become a British subject in 1836, the year he married Sophie Anna Wilcox, the daughter of Brodie Wilcox, one of the founders of the P&O shipping line in 1834. Pedro José was clearly well-connected in the City, but also had some more dubious contacts, including his cousin Julian, who acted for the firm in Havana and was the largest slave-trader in the Spanish empire. The slave trade had been outlawed in Britain in 1807 and consolidating legislation in 1824 further made trading with slavers illegal, but only if conducted with prior knowledge. It was this proviso which proved instrumental in securing Pedro José's acquittal in 1843 when he was arraigned at the Old Bailey in a celebrated trial for his firm's role in financing and equipping the voyage of the *Augusta* via Cadiz to the notorious slaving station of Gallinas on behalf of the equally-notorious slaver Pedro Martinez.

Pedro José's somewhat cynical view expressed in his subsequent publication about the trial was that laws to control the end-use of commerce were impossible to police and, in an age when slavery was still legal in many territories, in any case undesirable. These views had some resonances in Philip's time, considering American attempts to discourage British trade with Communist states like Cuba. They were clearly widely-shared amongst Pedro José's fellow bankers in the City, where Zulueta & Co remained active until closed for family reasons in 1915.⁶ Meanwhile, his second son and Philip's grandfather, Pedro Juan, moved into a different field. He served in the Spanish diplomatic service from 1866-88 and was first secretary of the Spanish embassy in London in the 1870s when he married Laura Mary, the daughter of Sir Justin Sheil, a former British ambassador to Persia.⁷ It was in that embassy, and thus on Spanish soil, that Philip's father, Francis, was born on 12 September 1878.

Francis, unusually, was neither a businessman nor a diplomat. He was instead a distinguished classicist, academic and Egyptologist. At the time of Philip's birth he was Fellow of All Souls in Oxford and also Regius Professor of Civil Law at

⁶ *Trial of Pedro de Zulueta Jun. on a charge of slave trading*, (London: C. Wood & Co., 1844), preface; Marika Sherwood, "'Oh, what a tangled web we weave": Britain, the slave trade and slavery 1808-43', *Shunpiking* (2007) [<http://shunpiking.com/bhs2007/200-BHS-MS-BritishStrade.htm> accessed 20 November 2012].

⁷ *The Catholic Who's Who*

[http://archive.org/stream/catholicwhoswho00burn/catholicwhoswho00burn_djvu.txt accessed 20 November 2012].

that university.⁸ Spanish citizenship had been no hindrance to such advancements. It did, however, prevent Francis from identifying with his adopted country by rallying to the colours in 1914. It was in this emergency that Francis now applied for naturalisation, urging haste before he became too old for military service and writing 'I do not see how one can avoid army service as a matter of honour'.⁹ He served in the Worcestershire Regiment throughout the First World War, rising to the rank of captain in 1916, before returning to Oxford in 1919.

Philip inherited a number of useful skills from his father. Francis was linguistically gifted and gregarious. He also passed on his devout Catholicism to his only child. One of his cousins was Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val, the secretary of the Congregation of the Holy Office from 1914 until his death in 1930. Another, Rafael's elder brother Alfonso, was Spanish ambassador to the Court of St James 1913-31.¹⁰ These familial connections with Catholic and royalist Spain were clearly important both to Francis and to Philip and help to explain Francis' support for Franco during the 1936-9 Spanish Civil War. Philip accordingly grew up in a very conservative household and followed his father's footsteps via the Jesuit private school of Beaumont College in Berkshire – where he was head boy – to New College, Oxford. By then the Second World War was already raging. Whilst Francis pursued good works, aiding Polish and Jewish refugees, Philip began his studies not in law but modern history. As soon as he was able, in 1943, he joined the Welsh Guards. For the rest of his life he shared with his future boss, Harold Macmillan, who had served in the Grenadier Guards in the First World War, a strong identification as a guardsman.¹¹ As a tank commander he participated in the liberation of the Netherlands. Like his father, Philip rose to the rank of captain in 1945. After two years' service in occupied Europe Philip left the army in 1947 and returned to Oxford to complete his degree, leaving with a third class in jurisprudence in 1948. It was not that he lacked Francis's brilliance so much as the difficulty of returning to

⁸ F. H. Lawson 'Francis de Zulueta (1878-1958)' in *New Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 60, pp.1021-2; *Who's Who* (London: A. & C. Black, 1925), p.3163. According to Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1990* 3rd ed., (London: SCM Press, 1991), pp.138-9 Francis was the leading Catholic in inter-war Oxford.

⁹ TNA: HO 144/104, Francis de Zulueta to Bannatyne, 29 August 1914.

¹⁰ *Catholic Who's Who*.

¹¹ On the camaraderie of this background see Peter Catterall (ed) *The Macmillan Years: The Cabinet Years 1950-1957* (London: Macmillan, 2003), p.231 (7 May 1953); Simon Ball, *The Guardsmen: Harold Macmillan, Three Friends and the World they made* (London: HarperCollins, 2004).

university life after the war.¹² With his father's encouragement, Philip still read for the Bar, but his aptitude lay elsewhere.¹³ Luckily for him there was heavy recruitment to the Foreign Service in the aftermath of the war: instead of the second class honours degree normally required as standard for entrants to Branch A – the senior ranks of the service known as the administrative class – candidates had to demonstrate their capability to pass this and to acquire linguistic competence. Philip spoke flawless French but still had to pass the written examination and surmount the various personality tests during the country house weekend used to assess entrants.¹⁴ Having done so, he was appointed a grade 9 officer, also known as a Third Secretary, on 13 October 1949.¹⁵

In common with about half the new entrants of the period, Philip swiftly was given his first overseas posting, being sent to Moscow on 28 January 1950.¹⁶ There he served as private secretary to the ambassador, Sir David Kelly. A later diplomat opined that Third Secretaries are 'treated as skivvies' by their ambassadors.¹⁷ It is likely that Philip's experience was little different. Certainly, in the lengthy memoir Kelly wrote immediately at the end of what was his last diplomatic posting, whilst he comments in some detail the Russian secret service bodyguards who accompanied him – and indeed Philip on his one attempt to see something of Russia – everywhere, there is no discussion of any of his staff.¹⁸ On the other hand, as Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh noted of his experiences skivvying for Sir Miles Lampson in Egypt in the 1930s, Private Secretaries nevertheless 'are given responsibilities well beyond their years and enjoy the acquaintance of interesting people in every walk of life long before they could otherwise expect it'.¹⁹ Such experiences no doubt helped to prepare Philip for when he later succeeded to Shuckburgh's sometime role as Private Secretary to Sir Anthony Eden. So did the knowledge of Russian he acquired.

¹² Interview: Lady de Zulueta, 24 October 2012.

¹³ Lawson, p.1022; Max Egremont, 'Sir Philip Francis de Zulueta (1925-1989)' in *New Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 60, p.1023.

¹⁴ Lord (William) Strang, *The Foreign Office* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1955), pp.79-80; Lord (William) Strang, *The Diplomatic Career* (London: André Deutsch, 1962), pp.36-9, 45; Alistair Horne, *Macmillan 1957-1986* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p.161.

¹⁵ *Foreign Office List* (1951), p.506.

¹⁶ Strang, *The Diplomatic Career*, p.42; *Foreign Office List* (1952), p.526.

¹⁷ Quoted in Geoffrey Moorhouse, *The Diplomats: The Foreign Office Today* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), p.47.

¹⁸ Sir David Kelly, *The Ruling Few or the Human Background to Diplomacy* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1952), pp.369-72.

¹⁹ Shuckburgh, p.7.

Language education was then the main form of training the Foreign Office provided.²⁰ Philip, however, had little time to enjoy the £100 a year allowance granted him for his Russian skills on 31 October 1951. These allowances were only payable when serving in the field, and Philip returned to London on 4 February 1952.²¹ The only overseas posting of his diplomatic career had ended.

The Foreign Office back in London was then divided into some 30 departments which had functional, territorial, administrative or miscellaneous responsibilities. Philip was placed in the General Department, whose role was to advise the Foreign Secretary on broad policy relating to civil aviation, shipping, telecommunications, international post, meteorology, fishing, safety at sea or locust control. These departments were small teams, in which junior responsibility was given to Second or even Third Secretaries. Having been promoted to Second Secretary (grade 8) on his 28th birthday, Philip was given responsibility for civil aviation.²² He also, however, clearly acquired some miscellaneous duties as well, including an attachment to the Brazilian representative at the Coronation in June 1953. This seems to have given him on the grounds that his Spanish language would be useful in dealing with the lusophone Brazilians, though in practice all his conversations with them were in French. The appointment did, however, give him his first encounter with his future wife who, sharing his linguistic facility with French and Spanish, was also helping the Brazilians and literally ran into him on the stairs one day.²³ Then, on 1 September 1953, he became a Resident Clerk.²⁴

Some years later Geoffrey Moorhouse noted that the six Resident Clerks of the 1970s were generally at the rank of First Secretary (grade 7), a rank Philip did not obtain until 5 March 1957. Philip may have risen more rapidly because of the war-induced gaps in the ranks. The four Resident Clerks of his day occupied flats in the eaves of the Foreign Office with spectacular views over St James' Park, taking it in turns to be on night duty dealing with any issues that might arise. Because of the unsocial nature of the job they were given a special allowance and necessarily expected to be unmarried.²⁵ Accordingly, it was not

²⁰ Moorhouse, p.76.

²¹ *Foreign Office List* (1953), p.545; (1954), p.126.

²² Strang, *The Foreign Office* p.209; Strang, *The Diplomatic Career* pp.82, 87; *Foreign Office List* (1953), p.67; (1954), p.481.

²³ Interview: Lady de Zulueta, 24 October 2012.

²⁴ *Foreign Office List* (1955), p.482.

²⁵ *Foreign Office List* (1958), p.481; Moorhouse, pp.18-19; Strang, *The Diplomatic Career* p.45.

until after he left this role in 1955 that Philip married Marie-Louise, the eldest daughter of the 2nd Baron Windlesham. They proved a devoted couple, and Philip immensely valued his wife's judgement.²⁶

It was this post as Resident Clerk that gave Philip some significant patrons. The Resident Clerks came under the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department established in 1948 which managed liaison with the Ministry of Defence, the Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Planning Staff and the Joint Intelligence Committee [JIC]. The chairman of the JIC at the time was Patrick Dean, one of the two Assistant Under-Secretaries responsible for this department, whilst the head of department was Geoffrey McDermott.²⁷ The position also involved liaison at the highest level, for instance through passing on drafts to the Foreign Secretary; the resulting sense of policy influence helping to compensate for the unsocial hours.²⁸ It certainly must have given Philip a chance to attract attention at those highest levels such that, when the Foreign Secretary, Sir Anthony Eden, succeeded Churchill as Prime Minister on 12 April 1955 he took Philip with him to Downing Street. Philip, however, had not previously met Eden. It was Eden's private secretary, Anthony Rumbold, who recommended Philip for the position. Rumbold stayed at the Foreign Office to serve the new Secretary of State, Harold Macmillan, until replaced by P. F. Hancock in September 1955.²⁹ Philip, meanwhile, was now officially seconded to the Treasury in order to serve in the Prime Minister's private office.³⁰

The Number 10 private office Philip then joined was four strong headed by David Pitblado.³¹ Guy Millard, a future ambassador to Italy, was the other member from a diplomatic background, having preceded Philip to Number 10 by six days. Millard was considerably senior to Philip in the diplomatic service, having served as an assistant private secretary to Foreign Secretary Eden in 1941-45. He accordingly knew Eden – his son's godfather – well and had been invited to join him in Number 10. The other member of the team was Freddie

²⁶ Email from Lord Egremont, 18 September 2012.

²⁷ *Foreign Office List* (1954), p.45; Geoffrey McDermott, *The Eden Legacy and the Decline of British Diplomacy* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1969), p.138; W. Scott Lucas 'The Missing Link? Patrick Dean, Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee' in Saul Kelly and Anthony Gorst (eds) *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p.118.

²⁸ Shuckburgh, p.20; Moorhouse, p.18.

²⁹ *Foreign Office List* (1956), pp.45, 407.

³⁰ *Foreign Office List* (1955), p.482.

³¹ Apparently Kennedy could not believe that the Prime Minister got by with so few staff; Interview: Lady de Zulueta, 24 October 2012.

Bishop. He had previously, in 1953-55, been in the Cabinet Office dealing with the economic business of the Cabinet and the organisation of its committees. This was invaluable experience for the private office which stood Bishop in good stead when in early 1956 he succeeded Pitblado as Principal Private Secretary, being replaced in his turn by Neil Cairncross, who specialised in advising on answering Prime Minister's questions. Despite his background as a home civil servant Bishop played a major role in advising the Prime Minister on foreign affairs and accompanying him on overseas visits throughout his time in the private office until his move back to the Cabinet Office in the summer of 1959 as deputy secretary. Accordingly Philip was at the time only the most junior of several foreign policy advisers in the private office.³²

Initially Philip's chances to shine in foreign affairs were accordingly limited. It was Millard who was taken to Geneva with Eden for the Indo-China talks in July 1955, whilst Philip merely managed correspondence between this delegation and the Far Eastern Department of the Foreign Office.³³ It was also Millard – having served in Ankara from 1949-54 – who liaised in 1955 with Shuckburgh, the latter being then responsible for the Levant, Arabian and Eastern departments of the Foreign Office dealing with the Middle Eastern policy problems which were to so overshadow Eden's premiership. Furthermore, Philip was serving a Prime Minister who, as Shuckburgh noted, was himself something of a professional diplomat who could not forebear interfering in Foreign Office affairs, bombarding his successor with telegrams even when at home in Broadchalke 'where he has no room for a Private Secretary'.³⁴

At the Foreign Office Eden had already acquired a reputation of relying on his own judgement and irascibility.³⁵ His health problems certainly could make Eden a demanding master both in terms of the medications he required and his tendency to imitate Churchill's penchant for bedroom dictation to his staff.³⁶ It is clear that Shuckburgh felt that the situation became worse after Eden's

³² D. R. Thorpe, *Eden: The Life and Times of Anthony Eden, First Earl of Avon 1897-1977* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003), p. 443; *Daily Telegraph* 14 March 2005, obituary of Sir Frederick Bishop; Telephone conversation with Sir Guy Millard, 28 August 2012.

³³ TNA: PREM11/1310.

³⁴ Shuckburgh, pp.11-12; p.277 (31 August 1955); p.314 (19 December 1955).

³⁵ Avi Shlaim, Peter Jones and Keith Sainsbury, *British Foreign Secretaries since 1945* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1977), p.87.

³⁶ Shuckburgh, pp.10, 14, 326.

translation to Number 10, noting in his diary on 31 January 1956: ‘I can see no prospect of my ever being intimate with him again, and I don’t think his present Private Secretaries like him enough to want to be.’³⁷

Shuckburgh’s source was presumably his friend Millard. Millard, however, has no recollection of such personal difficulties.³⁸ The warm personal correspondence both he and Philip kept up for years with Eden after the latter left office, including visits for lunch with the former Prime Minister whenever Eden’s health permitted, certainly suggests sustained good friendship. Indeed, some months after Eden’s resignation, Philip wrote to tell Eden: ‘All your former private secretaries very much including Bobby [Allan MP], miss you greatly’.³⁹

Millard also clearly had some influence on Eden’s policy towards the Middle East: in the run-up to Eden’s January 1956 Washington visit Millard stressed to the Prime Minister the need for economic counters to the Soviet penetration of the region marked by the Egyptian arms deal announced the previous September.⁴⁰ Shuckburgh was thus too critical of Eden’s relations with the private office. Its standard roles continued unimpaired: of managing liaison with ministers and officials; keeping up records; preparing drafts of correspondence and speeches; and superintending the cabinet committee system in conjunction with the Cabinet Office. An example of this last duty was Philip’s advice to the Prime Minister that a Cabinet committee was not necessary on university expansion – demonstrating as well that his role was never confined to foreign affairs.⁴¹

Eden also used his private secretaries as occasional sounding-boards for ideas.⁴² He seems to have taken Philip into his confidence even on some domestic matters, for instance on the mistake of combining the Leadership of the Commons with the Conservative party chairmanship.⁴³ Eden would also allow them to express his sentiments: for instance, on the desirability of making sure

³⁷ Shuckburgh, p.331.

³⁸ Telephone conversation with Sir Guy Millard, 28 August 2012.

³⁹ Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham: Avon Papers [henceforward AP], 23/67/1, de Zulueta to Eden, 24 April 1957. Allan was Eden’s Parliamentary Private Secretary.

⁴⁰ TNA: PREM11/1334, Millard to Eden, 3 January 1956.

⁴¹ TNA: PREM11/2283, de Zulueta to Eden, 22 February 1956.

⁴² Thorpe, *Eden* p.498.

⁴³ Department of Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford [henceforward DWM]: MS Macmillan, c310, f.49, de Zulueta to Macmillan, 28 May 1962.

that the Americans appreciated the importance to Britain of linkage between the 1955 Anglo-American Alpha Plan to tackle Israeli-Egyptian relations and the compensating offer of tanks for Iraq. Philip's expression of this, however, was regarded by the Foreign Secretary's assistant private secretary, Andrew Stark, as 'somewhat elliptical'.⁴⁴

This was a relatively rare foray then by Philip into Middle East policy, which seems to have remained Millard's fiefdom until the end of the Eden premiership. Otherwise evidence of Philip acting as more than an efficient manager of communications and liaison between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Office – for instance in terms of drafting British views on Nehru's somewhat vacuous principles of international relations – is scant.⁴⁵ When this does start to appear there are hints of the significance of his Soviet experiences, for instance in influencing the distribution list for a telegram interpreting the latest Delphic utterances from Moscow.⁴⁶ He does not seem, however, to have been involved in the exploratory four power talks that briefly flourished in 1955 following the conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty.⁴⁷ Such talks became for Eden even more expedient after the Soviet arms deal with Egypt and culminated in the visit to Britain of Bulganin and Khrushchev in April 1956. Previous private secretaries, notably Jock Colville during the Second World War, had been used as interpreters in such circumstances. Philip's Russian skills, however, were initially kept quiet, which enabled him to follow the visitors' conversation without their knowing and pass on any details to Eden. Other interpreters were used, with damaging outcomes as a result of drunkenness at the Foreign Secretary's lunch for the visiting dignitaries on 25 April 1956. Khrushchev, however, had picked up on Philip's mastery of Russian by the end of the visit.⁴⁸

Philip also used his Russian later that year in response to Bulganin's letter implying that Britain was being dragged into the Suez imbroglio to help the French out in tackling their war against nationalists in Algeria. There was much truth in Bulganin's observations, but Philip's role was confined to suggesting, without fully checking the Russian, that there might be significance in the

⁴⁴ Quoted in Richard Lamb, *The Failure of the Eden Government* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1987), p.167.

⁴⁵ TNA: PREM11/1303.

⁴⁶ TNA: PREM11/1341, Jack Ward to de Zulueta, 13 January 1956.

⁴⁷ On the principles behind these see Catterall, *The Cabinet Years*, p.420 (5 May 1955).

⁴⁸ Interview: Lady de Zulueta, 24 October 2012; Thorpe, *Eden*, pp.470-1.

textual differences between the three versions of the letter received, a suggestion dismissed by his Foreign Office counterpart.⁴⁹ This might be an example of the rivalry sometimes detected between the Foreign Office and those who have left it to serve in Number 10 or the Cabinet Office, a rivalry which arguably grew with perceptions of Philip's influence the longer he stayed at the former.⁵⁰ At the time it hardly furnished evidence of his influence; in this whole long file on the background to the Suez crisis this exchange is the only sign of Philip's involvement.

Earlier that month Philip pithily summarised a seven page telegram from Egypt's President Nasser on the crisis prompted by the Egyptian nationalisation of the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956: 'This is Nasser's reply. There is nothing new in it and it is an unequivocal rejection of international control.'⁵¹ However, much of the policy support for Suez in the private office fell on Millard. Millard would interpret at meetings with the French Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, Guy Mollet and Christian Pineau and was present on 14 October when General Challe came over from Paris to unfold for Eden the scheme of collusion with the Israelis. Eden also turned to Millard for guidance on the course of the Suez events for his memoirs.⁵² This included advice on the atmosphere 'at Downing Street during the Suez time. Have you any comments to suggest, apart from bad language?'⁵³

Neither Millard nor Philip had much sympathy with the doubts about the ensuing military operations against Egypt launched on 5 November 1956 expressed by the Prime Minister's press secretary, William Clark, who resigned on 6 November 1956.⁵⁴ Later that day, under enormous financial pressure from the Americans, Eden called the operations off, resigning the following year, when he was replaced as Prime Minister by Macmillan. Writing privately a few

⁴⁹ TNA: FO371/119138, de Zulueta to John Graham, 14 September 1956; Graham to de Zulueta, 25 September 1956.

⁵⁰ Moorhouse, p.134; Anne Deighton, 'British Foreign Policy-Making: The Macmillan Years' in Wolfram Kaiser and Gillian Staerck (eds) *British Foreign Policy 1955-64: Contracting Options* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp.5-6.

⁵¹ Lamb, *The Failure of the Eden Government* p.204.

⁵² AP: 24/49/1, Eden to Millard, 8 October 1957.

⁵³ AP: 24/49/6, Eden to Millard, 1 July 1958. Any comments Millard gave do not seem to have survived on paper.

⁵⁴ Thorpe, *Eden* pp.498, 532; Lamb, *The Failure of the Eden Government* p.261; telephone conversation with Sir Guy Millard, 28 August 2012.

months later to welcome Eden's apparent return to health after the strains of Suez, Philip made clear his broad support for the Suez strategy:

I believe the Americans are slowly and painfully being brought to accept facts and that the Israelis are naturally less jittery than they were before Nasser's power was broken....But there is still no way of meeting Nasser's act of force by negotiation and one can only hope that in the end he will succumb to the pressures building up against him and that meanwhile he will fail to overthrow our friends.⁵⁵

Despite his Russian background, however, Philip did not mention here the anxieties about Soviet penetration of the Middle East that featured so highly amongst Eden's concerns.⁵⁶

By then Millard had resigned on 31 December 1956 for personal reasons. Partly because of a bad skiing accident at Kitzbühl he had to endure nine months gardening leave and a two year sabbatical in the Paymaster-General's office supporting Reginald Maudling's abortive attempts to negotiate a European Free Trade Area [FTA] before resuming his diplomatic career.⁵⁷ It did not take Millard long correctly to surmise that these efforts would achieve little.⁵⁸ Philip, in contrast, seems to have been one of those encouraging the new Prime Minister to continue to believe – even with the return of Charles de Gaulle to power in Paris – that German-French differences were such that these efforts had a realistic chance of success.⁵⁹

Millard's departure meant that Macmillan inherited a depleted private office headed by Bishop and supported on the foreign policy side by Philip and on the domestic side (until 1958) by Cairncross. On 27 May 1957 Macmillan, having survived the post-Suez crisis, decided to strengthen this team by appointing his old wartime aide and friend, John Wyndham, as an unpaid supplementary private secretary who could take on the political as well as the administrative work. Wyndham regarded his new civil service colleagues as both loyal and

⁵⁵ AP: 23/67/1, de Zulueta to Eden, 24 April 1957.

⁵⁶ See AP: 20/5, diary entry, 2 January 1957.

⁵⁷ AP: 23/67/1, de Zulueta to Eden, 24 April 1957; 24/49/7, Millard to Eden, 20 July 1958; telephone conversation with Sir Guy Millard, 28 August 2012.

⁵⁸ AP: 24/49/5, Millard to Eden, 22 May 1958.

⁵⁹ Horne, p.35; Martin P. C. Schaad, *Bullying Bonn: Anglo-German Diplomacy on European Integration 1955-61* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p.93.

effective and by all accounts it was a happy team. For Macmillan they were his eyes and ears, controlling access to the Prime Minister from their adjoining offices adjacent to the Cabinet room on the first floor of Number 10.⁶⁰

There was ‘a great volume and variety of business’ with which all the private secretaries, regardless of specialism, required considerable familiarity. This was not least because of the duty rota, with the last one on duty each evening designated to close the box of papers from the day, which was then taken up to the Prime Minister’s bedroom, to be returned the following morning with each paper duly annotated by Macmillan. There was also ‘the Dip’ – consisting of carbon copies of letters and minutes from the day before with which the private office were expected to be *au fait* – and Macmillan’s ‘Bits and Pieces Box’, into which went quips and good material for future prime ministerial speeches. Macmillan was the first Prime Minister to travel abroad extensively and this private office set-up, usually including Philip, would accompany him on these journeys.⁶¹ Indeed, the job of the private office, like that of courtiers to a peripatetic mediaeval king, was very much one of following their master on his travels or from Number 10 to Chequers to the Prime Minister’s room in the Commons.

According to Wyndham, the private office could be quite as ruthless as Macmillan himself when interfering with the departments of state.⁶² Harold Evans, who had replaced Clark as press secretary at Number 10, where he was physically located within the private office, certainly later described Philip as

[P]ossessing a formidable array of gifts and talents – intellectual agility, charm, self-confidence to the point of arrogance and a readiness to be ruthless. Even the Prime Minister could be heard speaking jokingly of ‘that bully Philip’.

Evans nevertheless closed this examination of Philip’s qualities with ‘From my point of view he was never anything but helpful and considerate’.⁶³

⁶⁰ Horne, pp.11-12, 160; Lord Egremont (John Wyndham), *Wyndham and Children First* (London: Macmillan, 1968), pp.162-3, 165-6.

⁶¹ Wyndham, pp.168-9, 177.

⁶² Wyndham, p.167.

⁶³ Harold Evans, *Downing Street Diary: The Macmillan Years 1957/63* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1981), p.30.

Macmillan would use these various qualities for his own ends. He later observed, based on his own experiences, that ‘every Foreign Secretary must accept a great measure of interest, or even interference, from the Prime Minister of the day’.⁶⁴ Philip’s role included carrying this interference out on Macmillan’s behalf, and sometimes justifying it to the Foreign Secretary afterwards. Selwyn Lloyd, who had succeeded Macmillan to that post in 1955, for instance, very much resented the way in which he felt Philip and Bishop influenced Macmillan’s personal efforts – excluding him – to try to save the Paris summit in 1960.⁶⁵

To play this role Philip had to acquire Macmillan’s trust. This he clearly achieved, being described – alongside Bishop and Cabinet Secretary, Sir Norman Brook – as a ‘tower of strength’ in Macmillan’s memoirs.⁶⁶ Wyndham explains this role by saying:

The private secretary should seek to protect his Minister at all times and also to run a two-way traffic in ideas, which means having the confidence not only of the Minister but of everybody else with whom he has business. With all of them he must be absolutely straight. Above all he must understand his Minister’s mind. When the Minister has a ‘bright idea’ the private secretary should know instinctively how best to deal with it....This is where a good private secretary comes in. He touts the Minister’s ideas around and with complete honesty he reports back on the reactions.⁶⁷

That Philip did indeed deserve Macmillan’s tribute and successfully played this role of liaising with the Foreign Secretary and Foreign Office was in the 1970s widely and unanimously confirmed by both ministers and officials.⁶⁸

Specific examples of Philip acting as the influential ‘tower of strength’ of repute and the Macmillan memoirs are, however, not always easy to find. In the period up to the 1959 election for instance, during which Bishop continued to play a considerable role in foreign policy advice, Macmillan appreciated Philip’s help

⁶⁴ Harold Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune 1945-1955* (London: Macmillan, 1969), p.529.

⁶⁵ D. R. Thorpe, *Selwyn Lloyd* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1989), pp.303-4.

⁶⁶ Harold Macmillan, *Riding the Storm 1956-1959* (London: Macmillan, 1971), p.192.

⁶⁷ Wyndham, p.189.

⁶⁸ Shlaim et al, p.240.

in responding to the concerns of the Leader of the Opposition, Hugh Gaitskell, about the 1958 Quemoy crisis between the US and China. Macmillan also notes that Philip's Russian proved useful on his trip to the Soviet Union in 1959.⁶⁹

Furthermore, there were clearly areas in which Philip had little direct role. There is no sign of Philip's input into Macmillan's efforts to reshape defence organisation and policy at the start and end of his premiership, despite its obvious relevance to the projection of foreign policy. He could, however, advise on mistakes, observing in 1958: 'By some extraordinary muddle the Chiefs of Staff in their paper have commended on the wrong Foreign Office paper. Consequently I am afraid that many of their remarks are irrelevant'.⁷⁰

There was little private office involvement in the policy review exercise under Eden which in 1956 produced a paper – but little else – on 'The future of the UK in world affairs'. This policy review effort was led by Sir Norman Brook and the Cabinet Office and the private office contribution consisted of little more than Bishop's doubt 'whether this grandiose exercise will really produce much additional help'.⁷¹ This did not deter Macmillan from launching the even more grandiose 'Future Policy' exercise in 1959. This attempt to sketch in broad strategy for after that autumn's general election commenced with a Chequers meeting on 7 June 1959. The Cabinet Office, Foreign Office, Ministry of Defence and Treasury – the departments that would lead on the project – were all well-represented. The Prime Minister's private office was represented not by Philip but by Tim Bligh, a home civil servant who joined from the Treasury earlier that year.⁷² One of the few contributions Philip seems to have made was the prescient observation that the TSR-2 strike aircraft might not be required, though cancellation of this project was left to the next Labour government.⁷³

Philip in fact is not even mentioned in Macmillan's diaries – and then only *en passant* – before 23 October 1957. By the following summer, however, Philip seems to have become much more of a confidant, being invited with his wife to

⁶⁹ Macmillan, *Riding the Storm* pp.553, 615.

⁷⁰ TNA: PREM11/2347, de Zulueta to Macmillan, 19 March 1958.

⁷¹ TNA: PREM11/1778, Bishop to Hunt, 18 October 1956; PREM11/2321, Brook to Macmillan, 25 November 1957; Bishop to Macmillan, 26 November 1957.

⁷² TNA: CAB134/1929, meeting at Chequers, 7 June 1959.

⁷³ TNA: PREM11/2946, de Zulueta to Brook, 31 August 1960.

Chequers for a weekend of broad conversations.⁷⁴ It seems that their relationship had clearly blossomed into personal friendship by summer 1959, with Philip and Marie-Lou being invited down to Macmillan's private estate of Birch Grove in Sussex during a family weekend.⁷⁵

By then Philip had proved his worth to Macmillan through his work on a specific policy problem the Prime Minister had been wrestling with earlier when Foreign Secretary in 1955. By 1957 Macmillan had moved to trying to solve the terrorism in Cyprus and related Graeco-Turkish tensions with the idea of a tridominium on the island preserving the British sovereign bases. Faced with intransigence from both Turks and Greeks in March 1958 Macmillan undertook to redraft the plan. He was aided by 'an excellent draft from de Zulueta'.⁷⁶ That summer Philip accompanied Macmillan on a visit to the island. He was party to the discussions at Chequers on 8 September 1958 with the Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Governor of Cyprus Sir Hugh Foot, Macmillan and John Addis of the Foreign Office about when to allow Archbishop Makarios to return to the island. He also played an important role in drafting statements about Cyprus for parliament.⁷⁷

Philip was if anything even more valuable as a steadying hand during the crisis precipitated by the coup in Iraq of 14 July 1958. This removed what had been the linchpin of Britain's position in the Middle East. Macmillan's son-in-law, Julian Amery, immediately advocated action to try to reconquer Iraq. As he had been a leading member of the Suez group of Tory MPs advocating action against Nasser's Egypt two years earlier, this was hardly surprising. Amery was, however, joined by the Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, in enthusiasm for using figures like Colonel de Gaury – an old friend of the Iraqi royal family – to try to stir up counter-revolution.⁷⁸ Philip was instrumental in getting the Foreign Office to warn Macmillan against such adventures. Of a later Amery paper Philip noted: 'If he is right we shall I think have either to bring down Nasser by military means or lose all our favourable position over oil supplies from the Middle East.' But, he went on to advise 'this is such an unattractive

⁷⁴ DWM: Harold Macmillan diaries [henceforward HMD], 31 August 1958.

⁷⁵ DWM: HMD, 4 July 1959.

⁷⁶ DWM: HMD, 8 March 1958.

⁷⁷ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.149 (11 August 1958), p.157 (6 September 1958); DWM: HMD, 10 December 1958.

⁷⁸ TNA: PREM 11/2397, Amery to Macmillan, 15 July 1958; PREM 11/2416, Lennox-Boyd to Macmillan, 16 July 1958.

dilemma that we should seek to avoid it if we can and I do not believe that we are yet quite faced with it.’⁷⁹ It was this wise counsel that prevailed.

Philip was thus effective at weighing political risks for his chief. It is interesting that Millard described him as ‘imaginative’.⁸⁰ Macmillan’s supple mind was constantly probing for broad plans – what he called ‘Grand Designs’ – through which to tackle the issues he confronted. Those officials he invited periodically for general, wide-ranging discussions to address these were not necessarily the most senior, but those whose thinking he found congenial – Philip, for instance, felt that it was important to encourage contact with the Soviets, a view Macmillan had also developed when Foreign Secretary – and conducive to exploring the solutions he sought.⁸¹ Their role was to help Macmillan to tease out the interlocking policy devices he tended to favour. Accordingly, these sessions acted like impromptu policy seminars, helping the Prime Minister to crystallise his thoughts on, for instance, responses to the connected problems of the Soviet threats to Berlin in November 1958 and the need to reduce tension in the Cold War when many in the West (wrongly) believed that the Russians had a nuclear lead and political problems were gathering through the related fear of the consequences of nuclear testing.⁸² Philip was amongst those officials, including Bishop and Rumbold, Macmillan invited for one of these very long conversations over luncheon at Chequers in January 1959. The upshot was to help the Prime Minister to decide to address these issues through the device of the probing visit to Moscow which Philip accompanied him on the following month, with follow-up visits to western capitals, including Washington.⁸³

Before they left Philip warned Macmillan that recent press reports suggesting that the West German people were becoming more favourable to neutrality as a means of securing reunification might make it more difficult to secure concessions from the Russians. This indicates that part of Philip’s job was to keep the Prime Minister of the context in which his foreign policy was operating. It might have been helpful if he had also warned that this situation

⁷⁹ TNA: PREM 11/2416, de Zulueta to D. C. Symon, 19 July 1958, to Macmillan, 29 July 1958; PREM 11/2397, de Zulueta to Macmillan, 10 September 1958.

⁸⁰ Telephone conversation with Sir Guy Millard, 28 August 2012.

⁸¹ Richard Aldous, *Macmillan, Eisenhower and the Cold War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), p.31; Catterall, *The Cabinet Years* pp.420-5.

⁸² Catterall, *Prime Minister and After*, p.323n.

⁸³ DWM: HMD, 18 January 1959.

would also make the West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, much more sensitive to Macmillan's visit. Adenauer never really trusted Macmillan again.

This might suggest that there was a downside to having in such a central advisory role a figure sharing and reinforcing Macmillan's view that German reunification was a subsidiary problem of the Cold War and other wider global problems and disinclined to compensate for his master's tendency to underplay German anxieties.⁸⁴ Philip, like Macmillan, seems not to have readily noticed the way in which Anglo-German relations soured after de Gaulle in the autumn of 1958 set out to woo the aged Chancellor. He had recognised by December 1958 that the FTA negotiations were abortive, but continued to see the problem essentially in terms of threatening rather than persuading the Germans, in the hope of gaining leverage on the French. Thus at the end of the year he wrote to Macmillan 'If we alarm the Germans sufficiently we might, perhaps, cause them to put such pressure on the French that the Common Market would collapse or be very much watered down'.⁸⁵

The scheme Philip subsequently put forward in October 1959 further compounded the offence caused by the Moscow trip in Adenauer's eyes. The idea of an Anglo-Soviet arms limitation agreement in central Europe he then raised had obvious strategic and pecuniary benefits for the overstretched British; however, far from proving, as Philip hoped, a means of bullying the Germans into supporting wider European unity, it was only likely to continue to drive Adenauer into the arms of de Gaulle.⁸⁶ As Macmillan astutely observed, the French liked to pretend

[T]hat we are weak and defeatist, and that they are for 'being tough'. The purpose of this is to impress Chancellor Adenauer, and keep his support in their protectionist attitude towards European economic problems.⁸⁷

Some sort of Anglo-Soviet rapprochement was nevertheless clearly desirable. Through reducing international tension it would reduce military expenditure. But it would also increase Britain's room for manoeuvre. In consequence

⁸⁴ TNA: PREM11/2708, de Zulueta to Macmillan, 18 February 1959; Sabine Lee *An Uneasy Partnership: British-German Relations between 1955 and 1961* (Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1996), p.71.

⁸⁵ TNA: PREM11/2826, de Zulueta to Macmillan, 30 December 1958.

⁸⁶ Lee, pp.71-84; Schaad, p.128; Peter Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle* (London: I. B Tauris, 2006), p.91.

⁸⁷ Macmillan, *Riding the Storm* p.637 (9 March 1959).

British foreign policy would no longer be so dependent upon the US. The problem that ‘Western policy on Germany is to a large extent a prisoner of the Federal Government’, with concomitant stationing costs, would also be diminished.⁸⁸ Nuclear weapons were felt to have rendered redundant the large forces that Adenauer still demanded that his allies maintained in Germany. Furthermore, it might also help to slow Soviet penetration in both the Middle East and Africa. To combat this Macmillan advocated freer trade and greater Western unity. Indeed, his African tour of 1960 very much arose from this context, culminating in his warning in Cape Town in February that if the West did not respond to the ‘wind of change’ of nationalism blowing through the continent ‘we may imperil the precarious balance between the East and West on which the peace of the world depends’.⁸⁹

All these factors, together with political imperatives regarding the October 1959 election and the personal inclinations of both Philip and Macmillan, ensured a growing emphasis on the need for a four-power summit after the Moscow visit. In the process Philip could temper the Prime Minister’s inclination to run ahead of what his Allies would stomach, as is clear from their very private exchange of August 1959 in response to the latest Khrushchev letter about Berlin.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Philip clearly also supported Macmillan’s goals. Lloyd, who did not entirely share their enthusiasm, certainly seems to have felt that the policy which culminated in the Paris summit of May 1960 was at least as much Philip’s as Macmillan’s, hence his bitter comments then about ‘government by private secretary’.⁹¹ It was Philip, not Lloyd, who accompanied the Prime Minister on the key trips to Paris and Camp David on the road to the summit. He also helped Macmillan to respond to Khrushchev’s communications after the shooting down of an American U2 overflying the Soviet Union on spying mission imperilled the impending meeting.⁹² The following day, 11 May 1960, he sought to reassure his chief that the U2 incident was being used by the Soviet leader to sabre-rattle to keep in check his enemies at home and did not mean that the conference was doomed, in contrast to the gloomy prognostications

⁸⁸ TNA: PREM11/2347, ‘British Policy on Germany and European Security’, January 1958. Philip reiterated concerns about these costs in a letter to *The Times*, 9 November 1976.

⁸⁹ Cited in Peter Catterall, ‘Identity and Integration: Macmillan, “Britishness” and the Turn towards Europe’ in Gilbert Millat (ed), *Angleterre ou Albion, entre fascination et repulsion* (Lille: Université Lille 3 Charles de Gaulle, 2006), p.175.

⁹⁰ TNA: PREM11/2703, Macmillan to de Zulueta, 15 August 1959, de Zulueta to Macmillan, 18 August 1959.

⁹¹ Thorpe, *Selwyn Lloyd*, pp.303-4.

⁹² HMD 12 March 1960, 29 March 1960, 10 May 1960.

coming from the British ambassador, Sir Patrick Reilly, in Moscow. This overly-sanguine, if not self-deluding optimism suggests how much Philip had personally invested in success in Paris, a view reinforced by his part in Macmillan's last-ditch efforts to prevent a breakdown. His subsequent comment to Alistair Horne that, after this failure, 'I never saw [Macmillan] more depressed' is often quoted, but it is hard to escape the sense that Philip was here expressing his own sentiments as well.⁹³

Thereafter the British not only had to try to pick out some alternative policy, but also respond to the impending change of President in the US. Eisenhower, Macmillan's wartime colleague, was coming to the end of his term. The Democrat candidate to replace him, John F. Kennedy, Philip warned in June 1960, had told a garden party in the South of France the previous year 'the British have made such a mess of things in the world and especially in the Middle East that the best thing they can do is keep out of it in future'.⁹⁴ Such attitudes presented a problem when Kennedy subsequently took the White House. Macmillan rapidly concluded that he could no longer rely on

[T]he link of memories and a long friendship. I will have to base myself now on trying to win him by ideas. I have started working on a memorandum wh[ich] I might send him – giving a broad survey of the problems wh[ich] face us in the world.⁹⁵

It is not clear whether this approach was influenced by Philip, but a subsequent memorandum from the latter shows that he came to similar conclusions.⁹⁶

He also seems to have come to similar conclusions regarding the ideas Macmillan then sketched out. This required something of a shift on his part. After the FTA failure Philip had felt French hostility to any kind of trade deal with Britain was such that 'our only course is either to try and break up the Common Market or watering it down'.⁹⁷ Although a great Francophile who wrote many position papers for Macmillan on Anglo-French affairs, Philip continued to feel of the French in October 1959 'At the moment I do not think

⁹³ Aldous, pp.134-5, 148-9, 158; Horne, p.231.

⁹⁴ TNA: PREM11/3169, de Zulueta to Macmillan, 1 June 1960.

⁹⁵ HMD: 11 November 1960.

⁹⁶ Aldous, p.168.

⁹⁷ TNA: PREM11/2826, de Zulueta to Macmillan, 30 December 1958.

they do want us at all'.⁹⁸ However, it was increasingly clear that the alternative course Macmillan had been pursuing, of some kind of accommodation between the Six and the Seven – the countries of the Common Market and the European Free Trade Association that Britain had formed as an alternative – was a non-starter. One of Macmillan's old friends from his days in the European League for Economic Co-operation, Juliet Rhys-Williams, wrote to Philip in December 1960 about the difficulties of achieving such an accommodation in the face of GATT rules.⁹⁹ Informal external advisers like Rhys-Williams had been important to Macmillan when out of power in the late 1940s and into the early 1950s, a period when Europe remained a fluid concept. Now, with the Hallstein tariffs of July 1960, the Common Market in contrast was a present reality which threatened British trade.

Macmillan's solution was to work up his initial ideas for Kennedy in December 1960 into a 'Grand Design' paper. This paper distilled various policy proposals in the aftermath of the summit failure. It sought to liberalise international trade and aid in order to: provide a non-inflationary external stimulus to the UK economy; consolidate resistance to communism; reduce military costs. These were largely consistent with earlier policy devices such as the FTA concept, but the means was now through an exploration of whether some kind of accommodation was possible with the Common Market created by the Treaty of Rome in 1957.¹⁰⁰

The 'Grand Design' paper was drafted with the aid of a small circle of Philip, Bishop and Brook.¹⁰¹ It was by no means exclusively about European entry. Reflecting the recurring significance of the Cold War in Philip's thought, he advised that the 'Soviet fear of Germany and the spread of nuclear weapons might come in useful in th[is] enterprise'.¹⁰² This is because hopes of making progress with de Gaulle seem to have rested upon: a) persuading Kennedy to support the project, including by allowing nuclear information sharing with the French; b) reducing tensions over Berlin. On the first of these Macmillan

⁹⁸ TNA: PREM11/2985, de Zulueta to Macmillan, 30 October 1959; Aldous, p.117; Peter Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), p.97. Philip later chaired the British section of the Franco-British Society from 1981 until his death in 1989.

⁹⁹ London School of Economics archives, London: Juliet Rhys-Williams papers [henceforward JRW], 5/4/11, Rhys-Williams to de Zulueta, 19 December 1960; notes of speech by Maurice Schumann in Paris, 16 December 1960.

¹⁰⁰ Catterall, 'Identity and Integration', p.176.

¹⁰¹ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.353 (4 January 1961).

¹⁰² DWM: MS Macmillan dep. c. 353, Macmillan to de Zulueta, 24 January 1961.

recorded ‘most satisfactory’ progress when accompanied by Philip to the White House in April 1961. However, whilst Kennedy was certainly supportive over the envisaged Common Market entry negotiations, he was to oppose the nuclear information sharing with the French which Philip and Macmillan had dangled before de Gaulle at what the Prime Minister considered a successful meeting at Rambouillet in January.¹⁰³ Taking the view that de Gaulle was more interested in being the strongman of Europe than contributing usefully to tackling the Cold War, the Americans thus denied Macmillan a key means of leverage on the French.¹⁰⁴

The second goal proved no less tricky. Soviet fears were indeed evident in their desire to consolidate the division of Germany, reflected in the building of the Berlin Wall that summer. This, however, simply made de Gaulle even more reluctant to consider negotiations with the Soviets that were likely to prove unpalatable to Adenauer when Macmillan and Philip met with him at Birch Grove in November 1961.¹⁰⁵

Philip was heavily involved with the gestation, development and communication of this Grand Design both to British and overseas audiences.¹⁰⁶ This suggests that he was, by this stage if not earlier, more than a private secretary or a policy adviser. He it was, rather than the Foreign Secretary (by then Lord Home) who generally accompanied the Prime Minister on the visits whereby the policy advanced. By May 1962, however, little had been achieved. The ministerial meetings in Brussels were deadlocked. Pessimistic views were also being presented to Philip to pass on to the Prime Minister. The American journalist Joseph Alsop, for instance, told Philip over lunch that he was convinced de Gaulle did not want Britain in Europe and that nor, in the aftermath of the Anglo-American handling of the Berlin Wall crisis, did Adenauer; a verdict Philip recorded as unduly unfavourable, though there might be a ‘certain truth in what he says’.¹⁰⁷ Macmillan was coming to similar views about de Gaulle’s attitudes, convening a dinner at Chequers on 27 May 1962 to discuss responses at which Philip joined Home, chief European negotiator Ted Heath, Sir Harold Caccia (permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office), Sir

¹⁰³ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.358 (29 January 1961), p.372 (8 April 1961); Mangold, p.155.

¹⁰⁴ John F. Kennedy Library, Boston [henceforward JFKL]: NSF174A, ‘Background and Objects of Visit’, 21 March 1961.

¹⁰⁵ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* pp.429-31 (29 November 1961).

¹⁰⁶ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.372 (8 April 1961); Evans, p.153 (29 July 1961).

¹⁰⁷ TNA: PREM11/4575, de Zulueta to Macmillan, 14 May 1962.

Frank Lee (permanent under-secretary at the Board of Trade) and Sir Pierson Dixon (ambassador to France). This was in preparation for his visit, accompanied by Philip and Dixon, to de Gaulle at Château des Champs on 2-3 June. Philip seems to have returned from this with a sanguine assessment.¹⁰⁸ Although Macmillan could not play the nuclear card, following earlier advice from Philip, he did emphasise military co-operation in Europe.¹⁰⁹ Macmillan also felt that he had convinced de Gaulle that Britain regarded it as in their interest to join the Six 'if reasonable terms can be made, esp[ecially] for the old Commonwealth countries'.¹¹⁰

The latter, however, were not necessarily any more enthusiastic about British entry than de Gaulle. Philip's next major task was therefore helping to draft Macmillan's speech for the upcoming Commonwealth conference at which he would try to sell the policy. His important role in drafting or improving such speeches illustrates that he contributed significantly to the articulation of Macmillan's policy.¹¹¹ However, not all his advice was heeded; for instance, his concern that the creation of Malaysia in 1962 would amongst other risks overburden military relations with Australia and New Zealand.¹¹² On the other hand, during the Cuban crisis that October his warning to American intelligence officer Chet Cooper of the likely scepticism of the British press seems to have been a significant factor in the American decision to publish photographs of the Soviet missile sites.¹¹³ Philip was thus much more than a conduit (as in his communications with Kennedy's National Security Advisor, McGeorge Bundy, during the Cuban missile crisis), a bag-carrier or interpreter. He also offered an informal, plausibly-deniable channel of information for representatives of other countries. Thus in February 1961 he was invited to luncheon by Alex Romanov, the minister-counsellor at the Soviet embassy. For the Russians this was a means of exploring British attitudes to the Laos crisis that was then very much exercising the incoming Kennedy administration.¹¹⁴ Splendid meals and vodka

¹⁰⁸ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.473; Evans, p.199 (3 June 1962).

¹⁰⁹ Mangold, p.158; N. Piers Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain: The Six and the First UK Application to the EEC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.120-1.

¹¹⁰ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.475 (3 June 1962).

¹¹¹ DWM: HMD 30 August 1962; Evans, p.217 (22 September 1962).

¹¹² Christopher Staerck and Gillian Staerck, 'The Realities behind Britain's Global Defence Strategy' in Kaiser and Staerck, p.49.

¹¹³ L. V. Scott, *Macmillan, Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Political, Military and Intelligence Aspects* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999), p.118.

¹¹⁴ On Laos see Nigel Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War: The Irony of Independence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), chap.2.

at the Ritz and Café Royal over the next two years became a regular means of sounding out Soviet and British positions on issues from the Congo or China to the nuclear test ban that Macmillan sought so persistently from 1959, even if Philip could complain to the Foreign Office that Romanov's 'detailed knowledge of the Soviet negotiating position was better than my understanding of ours'.¹¹⁵

Philip similarly dined informally and strategically for Britain with journalists like Alsop or the French and American ambassadors. For instance, following the Château des Champs meeting he arranged a couple of private dinners with Geoffroy de Courcel, the new French ambassador. His predecessor, Paul Chauvel, had a reputation of being too anglophile to reliably transmit de Gaulle's views.¹¹⁶ In contrast, although Philip was able to use these meetings to convey Macmillan's dismay at de Gaulle's remarks on his September 1962 visit to Adenauer, de Courcel – formerly de Gaulle's personal aide – kept his cards close to his chest.¹¹⁷ They do not seem to have helped to prepare for the December 1962 meeting at Rambouillet with the General at which, as Macmillan puts it in his diaries, 'Philip de Z acted as my chief adviser and secretary'.¹¹⁸ These talks, according to Macmillan, were 'as bad as they c[oul]d be from the European point of view'. The French President, taking the line that British entry would subordinate Europe both to America and the Commonwealth, was clearly bent on refusal.¹¹⁹ Going into the talks Macmillan had continued to place hope in some nuclear agreement to give him leverage with de Gaulle. According to Philip, the problem was that the Prime Minister was not always as proficient at French as he liked to think, and the General – who he felt was only interested in nuclear weapons for prestige reasons – did not fully grasp the British offer.¹²⁰

At the same time nuclear relations with the Americans were becoming critical. Almost straight after Rambouillet Philip accompanied Macmillan to Nassau for Anglo-American talks in which the future of the British deterrent bulked large.

¹¹⁵ TNA: PREM11/4495, de Zulueta to A. C. I. Samuel, 9 February 1961.

¹¹⁶ JRW: Sir Edward Beddington-Behrens to Peter Thorneycroft, 17 May 1959.

¹¹⁷ TNA: PREM11/3791, de Zulueta to C. D. Wiggins (FO), 21 September 1962. See also Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.577 (17 July 1963).

¹¹⁸ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.525 (14 December 1962).

¹¹⁹ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.526 (16 December 1962); Mangold, pp.182-6.

¹²⁰ TNA: PREM11/3859, minutes of Macmillan meeting with Gaitskell, 20 November 1962; Horne, p.431; email from Lord Egremont, 18 September 2012.

At issue was whether the British could acquire a credible missile to launch nuclear warheads, having cancelled their own Blue Streak development in 1960 in favour of the American Skybolt, a programme the Administration had just decided to discontinue. Back then Philip had presciently argued in favour of the alternative submarine-based missiles, pointing out ‘Unless we have an option to buy or build Polaris we ourselves get nothing out of giving the Americans [nuclear] facilities in Scotland’.¹²¹ Britain had proved unable to secure an option on Polaris in 1960, but at Nassau a sleight of hand over the alignment of Britain’s deterrent secured these missiles for the Americans’ disgruntled ally. The Americans wished to present the Nassau deal as part of the Multilateral Force [MLF] through which they were trying to deter the West Germans from developing their own nuclear weapons.¹²² When Alsop complained a few months later that everywhere in Europe British representatives were speaking against the MLF, Philip did his ‘best to assure him this must be nonsense’.¹²³ His assurance was almost certainly disingenuous. Philip no doubt shared widespread British doubts about the MLF concept, which eventually ran into the sands in 1967. Instead the Nassau episode reinforced for Philip that

our “special relationship” with the United States is not worth much in real terms....so that we had better start reinforcing ourselves vis-à-vis the Americans by an independent policy in concert with someone else, e.g. the French.¹²⁴

Working over the weekend at Chequers with Philip on 28 January 1963, Macmillan sadly reflected on the lack of prospect of progress with the French as the entry talks ground to a halt. ‘If it were not’, he complained, ‘for the fatal survival of Dr Adenauer (the Pétain of Germany) we c[oul]d hope for a firm stand by the Germans’.¹²⁵ Macmillan, unlike Eden, had developed an uneasy relationship with Adenauer. Indeed, Eden noted of his dinner with the West German delegation during their November 1959 visit to Macmillan the Chancellor’s bitter complaints about the lack of clear British policy towards his

¹²¹ Cited in Richard Lamb, *The Macmillan Years: The Emerging Truth* (London: John Murray, 1995), p.293.

¹²² Peter Catterall, ‘Roles and Relationships: Dean Acheson, “British Decline” and Post-War Anglo-American Relations’ in Antoine Capet and Aissatou Sy-Wonyu (eds), *The Special Relationship* (Rouen: Université de Rouen, 2003), pp.115-17.

¹²³ TNA: PREM11/4575, de Zulueta to J. O. Wright (FO), 26 March 1963.

¹²⁴ Cited in Lamb, *The Macmillan Years* p.292.

¹²⁵ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.536.

country.¹²⁶ Philip does not seem materially to have helped to tackle this deficiency, later approvingly recording the observations of Llewellyn Thompson, the American ambassador to Russia, that ‘American conversations with the Federal Government were becoming rather like their conversations with the Russians in that they had a stock series of arguments which they had to continually employ’.¹²⁷

More success was in fact achieved in 1963 in conversations with the Americans and Russians than the French and Germans. Philip was part of the luncheon party Macmillan convened on 8 March 1963 to discuss how to break the deadlock in the test ban talks. With Philip’s help in drafting proposals Macmillan proceeded to woo Kennedy’s support for progress, culminating in the President’s visit to Birch Grove on 29-30 June. The Prime Minister regarded this as a great success: ‘We got all we wanted.

- 1) Full steam ahead with Moscow talks – Test Ban to be no. 1 priority
- 2) Go slow on Multi-Manned.¹²⁸

Philip’s duties over this weekend included taking his fellow Catholic, Kennedy, to Mass. He later told Richard Thorpe of his shock that the President only seemed interested in pumping Philip for the salacious details of the ongoing Profumo scandal.¹²⁹ This was by no means the only occasion when Philip’s Catholicism proved useful. His personal and familial connections with the Catholic hierarchy meant he was well-placed to keep Macmillan abreast of developments within the Holy See and to represent the Prime Minister at the coronation mass for John XXIII in 1958 and the requiem mass after his death in 1963. So good were these connections that the *Sunday Express* could credibly, if mendaciously, allege to Evans prime ministerial involvement in the selection of a new Archbishop of Westminster in 1963.¹³⁰

Philip meanwhile sought to help Macmillan to reopen some of the well-worn foreign policy objectives they had persistently pursued. For instance, following Birch Grove, Kennedy’s letter to Macmillan drawing attention to the possibility of Franco-German objections to the test ban talks prompted the fertile minds of both Prime Minister and adviser to look again at nuclear relations with France.

¹²⁶ AP: 23/3/18, Eden note, 1 May 1968; Catterall, *Prime Minister and After*, p.258 (19 November 1959).

¹²⁷ TNA: PREM11/4578, de Zulueta to Douglas-Home, 14 November 1963.

¹²⁸ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.575 (7 July 1963).

¹²⁹ Email from D. R. Thorpe, 13 September 2012.

¹³⁰ See TNA: PREM11/4427, PREM11/4594.

Thoughts of using American acquiescence at last to nuclear information sharing with the French as a means of persuading them to drop their objections to the proposed test ban led Macmillan to enthuse:

We might even revise Europe – (Common Market) etc and start a new and hopeful movement to straighten out the whole alliance....I put my ideas through de Zulueta to a small drafting ctee (1 F.O. and 1 MofD man) wh[ich] he dominated.¹³¹

Philip, charged with drafting yet another paper on Anglo-French nuclear relations, sought to find a price in a memorandum written on September 1963 which ‘we want, the French would give, and the Americans would not dislike’. The French reaction to the signing of the Test Ban Treaty on 25 July 1963 in Moscow however demonstrated that this remained an impossible proposition.¹³²

Philip’s perennial efforts to tackle Anglo-French relations thus ended in failure. A month later Macmillan, having at length decided to continue as Premier until the next election, was stricken by the prostate problem that prompted his retirement. Two days before Macmillan’s resignation Philip visited his hospital bed to tell the Prime Minister that he had decided to go to the City rather than return to the Foreign Office.¹³³ By kind permission of Rab Butler, who succeeded the incoming Prime Minister at the Foreign Office, a leaving party was held at Foreign Secretary’s London residence, 1 Carlton Gardens, on 12 December 1963.¹³⁴ A month later Philip, having been knighted in Macmillan’s resignation honours list, became a banker with Philip Hill-Higginson Erlanges.

There ensued some controversy both about the knighthood and about Philip’s decision to leave the diplomatic service. His old chief, Geoffrey McDermott, later gave this as an example of the wastage of talent by the Foreign Office. Both John Wyndham and Macmillan’s official biographer, Alistair Horne, felt this put a premature end to a career in which Philip could have risen to the top. The latter suggests that the length of his service in the private office, and resulting identification with Macmillan, was an obstacle to returning to

¹³¹ JFKL: NSF174, Kennedy to Macmillan, 10 July 1963; DWM: HMD, 18 July 1963.

¹³² Mangold, pp.207-10.

¹³³ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After* p.608 (16 October 1963).

¹³⁴ AP: 23/67/40, invitation card.

diplomatic life.¹³⁵ Philip certainly stayed in Number 10 longer than any of the other private secretaries with whom he served. Indeed, the only other to rival him in length of service (and the only other to receive a knighthood courtesy of Macmillan) was Tim Bligh, who also joined Philip in moving to the private sector. This, however, was surely largely down to personal choice. In the private office he had a master who shared his views and valued and relied upon him, plus a roving ability to influence foreign policy broadly in a manner not generally possible for a lowly Grade 7. Going back to the Foreign Office would mean resuming the slow climb to the top in a world made more competitive by the many diplomats of his age drafted in after the Second World War. As Moorhouse later noted, the age of 35 (Philip in 1963 was 38) is often a plateau in the diplomatic corps: after that the career structure becomes more pyramidal. The result, as Wyndham pointed out, is that promising civil servants like Philip could find it a long wait for advancement. Not many, either, were in Philip's position to instead get tempting offers to shift to the City. He turned down a Washington posting and formally left the Foreign Office on 17 January 1964.¹³⁶

In addition to his City career, Philip became a trustee both of the trust set up to manage Macmillan's memoirs and literary legacy and the Kennedy Memorial Trust. In 1965 he wrote to Eden asking for his support in efforts to gain the Conservative nomination for the constituency of the Cities of London and Westminster 'since it was at your feet that I first became really interested in politics'. There had been suspicions that such political sympathies had also been a reason for his decision to leave the civil service. However, as Philip pointed out when ambushed by a television interviewer on this point in Lusaka in 1964, it was not he but his wife who had more problems stomaching the idea of him working for the Labour government which, following the 1964 election, was by then in office.¹³⁷ Party politics was not the reason for his departure from Whitehall. Nor did he pursue it strongly. Despite Macmillan's coaching, however, the attempt to win the nomination for this promising seat proved unsuccessful, whilst career considerations precluded him chasing others.¹³⁸ This episode, however, illustrates that Philip remained close to the former Prime Minister, advising him both on the international financial situation (useful in

¹³⁵ McDermott, p.217; Wyndham, p.191; Horne, p.571.

¹³⁶ Strang, *The Diplomatic Career* p.45; Moorhouse, pp.93-5; Wyndham, p.191; *Foreign Office List* (1964), p.449; Interview: Lady de Zulueta, 24 October 2012.

¹³⁷ Interview: Lady de Zulueta, 24 October 2012.

¹³⁸ *The Times*, 22 January 1964; DWM: HMD, 2 April 1964, 3 October 1965; AP: 23/67/41, de Zulueta to Eden, 25 September 1965.

Macmillan's resumed role at the eponymous publishing firm) and the handling of misleading allegations made about Rambouillet by the Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, during the 1966 general election.¹³⁹ Philip was well-aware of Wilson's position on the nuclear issue, having reported of a transatlantic conversation with the then Leader of the Opposition in November 1963, that Wilson's objection was not to British warheads but to the purchase of American missiles.¹⁴⁰

Macmillan remained a would-be patron, unsuccessfully nominating Philip as a potential ambassador to Washington in 1970. Macmillan's tribute says much about his continuing regard for the man who served him so closely:

He is extremely able....and has made a considerable reputation in his knowledge of financial and economic affairs particularly in the European field. He knows a lot about both theoretical and applied economics. He has kept pretty close his friendships and connections with the diplomatic world. He has a charming and efficient wife...Here is a man who is still under fifty, known and respected in governing circles in almost every capital, with the unique experience of how No. 10 and the Foreign Office must work together.¹⁴¹

These virtues helped to make Philip a key asset to Macmillan, someone with whom during weekends at Chequers together they would clear their correspondence and crystallise views on foreign policy issues around the world. He thus served as much more than a private secretary, or even a special adviser. Philip became a confidant for a lonely Prime Minister who relied heavily on friendships in the private office to compensate both for an unhappy marriage and the gradual loss of political companions, particularly after the self-inflicted wounds of the botched Cabinet reshuffle of July 1962. To some extent Philip even became a co-producer of policy, as demonstrated by his contribution to continuity in objectives both before and after the 1960 Summit. This close working relationship was based upon a similarity of view which meant that the Prime Minister could trust Philip to draft for him, represent him and be his eyes and ears in Whitehall and beyond. As Macmillan later reflected, 'Philip knows

¹³⁹ Catterall, *Prime Minister and After*, pp.660, 677-9.

¹⁴⁰ TNA: PREM11/4332, de Zulueta, note for the record, 24 November 1963.

¹⁴¹ DWM: MS Macmillan, dep. c. 539, Macmillan to Douglas-Home, 23 July 1970.

my mind'.¹⁴² He could calm a sometimes overwrought Premier. Philip also provided invaluable insights in subsequently reading drafts of Macmillan's memoirs.

Nevertheless, this meeting of minds was almost too symbiotic, amplifying some concerns such as the need to reduce tensions with Russia. Both men also held similar attitudes towards Germany. They shared not only policy imperatives, but also certain character traits. A common penchant for understated, ironic humour comes across in the relaxed correspondence that passed between them.¹⁴³ They were also both apt to express themselves elliptically on occasion. These similarities no doubt ensured Philip's indispensability as a companion to Macmillan. They also helped to reinforce Macmillan's foreign policy preferences. Arguably, however, Philip was not always as successful at putting forward alternatives to what Macmillan wished to achieve, partly because he shared so closely the Prime Minister's views. He was thus not an independent source of advice. Accordingly, therefore, Philip's very closeness to and importance as a foreign policy adviser for Macmillan also somewhat diminished his overall effectiveness in that role.

¹⁴² Cited in Egremont, p.1023.

¹⁴³ For instance, on a memorandum noting that Labour would oppose British nuclear tests but not American ones Philip noted 'Not a very courageous attitude' to which Macmillan replied 'Nor very logical'. TNA: PREM11/3858, minute 4 January 1962.