LEARNING FROM HISTORY IN BRITISH OVERSEAS SECURITY: CASE STUDIES OF MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

LOUISE KETTLE

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Abstract

Recent problematic military interventions, as part of the Global War on Terror, have led to widespread criticism that British policy-makers have failed to learn lessons from history. At the same time as the accusations of not learning, the British government has repeatedly claimed that lessons have been learned, particularly from the disastrous war in Iraq. This thesis investigates these contradicting claims by analysing learning from the past in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Defence and the Intelligence Community across four case studies of British military intervention in the Middle East; 1958 in Jordan, 1961 in Kuwait, the 1990-1991 Gulf War and 2003-2009 Iraq War. It provides a fresh analysis of these highly significant events, using previously undisclosed documents, offers an assessment of learning processes and concludes by recommending practical suggestions for the improvement of learning from history in the future.

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Abbreviations

ABCA	Australia, Britain, Canada, America
ADM	Admiralty records held at The National Archives
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AIR	Air Ministry records held at The National Archives
ALSF	Arab League Security Force
AQI	al-Qaeda Iraq
AORG	Army Operational Research Group
BDA	Battle Damage Assessments
BDCC	British Defence Coordination Committee
BIG	Butler Implementation Group
BOI	Board of Inquiry
BW	Biological Warfare
CAB	Cabinet Office records held at The National Archives
CDI	Chief of Defence Intelligence
CENTCOM	Central Command (US)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
CID	Committee of the Imperial Defence
CIG	Current Intelligence Group
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CIS	Communications and information systems
CJO	Chief of Joint Operations
CNN	Cable News Network (US)
CO	Colonial Office records held at The National Archives
COI	Central Office of Information
COIN	Counter-insurgency
Comsec	Communication security
COS	Chiefs of Staff
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CW	Chemical Warfare
DBFP	Documents on British Foreign Policy

DBPO	Documents on British Policy Overseas
DC	House of Commons Defence Committee
DCDC	Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre
DCI	Director of Central Intelligence
DEFE	Ministry of Defence records held at The National Archives
DfID	Department for International Development
DI	Defence Intelligence
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency (US)
DIS	Defence Intelligence Staff
DLIMS	Defence Lessons Management System
DLL	Defence Lessons Library
DMS	Defence Medical Services
DOC	Directorate of Operational Capability
DOHP	(British) Diplomatic Oral History Programme record reference number
DwLB	Defence-wide Lessons Board
DwLM	Defence-wide Lessons Management
ECAC	Executive Committee of the Army Council
FAC	House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee
FAOH	Foreign Affairs Oral History (US)
FASC	Foreign Affairs Steering Committee
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FO	Foreign Office records held at The National Archives
FOI	Freedom of Information
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
FS	Foreign Secretary
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GCHQ	Government Communication Headquarters
GHQ	General Headquarters
HIC	High Intensity Conflict
HMG	Her Majesty’s Government

HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
HQBFME	Headquarters British Forces Middle East
Humint	Human intelligence
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IC	Intelligence Community
Imint	Imagery intelligence
IS	Islamic State
ISC	Intelligence and Security Committee
ISI	Islamic State in Iraq
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
IT	Information Technology
JFC	Joint Forces Command
JFHQ	Joint Forces Headquarters
JHQ	Joint Headquarters
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
JIC(ME)	Joint Intelligence Committee (Middle East)
JIO	Joint Intelligence Organisation
KCLMA	Kings College London Military Archive
KV	Security Service records held at The National Archives
ME	Middle East
MEC	Middle East Command
MELF	Middle East Land Forces
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MNF	Multi-National Force
MNF-I	Multi-National Force Iraq
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MP	Member of Parliament
NAO	National Audit Office
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration (US)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NHS	National Health Service
NOFORN	No Foreigners (security classification) (US)

No10	Number ten, Downing Street
NSA	National Security Agency (US)
NSC	National Security Council
OOA	Out Of (NATO) Area
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPTAG	Operational Training and Advisory Group
ORHA	Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance
PASC	House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee
PHIA	Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis
PI	Photographic interpreters
PJHQ	Permanent Joint Headquarters
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PM	Prime Minister
PPD	Policy Planning Department
PR	Public Relations
PREM	Prime Minister's Office records held at The National Archives
Psyops	Psychological operations
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAFHS	Royal Air Force Historical Society
RN	Royal Navy
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
Sigint	Signals intelligence
SIPRNET	Secret Internet Protocol Router Network
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service
SS	Security Service
SU	Stabilisation Unit
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
T	Treasury records held at The National Archives
TII	The Iraq Inquiry
TNA	The National Archives, Kew

TSO	The Stationery Office
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAR	United Arab Republic
UK EYES A	UK Eyes Alpha (security classification)
UN	United Nations
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
US	United States
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WO	War Office records held at The National Archives
WWI	The First World War
WWII	The Second World War

Operational codenames

Bellringer	UK codename for contingency planning to defend Kuwait against annexation, 1961 (pre-Vantage)
Besemer	UK operational codename for NATO intervention in Macedonia, 2001
Broil	UK codename for contingency planning to defend Jordan against a coup, 1958 (pre-Fortitude)
Corporate	UK codename for the Falklands War, 1982
Desert Shield	US codename for the defence of Saudi Arabia, 1990-1991
Desert Storm	US codename for liberating Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, 1991
Ellamy	UK codename for intervention in Libya, 2011
Fortitude	UK codename for the defence of Jordan, 1958
Fresco	UK codename for a fire fighting replacement service, 2002-2003
Granby	UK codename for the Gulf War, 1990-1991
Herrick	UK codename for the War in Afghanistan, 2002-2014
Iraqi Freedom	US codename for the Iraq War, 2003-2010
Livid	UK codename for contingency planning to defend Kuwait against annexation, 1967
Lodestar	UK codename for NATO intervention in Bosnia, 1996-1998
Musketeer	UK codename for regaining the Suez Canal, 1956
Resinate	UK codename for enforcing Iraqi no-fly zones, 1991-2003
Resolute	UK codename for NATO intervention in Bosnia, 1995-1996
Sodabread	UK codename for contingency planning to defend Kuwait against annexation, 1961 (post-Vantage)

Straggle	UK codename for covert operations in Syria, 1956
Telic	UK codename for the war in Iraq, 2003-2009
Torch	UK codename for the invasion of North Africa, 1942
Vantage	UK codename for the defence of Kuwait, 1961

Chapter 1: Introduction

> "If men could learn from history, what lessons it might teach us! But passion and party blind our eyes, and the light which experience gives is a lantern on the stern, which shines only on the waves behind us."
> (Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1831)[1]

In 2003, shortly after the invasion of Iraq, Prime Minister (PM) Tony Blair addressed the United States (US) Congress. In his speech he denounced the role of history in making contemporary policy and declared, at the beginning of what would become the most controversial and criticised war of a generation, that there had never been a time when "a study of history provides so little instruction for our present day."[2] Just over ten years later, PM David Cameron addressed the United Nations (UN) Assembly purporting the opposite view. Speaking on the plans to defeat extremist ideology, he stated that history, in particular the lessons from the Iraq War, was a vital consideration in the creation of current policy: "it is absolutely right that we should learn the lessons of the past, especially of what happened in Iraq a decade ago."[3]

Britain has had a long and complex history of intervention in the Middle East; from colonial rule to defining national boundaries, from

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[1] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "18th December 1831", *The Table Talk and Omnia of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, T. Ashe (ed.) (London: George Bell and Sons, 1884).
[2] Tony Blair, "Speech to the US Congress", 18th July 2003, *www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/jul/18/iraq.speeches*, accessed 12/11/2014.
[3] David Cameron, "UN Assembly address", 25th September 2014, *www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48840#.VI1qPiusWjU*, accessed 14/12/2014.

orchestrating secret coups to sending troops to overthrow dictatorships. However, recent problematic interventions, as part of the Global War on Terror, have led to widespread criticism that the British government has failed to harness its knowledge and expertise of the region.[4] Historians and commentators were quick to ask why, for example, when Britain had so much past experience in Iraq – having governed the country until 1932, intervened in 1941, maintained the country as a satellite state until 1958, and intervened again in 1991 – did policy-makers fail to understand the complexities of governing the nation in planning the 2003 intervention?[5] Similarly, how did the British government – having thrice failed to conquer Afghanistan[6] and having more recently observed the failure of the Soviet Union to achieve the same objective in the 1980s – reach the conclusion that an intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 would be successful? The deduction was made that the British government had failed to learn the lessons of history.[7]

However, since the Iraq War the government has repeatedly claimed that lessons have been learned from Iraq and Afghanistan. "Lessons" – often broad or undisclosed – have become regularly

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[4] See, for example, Robert Fisk, "The only lesson we ever learn is that we never learn", 19th March 2008, *www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-the-only-lesson-we-ever-learn-is-that-we-never-learn-797816.html*, accessed 29/07/2015.

[5] On some of the complexities see Robert S. G. Fletcher, *British Imperialism and 'The Tribal Question': Desert Administration and Nomadic Societies in the Middle East, 1919-1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[6] The Anglo-Afghan wars of 1839-1842, 1878-1880 and 1919.

[7] See, for example, Geoffrey Wheatcroft, "The Iraq War is the Suez of our time", 24th February 2004, *www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2004/feb/24/iraq.iraq*, accessed 10/06/2013; Rosemary Hollis, *Britain and the Middle East: Policy in the 9/11 Decade* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

referenced as justification for current policy including in response to crises in Libya,[8] Syria[9] and during the Arab Spring.[10]

The aim of this thesis is to ascertain whether learning from history occurs within British overseas security and to assess the government's lesson-learning processes. It will do so by analysing historical cases of intervention in the Middle East and the lesson-learning within the three key overseas security bodies; the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Intelligence Community (IC). Consequently, it will explore both the criticism that Britain does not learn from its past as well as scrutinising the contradicting claims made by politicians that lessons have been learned. In so doing it will examine an important but under-explored area of research within the literature as learning from history has never been fully explored in the British context.[11] It will provide a fresh analysis, using previously undisclosed documents to examine highly significant events within the history of British foreign policy, international relations and the Middle East.

Furthermore, since the beginning of the Iraq War, millions of pounds of taxpayers' money have been spent on internal and public inquiries specifically to identify lessons for the future. The Iraq Inquiry (TII), which was established in 2009, has thus far spent

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[8] N.a., "David Cameron On Libya: Gaddafi Was A Monster And We've Learnt The Lessons From Iraq", 2nd September 2011, *www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2011/09/02/david-cameron-on-libya-ga_n_946134.html*, accessed 30/12/2011.
[9] BBC News, "David Cameron 'Syria is not like Iraq'", 29th August 2013, *www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-23883970*, accessed 28/03/2014.
[10] Alastair Burt, "The Power of Western Foreign and Security Policy", 1st December 2011, *www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-power-of-western-foreign-and-security-policy*, accessed 30/12/2011.
[11] For more on this see chapter two.

£9,016,500 with specific terms of reference to aid learning from history:[12]

> "Our terms of reference are very broad...the way decisions were made and actions taken, to establish, as accurately as possible, what happened and to identify the lessons that can be learned. Those lessons will help ensure that, if we face similar situations in future, the government of the day is best equipped to respond to those situations in the most effective manner in the best interests of the country."[13]

However, the inquiry has yet to publish its findings and it is unclear whether such an investment will pay dividends. By assessing the government's past and present learning processes this thesis will consider whether such methods are likely to deliver effective results and reveal how improvements to learning from the past could be made for the future.

This research comes at a decisive moment, as the rise of Islamic State (IS) and civil war in Syria ensures that further British intervention in the region remains an ongoing possibility, where lessons from the past could prove invaluable. In addition, the impending publication of TII report will soon return the issue of learning from past interventions to the forefront of political debate thus making the results of this research timely and relevant.

1.1 Whitehall learning from history

The debate about the role of history, evidenced by the opposing views of Tony Blair and David Cameron, is not new. Between the

[12] 2009-2014 accounts, *www.iraqinquiry.org.uk*, accessed 26/02/2015. 2014-2015 accounts are yet to be published.
[13] *www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/about.aspx*, accessed 26/02/2015.

mid-1950s and the late 1970s a debate emerged amongst key historians as to whether history should be used within the development of policy. This debate came to fruition as the writing of the wartime official histories and civil series began to draw to a close and consideration was given to the future of the project. The discussions reignited a wider debate of whether history was a useful policy-making tool; did history provide lessons and could or should they be used in the creation of British policy?

The prominent historian Sir Geoffrey Elton fiercely disagreed with the idea that history provided lessons. He urged that the study of the past, to ascertain lessons for the future, was an "inappropriate and usually misleading purpose" and that the notion of lessons from history was an absurdity.[14] A. J. P. Taylor supported this view, believing that history was an interesting and enjoyable exercise which served no purpose other than providing an understanding of the past. For him, "we learn nothing from history except the infinite variety of men's behaviour. We study it, as we listen to music or read poetry, for pleasure, not for instruction."[15]

However, concurrently, an alternative perspective was beginning to gather pace, pushed forward by historians including Allan Bullock, Margaret Gowing, William Keith Hancock and Michael Lee, who urged for the increased use of history within Whitehall and accused policy-makers of "a lack of historical depth".[16] This view built upon a long standing historical tradition; Thucydides wrote his *History of*

[14] G. R. Elton, *Return to Essentials* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 114; 4; 9.
[15] A. J. P. Taylor, "The Radical Tradition: Fox, Paine, and Cobbett" in *The Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy, 1792-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 23.
[16] Margaret Gowing, "Reflections on Atomic Energy History", *The Rede Lecture 1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 5.

the Peloponnesian War, recounting the war between Sparta and Athens in the 5th century BC, in order to inform policy-makers of the future. He stated the writing was for "those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past, and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same way, be repeated in the future."[17] This sentiment was also echoed by Clausewitz who observed "All wars are things of the same nature"[18] and has become a fundamental assumption of social scientists who emphasise the importance of understanding past political and international relations phenomena in order to inform current decisions and, taking the argument even further, to form theoretical positions to provide a predictive function for the future through inductive reasoning.

In fact, a few Whitehall departments invested in the notion of learning from history throughout the 20th century. Following the end of the First World War (WWI) a number of international history and international relations chairs were introduced to universities, often under the title of "Peace Studies". These were funded by the government to encourage the study of WWI to consider how lessons could be learned from the events to prevent war in the future and maintain peace in the long-term.

In addition, the civil service placed significant emphasis on the importance of historical knowledge in its entrance examination and the study of history was considered as one of the recognised roads to the higher ranks within the service. In 1946 A. L. Rowse argued that the work of the civil service was "for the most part concerned

[17] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, translated from Greek to English by Rex Warner (London: Penguin, 1954), 48.
[18] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 606.

with nothing so pure and abstract as mathematics, but with the administration of human affairs...for which the appropriate background and training are provided by history."[19] To support his ideas Rowse, who was a Fellow of All Souls College at Oxford University at the time, explained that three of the greatest contemporary civil servants – Sir Robert Morant, Sir William Beveridge and Sir Arthur Salter – had all read Greats at Oxford. However, the "ill-omened" Sir Horace Wilson "seems to have been educated at the London School of Economics. It was very clear that he did not know the history of modern Europe."[20]

Government also invested in the production of Whitehall official histories. These began under the Committee of the Imperial Defence (CID), the forerunner of the Cabinet Office. The CID's Historical Section was started in 1908 to compile the naval and military history of Britain and to learn lessons from the Boer War. In 1939, when the CID lapsed, the Historical Section became the responsibility of the Cabinet Office and in 1941 it was tasked with the preparation and publication of the official history of the Second World War (WWII) from a military, intelligence and civil perspective. The aim of this was to record "experience for government use" in the event of another war.[21]

In 1957 the Cabinet Secretary, Norman Brook, invested further funding to encourage all Whitehall departments to follow this lead and use history more systematically in their everyday work. When Brook's initiative was taken to the FCO Steering Committee in April 1958 it produced a positive response. A background paper, written

[19] A. L. Rowse, *Use of History* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1946), 6.
[20] Rowse, *Use of History*, 6.
[21] Peter Beck, *Using History, Making British Policy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 26.

by the Head of the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, revealed support for learning from history:

> "Looking back can be a salutary exercise. If we could spare the time or the staff we should probably derive great benefit from examining in retrospect the accuracy of the information on which policy was based and the correctness of the conclusions drawn from it... past experience can be a useful guide to recurrent problems".[22]

In addition, in 1964 the Plowden Report on service overseas emphasised the use of historians by stating "Full use should be made of their services by executive departments so as to ensure that action on current problems is not taken in ignorance of the lessons of the past."[23] Then, in 1966, PM Harold Wilson agreed to extend the official histories to the examination of events during peacetime; a programme which continues today.

However, despite these many endeavours to learn from history there have equally been many failures, omissions and difficulties. The investment in university chairs or recruitment of history graduates has not always equated to the consideration of lessons from history in the policy-making process. Instead, relationships between Whitehall and the academy have always been encouraged but difficult, for a number of reasons.[24] For history graduates the pressures of the civil service can often overcome their historical dispositions. Over time equal opportunities has also led to a

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[22] Hooper, n.d., The National Archives (TNA) FO371/135611.
[23] Lord Plowden, "Report on Representational Services Overseas", 1964, TNA FO366/3197, 79.
[24] See, for example, C. R. Hill and P. Beshoff (eds), *Two Worlds of International Relations: Academics, Practitioners and the Trade in Ideas* (London: Routledge, 1994).

widening of disciplines considered for entry and promotion within the civil service. For the FCO the subject of law has become increasingly of interest but applications are accepted from all disciplines. A response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the FCO's Human Resources Directorate reveals that the subject of a candidate's degree does not form the basis of selection criteria, but for the FCO's Future Talent Scheme, a six week internship which is open to all graduates, those with an aptitude for languages are particularly encouraged to apply.[25]

The official histories have also been limited and received criticism for being both time consuming and expensive. When, in 1957, the Select Committee on Estimates examined the cost of producing the official histories it reported losses of £15,000 on the publication costs of the civil histories and £11,000 on military histories, in addition to the £79,517 paid in salaries to historians that year. This was not portrayed positively in the media and led to wider criticisms of the programme including over the duplication of work and the occupation of valuable premises in Westminster.[26]

The selection process of official histories has also seemed arbitrary. The 1956 Suez Crisis, for example, a key event in British foreign policy, has been notably rejected for consideration for an official history on a number of occasions. In 1963 when the writing of the official history of WWII was coming to a close the Cabinet Secretary Burke Trend specifically asked "How, for example, would the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Office react to the suggestion that we should publish an official 'history' of the Palestine mandate

[25] FOI request made by the author, Carty to Kettle, 28th October 2014.
[26] For example newspaper articles see TNA CAB103/596-597.

or the Suez episode?"[27] Having highlighted this particular quote PM Harold Macmillan responded that he did not much like the idea but preferred to produce work which could be released once the required fifty year time rule had passed.[28] However, having pressed the PM further Trend reached a compromise, albeit one where Suez remained explicitly off limits;

> "He agreed that discussions might now go forward with a view to producing a scheme or making contemporary accounts of certain episodes. These should be in the political field, e.g. Britain's history of decolonisation; or the independence of India; rather than in the military field e.g. Suez".[29]

Furthermore, strict criteria for the selection of histories were imposed, ensuring that Suez would never be chosen. A shortlist of topics were to be prepared by an interdepartmental Committee on Official Histories of Peacetime Events based on the criteria of presenting the British case of events, usefulness and, crucially, avoiding matters of controversy which may have party political or foreign policy implications.

As the ten year anniversary of Suez approached the ranks closed further. Burke Trend declared that "nobody should write anything on Suez" whilst Paul Gore-Booth, as the Permanent Under-Secretary of the FCO, agreed that "the less said about Suez the better".[30] As PM Harold Wilson declared in a discussion with Burke Trend, official histories content and scope "was entirely within the

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[27] Trend to Douglas-Home, minute, 22nd November 1963, TNA PREM11/4282.
[28] Douglas-Home to Bligh, note, 23rd November 1963, TNA PREM11/4282.
[29] Bligh, note, 28th November 1963, TNA PREM11/4282.
[30] Cited in Gore-Booth, 19th April 1966, TNA FO370/2913; Gore-Booth to Tower, 26th August 1966, TNA CAB103/617.

control of the Government of the day and due care could be exercised to ensure that national or individual interests were not harmed by their publication."[31]

As a result, the official histories which were produced took the form of a narrative and, aware of their publication for a wider audience, offered little criticism or clear identification of lessons for the future. All official histories, as with all documents released by the government for public consumption, were "weeded" to ensure no harm could be made to British interests or offence given to other governments or political leaders. For this reason the five volume diplomatic history of WWII, written by Llewellyn Woodward, was only published over a decade after completion.[32] Similarly, to date the weeding process appears to have inhibited official clearance for the publication of Sir Jeremy Greenstock's memoirs, the Ambassador to the UN and UK Special Representative to Iraq during the Iraq War.[33]

Woodward's heavyweight history also illustrated another fundamental problem with the official histories; they were often too long and unwieldy to ever be read by even the most interested of parties. For busy Whitehall staff the opportunity to read such histories, and attempt to learn lessons from them, was minimal. As

[31] Trend, 30th April 1965, TNA FO371/5231.
[32] Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War: Volume 1* (London: Stationery Office Books, 1970); *Volume 2* (1971); *Volume 3* (1972); *Volume 4* (1976); *Volume 5* (1976); for more on this see Peter Beck, "Locked in a dusty cupboard, neither accessible on the policymakers' desks nor cleared for early publication: Llewellyn Woodward's official diplomatic history of the Second World War", *English Historical Review*, (2012) 127/529, 1435-70.
[33] Interview with former British Ambassador Sir Alan Munro, 16th July 2014.

a result, the official histories were under-utilised and became increasingly expensive.

Finally, as a combination of the selection and weeding processes, there were accusations – including from A. J. P. Taylor – that the official histories merely served as a propaganda tool. Rather than providing a reliable account of history, from which useful lessons could be drawn, the series presented a one-sided view to vindicate the actions of the British government.[34] Even worse, some media reports suggested "calculated inaccuracy" and pointed to the concealment of sources.[35]

Overall, there was very little indication that the official histories had been used as a source for lesson-learning. Even the 1957 history funding experience put forward by the Cabinet Secretary proved largely unsuccessful; few government departments took up the mantle, with many citing the lack of resource as a fundamental barrier.

By 1976 the Treasury's history department was closed. In response to the closure, in a 1978 lecture, the former Treasury historian Margaret Gowing explained the lack of history within Whitehall.[36] She concluded that even though central government employed nearly 18,000 scientists and engineers and 900 social scientists it employed only a handful of historians. In addition, historical courses were not included in the syllabus of the Civil Service College:

[34] Peter Beck, "A. J. P. Taylor on the Documents on British Foreign Policy as 'a cover-up for the Foreign Office'", *British International History Group Newsletter*, (2013), 19; 4.
[35] Cited in Beck, *Using History*, 34.
[36] Cited in Beck, *Using History*, 3.

"Historical knowledge, it seems, is not a necessity but a luxury."[37] She found this incredulous:

> "But why, if the status and usefulness of historical knowledge [in schools and universities] are so high [within schools and universities], is there so little use of it in central and local government? Since the machinery of government is reorganised so often and ministers, civil servants and policies are so ephemeral, surely a collective memory is required? Surely governments need to understand the complex roots of policies and problems? Surely analysis of past experience should be fed back into the system?"[38]

Christopher Andrew, the official historian of the Security Service (SS – more commonly known as MI5), has more recently echoed this sentiment declaring there to be a political culture dominated by "Historical Attention Span Deficit Disorder".[39] This perception is also echoed by many within Whitehall. One retired member of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS – more commonly known as MI6), stated "We do not learn. The only learning we do is in terms of heroes and villains; who are the good guys and who are the bad."[40]

1.2 Politicians learning from history

As the ultimate policy decision-makers, with government departments acting as the advisor and implementer, the ability of

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[37] Gowing, "Reflections", 5.
[38] Gowing, "Reflections", 4.
[39] Christopher Andrew, "Intelligence analysis needs to look backwards before looking forward", (2004), *www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/intelligence-analysis-needs-to-look-backwards-before-looking-forward*, accessed 9/12/2014.
[40] Private information. A similar idea was explored in Lawrence Freedman and Jeffrey Michaels (eds.) *Scripting Middle East Leaders* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

politicians to learn from history may counteract Whitehall's historical failings and provide some credence to the contemporary claims to have learned lessons. Many key politicians throughout the 20th century have been interested in history, following a long tradition of Greeks, Romans and men of the Renaissance who read history not for pleasure but for practical benefit. In 1513 Machiavelli stressed the importance for leaders to examine history as a manual for statecraft:

> "As for a mental exercise, a ruler should read historical works, especially for the light they shed on the actions of eminent men: to find out how they waged war, to discover the reasons for their victories and defeats, in order to avoid reverses and achieve conquests; and above all, to imitate some eminent man, who himself set out to imitate some predecessor of his who was considered worthy of praise and glory."[41]

Sir Walter Raleigh similarly declared "the end and scope of all history being to teach us by example of times past such wisdom as may guide our desires and actions" and Sir Francis Bacon surmised "Histories make men wise".[42] Indeed, history was the favourite reading of Napoleon, Lloyd George, Hitler and Sir Winston Churchill. Churchill, who famously declared "Personally I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like to be taught", believed in the benefits of the lessons of the past for informing policy and stated "The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see."[43]

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[41] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 [1513]), 53.
[42] Cited in Rowse, *Use of History*, 21.
[43] *www.nationalchurchillmuseum.org*

More recently a number of politicians, including Paddy Ashdown, William Hague and Boris Johnson, have also researched and published their own histories.[44] PM Harold Macmillan was a keen reader, of all genres, filling his diaries with summaries of the latest book he had read. In addition, PM Anthony Eden drew on his own experiences of the 1930s to inform his decisions in the 1950s and called his autobiography *Full Circle* to emphasise the repetition of history. He stated in his foreword "The lessons of the thirties and their application to the fifties...are the theme of my memoirs."[45]

On the other hand, some politicians have shown very little interest in history. A cabinet colleague reflected upon John Major that he was a PM who knew nothing about history and concluded "it doesn't work".[46] Instead, politicians are usually primarily concerned with the future rather than the past; there are targets to be set, promises to be made and objectives to be achieved. Consequently, there is more emphasis on what is coming next than what is already past.

1.3 History in British overseas security

British overseas security relates to the security of British interests, personnel and citizens in territories outside of the United Kingdom. Although many Whitehall departments are involved in overseas security, including the Department for Business, Innovation and

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[44] See, for example, Paddy Ashdown, *A Brilliant Little Operation: The Cockleshell Heroes and the Most Courageous Raid of World War 2* (London: Aurum Press, 2013); Paddy Ashdown, *The Cruel Victory* (London: William Collins, 2014); William Hague, *William Pitt the Younger* (London: Harper Collins, 2004); William Hague, *William Wilberforce: The Life of the Great Anti-Slave Trade Campaigner* (London: Harper Press, 2007); Boris Johnson, *The Churchill Factor: How One Man Made History* (London: Houghton and Stodder, 2014).

[45] Sir Anthony Eden, *Full Circle* (London: Cassell, 1960).

[46] John Tusa, "A deep and continuing use of history", in David Cannadine (ed.), *History and the Media* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 132.

Skills and the Department for International Development (DfID), it is primarily managed through the FCO, MoD and IC. The FCO, MoD and IC will, therefore, form the main source of analysis for this research.

For consistency, throughout the research the FCO will be referred to as such although the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Office only merged to become the FCO in 1968. In addition, the MoD only came into existence in its present form in 1971 but again will be referred to as such throughout. Prior to 1971 the MoD's function was conducted by five different departments; the Admiralty, the War Office, the Air Ministry, the Ministry of Aviation and the Ministry of Defence itself. These merged in 1964 with the defence functions of the Ministry of Aviation Supply absorbed in 1971, when the MoD took over responsibility for supplying military aircraft and guided weapons.[47] The MoD is also a duality as both a Department of State and a military headquarters for the three services, thus the work of the three services will also be included under this heading.

Furthermore, the IC will be considered as one body within this research because of the many overlaps across the relevant intelligence agencies – including the SS, SIS and Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) – and because all of the intelligence agencies are subject to the setting of priorities by one body; the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). As a result, Defence Intelligence (DI) – which although forming part of the MoD budget is also represented on the JIC – and the JIC's supporting staff – the Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO) – will be considered as part of the IC. This will not only prevent confusion but will additionally

[47] Ministry of Defence (MoD), "History of the Ministry of Defence", (2012) *www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49053/history_of_mod.pdf*, accessed 09/12/2014.

overcome some of the methodological challenges of trying to attribute specific intelligence to one particular intelligence body.

Each of these bodies has established unique ways and means to try to record, manage and draw lessons from history. At the same time as the Cabinet Office had commissioned official histories from external historians, the FCO and the MoD (as well as the Treasury) invested in permanent in-house historians, sometimes supported by the additional commissioning of works. The MoD even established independent historical branches for each of its three services, with only the Army Historical Branch being centrally managed in the MoD since 1970. All of the work of the in-house historians was excluded from the centralised procedure of the Cabinet Office's Historical Section put in place in 1966 and thus had greater control over the subjects of their histories.

The FCO initially chose to use their in-house historians to focus upon the publication of *Documents on British Foreign Policy* (DBFP). This was a series of volumes featuring an edited, chronological selection of documents, considered by the historians to be the most important documents in the FCO archives relating to British foreign policy between 1919 and 1939. This series was only completed in 1986. In 1973, however, the government announced its intention to publish a new collection with the aim of providing documents from the post-war period; *Documents on British Policy Overseas* (DBPO) began with the Potsdam Conference in July 1945. DBPO continues to be published today along thematic rather than chronological lines.[48]

[48] For more on DBPO see FCO Historical Branch, "Occasional Papers, No.9 Documents on British Policy Overseas Publishing Policy and Practice", January 1995, *issuu.com/fcohistorians/docs/hpop_9*, accessed 13/06/2015.

The focus on DBFP and DBPO meant that little was produced by the historians that offered an analysis of history or identified lessons for the future. Rohan Butler, who became the senior editor of DBFP in 1955, argued that this provided "a balanced view of British foreign policy" and this stance continued throughout the 20th century into the 1980s.[49] As late as 1989 Patricia Barnes of the FCO Library and Records Department defended this approach stating that the role of Whitehall was "to get the records into the public domain. Interpretation of their content and speculation about what was recorded is for those who visit the Public Record Office".[50] Although the FCO in-house historians' role has now expanded and includes additional publications across a range of topics – which are written as narratives and often in the form of much shorter essays or occasional papers – their main activity remains the publication of DBPO.[51]

In the MoD, one maxim has always been that the military only study their last war and thus do poorly in the next. In fact, unlike in the FCO, there has been a long standing tradition of both writing and teaching history across the services. The historian Margaret Macmillan claims "Two groups in particular in our society have always taken history seriously as a guide. People in business and in the military".[52] In fact, unlike the FCO historians who were publishing for public consumption, the primary objectives of the historical branches within the MoD were to write classified histories, which provided narratives of campaigns and details on certain

[49] Butler, 8th March 1960, TNA FO370/2597.
[50] Barnes to Winchester, 2nd February 1989, TNA FCO12/183.
[51] See *issuu.com/fcohistorians#* for the latest work; FCO (n.d.) *FCO Historians*, factsheet given to the author by the FCO Historians.
[52] Margaret Macmillan, *The Uses and Abuses of History* (London: Profile Books Ltd, 2010), 150.

technical aspects such as command structures or bases.[53] Within the Army there was also a particular tradition for regimental history. Even today a paratrooper cannot receive their red beret without successfully answering some historical questions about their regiment.[54]

However, these histories were often written in a functional way and were regularly concerned with the minutiae of the operation, not longer-term trends. They were written for the sake of history, not for the sake of informing policy and the Head of the Naval Branch was quoted as having complained that "the 'proper' work of the historians was being interrupted by the volume of day-to-day questions coming in".[55] In addition, subjectivity over the selection of topics remained. Sir Michael Howard noted, in a keynote address to the first "Past Futures" conference on military history at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, that when he was a regimental historian the role was "to chronicle triumphs, not disasters. [The historian's] purpose is morale building, not dispassionate analysis, which rather limits its didactic value."[56] Brigadier General Sir James Edmonds, the man in charge of the official military histories of WWI, felt similarly. He often stated that he could not provide the entire truth in an official history because of loyalty to the service and former comrades.[57]

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[53] See, for example, TNA AIR41.
[54] Private information.
[55] Cited in Beck, *Using History*, 19.
[56] Sir Michael Howard, "Military history and the history of war", in Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich (eds.), *Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 14.
[57] B. H. Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We Learn From History?* (Marston Gate: Amazon, 2012 [1972]), 41.

Nonetheless, teaching of military history does form part of the curriculum within the service's staff colleges. There is a history department at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, there are opportunities to complete degrees in War Studies and there are many links with academic historians. In addition, staff rides to battlefields have increased over the years. These were started by the army in the 19th century to take soldiers to locations of past battles to learn the history of an operation. They were so-called because the soldiers rode their horses over the battlefield. When, in the 1990s, more joint service education began to emerge it became clear that the Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Air Force (RAF) would also benefit from training their recruits using a similar method. Now every RAF station conducts staff rides and every member of the RAF is supposed to attend a staff ride every three years.[58]

Within the IC very little has been published in terms of histories. Some history of intelligence during WWII has been published but many documents have remained classified.[59] For example, a number of reports related to cracking the enigma code were only released to the public in 2011.[60] Besides the official history volumes on British intelligence in WWII there have only been three official histories produced, all published within the last five years.[61] This is

[58] Private information.
[59] Of particular note are the volumes of work produced by F. H. Hinsley. See, for example, F. H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War, Volume 1: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations* (London: HMSO, 1979).
[60] For more on this see Richard J. Aldrich, "Policing the Past: Official History, Secrecy and British Intelligence since 1945", *English Historical Review*, (2004) 119/483, 922-953.
[61] Christopher Andrew, *Defence of the Realm* (London: Penguin, 2010); Keith Jeffrey, *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011); Michael S. Goodman, *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee: Volume I: From the Approach of the Second World War to the Suez Crisis* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).

perhaps inevitable given that it was not until 1992 that the name of the head of MI5 was first revealed, Stella Rimington, with the SIS only being officially recognised as existing for the first time through the words "There shall continue to be a Secret Intelligence Service" in the 1994 Intelligence Services Act.

Instead, the IC has relied exclusively upon a few, limited, internal histories but has not benefited from a British equivalent of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) journal *Studies in Intelligence*.[62] A handful of specific reports have also been produced after disasters, including the 1968 Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and the 1973 Syrian and Egyptian attacks on Israel in an endeavour to identify lessons for the future.[63]

However, unlike in the MoD, in the past no training programmes have existed for IC recruits which looked at history. Often training was focused upon more technical aspects, particularly for those starting employment at GCHQ.[64] Nonetheless, as intelligence analysts examine current and past evidence in order to try to assess the present and anticipate the future course of events, there are a number of similarities between the approach to researching a problem and the approach of the historian. Consequently, the lessons of history should always be enshrined in their assessments.[65]

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[62] A number of which are now declassified and can be found at TNA KV4.
[63] Private information.
[64] Private information.
[65] For more on this analogy see Michael Herman, "What can intelligence analysts learn from historians (and from international relations academics)?", background paper, (2008), *www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/Research/OIG/Documents/meh%20website%20view%20on%20historians.pdf*, accessed 09/12/2014.

Overall, each of the three main overseas security bodies have approached history, and learning from it, very differently. The question is whether, as a result of different approaches and methods, there is a noticeable difference in the ongoing application of the lessons of history? Does, for example, the history formally taught to officers in the Staff College ever get used within policy planning? Is it utilitarian as well as educational? Are the histories written by the in-house historians within the FCO referred to in strategy meetings and policy planning? Is there a link between the investment in history and lesson-learning? And, if this is the endeavour of these departments, what could they learn from the way each other conducts history and lesson-learning? A comparison of these departments in their approach and methods of learning from history across time will endeavour to reveal answers to these questions.

1.4 Learning from interventions in the Middle East

In order to provide a clear comparison of learning from history in British overseas security case studies will be examined focusing on the handling of crises and subsequent military interventions. This has been selected for a number of reasons. Firstly, crises and interventions are key events in the history of British overseas security, and there have been a number from which to select relevant case studies for analysis. As a result, there have also been many past examples from which policy-makers could have drawn lessons to inform their decisions. Secondly, the nature of crises and interventions leads to the involvement of all three institutions; the FCO, MoD and IC. Each institution is involved before, during and after the intervention. Thirdly, such events often have a clear start and end point and are often relatively short-term international events. The start point provides a time from which analysis of learning can begin. The end point, more critically, provides a clear

break for politicians and civil servants to reflect upon the recent events and attempt to draw lessons. Events which do not have such a clear end point offer less incentive for this form of reflection.

The focus of these case studies will be limited by geographical region to the Middle East (for more on the specific case study selection rationale see 3.3.2). This geographic boundary had been selected because the British have a long and intimate history with the region from which to draw lessons.[66] Additionally, there have been many crises and interventions in the area from which to choose case studies for comparison. Furthermore, the region maintains contemporary relevance for British overseas security as British combat troops only left Iraq in 2009, with the RN remaining until 2011 to train Iraqi sailors. The escalating crises in Syria and Iraq also open the possibility of commencing a new intervention in the region in the near future. Consequently, researching learning from the history of British actions in this region not only allows up-to-date research to be conducted but also ensures that the findings of this research will have contemporary relevance for policy-makers.

[66] As early as 1875 Britain bought Egypt's shares in the Suez Canal in order to safeguard the passageway to the imperial jewel and trading post of India. A year later Britain and France took control of Egypt's treasury, ports, railways, post offices and customs. By 1882 British troops had seized control of the canal and the country, following the Anglo-Egyptian War. Britain was also responsible for the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in WWI, the occupation of a significant amount of territory in the region – following the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 – and the establishment of the state of Israel and subsequent 1947 partition of Palestine. Iraq was under a British mandate until 1932, Jordan until 1946 and Israel until 1948. Following the end of WWII the British stationed troops in Egypt until 1956, maintained the Aden protectorate in Yemen until 1963 and only finally withdrew from Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 1971.

1.5 Learning from history after Suez

This research will specifically examine case studies of British intervention in the Middle East after Suez because the 1956 crisis was a watershed moment. The handling of the crisis was a key turning point in British overseas security policy in the region but it was also significant as a seismic low point for drawing lessons from the events.[67] Despite Anthony Nutting, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs who was privy and opposed to all of the secrets of Suez, quoting Rudyard Kipling's famous poem about the Boer War to describe the events as providing "no end of a lesson", very few formal attempts were made to identify lessons for the future.[68]

As already outlined, Suez was notably rejected as a topic for an official history. It was also not considered for the 1957 pilot history project, which was completed on the 1951 Abadan crisis instead. In addition, there was no official inquiry into Suez and the lessons which could be drawn, despite much clamour from parliament. Initially the grounds for denying such an inquiry were stated to be that "The Government do not believe an inquiry should take place into a matter which is primarily the responsibility of the Government".[69] However, as time passed, calls for an inquiry led to various reasons for its dismissal. In 1960, PM Harold Macmillan denied the benefit of learning from the history of Suez and declared that he could not conceive of "any purpose, national or international, that can be served".[70] Furthermore, in the run up to

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[67] For details on the Suez crisis see Keith Kyle, *Suez* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003); W. Scott Lucas, *Britain and Suez: The Lion's Last Roar* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-1956* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963).

[68] Anthony Nutting, *No End of A Lesson: The Story of Suez* (London: Constable and Company, 1967).

[69] Rab Butler, Hansard (Commons), DLX, c22, 22nd November 1956.

[70] Harold Macmillan, Hansard (Commons), DCXX, c231, 22nd March 1960.

the 1959 debate on the Anglo-Egyptian Financial Agreement, when the Suez question was likely to be revisited, Sir Norman Brook produced a memorandum on the precedent of inquiries which concluded that since criticism was towards the honour of ministers, rather than their professional wisdom, any debate should be confined to the floor of the House of Commons rather than an inquiry.[71]

The FCO also did not wish to support an external inquiry. It was concerned that an inquiry would reopen wounds which it was trying to repair, particularly with the US, and would only serve to bolster the support of President Nasser of Egypt.[72] Even ten years later the Foreign Secretary (FS), George Brown, informed Richard Crossman, the Chair of the Cabinet's Legislation Committee, that he believed any inquiry into Suez would have harmful effects worldwide. He concluded that in no country would such an inquiry bring Britain any benefit.[73]

Consequently, the power of politics and diplomacy overtook learning from the past. The only time an inquiry was seriously considered by the Government was ten years later, in the summer of 1966, when the escalating sterling crisis made the revival of the Suez debate seem like an appealing distraction.[74]

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[71] Brook to Macmillan, memorandum B, 5th March 1959, TNA PREM11/2653.
[72] FCO, 19th December 1956, TNA CAB195/15; Reid to Trend, 9th May 1966, TNA CAB103/598; Cabinet Office to Crossman, 14th November 1965, TNA CAB165/109.
[73] Brown to Crossman, 5th October 1966, TNA FO800/983.
[74] Correspondence between Nicholls and Gore-Booth, 28th and 30th September 1966, TNA FO370/2911.

Internally, key figures within the FCO also refused to examine lessons from Suez. Upon completion of the Abadan project, the FS, Michael Stewart, inquired whether a similar review could be conducted of Suez:

> "I would be grateful if you would consider whether a similar confidential report could be prepared within the Foreign Office on the lessons of Suez. I am not thinking of a full official enquiry which would no doubt require a tribunal and affidavits. Nor am I thinking of going outside the Diplomatic Service, but I think that there would be value in a study of Suez to see what material is available both written and oral within the Service. This might be of use when the time comes for a fuller analysis to be done of Suez. I think also that just as we have learned some useful lessons from Abadan, so something worthwhile could emerge from a study of Suez".[75]

As a result, whilst Stewart recognised the difficulty of a formal inquiry he appreciated the benefit of learning from history. He also explicitly stated a desire for Suez to be explored as well as suggesting that a fuller analysis would be completed at a later time. Nonetheless, the FS was still aware of the sensitivity of the topic and had no intention of the history becoming public. He stated "this would have to be done most carefully because I am sure it would be most unfortunate if the fact that this study was being undertaken became public knowledge."[76]

However, FCO Permanent Under-Secretary Paul Gore-Booth was quick to dissuade the Secretary of State from pursuing the matter further and went on to explain that, even if he wished to produce an

[75] Stewart to Gore-Booth, 5th July 1965, TNA FO370/2807.
[76] Stewart to Gore-Booth, 5th July 1965, TNA FO370/2807.

internal history equivalent to that of Abadan, any investigation would prove difficult as little evidence had been retained. Indeed it would be found that "sometime after the nationalisation the records would, so to speak, thin out and that on the crucial events leading up to the hostilities there would be no confidential evidence in the Foreign Office official archives at all".[77] This concurred with Sir Norman Brook's declaration that "Damned good care has been taken to see that the whole truth never does emerge".[78] As a result, the FS felt that "while in due course the true story ought to be told" in the circumstances "the only way to get at the true history of events would be to have a formal tribunal before which people would be compelled to give evidence".[79] However, Brook argued that such an inquiry "would look like a vindictive diversion of time and effort".[80] Consequently, the matter of producing an internal history on Suez was promptly dropped without further recorded discussion.

The MoD had some minor success at drawing lessons from the events of 1956 and Operation Musketeer, the codename for the intervention, but lesson-learning remained limited. On 4th February 1957 separate loose minutes were sent to all of the major departments involved in Musketeer to announce a cross departmental lesson initiative and the collection of "major lessons...which you consider could be drawn from the operation, other than purely departmental matters with which you are dealing yourself".[81]

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[77] Stewart to Gore-Booth, 5th July 1965, TNA FO370/2807.
[78] Peter Beck, "'The Less Said about Suez the Better': British Governments and the Politics of Suez's History, 1956-67", *English Historical Review*, (2009) 124/508, 605.
[79] Beck, "The Less Said", 605.
[80] Beck, "The Less Said", 605.
[81] N.a, loose minute, 4th February 1957, TNA WO32/16731/6A.

The response to the request resulted in the collection of historical lessons across the defence departments through reports submitted by the Directors in the War Office, General Officers Commanding in Chief of Home Commands and the Commander of 2 (British) Corps. These were then collated into a paper, *Lessons from Operation Musketeer*, by the Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Lieutenant General Sir Richard Hull.[82] Although this revealed a commitment to learning, it was nonetheless a restricted exercise with the resultant paper circulated in the War Office but given very limited distribution. Whilst some effort was taken to implement the lessons, it was suggested that the list of lessons identified were not tabled at the Executive Committee of the Army Council (ECAC) meeting for any further discussion.[83]

Concurrently, the Commander in Chief (C-in-C) of Allied Forces, General Sir Charles Keightley, prepared his own despatch on the Suez campaign, the second section of which offered a critical analysis of the lessons of Suez, including the lack of political direction, the use of psychological warfare and the impact of world opinion.[84] However, in May 1957, it was proposed by the MoD that the despatch should be published. PM Harold Macmillan was horrified by the suggestion and an order by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff was quickly made to withdraw all of the circulated copies of Keightley's report.[85] After some persuasion by

[82] The Executive Committee of the Army Council (ECAC), n.d. TNA WO32/16731.
[83] Thompson, loose minute, 9th June 1957, TNA WO32/16731.
[84] See TNA DEFE7/1736; these lessons were examined by the Chiefs of Staff (COS) and studies were commissioned to follow-up on a number of points, Croly, minute from COS (57) 85th meeting, 22nd January 1958, TNA DEFE11/137.
[85] N.a., loose minute, 3rd May 1957, TNA WO32/21899/10A.

the MoD's Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Sir Richard Powell, Macmillan agreed to the report publication on the understanding that it was to provide a purely factual and military-focused account.[86] More specifically, the version was to be "harmless", not give rise to "public difficulties", "political controversy" nor "friction in foreign relations".[87] In order to enforce such requirements the despatch had to be personally approved by Macmillan, the FS, the Secretary of State for Defence and the former PM, Anthony Eden himself. As a result, the second part of the despatch, where historical learning was the most prominent, was not published. Consequently, despite the best attempts of the MoD to distribute lessons widely, politics again won precedent over history.

The question of an internal Suez study reappeared in 1963 when the Chiefs of Staff (COS) approved a study by the Combined Staff College. This was the perfect opportunity for the MoD to utilise historical learning in the training of their personnel and would provide a method to ensure the lessons of Suez were not forgotten. However, even six years later, Macmillan's view had not changed. He instructed the study to be abandoned immediately and his decision came to be considered as a comprehensive ban across Whitehall for any such study of the Suez crisis.[88]

Subsequently, even though the MoD was more inclined to learn lessons from Suez internally than the FCO, through reports and inquiries, it was nonetheless constrained by ministers and policy-makers from achieving wide-ranging lesson-learning. Furthermore, the restrictions on learning from history imposed upon the MoD

[86] Powell to Sandys, 28th June 1957, TNA DEFE7/1736.
[87] Macmillan to Brook, 25th July 1957, TNA PREM11/1130.
[88] Trend, minute, 28th March 1963, TNA CAB164/1357; Mountbatten to Scott, 5th April 1963, TNA CAB164/1357.

dampened the enthusiasm for writing any form of internal history of the Suez campaign, which may have been utilised as a tool for lesson-learning. Whilst the Working Party on Joint Service In-House Histories recognised the importance of historical learning, whereby "histories should help solve the problems of the future by disseminating the lessons of the recent past", they still shied away from tackling the thorny topic of Suez.[89] Even as late as 1973, despite sufficient military records existing for a MoD history of Suez, the Working Party concluded "Suez would have to be excluded because of political sensitivity".[90] It also reported that even a purely military history of Suez would "meet difficulties".[91]

Little had changed five years later, in 1978, when the concerns over the ramifications of producing a history of Suez remained prevalent. In writing to the Head of the Air Historical Branch Lieutenant Colonel T. M. P. Stevens emphasised the legal issues surrounding the internal history programmes, with a specific reference to Suez:

> "even 'in house' documents which impugn someone's character or reputation are open to damages. We have to think about reflections upon both individuals and organisations...We must also consider implied criticisms: for example, regarding the History of RAF Policy, it would be amazing if the top people in the MOD did not make mistakes in the difficult time from 1956."[92]

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[89] Working Party meeting on Joint Service Histories, 2nd March 1973, TNA DEFE24/649.
[90] Stevens, note, 26th March 1973, TNA DEFE24/649; Working Party meeting on Joint Service Histories, 2nd March 1973, TNA DEFE24/649.
[91] Enclosure 1 to COS 1187/131, 13th April 1973, TNA DEFE24/649.
[92] Stevens to Head of Air Historical Branch, 29th November 1978, TNA DEFE71/242/84.

This also revealed one of the many difficulties in drawing lessons from history, the requirement for self-reflexivity and acceptance of criticism. Therefore, even though the Air Historical Branch Steering Committee recognised that the history programme was beneficial to "meet a genuine professional need of the RAF and of the Air Force Department" and Suez offered some important and relevant historical lessons, it was rejected as a subject for a standalone history.[93] Even with the protection of classification and a distribution list as low as 200, the lessons of Suez through internal histories was abandoned.

A number of senior MoD members believed that the unique circumstances of Suez left little worth in studying the lessons of the operation. In response to the School of Land and Air Warfare request for an account of the events it was stated "I don't see that the peculiar circumstances of the [M]usketeer operation afford good cause for altering general doctrine and policy".[94] In answer to whether Air Chief Marshal Sir Thomas Prickett had learned any lessons from Suez he advised "I don't think I did, because the whole thing was Alice-in-Wonderland to start off with and it was highly unlikely that anything like this was ever going to take place again".[95]

Within the IC there was some endeavour to learn lessons from the crisis but these were less significant than those within the MoD. On 26th November 1956 a request was made for a report to be produced on the indications of Soviet penetration in the Middle East. When the report was presented the conclusions offered a small

[93] Stevens to Head of Air Historical Branch, 22nd November 1978, TNA DEFE71/242/80.
[94] N.a., 28th November 1956, TNA WO32/21899.
[95] Air Marshal Sir Frederick B Sowrey (ed.), "Seminar – Suez 1956", *Royal Air Force Historical Society Journal*, (1988) 3 (January), 67.

review of past intelligence assessments.[96] Similarly, a report on 13th December 1956 reconsidered the likelihood of chains of circumstances and miscalculations leading to a global war and concluded that, contrary to a previous analysis on the Suez crisis, the Soviet Union did not have vital interests in the Middle East for which they were likely to invoke military action.[97] Finally, in a report of January 1957, which reassessed Soviet aims post-Suez, the final clause offered the most reflective statement on learning by the IC; the Suez crisis had been a traumatic experience for all of the British government and the principal lesson was not to let such a thing happen again.[98]

In fact, following Suez, the IC continued to experience remarkable continuity. The business of focusing on the Cold War and Soviet threat remained as it had before Suez as revealed by the JIC immediate post-Suez assessment into Soviet aims and the effect of the Suez crisis.[99] In addition, a number of the pre-Suez crisis operations quickly resumed, with the search for an alternative government to Nasser, known as the "Restoration Plot", continuing into the premiership of Macmillan.[100] Even relations with the CIA remained relatively unaffected with a CIA representative continuing to sit in on JIC meetings when much of the US administration refused to talk to London.[101] In fact, the political quarantine placed by Eisenhower on the Eden government lifted partially in an effort

[96] JIC(56)123, 6th December 1956, TNA CAB158/26.
[97] JIC(56)136, 13th December 1956, TNA CAB158/26.
[98] JIC(56)133, 1st January 1957, TNA CAB158/26.
[99] JIC(56)133, 1st January 1957, TNA CAB158/26.
[100] For more on this see Kyle, *Suez*, 149.
[101] Richard J. Aldrich, Rory Cormac and Michael S. Goodman, *Spying on the World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 429-430.

to reignite a joint intelligence operation in Syria, Operation Straggle.[102]

The most significant impact of learning resulted in a structural change to the central intelligence organisation whereby the JIC was moved from subservience of the COS to within the Cabinet Office structure. During Suez, the denial of SIS existence and subsequent lack of structure and formality had resulted in actions taking place beyond the supervision of the FCO and the Cabinet. In particular, it had allowed PM Anthony Eden to circumnavigate the officials at the FCO and work directly with the SIS and the new structure aimed to rectify this loophole.

Consequently, despite some attempts from within Whitehall, after the Suez crisis learning from history was limited. The government refused to examine the recent events and blocked official histories being written along with the publication or wide circulation of reports which considered what could be learned. In some ways this was surprising, given that Suez had been such a catastrophic disaster for the government, as there were many lessons to be learned. In other ways it was not surprising at all; having suffered significant embarrassment there was little desire to further dissect British failures by considering the lessons to be learned. Suez, therefore, provides a critical juncture within British overseas security both due to its impact on policy and contradictory lack of formal learning from the events. It is therefore an analysis of learning from history post-Suez from which this research will commence.

[102] Scott Lucas and Alistair Morey, "The Hidden 'Alliance': The CIA and MI6 before and after Suez", *Intelligence and National Security*, (2000) 15/2, 111-112.

1.6 The structure of the thesis

In order to answer the question "Does learning from history occur in British overseas security?" current learning literature and research will initially be examined. Consequently, chapter two will consider the current literature in three stages. Firstly, literature on learning and learning from history will be drawn upon to establish an understanding of current and previous definitions of "learning from history". This will include examining research in the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, organisation theory and education studies. Secondly, specific literature on learning from history in international relations and British overseas security will be assessed and utilised to situate this thesis within the wider body of existing research. It will also be used to consider current research findings, which may be challenged or built-upon, and some of the difficulties involved in conceptualising and researching "learning from history" in this particular field. Finally, the literature on the four case studies selected for this research will be examined.

Following the literature review, chapter three will define additional research questions to be examined within this project. It will also build upon and develop the existing literature on learning from history to consider the question of what "learning from history" means. This definition will then be operationalised to form a framework for analysis which will include establishing "who" is the agent of analysis within British overseas security (the learner) and "what" is the process of learning from history to be analysed. Chapter three will also establish an appropriate research design and the rationale for the selection of the four case studies. The research methods will be stated and assessed for limitations and consideration will be given to research ethics.

Chapters four, five, six and seven will each focus upon the analysis of learning from history in a specific case study. These will be considered chronologically; Jordan 1958, Kuwait 1961, Gulf War 1990-1991, Iraq War 2003-2009. Each chapter will provide a brief historical background to the specific crisis and intervention before commencing investigation and analysis. In each case all three of the overseas security bodies will be assessed during different stages of the operation; before, during and after the intervention. By questioning *whether* learning occurred and investigating *how* it occurred, rather than suggesting what lessons could or should have been learned, this research will provide a new approach to the examination of the lessons of history and the particular case studies which have been analysed.

Finally, chapter eight will draw conclusions. It will revisit the original research questions and summarise key findings and themes to scrutinise the rhetorical claims from politicians that "lessons have been learned" and simultaneously question the common perception from the public and the media that "we don't learn". In addition, just as this project is *about* learning from the past in order to inform the future, so it is also the *objective* of this project; to look at learning from history in order to improve it moving forward. By comparing the three overseas security bodies their different approaches will be examined and assessed in order to provide practical suggestions for development in the future.

Chapter 2: Learning from history and a review of the literature

> "Whosoever wishes to foretell the future must consider the past, for human events ever resemble those of preceding times".
> (Niccolò Machiavelli, c.1517)[103]

Learning from history has never been fully examined in the British context. Although the nature of history and the possibility to learn from it has been debated amongst philosophers and historians for centuries there has been very little application of this debate to studies of policy-making. Where literature exists it has tended to focus upon learning in British domestic or public policy-making, whereas learning from history in foreign and security policy has been almost exclusively researched by American academics examining the American experience.[104] In these cases the work has primarily examined well known foreign policy failures – the appeasement of Germany, the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the Bay of Pigs, Vietnam – and critiqued the failure to learn specific lessons rather than examining the process of learning itself.

This chapter will explore the broad literature on learning from history, across a number of different disciplines, to consider varying approaches and definitions, the unit of analysis for learning (the learner) and how learning occurs. This will then be used to inform the operationalising of learning and the methodological approach

[103] Cited in Bernard Crick, "Introduction" in Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (London: Penguin, 1983 [1531]), 50.
[104] See, for example, Mark Bovens and Paul Hart, *Understanding Policy Fiascos* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1998); Eve Gregory and Ann Williams, *City Literacies: Learning to Read Across Generations and Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2000).

designed for this research (see chapter three). In addition the limited literature on learning from history in international relations will be examined. An analysis of current findings and methodologies will be assessed and drawn upon to inform the development of an analytical framework but will also serve to situate this research within its wider academic context. Finally, literature on the four specific case studies for this research will be investigated to establish how these events have been previously analysed and whether any authors have considered learning from history within their analysis of the interventions.

2.1 Learning from history within the wider literature

Outside of international relations there is considerably more research on learning from history. Amongst others, cognitive psychologists have used the concept of learning from history in the study of human mental processes,[105] behavioural psychologists have examined learning from past experiences in animals,[106] learning has been applied in economic game theories to develop decision-making models,[107] evolutionary biologists have theorised learning in the development of ideas and the passing of culture[108] and cybernetic theorists have analysed the ability of machines to learn from past experiences.[109]

However, the literature frequently concedes that learning from history is not easy and neither is its study. Research has emerged

[105] Jean Piaget, *Psychology of the Child* (New York: Basic Books, 1972).
[106] I. P. Pavlov, *Conditioned Reflexes* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960).
[107] Drew Fudenberg and David K. Levine, *The Theory of Learning in Games* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998).
[108] Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).
[109] John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

which critiques the existing analysis of learning as a result of the methodological challenges it presents. This literature emphasises the notorious difficulties in operationalising the concept of learning. Jack Levy, for example, claims that studying learning in foreign policy is a "minefield" and questions whether individuals genuinely learn from historical experience or use history instrumentally to support their existing biases.[110] Philip Tetlock calls learning "an elusive concept" and stresses that the lessons of history are subjective and that there is difficulty in establishing a causal relationship between inferences of learning from history, the effect on beliefs and policy preferences, and policy outcomes.[111]

2.1.1 Defining "learning from history"

The study of learning from the past can be traced back to the epistemological debates of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Since then, researchers and theorists have utilised the concept of learning from history to examine, explain or predict occurrences across a variety of academic disciplines. However, despite this long tradition no agreed definition of learning from history exists. Instead, there are a wide range of definitions which take into account varying degrees of cognitive processing, effect and accuracy.

For some theorists, particularly cognitivists, learning is defined as the appropriation of new knowledge.[112] This definition focuses upon the cognitive structure of individuals and does not require knowledge to be utilised to qualify as having been learned. It

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[110] Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield", *International Organization*, (1994) 48/2, 279-312.
[111] P. E. Tetlock, "Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy: In Search of an Elusive Concept", in G. Breslauer & P. E. Tetlock (eds.) *Learning in US and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991), 20-61.
[112] Robert P. Abelso et al. (eds.), *Theories of Cognitive Consistency* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1968).

recognises that individuals can be closed-minded about the way they process information and how it may affect their beliefs and their behaviour, but that such closed-mindedness does not forego new knowledge having been learned.[113] However, this understanding of learning causes a number of difficulties and implications for research. If learning is defined as a process within itself, without the necessity to act as a causal mechanism, learning has no necessary impact and cannot be subject to empirical testing. Furthermore, without a definition allowing for an impact, the importance of learning for actors becomes void.

A number of social psychologists define learning as occurring when new knowledge affects behaviour.[114] Peter Hall, for example, suggests "Learning is conventionally said to occur when individuals assimilate new information, including that based on past experience, and apply it to their subsequent actions".[115] This definition resonates with realists (for whom learning occurs when states change their actions in the international system)[116] and organisational theorists (who define learning as involving changes in institutional procedures).[117] In addition, the change in behaviour provides an observation from which researchers can consider

[113] J. A. Rosati, "A cognitive approach to the study of foreign policy" in Laura Neack, Jeanne Hay and Patrick Haney (eds.) *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in its Second Generation*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 50.
[114] George Siemens, "Connectivism: A Learning Theory for the Digital Age", *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, (2005) 2/1, n.p.
[115] Peter A. Hall, "Policy Paradigms, Social Learning and the State: The Case of Economic Policymaking in Britain", *Comparative Politics*, (1993) 25/3, 278.
[116] Russell J. Leng, "When Will They Ever Learn? Coercive Bargaining in Recurrent Crises", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, (1983) 27/3, 379-419.
[117] Pertti H. Lounamaa and James G. March, "Adaptive Coordination of a Learning Team", *Management Science*, (1987) 33/1, 107-108.

whether learning has occurred. The educational psychologist Edgar Stones emphasises that the definition of learning is wrapped up in the research of learning and claims "Learning is an active process and we cannot say whether learning has taken place unless we actually observe a change in behaviour".[118] Within overseas security this would be most explicitly observed through a change of policy.

On the other hand, constructivist scholars have argued that learning may not be defined by an effect on behaviour but must be defined by an effect on beliefs. Jack Levy defines learning as "a change of beliefs (or the degree of confidence in one's beliefs) or the development of new beliefs".[119] This understanding of learning is important in economics, where experiences strengthen and weaken beliefs but belief learning has only an indirect influence on behaviour.[120] It is also particularly useful to political psychologists who have revealed a tendency of decision-makers to fall back on their beliefs as a coping mechanism in deliberating policy preferences, especially in uncertain situations such as overseas security.[121]

However, Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane identify the complexity of belief systems and conclude that there are three types of beliefs which can be affected; world views which connect to ideas of identity such as religion, principles beliefs which are normative ideas for distinguishing right from wrong and casual

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[118] Edgar Stones, *An Introduction to Educational Psychology* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1966), 51.
[119] Levy, "Conceptual Minefield", 283.
[120] Reinhard Selton, "Evolution, Learning and Economic Behaviour", *Games and Economic Behaviour*, (1991) 3/1, 14.
[121] Dan Reiter, "Learning, Realism, and Alliances: The Weight of the Shadow of the Past", *World Politics*, (1994) 46/4, 256.

beliefs about cause-effect relationships.[122] Yet the extent to which learning from the past is able to affect any of these types of beliefs is questionable. Joseph Nye suggests that belief systems are used as a filter by which learners can learn what they want from history; "Learning is frequently blocked by the affective or power aspects of prior beliefs".[123] Philip Tetlock supports this view and argues "Belief systems may facilitate the learning of lessons consistent with the underlying assumptions but impede the learning of anything else".[124]

A number of sceptics have also argued that lessons from history are used instrumentally as a form of rhetoric or rationale to support existing behaviour and policy preferences. Arthur Schlesinger, on reviewing Ernest May's book *"Lessons" of the Past*, claimed "The past is an enormous grab bag with a prize for everybody. The issue of history as rationalization somewhat diminishes the force of the argument that history is per se a powerful formal determinant of policy".[125] Jack Levy also emphasises this issue and states that in order to ensure that learning has a causal impact, research designs must allow analysts to differentiate between genuine and instrumental use of history through reasonable hypotheses on the sources of learning.[126] Although this is difficult, Levy suggests that it is surmountable through a research design that incorporates longitudinal and comparative studies, an approach taken by Yuen

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[122] Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (eds.), *Ideas and Foreign Policy* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 8-10.
[123] Joseph S. Nye, "Nuclear learning and US-Soviet security regimes", *International Organization*, (1987) 41/3, 398.
[124] Tetlock, "Elusive Concept", 28.
[125] Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr, "Review: 'Lessons of the Past' The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy", *The Journal of American History*, (1974) 61/2, 444.
[126] Levy, "Conceptual Minefield", 307-308.

Foong Khong in his analysis of the use of historical analogies by US political elites in the Korean and Vietnam wars.[127]

For other scholars the definition of learning has a teleological condition. The acquisition of new knowledge which changes behaviour or beliefs is not enough. Instead, new knowledge must cause change in a manner that is accurate, corrective or increases effectiveness or efficiency in order to be defined as learning.[128] For those that employ an accuracy criterion, learning has only occurred if a greater understanding of the world is achieved from new knowledge. As a result, the content of the cognitive change becomes important and the literature provides a plethora of examples where "lessons from history" have been incorrectly applied and would therefore not be defined as learning.[129] These scholars also argue that the inclusion of this criterion has the benefit of differentiating learning from belief change and paranoid thinking.[130] However, this definition causes the problem of a normative understanding of what is deemed "accurate". A standard of accuracy of learning would need to be designed for application to scenarios where there is no clear success or failure outcome.

On the other hand, the inclusion of an efficiency criterion removes the normative element of accuracy and instead focuses upon goal achievement. Tetlock explains that learning in this sense can occur in two distinct forms; by discovering more effective strategies for pursuing goals or by redefining goals in more realistic ways.[131] For

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[127] Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
[128] Tetlock, "Elusive Concept", 22.
[129] May, *'Lessons' of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), ix-xi.
[130] Levy, "Conceptual Minefield", 292.
[131] Tetlock, "Elusive Concept", 35.

researchers, a definition of learning which includes efficiency can be measured, often suiting quantitative analysis. However, this is only the case when goals are tangible and explicit. Consequently, it is often more straightforward in the research of organisations and institutions than individual policy-makers.

Some international relations theorists also incorporate a level of accuracy, efficiency and change in behaviour into their definition of learning. For realists learning is often defined in game theory terms as responding to structural changes in the international environment.[132] Neorealists expand on this definition by stressing the response to structural incentives of reward and punishment in the international system to certain policies and equate the ability to learn from the past with the ability to survive.[133] In liberalism the definition of learning begins to incorporate the influence of society and the development of institutions. Therefore, the definition of learning extends beyond the international environment and focuses on the development of the concept of the "national interest" through the interaction of international and domestic politics to redefine systems.[134]

In complete contrast to all of the previously discussed definitions, a number of scholars define learning by differentiating it from other concepts, in particular the concepts of change,[135] adaption[136] and evolution.[137] For example, economists concerned with Bayesian

[132] Nye, "Nuclear learning", 372.
[133] Tetlock, "Elusive Concept", 24-27.
[134] Nye, "Nuclear learning", 372-373.
[135] Levy, "Conceptual Minefield", 290.
[136] Ernst B. Haas, *When Knowledge Is Power* (California: University of California Press, 1990), 3.
[137] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 58-89.

learning associate learning with constantly changing one's prior beliefs.[138] However, from a research point of view, change can occur as a result of the impact of a number of variables of which learning may be one. For example, in organization theory it is stressed that change can occur due to personnel shifts, imposed legislation and unintended consequences. Similarly, actors may learn from history but be prevented from initiating change or having a situation whereby such learning may be applied to create change due to economic or organisational restrictions. Furthermore, learning may reinforce existing beliefs, structures and decisions and therefore may not result in change. Consequently change and learning must not be used interchangeably.

Ernest B. Haas' definition of learning is dependent upon differentiation from the concept of adaption.[139] He defined the difference in terms of its dependence on new knowledge. For him, adaption is when new knowledge causes behaviour changes as actors add new activities without examining underlying theories. Values and purposes are not questioned and the emphasis is placed on means rather than ends. In contrast, learning is defined as when new knowledge causes behaviour change whereby actors question their original implicit theories and values. Therefore, Haas defines learning in terms of the re-evaluation of beliefs, methods and goals.

David Ucko and Robert Egnell also define learning as different to adaption.[140] For them the distinction between the two is that adaption comes from the bottom-up. In military terms this means

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[138] Ward Edwards, Harold Lindman and Leonard Savage, "Bayesian Statistical Inference for Psychological Research", *Psychological Review*, (1963) 70/3, 193-242.
[139] Haas, *Knowledge is Power*, 3.
[140] David H. Ucko and Robert Egnell, *Counterinsurgency in Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

changes to tactics, techniques and procedures implemented on the ground during operations. Learning, on the other hand, comes from the top-down and is the institutionalising of these practices through training, doctrine, education and force structure. However, this defines learning as a particular type of knowledge, which is knowledge that can be explicitly stated, and denies that tacit knowledge can also be learning. It does not consider that both bottom-up and top-down learning can be forms of learning, with bottom-up lessons equally capable of institutionalising practices.

Learning has also been distinguished from the concept of evolution or selection. In evolution there is a form of progression whereby certain actors or, in the case of memetics, ideas, survive over others. For Donald Campbell, learning is connected to this notion of evolution and is defined as a process by which the learner comes to have increased correspondence with the environment in order to survive the process of natural selection.[141] However, this definition can be considered as a process of instinct which disregards the need for any cognitive activity. Furthermore, it fails to recognise that learning is able to occur without the elimination of alternatives.

Finally, the definition of learning has been advanced differently by both scholars and practitioners. Chris Argyris and Donald Schön identify the two approaches to defining learning; one where learning is a scholarly research topic, distant from practice, sceptical and neutral in approach and another whereby learning is practice-orientated, prescriptive and value committed.[142] The former tends to focus on skill, learning as "how" and can be overtly ideological in

[141] Wayne D. Christensen and Clifford A. Hooker, "The Organization of Knowledge: Beyond Campbell's Evolutionary Epistemology", *Philosophy of Science*, (1999) 66 (September), 245.
[142] Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schön, *Organizational Learning* (Wokingham: Addison-Wesley, 1996), xix.

definition. The latter tends to focus on information, learning as "what" and attempts to be neutral in definition. However, a definition of learning should be able to be embraced by practitioners and academics alike, incorporating information and skill, avoiding scepticism and ideology in order to appeal to both users.

Consequently, this research must take into account a number of considerations when defining learning from history. The definition must offer more than simply the appropriation of new information as this is knowledge rather than learning. Instead, learning requires an impact either immediately or in the future. The impact may be upon beliefs or behaviour but does not necessarily have to invoke change; learning from history could reinforce existing beliefs or behaviours. However, this provides some challenges for research and the operationalising of learning from history will need to take into account how research can be conducted without the observation of change.

This research also rejects the use of an accuracy or efficiency criterion within the definition of learning from history and considers that learning a lesson which results in a less desirable or equal outcome to the past is still learning nonetheless. It must also ensure that any definition distinguishes learning from other concepts including change, adaption and evolution. Although this research does not agree with the existing definitions of some of these concepts, particularly those relating to adaption, the differentiation offers more than an exploration of semantics. Instead it contributes to an important understanding of what learning is and what it can be expected to achieve. Finally, definitions have previously been criticised for being self-serving, either to scholars or practitioners. Therefore any definition must be able to be utilised in both theory and practice.

2.1.2 Establishing the learner

Many of the different approaches to defining learning exist because the definitions are designed with a particular agent of learning in mind. The agent is the "who" which learns, the learner, and the literature on learning also disagrees on this definition. In British foreign and security policy-making there are many actors which could be analysed as learners.

Traditionally, learning from history has been primarily analysed with an individual as the learner. When the nineteenth century brought about the scientific study of learning, influenced by the rationalist philosophies of Descartes and Kant and Darwin's research on evolution, psychologists began to conduct tests to examine the way in which individuals learn. Psychological approaches to learning have since influenced the analysis of learning in other disciplines, each also examining the individual as the agent of learning. These include education studies and maximising student learning through pedagogy,[143] andragogy (or learning in adults)[144] and heutagogy (or self-determined learning).[145] Economics has also adapted a notion of cognitive psychology in game theory and Bayesian statistics to theorise modifications of opinions of ideally consistent players.[146] It was also this approach which was first adopted by political scholars

[143] John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed", *School Journal*, (1897) 54, 77-80.
[144] Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education* (New York: The Adult Education Company, 1980).
[145] Chris Kenyon and Stewart Hase, "Moving from andragogy to heutagogy in vocational education", (2001) *www.avetra.org.au/abstracts_and_papers_2001/Hase-Kenyon_full.pdf*, accessed 18/10/2012.
[146] Edwards, Lindman and Savage, "Bayesian Statistical Inference".

in the analysis of learning from history by individual policy-makers.[147]

In extending the idea of the individual as a learner, social psychologists have sought to establish groups of individuals as an alternative agent of learning. Learning groups of individuals can be disparate and randomly selected and are often studied in order to understand more about the individual learner and how they are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of other learners. For social psychologists the relationship between the individual learner and the group learner can occur regardless of their similarities or differences.[148] In international relations, for example, this may take the form of socialisation and learning the norms of international organisations. In intelligence studies this idea informs the concept of "group think".

Groups of learners are also analysed to establish patterns of learning through a shared identity; for example teenagers, women, ethnic minorities, taxi drivers, knitters or dog lovers. In politics, learning in demographic groups is particularly used by electoral and domestic political analysts.[149]

Groups of individuals can also be bound as generations; groups of individuals which are within a certain age range during a particular point in time. Generations can learn differently from each other as

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[147] See, for example, May, *'Lessons'*; Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Use of History for Decision-Makers* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1986); Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1976).
[148] Lindzey Gardner and Elliot Aronson (eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, Volume I, 3rd Edition (New York: Random House Group, 1985), 3.
[149] M. E. Turner (ed.), *Groups at work: Advances in theory and research* (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001).

experience, recency of events, the impact of events during one's wakening consciousness and the impact of societal understandings can all affect what is learned.[150] Consequently, a number of studies with generations as learners have taken place in education studies,[151] economics[152] and politics.[153] The study of learning in generations also allows the examination of cross-generational learning to ensure that lessons do not get lost over time. Additionally, learning can occur incrementally, over a long period of time, and further events will impact what has been learned from a previous event. Nye claims that "some learning is discontinuous or 'lumpy'" which can provide a challenge for the researcher that can be overcome through the use of a suitable longitudinal research design and the comparison of generations as learners.[154]

The study of institutions and organisations as agents of learning has been widely adopted and applied by organisational theorists.[155] It has also been embraced by cybernetic theorists in their theories of cybernetic learning, which is focused on organisational settings.[156] Whilst individuals within an organisation must bring new skills and knowledge for organisational learning to occur, organisations offer systems, structures, resources and influences which impact upon

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[150] Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 249-250.
[151] Gregory and Williams, *City Literacies*.
[152] T. Parker Ballinger, Michael G. Palumbo and Nathaniel T. Wilcox, "Precautionary Saving and Social Learning Across Generations: An Experiment", *The Economic Journal*, (2003) 113/490, 920-947.
[153] M. Kent Jennings, Laura Stoker and Jake Bowers, "Politics Across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined", *The Journal of Politics*, (2009) 71/3, 782-799.
[154] Nye, "Nuclear learning", 398.
[155] N. Fligstein, "The Spread of Multi-Divisional Form Among Large Firms 1919-1979", *American Sociology Review*, (1985) 50, 377-391; D. Knoke, "The Spread of Municipal Reform: Temporal, Spatial, and Social Dynamics", *American Journal of Sociology*, (1982) 87, 1314-1339.
[156] Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory*, 78.

the learning of individuals.[157] These ensure that lessons are used to achieve group goals and that they are retained beyond the memory of an individual. Pedlar, Burgoyne and Boydell state "The company may be full of bright, creative, self-developing individuals but that does not mean it can learn".[158] In the analysis of learning from history in British overseas security this research has already identified that it will focus upon the work of three organisations; the FCO, MoD and IC and therefore organisational learning will be crucial.

An alternative agent of learning, used by sociologists, is society itself.[159] Society can be distinguished from groups due to its web of social relations without a necessary sense of unity. It is abstract and cannot be demographically or geographically bound. The study of society as a learner is referred to as social learning and examples include learning on the issue of slavery in the US which transformed laws, economic structures and social relationships. John Mueller in *Retreat from Doomsday* used societal learning to consider whether war could be unlearned, just as ideas of duelling and slavery have been in the past.[160]

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[157] Bo Hedberg, "How Organizations Learn and Unlearn?" in Paul C. Nyström and William H. Starbuck (eds.) *Handbook of Organizational Design* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 3–27; Paul Shrivastava, "A Typology of Organizational Learning Systems" *Journal of Management Studies*, (1983) 20/ 1, 7–28.

[158] M. Pedlar, J. Burgoyne and T. Boydell, *The Learning Company*, 2nd edition (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill, 1997), xiv.

[159] Steven J. Waddell, "Six Societal Learning Concepts for a New Era of Engagement", *Reflections,* (2002) 3/4, 18-26.

[160] John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday* (New York: Basic Books, Harper Collins, 1989), 9-13.

Finally, as previously mentioned, states have also been examined as an agent for analysis.[161] In particular, realists and neorealists focus on the role of the state but such analysis oversimplifies states as unitary learning actors without consideration of the learning dynamics from within the state. Since this research is focused exclusively on the British experience it does not offer a comparative state perspective to understanding whether there is a particularly "British way" to learn lessons from history. Instead it focuses on the different way learning from history is approached from within Whitehall and consequently states do not provide a relevant unit of analysis for this research.

In conclusion, a review of the literature reveals that there are many different learners which can be analysed. Individuals as learners, which has been embraced by the disciplines of psychology, education studies, economics and politics, is particularly relevant for this research due to the impact of certain key policy-makers and practitioners in overseas security decision-making. On the other hand, groups of learners, as used in social psychology and some political psychology, organization theory and education studies, offer a means of understanding how learning occurs across individuals in different contexts. Additionally, the study of generations provides understanding of how learning occurs between generations and over longer periods of time. Furthermore, the sociological learning unit of society could also be considered for analysis. Moreover, the analysis of organisations as learners is also significant, as the FCO, MoD and IC are the focus of this project.

[161] Leng, "Coercive Bargaining"; Nye, "Nuclear learning"; Reiter "Learning, Realism, and Alliances".

2.1.3 Examining how learning occurs

The understanding of how learning occurs, and therefore how it can be analysed, also differs across disciplines and scholars. There are a vast number of ideas about learning which are driven by differing epistemological beliefs, theoretical perspectives and understandings about the learning process.

2.1.3.1 Epistemological beliefs

In philosophy there is much debate about epistemological assumptions – or how knowledge can become known – which questions from the outset the extent to which learning can occur or lessons be learned. For philosophers there are three major epistemological approaches: rationalism, empiricism and scepticism. A fourth approach which has been termed "evolutionary" or "naturalist" epistemology has also emerged from Darwinists.

The rationalist philosophy was founded by Plato who argued that knowledge could be discovered through self-reflection. Descartes followed the Platonic, rationalist epistemology of innate knowledge and argued that ideas existed within human beings prior to experience.[162] These ideas were contrasted by empiricists, led by Aristotle, who believed that knowledge was found externally through the use of the senses. As a consequence of this epistemology a scientific method of data gathering was developed to gain knowledge about the world. Locke followed the empiricist tradition and developed the theory that individuals were born with a mind which was a "tabula rasa", or blank slate, without any pre-existing content until knowledge was gathered through

[162] René Descartes, *Mediations on First Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [1641]), 17-24.

experience.[163] These ideas were further developed by Kant who modernised the idea of rationalism and empiricism through the concept of "a priori" knowledge.[164] For Kant the two could be brought together through the understanding that experience awakens awareness of pre-existing, innate knowledge.

The third epistemological approach from the discipline of philosophy is scepticism. The sceptical conclusion is that knowledge does not exist because nothing can be known with any certainty. In particular three sceptical arguments are put forward; that one cannot know that one is not simply a brain in a vat; that having made previous errors the concept of knowledge must be mistaken; experience is not a reliable guide and, if it was, one cannot have knowledge of anything beyond one's own experience.[165] Scepticism offers a bleak picture for the concept of learning. If knowledge does not exist, it cannot be acquired and therefore learning cannot occur. It is thus rejected for use within this research.

For Darwinists, the concept of biological evolution can also be applied to epistemology. Donald T. Campbell sought to explain knowledge outside of philosophical methods of investigation by constructing an evolutionary or naturalist epistemology whereby the process of acquiring knowledge, or cognogenesis, was associated with selectionist adaption.[166] In this epistemology adaptiveness is equated to knowledge and is therefore gained through trial and error relations with the environment. This epistemology confuses

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[163] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001 [1689]), 24-72.
[164] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 [1781]).
[165] Jonathan Dancy, *Introduction To Contemporary Epistemology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 10-15.
[166] Christensen and Hooker, "The Organization of Knowledge", 237-238.

the concepts of learning and adaption which have previously been distinguished. Adaptiveness also fails to account for any form of complex cognitive processing which occurs within individuals and thus is rejected for this research.

Three further epistemological approaches have been developed by social scientists; interpretivism, positivism and realism. Positivists are ontologically foundationalist and advocate that only hypotheses confirmed by the senses, inductively or deductively, can be warranted as genuine knowledge.[167] Therefore they distinguish between scientific statements and normative statements with only scientific statements claimed to be knowledge to be learned. Interpretivists disagree. Instead, intepretivists are anti-foundationalist and believe that the world is socially constructed whereby knowledge is theoretically and discursively laden.[168] For interpretivists, there is no objective knowledge and knowledge can only be of social constructions. Realists are also ontologically foundationalist but believe there to be deep structural relationships that cannot be known through the senses but which still have an influence upon behaviour.[169] An example of such a relationship would be that of patriarchy. Therefore there is a distinction between appearance and reality and what can be known and what can be perceived. Consequently, realists oscillate between empiricism and rationalism in their approach to how knowledge is acquired. This research will draw upon the epistemology of empiricism, as knowledge can be learned from history rather than oneself but will

[167] Alan Bryman, *Social Research Strategies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 12.
[168] David Marsh and Paul Furlong, "Skin not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science" in David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.) *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 20.
[169] Marsh and Furlong, "Skin not a Sweater", 20.

take an interpretivist approach assuming that the interpretation of knowledge is a subjective experience.

2.1.3.2 Theoretical perspectives

Only once it is understood how knowledge is learned can theorists develop their approach to learning. In psychology, two distinct approaches to learning have developed from the two contrasting epistemologies; behaviourists follow the empiricist tradition, whilst cognitivists draw upon a rationalist epistemology.

The psychologists I. P. Pavlov, Edward Thorndike and B. F. Skinner followed the behaviourist approach and explored dividing this theory further to understand how learning occurs.[170] Classical conditioning, or reflex learning was explored by Pavlov and suggests that learning can occur passively through reflexes. Pavlov's experiments on dogs demonstrated that learning could occur when unconditioned stimulus, such as food, produced an unconditioned response, such as saliva. When the unconditioned stimulus was presented with a conditioned stimulus, such as a bell, eventually the conditioned stimulus would produce a conditioned response, such as salivation.[171]

Operant learning, a theory devised by Thorndike and developed by Skinner, suggests that learning occurs when the effect of an action and the consequences of a behaviour becomes reinforcing.[172] In this learning theory, behaviour followed by reward or success would be repeated, whilst behaviour not rewarded would not.[173] This was originally considered to be trial and error learning but later became

[170] Stones, *An Introduction*, 50-67.
[171] Pavlov, *Conditioned Reflexes*.
[172] Edward L. Thorndike, *Education Psychology: Briefer Course* (Florence: Routledge, 1999), 69-83.
[173] Stones, *An Introduction*, 58.

recognised as a form of instrumental learning. In contrast to classical conditioning, instrumental learning is seen as an active process.

Margaret Gredler argues that behaviourism makes three assumptions about learning; that observable behaviour is more important than understanding internal activities, behaviour should be focused upon simple elements of specific stimuli and responses and that learning is about behavioural change.[174] The definition of learning from history for this research extends beyond behaviour to include beliefs, although the importance of reward in operant behaviour may prove significant to encourage increased learning from history in the future.

Cognitivist psychologists reject the behaviourist theory of learning and follow a more rationalist epistemological approach whereby learning can be analogised to an information processing model. In cognitive theory learning is a process of inputs which are managed into short-term memory and coded for long-term recall.[175] For cognitivists, the study of how learning occurs is the study of the thought processes behind behaviour. Therefore the focus is upon the mental processes that behaviourists believe to be unknowable and learning is studied to understand its effect on a learner's perceptions, beliefs, desires, motivations and thought processes.[176] This theory, therefore, is best suited to those scholars who consider learning to be defined as a change in beliefs.

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[174] Margaret E. Gredler, *Learning and Instruction: Theory into Practice*, 5th edition (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2005).
[175] Siemens, "Connectivism".
[176] Ulric Neisser, *Cognitive Psychology* (Michigan: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967).

Jean Piaget was the first psychologist to study systematically the process of cognitive development and L. S. Vygotsky extended Piaget's work to include social and cultural cognition.[177] His work became known as Social Development Theory which suggested that learning occurs in a cultural context through social interactions. In contrast to Piaget, Vygotsky believed social learning occurred before development and as a result he placed greater emphasis upon social factors, including the role of language.

A third psychological theoretical approach, constructivism, draws upon the epistemological ideas of Kant and emphasises learning as an attempt to understand one's experiences. Learners are seen to be actively seeking meaning through real life experiences in order to construct knowledge.[178] This idea is used in andragogy and heutagogy whereby knowledge is constructed rather than transmitted.

In education studies, George Siemens has developed a further theoretical approach to understanding how learning occurs; connectivism.[179] In arguing that the digital age has changed the way in which learning takes place, Siemens draws upon chaos theory to explain that learning occurs by the connection of information. He argues "Learning (defined as actionable knowledge) can reside outside of ourselves (within an organization or a database), is focused on connecting specialized information sets, and the connections that enable us to learn more are more important than our current state of knowing." This theoretical approach is particularly useful for providing a connection between

[177] L. S. Vygotsky, *Mind In Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).
[178] D. Jonassen, "Evaluating Constructivist Learning", *Educational Technology*, (1991) 36/9, 28-33.
[179] Siemens, "Connectivism".

the analysis of individuals and the organisational structures and systems within which knowledge can be found. This is particularly relevant for understanding some of the learning methods within the FCO, MoD and IC. Therefore this research will draw upon all four theories in developing an understanding of its approach to learning from history.

2.1.3.3 The process of learning

There are a variety of processes of learning set out within the literature. For example, David Kolb's process of learning is based upon experiential learning and situates learning as a cyclical process. He argues that there are four stages of learning; concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.[180] His process has influenced education studies, psychology and organization theory.

Organizational theorists also offer processes of learning which can be used in understanding both the learning process of individuals and the structures involved in learning within organizations. In particular, Barbara Levitt and James March argue that organisational learning depends on features similar to that of an individual's memory. They distinguish a three stage organisational learning process; recording of experience, conserving the experience and retrieval of the experience.[181]

George Huber extends this work and argues that the learning process follows four stages; knowledge acquisition, information interpretation, information distribution and organizational

[180] David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (London: Prentice Hall, 1984).
[181] Barbara Levitt and James March, "Organizational Learning", *Annual Review of Sociology*, (1988) 14, 327-328.

memory.[182] For Huber, knowledge acquisition is the process by which knowledge is obtained, information interpretation the process by which information becomes understood, information distribution the process by which information is shared and organizational memory the means by which knowledge is stored for future use.[183] For lessons to become and remain learned all four stages of the process must take place. This process provides a useful framework for the analysis of learning across a number of learners.

2.2 Learning from history in international relations literature

The first analysis of learning from history in international relations came from Ernest May in his 1973 seminal work *"Lessons" of the Past*.[184] This research qualitatively examined the use of learning from history by US policy-makers and hypothesised that framers of foreign policy were influenced by beliefs about history, that history was often used incorrectly through overly-simplistic analogies and that policy-makers could use history better. May deductively tested these hypotheses through case studies from the 20th century; planning during WWII for the peace that would follow, the Cold War and the interventions in Korea and Vietnam. He concluded that the use of history was faulty in each case. He also considered the actions of specific US Presidents before demonstrating how lessons from the past could be used in a more useful and appropriate fashion. This research provided the first critical analysis of these events, which challenged the existing structural explanations of international politics. It also revealed that learning from history had become an important part of policy decision-making but that policy-makers made bad historical analyses in times of crisis.

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[182] George P. Huber, "Organizational Learning: The Contributing Processes and the Literatures", *Organization Science*, (1991) 2/1, 88.
[183] Huber, "Organizational Learning", 90.
[184] May, *'Lessons'*.

To solve this problem May extended his initial work some years later in *Thinking in Time*, co-authored with Richard Neustadt, with whom he had taught a "Uses of History" course at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.[185] *Thinking in Time* was written as a culmination of this course which was primarily attended by mid-level policy-makers searching for methods to further their career progression. Consequently, the book endeavoured to translate some of the conceptual insights over the misuse of history in foreign policy gained from case study analysis into practical methods to aid policy-makers. However the methods, including making lists of what is "known", "unclear" and "presumed", provided little more than common sense interjections which couched analogical reasoning as an intellectual exercise rather than a psychological process.

In opposition, Jervis' *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* attempted to tackle the psychological process of learning from history through the methodologies of cognitive and social psychology.[186] Similarly to May, he saw how historical analogies were being utilised as a shortcut to rationality and he sought to develop a causal link between the existing beliefs of individuals about international relations history and misperceptions of other relevant information. He also explored what and how policy-makers learned the most, concluding that firsthand experience provided the most important lessons whilst the most recent or dramatic events were the most frequently drawn upon analogies.

Jervis' research identified many of the same problems as May's but he extended the work to offer explanations, although he did not provide any solutions. He also failed to consider the organisational

[185] Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time*.
[186] Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*.

and social structures which impacted upon learning long-term across generations. Nonetheless, his work sparked a number of scholars to further his research into learning and political psychology, particularly within the US foreign policy decision-making process and the use of analogies.[187] These works included Yuen Foong Khong's *Analogies at War*,[188] which examined how President Lyndon Johnson used analogies to escalate US involvement in the Vietnam War and Alexander George's *Bridging the Gap* which provided an analytical evaluation of the relationship between knowledge and action in the conduct of foreign policy.[189] George also pioneered a method of using historical case studies to derive lessons from history for use by international relations theorists.[190]

More recently, as a result of the War on Terror, there has been a resurgence of interest in the use of analogy in international relations academia. Following 9/11 a plethora of analogies were drawn by policy-makers as rationale for policy decisions and to help

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[187] See, for example, A. Hehir, "The impact of analogical reasoning on US foreign policy towards Kosovo", *Journal of Peace Research*, (2006) 43/1, 67–81; D. P. Houghton, "The role of analogical reasoning in novel foreign policy situations", *British Journal of Political Science*, (1996) 26/4, 523–552; J. Meierhenrich, "Analogies at War", *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*, (2006) 11/1, 1–40; L. Keith Shimko, "Metaphors and Foreign Policy Decision Making", *Political Psychology*, (1994) 15/4, 655-671; Yaacov Vertzberger, "Foreign Policy Decisionmakers As Practical-Intuitive Historians: Applied History and Its Shortcomings", *International Studies Quarterly*, (1986) 30/2, 223-247.

[188] Khong, *Analogies*.

[189] Alexander L. George, *Bridging the Gap: Theory and Practice in Foreign Policy* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1993).

[190] Alexander L. George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focussed Comparison" in P. Lauren (ed.) *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory and Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 43–68.

in the planning stages of intervention.[191] This has led Andrew Mumford to conclude that the use of analogy shifted from a tool of decision-making to one of ideologically informed policy justification.[192] Additionally, as the US began to fail in achieving its objectives in the War on Terror commentators provided a stream of analogies to past failures.[193]

However, American policy-makers also began to look beyond the veneer of analogy to study history in more depth in the hope of uncovering past inspiration for tackling the present difficulties. In particular, the Commanding General of Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), the American General David Petraeus, searched the history of counter-insurgency (COIN) warfare to inspire his newly issued field manual *FM 3-24*.[194] In 2005 he also made the study of COIN history compulsory at the US Army's advanced training colleges resulting in T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare* becoming bestsellers at book

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[191] D. H. Noon, "Operation Enduring Analogy: World War II, the War on Terror, and the Uses of Historical Memory", *Rhetoric and Public Affairs,* (2004) 7/3, 339–366.

[192] Andrew Mumford, "Parallels, prescience and the past: Analogical reasoning and contemporary international politics", *International Politics*, (2015) 52/1, 1–19.

[193] Many focused upon comparisons made by US policy-makers between the wars in Vietnam and Iraq. See, for example, Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon", *Foreign Affairs*, (2006) 85, 2-14; John Dumbrell and David Ryan (eds.) *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies and Ghosts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006); Christopher Hitchens, "Beating a Dead Parrot: Why Iraq and Vietnam have nothing whatsoever in common", (2005) *www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/fighting_words/2005/01/beating_a_dead_parrot.2.html*, accessed 31/07/2015; Jeffrey Record "The Use and Abuse of History: Munich, Vietnam and Iraq", *Survival*, (2007) 49/1, 163-180.

[194] Lieutenant General David Petraeus, and Lieutenant General James F. Amos, *Counterinsurgency: FM 3-24* (United States: Paladin Press, 2006).

shops near army bases.[195] At the same time, similar work was produced by academics examining past COIN methods in order that they could learn lessons to be applied to current operations.[196]

As Jervis' learning models were being developed by academics to explain the role of the individual within foreign policy decision-making, researchers began to construct learning models that were quantitative in nature and examined the role of the state. The context of the Cold War led researchers to draw upon the dominant international relations theory of the time, realism, to analyse learning at the state level and within international power struggles. The aim was to provide a predictive function for future state action, particularly the actions of the Soviet Union. Joseph Nye argued that applying the concept of learning to the US-Soviet security relationship opened new insights into understanding change in the political relationship.[197] Similarly, Russell Leng used the concept of learning to examine the bargaining behaviour of six pairs of states in recurring crises and concluded that states learned from unsuccessful bargaining outcomes.[198]

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[195] T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph* (London: Cape, 1935); David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare* (London: Praeger, 1964); Margaret Macmillan, *The Uses and Abuses of History* (London: Profile Books Ltd, 2010), 153.

[196] John A. Gentry, "Intelligence Learning and Adaptation: Lessons from Counterinsurgency Wars", *Intelligence and National Security*, (2010) 25/1, 50-75; Andrew Mumford, *The Counter-Insurgency Myth: The British Experience of Irregular Warfare* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014); John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Ian Roxborough, "Learning and Diffusing the Lessons of Counterinsurgency: The U.S. Military from Vietnam to Iraq", *Sociological Focus*, (2006) 39/4, 319-346.

[197] Nye, "Nuclear learning".

[198] Leng, "Coercive Bargaining".

With the end of the Cold War and the rejection by many scholars of both realism and structural models for failing to explain the change in Soviet foreign policy, many academics began to use learning models to challenge theoretical orthodoxies. Dan Reiter tested realist predictions for alliance behaviour against theories of learning and concluded that states chose alliances based on learning from past experiences, rather than following the predictive pattern of realism.[199] His conclusion was that more research needed to take into account belief structures of policy-makers and the origins of those beliefs, including learning. Jack Levy also called for more emphasis to be placed upon integrating learning processes into the study of foreign policy and many academics returned to the examination of learning for explanation rather than prediction and analysis at an individual rather than state level.[200]

However, despite this nascent literature, analysis has failed to move beyond the state and state leaders to examine learning by other individuals who impact upon policy-making or learning within the organisations of government. Whilst the majority of research is US focused, little has also been written about learning within US national security as a whole or considered how learning could be improved within overseas security policy. Even historical institutionalists have not examined this fertile area of research, preferring instead to focus upon cross-national comparisons of public policy.[201] In addition, the research on learning from history has not extended across the Atlantic to be examined fully from a British context or perspective.

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[199] Reiter "Learning, Realism, and Alliances".
[200] Levy, "Conceptual Minefield".
[201] Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms", *Political Studies*, (1996) 44, 936-957.

There are three main exceptions: firstly, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has recently funded research into lessons learned within the SIS. This project began with an analysis of the partly declassified "Nicoll Report" by Michael Goodman which assessed the performance of the Joint Intelligence Committee in learning from warnings of aggression.[202] Goodman extended this work into an edited collection, *Learning from the Secret Past*, which looked to offer time-pressured policy-makers with a description of particular historical intelligence events, an overview of their context and contemporary relevance as well as discussion of the lessons that emerged as a result.[203] However, the process of learning itself remained unexamined and the work focused on providing answers from specific case studies rather than creating a general understanding of learning that could be applied elsewhere within the SIS or across government.

The second exception has been in response to the wave of reviews and inquiries that emerged from the government following the Iraq War, a number of which have sought to identify lessons for the future.[204] The academic analysis of the reports from these inquiries has offered some critique of the methods used in the government's endeavour to learn but work has focused specifically on these

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[202] Michael S. Goodman, "The Dog That Didn't Bark: The Joint Intelligence Committee and the Warning of Aggression", *Cold War History*, (2007) 7/4, 529-551.
[203] Robert Dover and Michael S. Goodman (eds.), *Learning From the Secret Past* (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 2011).
[204] See, for example, Alex Danchev, "The Reckoning: Official Inquiries and the Iraq War", *Intelligence and National Security*, (2004) 19, 436-466; Alan Doig, "45 Minutes of Infamy? Hutton, Blair and the Invasion of Iraq", *Parliamentary Affairs*, (2005) 58/1, 109-123; Peter Gill, "Evaluating intelligence oversight committees: The UK Intelligence and Security Committee and the 'war on terror'", *Intelligence and National Security*, (2007) 22/1, 14-37; Mark Phythian, "Hutton and Scott: A Tale of Two Inquiries", *Parliamentary Affairs*, (2005) 58/1, 124-137.

inquiries and not more broadly addressed the concept of learning from history within overseas security.

Finally, there has been some work conducted on the use of history within a selection of government departments. Peter Nailor's work examined learning from precedent within Whitehall in the 1980s and 1990s and urged a greater use of history across government.[205] Hugh Pemberton has also studied policy learning but focused upon the Treasury and Britain's economic policy during the 1960s.[206] Peter Beck has since extended this work and provided the most detailed analysis on learning from history in policy-making within the Treasury and the FCO between 1950 and 1976.[207] This work is detailed and important, providing an insight into historical activities and cultural approaches to history by examining the internal debates about history within these institutions. However, the focus is on the *role* of history whilst the process of learning *from* history remains largely ignored. This research will extend Beck's work by uniting the historical approach with the learning process, looking to additional institutions and bringing the analysis forward to more contemporary events.

2.3 Existing literature on case studies of British intervention in the Middle East

[205] Peter Nailor, *Learning from Precedent in Whitehall* (London: ICBH/RIPA, 1991).
[206] Hugh Pemberton, *Policy Learning and British Governance in the 1960s* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
[207] Peter Beck, "History and policy at work in the Treasury, 1957-76", *www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-37.html*, (2006), accessed 13/10/2012; Peter Beck, *Using History, Making British Policy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

2.3.1 Jordan 1958 – Operation Fortitude

Very little has been written about the British intervention in Jordan, either in English or in Arabic. Stephen Blackwell has provided the most detailed account of the operation[208] and Lawrence Tal has also provided an important narrative of events.[209] However, the majority of authors who have examined the subject have tended to discuss the crisis as a small part in the wider ongoing Cold War battle between Western and Soviet-backed states.[210] Some research has focused upon pairing the operation with the US operation conducted at the same time in Lebanon in an examination of US-UK military relations or an analysis of the "special relationship".[211] Uriel Dann even proposes that it was the planning for action in Jordan and Lebanon that smoothed over previous relationship difficulties between the two nations. He claims "American ill feeling toward Britain over divergent Middle Eastern perceptions had been overcome in the interest of higher concerns".[212]

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[208] Stephen Blackwell, *British military intervention and the struggle for Jordan: King Hussein, Nasser and the Middle East crisis, 1955-1958* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[209] Lawrence Tal, "Britain and the Jordan Crisis of 1958", *Middle Eastern Studies*, (1995) 31/1 (January), 39-57.

[210] Rory Barrett (ed.), *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: US Foreign Policy Under Eisenhower and Kennedy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007); Yezid Sayigh and Avi Shlaim (eds.), *The Cold War and the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[211] Ritchie Ovendale, "Great Britain and the Anglo-American Invasion of Jordan and Lebanon in 1958", *The International History Review*, (1994) 16/2 (May), 284-303; Nigel de Lee, "'More like Korea than Suez': British and American intervention in the Levant in 1958", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, (1997) 8/3, 1-24; Ivan Pearson, "The Syrian Crisis of 1957, the Anglo-American 'Special Relationship' and the 1958 Landings in Jordan and Lebanon", *Middle Eastern Studies*, (2007) 43/1 (January), 45-64; Nigel J. Ashton, "Harold Macmillan and the 'Golden Days' of Anglo-American Relations Revisited, 1957-63", *Diplomatic History*, (2005) 29/4 (September), 695-696.

[212] Uriel Dann, *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism: Jordan 1955-1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 84.

In fact, many scholars who have examined the intervention have tended to offer analysis in conjunction with other events. Nigel Ashton, for example, has written about the operation in analysis with the 1961 Kuwait and suggested that, post-Suez, 1958 and 1961 revealed a British crisis in confidence and a loss of nerve for projecting power in the region. He argued this was as significant for British decline in the Middle East as economic constraints.[213]

Research examining learning from history in application to Jordan or learning from the Jordan intervention itself is noticeably absent. Instead, the majority of lesson reflection on Operation Fortitude is limited to a small number of individuals' memoirs and autobiographies,[214] including PM Harold Macmillan and King Hussein of Jordan, although for many it remains a minor detail in broader discussions.[215]

2.3.2 Kuwait 1961 – Operation Vantage

Similarly to Jordan very little has been written about Operation Vantage. Nigel Ashton bemoans that the Kuwaiti crisis has provided "little more than a footnote" in the histories of Britain in the Middle East and declared; "the Suez crisis of 1956 is entrenched as the terminal date for Britain's paramountcy in the region, while the intervention in Kuwait is normally treated as little more than an

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[213] Nigel J. Ashton, "A microcosm of Decline: British Loss of Nerve and Military Intervention in Jordan and Kuwait, 1958 and 1961", *The Historical Journal*, (1997) 40/4, 1069-1083.
[214] Harold Macmillan, *Riding the Storm: 1956-1959* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1971); King Hussein of Jordan, *Uneasy Lies the Head: An Autobiography of H.M. King Hussein of Jordan* (London: Heinemann, 1962).
[215] Anthony Parsons, *They Say The Lion* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1986).

afterthought."[216] The few authors who have approached the crisis have done so from a number of different perspectives. Miriam Joyce has examined the crisis in the context of Anglo-Kuwaiti and Anglo-American relationships whilst William Taylor Fain has used the case study to consider the relationship between the Kennedy and Macmillan governments.[217] A number of researchers have also examined the intervention from an Arab perspective; Rosemarie Said Zahlan has looked at the Iraqi-Kuwaiti relationship, whilst Elie Podeh has offered an analysis which situates the intervention as the beginning of the decline of Colonel Nasser's Arab nationalism and the establishment of stronger Arab sovereign states.[218]

Academics have also analysed Operation Vantage to question British motives in the Gulf. Alani, who has written a detailed study of the operation, has argued that the British decision to intervene was based on the desire to restore prestige and military power following the experience of Suez.[219] For others the crisis response sprang from the desire to protect economic interests; the flow of oil, Kuwait Oil Company profits and Kuwait's large reserves of sterling.[220] Those researchers who have focused upon a British perspective have

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[216] Nigel J. Ashton, "Britain and the Kuwaiti Crisis, 1961", *Diplomacy and Statescraft*, (1998) 9/1 (March), 163.
[217] Miriam Joyce, "Preserving the Sheikhdom: London, Washington, Iraq and Kuwait, 1958-61", *Middle Eastern Studies*, (1995) 31/2 (April), 281-292; W. Taylor Fain, "John F. Kennedy and Harold Macmillan: Managing the 'Special Relationship' in the Persian Gulf Region", *Middle Eastern Studies*, (2002) 38/4, 95-122.
[218] Rosemarie Salid Zahlan, "Shades of the Past: The Iraq-Kuwait Dispute, 1961", *Journal of Social Affairs*, (2005) 22/81, 47-80; Elie Podeh, "'Suez in Reverse': The Arab response to the Iraqi bid for Kuwait 1961-63", *Diplomacy and Statescraft*, (2003) 14/1, 103-130.
[219] Mustafa M. Alani, *Operation Vantage: British Military Intervention in Kuwait 1961* (Surrey: LAAM, 1990), 254.
[220] Morice Snell-Mendoza, "In Defence of oil: Britain's response to the Iraqi threat towards Kuwait, 1961", *Contemporary British History*, (1996) 10/3, 40.

made much of the event as part of the evolution of British strategy in the Middle East and the Gulf region. Philip Darby examined the case study as part of an analysis of Britain's East of Suez defence policy whilst Helene Von Bismarck concluded that the crisis reaffirmed the British belief that "Britain's military and political presence in the Gulf was indispensible to guarantee regional peace and security".[221] Nigel Ashton argued that the Kuwait crisis was an important defining moment in the Gulf because it focused the minds of policy-makers on their long-term interests and priorities.[222]

In addition, several memoirs of officials involved in the crisis have been released. These include PM Harold Macmillan and Ambassador Humphrey Trevelyan.[223] Trevelyan's memoirs provide a particularly interesting and comparative insight between 1956 and 1961, having been both the Ambassador to Egypt during the Suez crisis and the Ambassador to Iraq during the Kuwait crisis. Nevertheless, whilst some of the existing literature on Kuwait has begun to dip into the realms of historical learning, especially those drawing comparisons to Suez or examining the evolution of British strategy, learning from Kuwait have not been explicitly explored.

2.3.3 The Gulf 1990-1991 – Operation Granby

In contrast to the 1961 intervention, much has been written on the Gulf War, codenamed Operation Granby. Despite official records still unavailable at The National Archives (TNA) – as the time period for

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[221] Philip Darby, *British Defence Policy East of Suez: 1947-1968* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); Helene Von Bismarck, "The Kuwait Crisis of 1961 and its Consequences for Great Britain's Persian Gulf Policy", *British Scholar*, (2009) 2/1 (September), 78.
[222] Ashton, "Kuwaiti Crisis".
[223] Harold Macmillan, *Pointing the Way 1959-1961* (London: Macmillan, 1973); Alastair Horne, *Macmillan Volume 2, 1957-1986* (London: Macmillan, 1989); Humphrey Trevelyan, *The Middle East in Revolution* (Boston: Gambit Incorporated, 1970).

public release has not yet been reached – changes in journalism and technology led to an unprecedented amount of open and instant information being available for researchers to analyse and thus a greater body of literature. The military operation was the first war where events became instant news. Modern communications and satellite technology vastly changed the way in which the war was reported and many media outlets used footage which was live and unedited. America's Cable News Network (CNN) ran news coverage 24 hours a day and continued to broadcast from inside Baghdad throughout the campaign. As a result, much writing and analysis on the campaign has focused upon the use of media during the war, with one academic arguing that the Gulf War did not take place but was a virtual war brought into being by a carefully scripted media event.[224]

A number of authors have also focused upon analysing the conflict from an international perspective based on the context of the end of the Cold War and the need to establish a "new world order".[225] The phrase was coined by President George H. Bush, quoting Winston Churchill, in his address to a joint session of the House and Senate at the end of the Gulf War.[226] Academics, including Richard

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[224] W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz (eds.), *Taken By Storm: The Media, Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); Philip M. Taylor, *War and the Media: Propaganda and Persuasion in the Gulf War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992); Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Happen* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995).
[225] Joseph S. Nye, "What New World Order?", *Foreign Affairs*, (1992) 71/2 (Spring), 83-96; Lawrence Freedman, "The Gulf War and the New World Order", *Survival*, (1991) 33/3, 195-209.
[226] George Bush, "After the War: The President; Transcript of President Bush's Address on End of the Gulf War", 7th March 1991, *www.nytimes.com/1991/03/07/us/after-war-president-transcript-president-bush-s-address-end-gulf-war.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm*, accessed 24/10/2013.

Herrman, Bruce Russett and James Sutterlin, have since utilised the phrase as an analytical framework to examine the effect of the Gulf War on US strategy, the prospects in the Arab world and the UN.[227]

However, despite the large amount of literature, as a US-led coalition comprising overwhelmingly of US troops, much of the writing and analysis has been written from both a military and a US perspective.[228] There have even been specific reflections on US military lessons learned.[229] Thus, research on Operation Granby has been largely sidelined by Operation Desert Storm, the US operational codename. Even Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh's authoritative publication on the conflict does not prioritise a British perspective, although it does consider that many countries were influenced by their past experiences throughout the crisis; the US by Vietnam, Korea, Lebanon and Panama, Britain by the Falklands, the Soviet Union by Afghanistan and Iraq by the war with Iran.[230]

Analysis from an exclusively British perspective therefore remains largely unexplored, despite the publication of a number of memoirs of officials involved in the crisis; the PMs Margaret Thatcher and

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[227] Richard K. Herrman, "The Middle East and the New World Order: Rethinking US Political Strategy after the Gulf War", *International Security*, (1991) 16/2 (Autumn), 42-75; Michael Hudson, "After the Gulf War: The Prospects for Democratization in the Arab World", *Middle East Journal*, (1991) 45/3 (Summer), 407-426; Bruce Russett and James S. Sutterlin "The UN in a New World Order", *Foreign Affairs*, (1991) 70/2 (Spring), 69-83.

[228] Joseph S. Nye and Roger K. Smith, *After the Storm* (Lanham: Madison Books, 1992); Richard Hallion, *Storm Over Iraq: Air Power and the Gulf War* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1992).

[229] Colonel David H. Hackworth, "The Lessons of the Gulf War", *Newsweek*, 24th June 1991, 117/25, 22.

[230] Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 435-436.

John Major, FS Douglas Hurd, the British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Alan Munro, and the C-in-C of the British Forces General Peter de la Billière.[231]

There are a few exceptions. Dan Keohane offers an examination of the effect of Britain's role in the crisis for its international standing and relations with the US and European Community.[232] There has also been some analysis between the Gulf War and other interventions; a comparison of culture and strategy in the RN from the Falklands and the Gulf War, the repeat lessons identified for the RAF from Granby and the NATO operation in Kosovo and Serbia and a comparison between the Gulf War and the Suez Crisis.[233] However, a comparison with the events surrounding Operation Vantage in 1961 appears to have been largely ignored. In addition, little research has been done on the British lessons from the crisis, either the lessons informing the decision-making or the lessons resulting from the experience itself.

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[231] Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: Harper Collins, 1993); John Major, *The Autobiography* (London: Harper Collins, 1999); Douglas Hurd, *Memoirs* (London: Little Brown, 2003); Alan Munro, *Arab Storm: Politics and Diplomacy Behind the Gulf War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006); Alan Munro, *Keep the Flag Flying: A Diplomatic Memoir* (London: Gilgamesh, 2012); General Peter De la Billière, *Storm Command: A Personal Account of the Gulf War* (London: Harper Collins, 1992).

[232] Alex Danchev and Dan Keohane (eds.) *International Perspectives on the Gulf Conflict, 1990-91* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994).

[233] Alistair Finlan, *The Royal Navy in the Falklands and the Gulf War: Culture and Strategy* (London: Routledge, 2004); Wing Commander W. A. W. James, "Between Operations 'Desert Storm' and 'Allied Force' repeat 'Lessons' were learned by British air power. What caused this repetition and what lessons can be drawn for future air power employment?", *Defence Studies*, (2002) 2/1 (Spring), 83-108; Keith Kyle, "The Gulf War: Lessons of Suez", *The World Today*, (1991) 47/12 (December), 216-219.

2.3.4 Iraq 2003-2009 – Operation Telic

Although the Gulf War was widely analysed, the literature is dwarfed in comparison to the writings produced on the Iraq War. The interest in this war was widespread from the outset and increased as the government took great efforts to engage the media and public in the debate about going to war during a period when, post-9/11, there was already a heightened awareness of national security.

As the war developed, changed and extended, increasing criticism emerged, heightened by the superfluity of public inquiries. Authors focused criticism upon decisions made in the run-up to war,[234] the legality of the war,[235] the Blair-Bush relationship,[236] military procurement,[237] intelligence failures,[238] the breakdown of UN negotiations,[239] failing to establish peace,[240] interrogation and

[234] Christoph Bluth, "The British road to war: Blair, Bush and the decision to invade Iraq", *International Affairs*, (2004) 80/5, 871-892; James Humphreys, "The Iraq Dossier and the Meaning of Spin", *Parliamentary Affairs*, (2005) 58/1, 156-170; Andrew Flibbert, "The Road to Baghdad: Ideas and Intellectuals in Explanations of the Iraq War", *Security Studies*, (2006) 15/2, 310-352.

[235] Thomas M. Franck, "What Happens Now? The United Nations after Iraq", *The American Journal of International Law*, (2003) 97/3 (July), 607-620; William H. Taft IV and Todd F. Buchwald, "Preemption, Iraq and International Law", *American Journal of International Law*, (2003) 97, 557-563.

[236] James Naughtie, *The Accidental American: Tony Blair and the Presidency* (London: Macmillan, 2004); Lawrence D. Freedman, "The Special Relationship Then and Now", *Foreign Affairs*, (2006) 85/3 (May/June), 61-73.

[237] Richard North, *Ministry of Defeat* (London: Continuum, 2009).

[238] James P. Pfiffner and Mark Phythian, *Intelligence and National Security Policymaking on Iraq: British and American Perspectives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); John Morrison, "British Intelligence Failures in Iraq", *Intelligence and National Security*, (2011) 26/4, 509-520.

[239] Mats Berdal, "The UN After Iraq", *Survival*, (2004) 46/3, 83-101; David Malone, *The International Struggle Over Iraq: Politics in the UN Security*

torture accusations[241] and poor post-war planning.[242] A large volume of literature even emerged on the various inquiries which took place with specific assessments of the Hutton inquiry,[243] the Butler inquiry,[244] the Baha Mousa inquiry,[245] Historic Allegations inquiries[246] and the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) reports.[247]

Council 1980-2005: Politics in the UN Security Council 1980-2005 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[240] David H. Ucko, "Lessons from Basra: The Future of British Counter-Insurgency", *Survival*, (2010) 52/4, 131-158; Frank Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan* (London: Yale University Press, 2011).

[241] Alex Danchev, "Accomplicity: Britain, Torture and Terror", *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, (2006) 8/4, 587-601; Jamie Gaskarth, "Entangling alliances? The UK's complicity in torture in the global war on terrorism", *International Affairs*, (2011) 87/4, 945-964.

[242] Roger MacGinty, "The pre-war reconstruction of post-war Iraq", *Third World Quarterly*, (2003) 24/4, 601-617; Andrew Rathmell, "Planning post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq: what can we learn?", *International Affairs*, (2003) 81/5, 1013-1038.

[243] Alan Doig, "45 Minutes of Infamy? Hutton, Blair and the Invasion of Iraq", *Parliamentary Affairs*, (2005) 58/1, 109-123; Alan Doig and Mark Phythian, "The Hutton Inquiry: Origins and Issues", *Parliamentary Affairs*, (2005) 58/1, 104-108; Anthony Glees, "Evidence-Based Policy or Policy-Based Evidence? Hutton and the Government's Use of Secret Intelligence", *Parliamentary Affairs*, (2005) 58/1, 138-155; Claire Cozens, "Widespread scepticism to Hutton 'whitewash'", 29th January 2004, *www.guardian.co.uk/media/2004/jan/29/huttoninquiry.davidkelly2?cat=media&type=article*, accessed 28/07/2012.

[244] Philip Davies, "A Critical Look at Britain's Spy Machinery", *Studies in Intelligence*, (2005) 49/4, 41-54.

[245] Huw Bennett, "The Baha Mousa Tragedy: British Army Detention and Interrogation from Iraq to Afghanistan", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations,* (2012), 1-19.

[246] Angus Crawford, "Iraq Historic Allegations team probe 'is a shambles'", 14th June 2011, *www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-13757766*, accessed 08/08/2012.

[247] Peter Gill, "Evaluating intelligence oversight committees: The UK Intelligence and Security Committee and the 'war on terror'", *Intelligence and National Security*, (2007) 22/1, 14-37.

Commentators, journalists and academics also began to draw their own lessons from the conflict and consider Iraq's wider impact upon British foreign policy.[248] Historical analogies between the war and past conflicts became widespread in an endeavour to understand its complexities, highlight failings and reveal that lessons from the past had not been learned. Aspects of the war were compared to Suez,[249] Vietnam,[250] the Cuban Missile Crisis,[251] Northern Ireland[252] and the North African Campaign of WWII.[253]

However, despite this vast literature little has been done to consider how and what lessons have been learned within Whitehall. Whilst

[248] Anthony King, "Military Command in the Last Decade", *International Affairs,* (2011) 87/2, 377-396; Emma Sky, "Six Important lessons from Iraq that the West ignores at its Peril", *The Guardian*, 12th March 2013, 32; Frederick Hood, "Atlantic Dreams and European Realities: British Foreign Policy After Iraq", *Journal of European Integration*, (2008) 30/1, 183-197.

[249] Charles Moore, "From Suez to Iraq: how to weaken the will of the West", 4th November 2006, *www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3633863/From-Suez-to-Iraq-how-to-weaken-the-will-of-the-West.html*, accessed 27/01/2012; Geoffrey Wheatcroft, "The Iraq war is the Suez of our time", The Guardian, 24th February 2004, *www.theguardian.com/politics/2004/feb/24/iraq.iraq*, accessed 27/03/2014.

[250] Alex Danchev, "Tony Blair's Vietnam: The Iraq War and the 'special relationship' in historical perspective", *Review of International Studies*, (2007) 33, 189-203; Lloyd Gardner and Marilyn Young (eds.), *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam: Or, How Not to Learn from the Past* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007); Anthony King, "Britain's Vietnam? Learning the Lessons of Operation Telic", (n.d.)*www.rusi.org/analysis/commentary/%20/ref:C49F9BEE224FA0/*, accessed 23/03/2012.

[251] Gustavo Diaz, "Different Approaches to the Difficult Relationship Between Intelligence and Policy: A Case Study of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 vs. the 2003 War in Iraq", UNISCI Discussion Papers No.9,(2005), *www.ucm.es/info/unisci/UNISCI-Review.htm*, accessed 15/06/2012.

[252] Caroline Kennedy-Pipe and Andrew Mumford, "Torture, Rights, Rules and War: Ireland to Iraq", *International Relations,* (2007) 21/1, 119-126.

[253] Wing Commander Harv Smyth, "From Coningham to Project Coningham-Keyes", *Air Power Review*, (2007) 10/1, 1-27.

there has been some synthesis of analysis of the learning process of the Iraq War inquiries,[254] this has yet to be combined with a wider examination of learning in the FCO, MoD and IC. There has also not been consideration as to whether the identified lessons have since been implemented or if any of these lessons were previously identified in past Middle East interventions. In addition, with the passing of the ten year anniversary, witness statements at TII and the publication of a number of officials' memoirs, further useful sources for learning have begun to emerge.[255]

2.4 Conclusion

The literature on learning from history is wide and varied. It is a cross-disciplinary concept and as such has been used in many different ways to analyse a number of issues and scenarios. Therefore, although there is very limited literature on learning from history which focuses on the British perspective or within the four case studies to be analysed, this research has identified a number of other disciplines from which to draw an analytical framework.

In particular, the definition of learning from history has been examined within the literature to reveal that a definition for this research must include an impact from any acquisition of knowledge. This impact need not necessarily invoke change or ensure greater

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[254] Danchev, "The Reckoning", 436-466; Richard J. Aldrich, "Whitehall and the Iraq War: the UK's Four Intelligence Enquiries", *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, (2005) 16, 73-88.

[255] Tony Blair, *A Journey* (London: Hutchinson, 2010); Alastair Campbell, *The Blair Years: Extracts From The Alastair Campbell Diaries* (London: The Random House Group, 2007); Alastair Campbell, *The Alastair Campbell Diaries* (London: Hutchinson, 2011); Robin Cook, *The Point of Departure: Diaries From The Front Bench* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2004); Christopher Meyer, *DC Confidential* (London: Orion, 2005); Chris Mullin, *A View from the Foothills* (London: Profile, 2010); Jack Straw, *Last Man Standing: Memoirs of a Political Survivor* (London: Macmillan, 2012).

accuracy or efficiency but would affect beliefs, behaviour or both. The definition must also ensure a distinction between learning and change, adaption and evolution and that it is suitable for use within both theory and practice.

This research will also analyse different learners; individuals, groups, generations, society and organisations will each be considered. However, the analysis of states as a learner is less relevant. In developing an analytical framework the epistemology of empiricism and the approach of interpretivism will be drawn upon along with all four theories of learning and the learning process models from organisational theorists, particularly the work of Huber.

Chapter 3: Research questions, conceptual framework, research design and methods

> "Without learning, the wise become foolish; by learning, the foolish become wise."
> (Confucius)

This chapter will define the specific research questions that this project seeks to address. It will also draw upon the plethora of definitions of learning, possible learners and methods of learning revealed by the literature review to develop a conceptual framework for the specific analysis of whether the FCO, MoD and IC learn from history. Once the conceptual framework is clear the research design and research methods will be outlined, including rationales for the selection of case studies and an acknowledgement of research limitations and epistemological and methodological challenges to be overcome.

3.1 Research questions

In order to examine the overall research question "Does learning from history occur in British overseas security?" four subsidiary research questions will be addressed. Firstly, it must be established what is meant by "learning from history". This will form the conceptual framework for this research and will offer a definition to ensure that understanding and clarity surround the concept being explored. It will also include establishing a unit of analysis (the learner) and an understanding of how learning from history occurs. Consequently, the first research question to be examined will be:

1. *What does "learning from history" mean?*

Secondly, in order to limit the wide scope of investigation into whether the FCO, MoD and IC learn from history, particular case studies must be examined to ascertain whether learning has been demonstrated. The case studies which have been selected focus upon crisis and military interventions in the Middle East after Suez (for case study selection rationales see 3.3.2). The second research question therefore centres learning from history on the particular bodies to be studied within a specific region, during a particular time period. It asks:

2. *Have the FCO, MoD and IC demonstrated learning from history in British interventions in the Middle East since 1956?*

As such this research does not endeavour to offer a normative approach of highlighting which lessons should have been learned but seeks to investigate and analyse the *action* of learning from history rather than the *subject* of the learning.

Thirdly, in order to examine whether learning is consistent within British overseas security, similarities and differences between the FCO, MoD and IC will need to be considered. Results from the investigative research conducted to answer research question two can be further analysed to identify patterns of learning. The third research question posed is:

3. *How do the approaches of the FCO, MoD and IC to learning from history compare and contrast?*

Finally, this research seeks to use its findings of whether the FCO, MoD and IC learn from history to identify practical solutions and areas for improvement for the future. The fourth and final research question acknowledges this requirement:

4. *How could learning from history be improved in British overseas security?*

The results from all four of these research questions will be used to draw a final conclusion as to whether learning from history occurs in British overseas security, thus answering the overall research question.

3.2 Conceptual framework

In order to answer research question one, the learning from history literature must be drawn upon to develop a conceptual framework - comprising of a definition of the concept (learning from history), the unit of analysis (the learner) and the relationship between the two (how the learner learns from history) - which can be operationalised.

3.2.1 Defining "learning from history"

This research will define "learning from history" in the context of British overseas security as "*a process between the acquisition of knowledge of the past and its use to inform policy decisions of the future"*. In this definition *learning* is the action and the *lesson* is the object. This definition is intentionally unspecific about the learner, as different learners will be considered (see 3.2.2). It is also unspecific about both the nature of the lesson ("knowledge of the past") and the method of learning, stating only "the acquisition" without specifying "how" knowledge is acquired. In addition, the "what" is learned is defined only as "knowledge of the past" in order that the learning is not restricted and the definition can be used by both practitioners and academics. Finally, the condition of this knowledge being "of the past" adds the specificity of learning from

history, rather than learning by other means such as deductive or logical reasoning.

However, it would not be enough to define learning from history as only "the acquisition of knowledge of the past"; this is history rather than learning from it. What distinguishes learning from history is the use of this knowledge to inform the future; it is the utilisation of history, taking its understanding from the passive to the active. Without this utilisation nothing is learned, it merely is. The *process* of learning is therefore a key consideration in the definition of learning (see 3.2.3) and "its use to inform policy decisions in the future" incorporates an understanding of the potential impact of learning from history over time and sets it within the political context. This concurs with the definition from Richard Rose that "a lesson is knowledge that is instructive, a conclusion about a subject...A lesson is more than learning for its own sake; it relates actions elsewhere to substantive problems".[256]

The potential of learning within the definition also remains neutral. There is no requirement for this learning to have an immediate effect on behaviour or beliefs. Instead it can be acted upon in the future, or not at all if the future fails to provide an appropriate occasion to do so. It can also impact beliefs, behaviour, or both. Nonetheless, it is only once the knowledge has been used to inform policy decisions that a lesson can claim to have been learned.

The definition also does not include an accuracy or efficiency requirement; the lesson does not have to be "right", nor does it require that it results in an improvement. Although a number of scholars provide these criteria as essential precursors to learning,

[256] Richard Rose, "What Is Lesson-Drawing?", *Journal of Public Policy*, (1991) 11/1, 7.

this research assumes that learning which is considered to be "wrong" or ineffective is still learning nonetheless.[257] In addition, the inclusion of such precursors is fraught with normative difficulties, of judging "right" and "wrong" lessons and providing a standard measurement for assessing efficiency as well as methodological challenges of assessing an effect upon belief systems. The position of judging right and wrong is also subjective in time. Sir Michael Howard asserts that many other biases become involved in judgement upon the past: "Historians are as prone as anyone else unconsciously to formulate conclusions on the basis of temperament, prejudice and habit."[258] Consequently, to avoid these difficulties, no criteria of accuracy or efficiency have been included. Instead this research seeks to examine whether learning occurs, not to judge whether lessons were right or wrong.

The definition also ensures a distinction between "change", "adaption" and "learning". This research argues that "adaption" and "change" are the outcomes of learning whereby the acquisition of knowledge from the past has been used to inform the present. For "change", lessons have led to a policy which sees the reversal of past behaviour or beliefs. For "adaption" learning has led to adjustments, not complete reversals. Neither of these concepts can be used interchangeably as learning does not necessarily equate to a change or adaption. Instead, existing beliefs and behaviours could be confirmed, compounded or the conclusion drawn that a preferable alternative does not exist.

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[257] See, for example, Philip E. Tetlock, "Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy: In Search of an Elusive Concept", in G. Breslauer & P. E. Tetlock (eds.) *Learning in US and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991), 35.

[258] Sir Michael Howard, *The Lessons of History* (New York: Vail-Ballou Press, 1991), 2.

3.2.2 Establishing the learner

Having established what it means to learn from history, it is also important to establish the subject or agent of learning; the learner. It is clear from the literature review that previous research has identified a number of different learners for analysis, including societies and groups of individuals. However, this research will focus on the three most significant learners within British overseas security; individuals, institutions and generations. The state will not be examined within this research as a "learner" itself but instead learning will be examined at the more devolved level of the individuals and institutions which influence the making or enacting of the overseas security policies of the state.

The individual has been selected as a learner for analysis due to the impact of certain individuals on the policy-making process. The examination of the individual learner allows for the analysis of learning from history by key policy-makers and builds upon the existing research conducted on learning within the international relations literature. The lessons of individuals will also provide an interesting comparison to those of more broadly defined learners, comprising of a group of individuals. The examination of the individual as a learner will be limited to those who work or worked within the FCO, MoD and IC. The one exception will be the additional analysis of the PM due to the office's influence and control over the policy direction of all three overseas security bodies.

The FCO, MoD and IC will also be considered learners within their own right as institutions. These institutions are important to examine because they define the organisational framework and culture within which learning occurs. Robert Foley uses the example of how the institutional organisation of the British and German

armies during WWI led to different ways of learning and explains that whilst a formal, centralised structure led to horizontal and bottom-up learning, often resulting in a more effective use of existing systems, informal structures tended to favour more radical solutions with learning driven from the top-down.[259] Consequently, understanding the institution as a learner is important because of its relationship in driving learning and influencing what becomes learned. In addition, the cultural approach of an institution defines how much emphasis is placed upon learning from history and the amount of time and resource it is allocated. It also creates the expectation, pressure or incentives placed upon individuals within the institution to learn.

Institutions offer the possibility for more formalised learning processes than those made by individuals; they can turn tacit lessons, or those held by individuals, into explicit lessons which can be shared. Institutional lessons are drawn from a large number of individuals, therefore drawing upon a variety of points of view, different degrees of experience and collating a vast number of lessons. These are then prioritised, summarised or filtered down to provide institutional lessons which may remain identified or become implemented. As a result, the codification or formalisation of lessons removes the subjectivity of individual interpretations of what lessons should be drawn and creates a universal institutional lesson which can be taught to others. This is beneficial for a united institutional approach but can provide an interesting comparison to the lessons of the individual. Whilst lessons from individuals feed into the institution lessons process, the final institutional lessons may run contrary to the lessons from history drawn by specific

[259] Robert T. Foley, "Dumb Donkeys or Cunning Foxes? Learning in the British and German armies during the Great War", *International Affairs*, (2014) 90/2, 279-298.

individuals and whilst some individual lessons are prioritised others may be dismissed altogether.

Generations will also be analysed as learners in this research. As a result of societal learning, generations absorb many of the most significant values and beliefs that dominate the majority of opinion at a particular time.[260] They provide a collective memory of lessons of events reflective of a large group of people thus an examination of generational learning will reveal the key historical lessons which were considered to be important during specific times. Furthermore, the comparison of learning across different generations allows for the analysis of the development of learning over a longer period of time and a consideration of which lessons survive across generations and why. Consequently, an understanding of generational learning is important to ensure that lessons from history remain learned in the long-term.

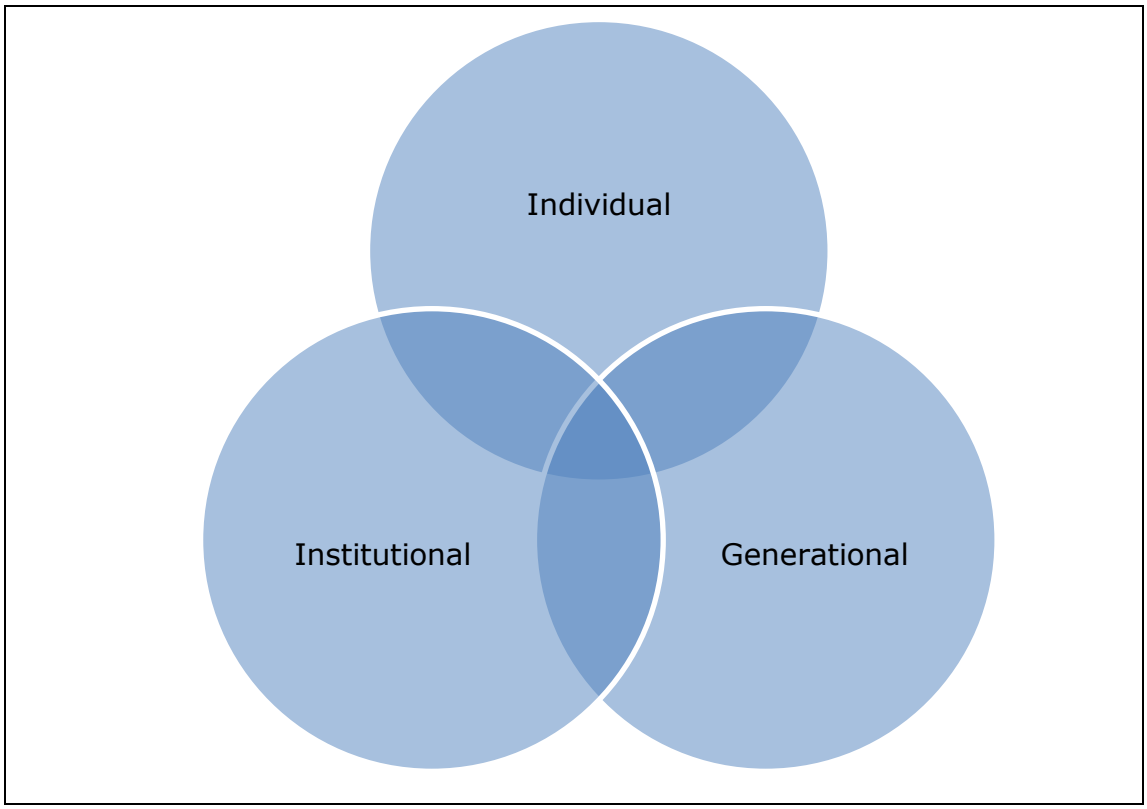
For the purposes of this research, generations are defined as groups of individuals who worked within the FCO, MoD or IC at a particular point in time. Three generations will be considered; those based within the FCO, MoD or IC at any time between 1956-1961, 1990-91 and 2003-2009. There may be some personnel who served as juniors in 1956 and had reached senior level positions by 1990, with even higher numbers of personnel who were serving in both 1991 and 2003. Consequently, it will be noted where any key individuals overlap across these generations and therefore may affect the results of analysis.

This illustrates the difficulty of how learners relate to each other. None of the three learners exist in a vacuum or are mutually

[260] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1976), 253.

exclusive to the others. Instead, the three learners exist within spheres of learning which overlap and interact with each other (as illustrated in figure 1).

Figure 1: Illustration of the spheres of learning



It is clear that individuals form the workforce in institutions and the collective group of people that create a generation, thus it is logical that these spheres will overlap. Similarly, a generation of employees exist within an institution whilst an institution frames the experiences of individuals and generations creating further overlaps of learners. However, the relationship between these spheres can also be extremely complex and the lines between the differing spheres of learning are very often blurred. For example, it can be the case that senior individuals within an institution may also have the power, position and personality to dominate an institutional sphere of learning.

There are also nuanced overlaps between the spheres. For example, when a diplomat in the FCO telegrams another diplomat, with whom there is a candid friendship, using official channels about their personal thoughts on lessons from a particular crisis – is this individual or institutional learning? The answer depends on how the telegram is used. If suggestions are put forward from one individual to another, then this remains solely within the individual sphere, albeit articulated through an institutional channel of communication. However, if the telegram has a wider circulation or is further distributed within an institution it begins to also impact the institutional sphere of learning. If the knowledge within the telegram becomes further utilised within the FCO, the balance begins to shift to the institutional sphere of learning. If the content of the telegram informs a wider report, the new document, despite including the lessons of an individual, becomes part of the institutional sphere of learning. As a result, this example of learning from history could fall into either the individual or institutional spheres of learning whereby one overlaps with the other. In contrast, if the diplomat had written their thoughts in their personal diary then the learning would fall exclusively into the individual sphere until it was used again within an institutional environment.

The very centre of the diagram - where all three spheres of learning overlap - is where learning is the most effective, in terms of impact and longevity. Where individuals, institutions and generations learn it is more likely that one sphere has significantly influenced the learning of others, rather than all three naturally aligning, but this research will consider how and when all three occur together. An example, which would situate learning in the centre of the three spheres, would be that of Anthony Eden and lessons around Munich. If, Eden, the FS to Neville Chamberlain in 1938 later cited the lesson of "no appeasement" towards dictators, would he be

reflecting the individual, institutional (in terms of the FCO) or generational sphere of learning? The policy of appeasement was widely criticised across government but Eden's experience was particularly personal. This lesson could fall into either the individual, institutional or generational spheres of learning but is best placed where each overlaps with the other.

Consequently, this research will consider learners as spheres of learning rather than separate learners and will endeavour to identify into which sphere learning occurs. In many cases the sphere of learning is likely to be defined by the historical source which evidences learning. For example, personal papers reveal learning in the individual sphere, ministerial parliamentary speeches reveal learning in the institutional sphere and notes from retrospective conferences reveal learning in the generational sphere. However, identifying patterns of who is learning will provide further information to be able to answer research questions two and three and to identify which learners, if any, are driving the learning process within British overseas security.

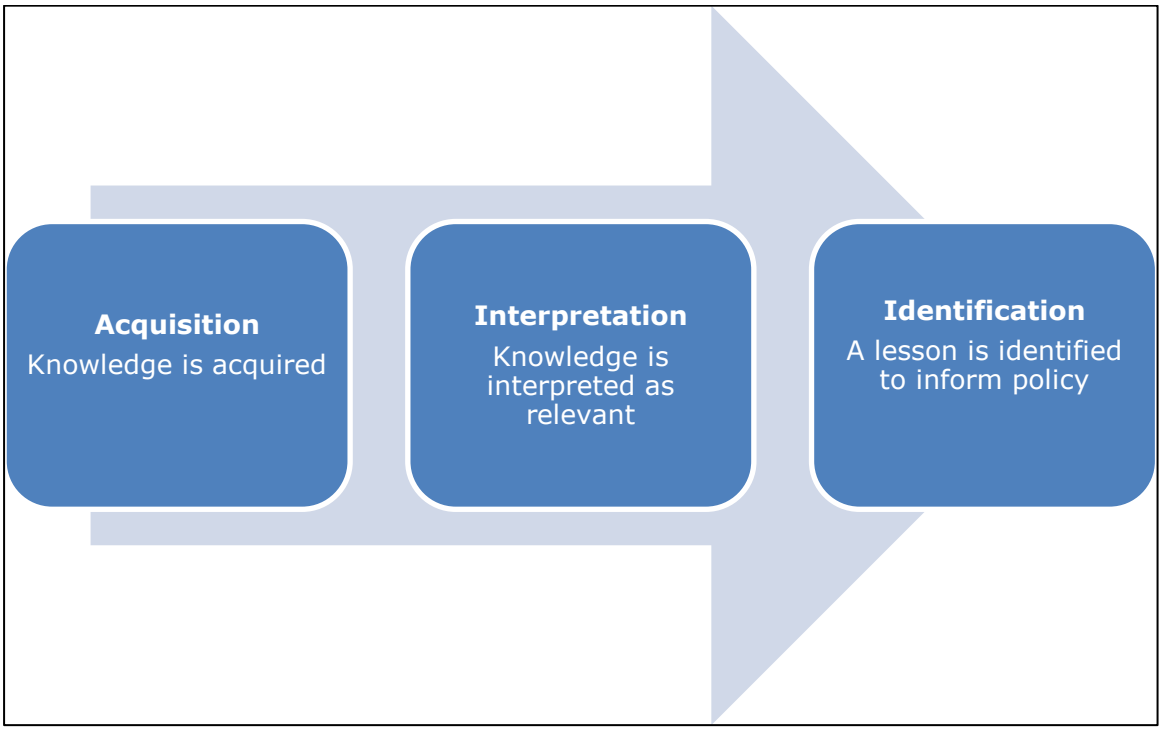
3.2.3 Examining how learning from history occurs

In order to understand learning from history by learners, it is also important to ascertain *how* learning occurs – the relationship between the subject and the object of learning. Drawing upon the work of organisational theorists, this research will assume that learning does not occur as a monolithic action but is a process which can be broken down into further stages; lesson identification, lesson implementation, lesson distribution and lesson retention (as illustrated in figure 3). By investigating and analysing the process of learning in this manner, with four distinct stages, data will be gathered in order to answer research questions two and three in more detail.

3.2.3.1 Lesson identification

Lesson identification is always the first stage of the learning process. It is at this stage that, in line with the definition, the "acquisition of knowledge" occurs. This idea draws upon the cognitivist theory of learning. Such knowledge is then interpreted as relevant and identified as a lesson for informing overseas security policy (as illustrated by figure 2).

Figure 2: Illustration of lesson identification



Knowledge can be acquired through a number of different methods and by internal or external sources. Internal knowledge acquisition usually occurs through two main sources; direct experience and the intentional development of knowledge through, for example, research and development. The methods will also vary for different learners. One internal mode of knowledge acquisition in the individual sphere could be the result of self-reflexivity; in the institutional sphere, a feedback mechanism; in the generational

sphere, a response to generational guilt or pride. Furthermore, they are likely to differ within each of the three overseas security bodies. For example, the FCO may be reliant upon holding post-event conferences, the MoD on commissioning operational research and the IC on the method of running an analysis of previous assessments.

On the other hand, the acquisition of knowledge from an external source can occur through four methods. Firstly, learners can learn vicariously through the observation or distribution of lessons by others. This is the ambition of most learners who study history in order to identify lessons. As Otto von Bismarck famously stated "Fools say they learn by experience, I prefer to profit by other people's experiences".[261] In organisational theory the term "corporate intelligence" is used to explain searching for information about competitors; what they are doing and how they are doing it.[262] Secondly, it is possible to cooperate with others engaged in similar activities to identify lessons through joint ventures or, in interventions, coalitions. However, this source of learning is usually only useful when goals or culture remain the same between the learner and from whom they are learning. Thirdly, external experts may provide, or can be recruited to identify, lessons. These may be individual experts or epistemic communities who often have detailed expertise within a narrow field. In particular, Ernest Haas has argued that epistemic communities are vital for identifying lessons within habit-driven institutions.[263] Finally, external lesson identification may occur through the acquisition of other knowledge sources, such as technologies or blueprints.

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[261] Cited in B. H. Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We*, 15.
[262] George P. Huber, "Organizational Learning: The Contributing Processes and the Literatures", *Organization Science*, (1991) 2/1, 96.
[263] Ernst B. Haas, *When Knowledge Is Power* (California: University of California Press, 1990), 40.

Whilst all three spheres of learning can consider lessons identified as a result of external sources – from other individuals, counterparts, scrutinising bodies, the media and experts – the methods for identification will again vary across learners. For individual learners, the source of cooperation may be utilised through the method of an apprenticeship. In the institutional sphere, the source of vicarious observation may be used through the method of intelligence gathering, whilst generations may identify lessons through revelations provided by epistemic communities. A closed-minded learner may only seek to identify lessons from internal sources, rather than risk external comparison or criticism. Similarly, methods which are routine may produce more routine lessons than those identified by extraordinary methods. The type of method used for identification may also impact the methods used for the other stages of learning. For example, a more formal lesson identification method, such as an internal inquiry, is likely to result in a more formal lesson implementation method.

Once knowledge is acquired it becomes understood and is given value and meaning – it is interpreted. This idea draws upon the constructivism theory of learning. How it is interpreted will also depend on the learner but at this stage biases, beliefs, goals, current and future activities will impact the knowledge and the lesson which is ultimately identified.

Consequently, this research will establish the types of sources and methods used by the different spheres of learning in lesson identification. It will also distinguish between internal and external sources. This will provide valuable information to establish whether there is a correlation between source and method of lesson

identification and whether lessons become and remain learned. Additionally, it will reveal how lesson identification has developed over time, which sources and methods are relied upon or underutilised, whether all three bodies use the full range of methods available to them and whether specific lenses of interpretation of knowledge are revealed. This information can be drawn upon to develop an effective strategy for learning from history in the future.

Once a lesson is identified, there is no determined order for the other stages of learning. Thus a lesson can be identified and implemented, before being distributed and retained. Alternatively, it may be identified, immediately distributed, retained for the future and subsequently implemented at a later date (as illustrated in figure 3). Equally, where learning is not successful a lesson may encounter as few as one, rather than all four, stages of the learning process. For learning to be successful long-term all four stages must be encountered.

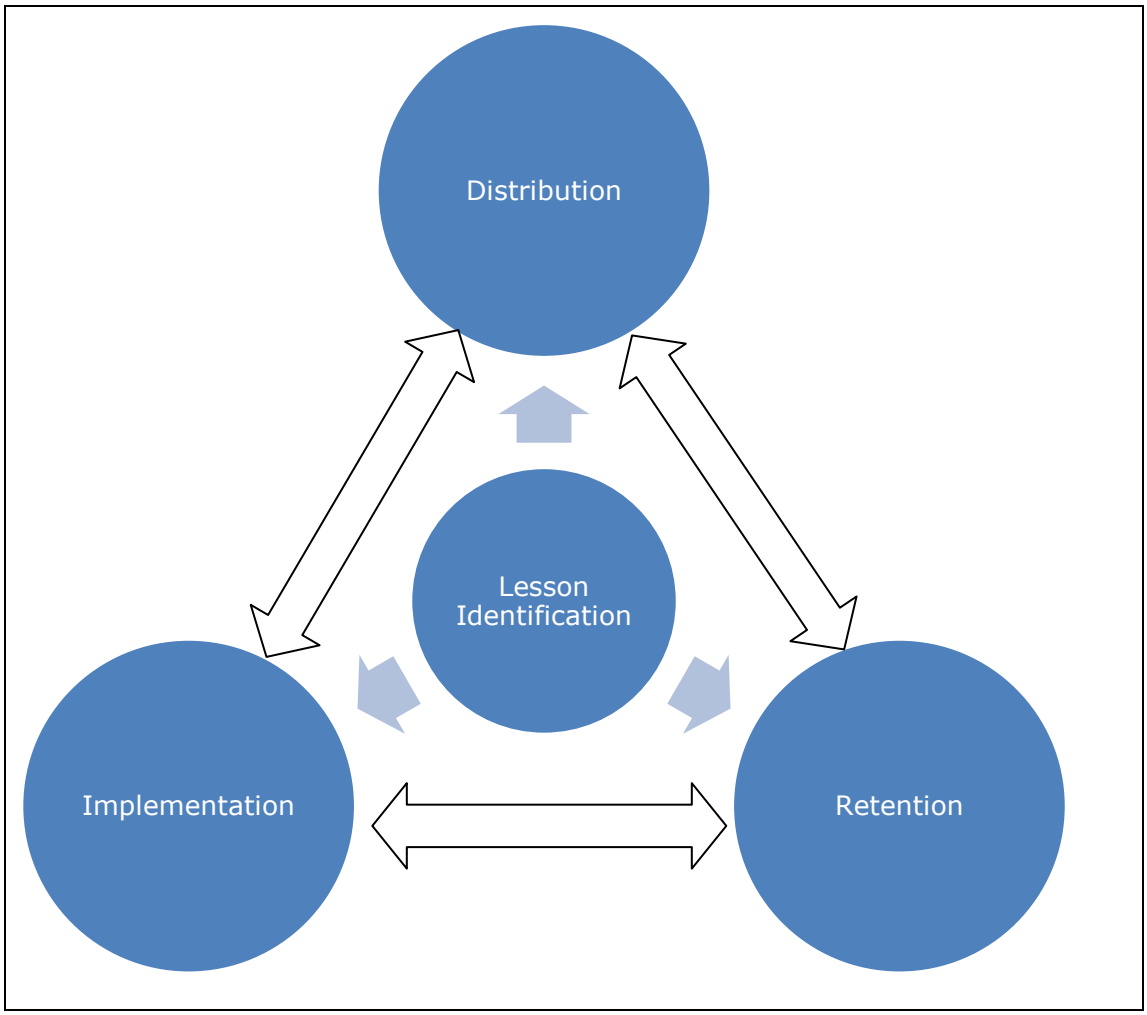
3.2.3.2 Lesson implementation

Lesson implementation is the stage in the learning process when the knowledge of the past, the lesson identified, is used and is most closely aligned to the behaviourism theory of learning. Again, lesson implementation can occur through a number of different methods. These may also vary across learners and institutions. For example, the FCO may place a greater emphasis on training, whilst the MoD use doctrine to implement lessons and the IC changes in institutional structure.

Although learning occurs from the very start of the learning process (identification), it is only once a lesson has been implemented that it can be claimed to have been *learned*. If a lesson is not implemented it risks being *forgotten*. Lessons which have been

identified but which are never used in situations where they would have been relevant are lessons which have been forgotten by the learner. This research will establish whether identified lessons have been implemented and by what method. In addition it will establish which lessons have been learned and which have been forgotten.

Figure 3: Illustration of the process of learning



3.2.3.3 Lesson distribution

In order to advance the learning process, lessons must be distributed to other learners. For institutions and generations, this distribution can be internal or external; shared within themselves or across other institutions and generations. Lesson distribution can therefore occur across the three spheres of learning, again through different methods; from the circulation of a note to the holding of

conferences. Lesson distribution is important to ensure that all relevant learners learn from history and that lessons are not lost if individual learners are removed from office, personnel are changed within an institution or a generation dies out.

The distribution of lessons by one learner can also become an external source from which another learner may identify lessons. It is for this reason that the distribution of lessons across the three British overseas security bodies is so important. It also increases resilience as the greater the number of learners who identify a lesson, the greater the likelihood of implementation – which reduces the risk of lessons being forgotten.

3.2.3.4 Lesson retention

Although lesson distribution (and some methods of lesson implementation) can help to ensure lesson retention this is also a stage within itself. Retention is the recording of the lesson for the future and aligns with the connectivism theory of learning. In some cases it is not necessary to implement or distribute the lesson immediately and therefore it must be retained to maintain the possibility of satisfying the second part of the definition of learning from history: "to inform policy decisions of the future".

Furthermore, even if the lesson has been implemented and distributed, it should nevertheless be retained for the benefit of future learners. If lessons are not retained there is a risk that such lessons will become *unlearned*. Unlearned lessons are those which were "learned" at some time but, having been implemented, the implementation process has now ceased or decisions have since been taken which contradict the original lesson thus the lesson has been unlearned. The key difference between whether a lesson is forgotten or unlearned is whether a lesson was ever implemented,

or learned, in the first place. Forgetting or unlearning a lesson can be particularly straightforward in the complex world of politics and in a working environment where time is critical and information is available in abundance. Consequently, continuing to use all lessons is challenging for any learner and learning and maintaining expertise is an ongoing difficulty.

For individuals, lessons can be retained within the memory, or perhaps within personal papers. For institutions, lessons can be retained and stored for the future in physical and digital files as well as organisational structures and processes. As a result, institutional lessons can outlast the careers of individual personnel, creating an institutional or – as termed by institutionalists – corporate memory. The benefit of corporate over individual memory is that lessons can be retained in the condition with which they were first drawn thus excluding the reliance upon accurate recall or the analysis of the past through the bias of the present context. For generations, learning is often stored through attitudes and assumptions, as well as memory. Lessons can also be retained by all three spheres of learning through language and symbols. Therefore, in examining whether learning from history is occurring in British overseas security the methods of lesson retention will also be considered for comparison.

3.3 Research design and methods

3.3.1 Research design

Whilst research question one has already been addressed (see 3.2) research questions two, three and four will be examined by the application of the conceptual framework to a case study research design. This research design has been selected in order to provide qualitative analysis which will answer research question two by

dissecting across the three specific types of case studies identified by Yin; exploratory, explanatory and descriptive.[264] This research design will also allow for the analysis of a number of perspectives and provide data to be able to compare, contrast and identify interactions within and between the FCO, MoD and IC to answer research question three. Comparisons will also be made between different learners and the methods used and emphasis placed upon the separate stages of the learning process. In addition, each case study will be divided into the examination of learning in planning, during and after each specific intervention.

The research will be conducted through small-N analysis in order to study each case in-depth. Four case studies of British crisis interventions in the Middle East, after the 1956 Suez crisis, have been selected; 1958 intervention in Jordan, 1961 intervention in Kuwait, 1990-1991 intervention in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and 2003-2009 intervention in Iraq.

3.3.2 Case study selection

Each case study has been selected for its relevance to learning from history within British interventions in the Middle East. In addition, the four studies combine to together form a longitudinal research design which will overcome some of the challenges in examining learning from history established in chapter two. As illustrated in chapter one, the 1956 Suez crisis was a watershed moment for Britain in the Middle East. It damaged long established relations with Arab communities and leaders and heralded the beginning of the British withdrawal East of Suez. In addition, 1956 provides an interesting starting point for learning from history. It was widely recognised that the crisis had been handled badly but the

[264] R. Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publishing, 1993).

government was determined that there would be no wide-spread lesson-learning. Consequently, an analysis beginning after Suez starts at a critical juncture for learning from history within British overseas security and for Britain in the Middle East region.

The case study of the 1958 intervention in Jordan has been selected because it was the first crisis intervention in the Middle East post-Suez. Although Britain sent additional troops to Oman, at the request of the Sultan, to protect against a revolutionary force in 1957, this event served to bolster an existing British presence rather than commencing a new intervention. The crisis of 1958, however, offered PM Harold Macmillan the first opportunity to reassert British authority in the region and to intervene in a Middle East state since the 1956 debacle. The intervention also ran concurrently to a US operation in Lebanon, creating an opportunity to share lessons and resources and providing a comparison to lesson distribution in more recent case studies where Britain has intervened as part of a US-led coalition.

The second case study is the 1961 British intervention in Kuwait which has been selected to provide a comparative case to the intervention in Jordan. The operations shared many similarities; pre-emptive, defensive, ground missions to protect the ruler of the state at their request. In addition, in investigating the case study of Kuwait, analysis of whether learning from Suez had advanced or declined since 1958 will be considered. Glancing around the Cabinet table in 1961 would have provided a very similar view to that of 1956 or 1958 and consequently learning should have been continuous; Rab Butler, Selwyn Lloyd, Sir David Eccles, Viscount Kilmuir, Lord Alec Douglas-Home, Duncan Sandys, Iain Macleod, Harold Macmillan and Sir Norman Brook all remained at the centre of government throughout the three crises. In addition, the case

study of the 1961 intervention will provide an interesting learning comparison to the British experience 30 years later, when Iraq again threatened to attack Kuwait.

The 1990-1991 Gulf War forms the third case study. Although this war formed two different types of interventions (a defensive intervention in Saudi Arabia and an offensive intervention in Kuwait) it will be considered as one case study because it was treated as such by the MoD and the two are so closely linked, with the time in Saudi Arabia used to prepare for Kuwait.

The Gulf War has been selected as a case study because of its importance within British overseas security. It was a particularly significant intervention due to its timing and scale. The end of the Cold War in 1989 and the reduction of international tensions following the collapse of the Warsaw Pact had led many Western states to reconsider their military expenditure. As a result, the war was the first British intervention in a new military context and became the subject of much scrutiny, with Whitehall looking for reasons to cut costs and the MoD trying to retain force numbers. Consequently, the lessons of the Gulf War became divisive in defining the future of British defence policy in a new international order.

In addition, the Gulf War was the largest deployment of British forces since WWII, with some 45,000 British personnel deployed in total.[265] Unlike previous case studies the intervention was conducted as a US-led coalition thus creating a new context from which lessons could be learned and a case for comparison to the 1958 Jordan intervention. Due to the length of time between the

[265] Central Office of Information (COI), *Britain and the Gulf Crisis* (London: HMSO, 1993), 22.

Gulf War and the 1961 intervention, this case study also provides the first opportunity to examine learning in the generational sphere. Whilst there were some personnel who had remained in service since 1961, including the diplomat Sir Alan Munro and General Peter de la Billière, there was little continuity.

The final case study is the 2003-2009 Iraq War. This case study is important within British overseas security because of its scale, intensity and prolonged nature. It was also a war which was extremely controversial and had many difficulties, leading to a widespread recognition that there were many lessons to be learned. In addition, the rhetoric of "the lessons of Iraq" continues to penetrate British foreign policy discourse and, as discussed in chapter one, has recently been used as rationale for other foreign policy decisions. Consequently, understanding the learning process from the Iraq War has also become crucial for understanding and scrutinising current overseas security decisions.

The Iraq War further provides a relevant addition in the analysis of learning from history because the culture, environment, geography and enemy remained the same as it had been 12 years previously in the Gulf War and, to some extent, 30 years before in Kuwait. As a result, there were many opportunities to draw upon history and demonstrate that lessons had been learned from two past interventions – one more recent and the other two generations previous. It therefore also provides a third generation of learners for analysis, with few individuals from the Gulf War remaining in decision-making positions in 2003.

In addition, as with the Gulf War, the British intervention was an offensive military operation which played out as part of a wider coalition force, thus providing a case study to examine the

implementation of lessons learned in coalition operations – an increasingly important skill in a reducing British military.

As a recent case study, the Iraq War also serves to contemporise the research and ensures that policy-relevant conclusions on learning from history are drawn. However, unlike many other recent interventions, this case study has also been selected because of the amount of source materials available for analysis. It is unusual for a contemporary intervention to have such a wide availability of official documentation, but the controversial nature of the war has led to large numbers of FOI requests, investigative reporting, the publication of departmental and parliamentary committee reports and a number of official public inquiries, with TII releasing vast amounts of documents for public reading on its website.[266] Even the usually secretive work of the IC has come under unprecedented public scrutiny.

The analysis of the four cases together will provide data to determine whether learning from history has changed or developed over time and whether lessons remain learned or have become unlearned or forgotten. It will also allow the continuing analysis of learning; identifying patterns of learning and a consideration of which lessons endured over a longer period of time and why.

3.3.3 Research methods

This research will be conducted through the historical research method. This method has been chosen to allow the systematic examination of accounts of past interventions through the analysis of primary sources. It will seek to identify where learning from one

[266] *www.iraqinquiry.org.uk*.

process has informed another in order to establish that what has occurred can be defined as learning rather than change.

The historical method, as with all methods, inevitably has some research limitations. It is reliant upon the existence of evidence and therefore it cannot be used to identify many of the passive and informal methods of learning where data is less tangible and may not exist. There may also not be sufficient evidence of all stages of the learning process or all three spheres of learning in each case study. Consequently, this research will only comment on where there is enough evidence for analysis and will highlight significant areas where learning from history appears not to have occurred.

The historical method can also lead to some false positive results whereby lesson-learning is presented in documents, suggesting that it has occurred, but it is not possible to analyse learning further – due to the lack of time or evidence – and thus one has to assume that learning has occurred as presented.

The sources for this research will be obtained through archival and textual research and FOI requests. Firstly, textual and academic sources will be mined for information. These will include a wide range of primary and secondary sources, particularly the memoirs and diaries of relevant individuals, the reports and evidence hearings of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs (FAC) and Defence Committees (DC), reports from the ISC, published reports from the FCO and MoD, Hansard records of Parliamentary speeches, newspaper reports and the published reports from strategic reviews and public inquiries. This selection of sources will facilitate the acquisition of evidence across the boundaries of the three spheres of learning.

For archival research a number of different repositories will be examined. The majority of the archival sources will be gained from TNA. This archive houses documentation which provides an invaluable insight into the official workings of the government during the times of the relevant crises; an insight that does not rely on the recall of memory or the accurate reconstruction of the past by individuals in the present. As official documentation is only released to the public after 30 years – although currently transitioning down to 20 years – the sources at TNA are limited and only cover the first two case studies; 1958 and 1961.

TNA succumbs to all of the usual methodological limitations of government archives. Opportunity for document manipulation and bias by document authors, decision-makers in selecting, weeding, retaining and redacting, institutional archive management, the transfer to TNA and the subsequent curating, collecting, organising and accessing within TNA itself are all methodological limitations.[267] Many documents are destroyed or lost, sometimes intentionally. A number of statements reveal that during Suez documents were destroyed both through procedure and at the PM's specific request.[268] The effect of this absenteeism is that some information remains unknown as the research relies upon examination of those documents which have survived. With Suez, for example, no documents within the archive contain any reference to the tripartite collusion between the British, French and Israeli leaders over the Suez invasion, known as the Sèvres Protocol. However, signed copies have since been found within the Ben-Gurion archives in

[267] For more on this see Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008).
[268] Hoyer Millar to Eden, draft letter, n.d., TNA FO370/2554; Peter Beck, "'The Less Said about Suez the Better': British Governments and the Politics of Suez's History, 1956-67", *English Historical Review*, (2009) 124/508, 605; 609.

Israel and later released documents revealed the plans for concealment of the collusion.[269]

Those documents which do endure also pass through the rigorous "weeding" process before being made publicly available; reviewed and redacted under specific criteria. The result is that the research risks being constructed upon formal documents deemed suitable to be retained and appropriate to be shared. It provides dissemination of a "historical a priori" constructed by the agents of the institution.

In addition, very few documents record the struggles of negotiation and debate that take place within the corridors of Whitehall. Instead, they tend to focus on the opinions of high level officials or minutes and outcomes of high level meetings. They are, therefore, also written in formal language lacking emotion. Informal conversations, emotive responses and the efforts and opinions of lower ranking officials are often noticeably absent.

In an endeavour to overcome some of these limitations this research will triangulate events with sources in other archives and through other research methods. The records of the Conservative Party Foreign Affairs Committee and private papers and diaries of relevant individuals based at the archives The Churchill Archive Centre, Cambridge, the Kings College London Military Archives Liddell Hart Centre (KCLMA) and The Bodleian Library at Oxford will also be examined. Additionally, the digital archive of transcripts of interviews conducted as part of the British Diplomatic Oral History Programme (DOHP), also based at The Churchill Archive Centre,

[269] John Bingham, "Sir Anthony Eden's cabinet discussed concealing Suez 'collusion', records show", 2nd October 2008, *www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/egypt/3122846/Sir-Anthony-Edens-cabinet-discussed-concealing-Suez-collusion-records-show.html*, accessed 14/05/2013.

Cambridge, will be mined for relevant sources. Finally, in order to overcome British biases within the archives, the US archive of Foreign Affairs Oral History (FAOH) and the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) document series will also be examined for evidence. The additional British and US archives will also be utilised for sources related to the more contemporary case studies; the Gulf War and the Iraq War. To support the findings and evidence missing from these sources a number of FOI requests will be made. These will be sent to the Cabinet Office, FCO and MoD and it will be noted if these requests are refused.

The IC presents its own unique epistemological and methodological issues for research due to the limited public access to intelligence information and the nature of intelligence, leaving little information to be written down, with much less retained.[270] In particular, intelligence agencies are exempt from the FOI Act and therefore do not process any FOI requests. Nor do the intelligence agencies transfer their files to TNA; there are no MI6 or GCHQ files available at Kew.[271] Nonetheless, this challenge can be somewhat overcome by searching for reference to intelligence and intelligence documents in files from other government departments. In particular the Cabinet Office, which does submit its files to TNA, holds copies of Defence and COS Committee meeting minutes and JIC reports and papers – all forums where intelligence is widely discussed. In addition, as DI falls under the remit of the MoD, but

[270] For more on this see Wesley K. Wark, "In Never-Never Land? The British Archives on Intelligence", *The Historical Journal*, (1992) 35/1, 195-203; Richard J. Aldrich, "Never-Never Land and Wonderland? British and American Policy on Intelligence Archives", *Contemporary Record*, (1994) 8/1, 133–52.

[271] For more on this see Gill Bennett, "Declassification and release policies of the UK's intelligence agencies", *Intelligence and National Security*, (2002) 17/1, 21-32.

works closely with the other intelligence agencies, files related to DI are more widely available in archives. Furthermore, as the JIC has been an FCO dominated committee there has often been much reliance upon diplomatic intelligence. As this has been generated by the FCO it is also often available in FCO files.

These forms of evidence are likely to reveal learning primarily in the institutional sphere. Furthermore, the names and information of most intelligence officials are redacted from release. Consequently, evidence will also be supported by the memoirs of intelligence customers, such as former PMs, as well as the few books written by former intelligence officials.[272] In addition, this research will attempt to overcome this limitation by stating where there is no evidence available, rather than assuming that the lack of evidence equates to a lack of learning from history.

Finally, this research will also aim to overcome a number of methodological challenges by supporting the textual and archival research through interviews. Semi-structured elite and practitioner interviews will take place to provide a further, alternative, qualitative resource as well as testing initial findings. In particular, a number of current and past practitioners will be interviewed as well as official historians within each of the three overseas security bodies. Although these interviews will primarily provide data for the individual sphere of learning, some interviewees may also provide information to inform the research into the other spheres of learning. This method has also been selected in order to ascertain whether learning occurs which may not be recorded in documentation and to be able to speak to current practitioners to

[272] See, for example, Percy Cradock, *Know Your Enemy: How the Joint Intelligence Committee Saw the World* (London: John Murray, 2002).

bring the research results up-to-date to ensure contemporary policy relevance.

Again, the interview method has methodological issues and biases. These biases are due to both the researcher – through interviewee and question selection – and the interviewee. The interviewee is inevitably prone to response bias, presenting a subjective perspective. There is also a possibility of elaboration, story-telling and an awareness of preserving their own historical legacy in the way that answers are given. In addition, interviewees are reliant upon recollection of memory which can at times, with or without intent, provide an unreliable view. Their answers are also limited by observation and judgment.

The biases of the researcher will be limited by selecting interviewees who are relevant for the particular case studies and institutions and an official historian from each of the three institutions. The semi-structured approach to the interviews will also endeavour to counteract some of the bias in question selection, allowing interviewees to talk freely about the subject without interjection. Counteracting the biases of interviewees is more challenging but response biases will be taken into account during the research analysis. Furthermore, some additional research may be carried out to validate any key interview findings through a second source.

3.3.4 Research ethics

This research includes the use of data research and therefore research ethics must be considered. This research will be conducted in accordance with the research ethics guidelines provided by the University of Nottingham and only upon approval of an Ethical

Review by the School of Politics and International Relations Research Ethics Committee.

Although this research does not involve any covert elements or risk to the researcher, there may be a minimal risk to interviewees through adverse effects on their careers and for those who have signed the Official Secrets Act. These risks will be reduced through confidentiality and anonymity. Interviewees will be contacted with a request to participate in an interview, without pressure or incentive. They will be provided with information about the research in advance as well as a selection of some of the questions to be discussed, in order that they may make an informed decision about whether to participate. Interviewees who agree to take part will also be in control of the disclosure of their identity and contribution. Anonymity will be considered the default position and this will include the removal of the interviewee's name as well as any additional information which may make it easy for the interviewee to be identified, such as a specific job title, age, gender or length of service. Only those interviewees who agree will be named and quoted otherwise such information will be referenced as "private information".

Furthermore, personal data will not be kept for longer than necessary and confidentiality will be ensured through assigning identification code numbers to corresponding research data. Additionally, the interviewee will be free at any point to withdraw from the research and may do so by written request to the researcher at the School of Politics and International Relations. The interviewee may withdraw without providing a reason and have the data relating to them destroyed.

Finally, all data collected from private archives will adhere to the copyright and publication rules as stated by the individual archive and permission will be obtained for the citation of all relevant material.

3.4 Summary of proposed analysis, research design and methods

This chapter has confirmed that to examine the overall research question "Does learning from history occur in British overseas security" four further research questions will be examined; what does "learning from history" mean? Have the FCO, MoD and IC demonstrated learning from history in British interventions in the Middle East since 1956? How do the approaches of the FCO, MoD and IC to learning from history compare and contrast? And how could learning from history be improved in British overseas security?

In order to offer clarification and answer research question one, learning from history has been defined as "a process between the acquisition of knowledge of the past and its use to inform policy decisions of the future". To operationalise this concept and to provide data to address the remaining research questions, a conceptual framework for learning from history has been developed which examines three spheres of learning (individual, institutional and generational) across four stages of a learning process (identification, implementation, distribution and retention) before, during and after each crisis intervention.

The research will be conducted through a case study research design, using small-N analysis, of four case studies of British intervention in the Middle East after 1956. Data will be gathered and analysed through the historical method from textual, archival

and interview sources. Each method and source has its own limitations which have been acknowledged and will be borne in mind during the research and analysis process.

Chapter 4: Jordan 1958 – Operation Fortitude

"With the loss of our positions on the Canal and the outcome of military intervention at the end of 1956, we were far worse placed from a military point of view. On the other hand the Western world had learnt much in the last two years and we no longer stood alone."
(Harold Macmillan, reflecting upon the events of 1958)[273]

The operation in Jordan was hugely significant. It provided the first opportunity for the British government to rebuild many of the bridges which had been burned after Suez by demonstrating to the international community, Parliament and the public that lessons had been learned. It also presented the opportunity for any lessons which had been identified from Suez to be implemented and any implemented lessons to be tested in a crisis situation, as well as the opportunity for new lessons to be identified for the future. This chapter will investigate whether, despite the government clamp-down on learning from Suez, lessons from Operation Musketeer were considered before and during the intervention in Jordan – Operation Fortitude. It will also examine, in comparison to Suez, whether lessons were drawn from Fortitude and begin to assess patterns of learning from history across the FCO, MoD and IC.

Between 1956 and 1958 the dynamics of the Middle East had changed with an increasing tide of Arab nationalism and anti-imperialism. In February 1958, Syria and Egypt merged to become the United Arab Republic (UAR), under the leadership of President Nasser, and received funding and arms from the Soviet Union. To counteract the power merger, less than two weeks later, the British

[273] Harold Macmillan, *Riding the Storm: 1956-1959* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1971), 506.

allies of Jordan and Iraq formed the Arab Union and a propaganda battle between the two unions began.[274] On the morning of 14th July 1958, news arrived in London that the Iraqi monarchy, which had been installed by Britain upon the foundation of Iraq in 1922, had been unexpectedly overthrown in a bloody coup d'état. Members of an Arab nationalist group, known as the Free Officers and led by Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qasim, had brutally murdered the Royal Family. In addition, reports through US intelligence advised that the British Embassy had been overrun and set on fire.[275] Suspicions were rife that Nasser and the UAR were behind the actions.

As a result of the coup, the 1955 Baghdad Pact – the British-led defence agreement aimed at preventing Soviet Union influence in the region – was immediately threatened and the Western ally of the Arab Union effectively dissolved. Many Middle Eastern leaders became increasingly nervous about their own positions, and on the same day as the coup, the President of Lebanon, Camille Chamoun, called the UK and US Ambassadors to request the sending of Anglo-American forces to protect his Presidency from a similar fate. The Americans agreed to oblige and when it became clear to PM Harold Macmillan that the US had taken a unilateral decision to land in Lebanon he phoned President Eisenhower and joked "You are doing a Suez on me".[276]

Two days later King Hussein of Jordan also formally requested a British and American military intervention for protection against a

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[274] Lawrence Tal, "Britain and the Jordan Crisis of 1958", *Middle Eastern Studies*, (1995) 31/1 (January), 42; Uriel Dann, *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism: Jordan 1955-1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 81-82.
[275] Cabinet Defence Committee meeting minutes, 14th July 1958, TNA CAB131/19.
[276] Macmillan, *Storm*, 512.

coup. In this case, the British agreed to intervene and, on 17th July 1958, around 1,500 British troops arrived in Jordan to secure the Amman airfield, protect King Hussein and the Jordanian Government and protect the lives and property of British and friendly nationals.[277] Forces remained in the country until 2nd November 1958 and no attack transpired.

Sending British troops back to the Middle East so soon after Suez was risky and controversial, with UK-Arab relations still damaged and accusations of imperialism echoing around the corridors of Whitehall. Even within the Conservative government there were serious concerns about another embarrassing diplomatic and military situation. PM Harold Macmillan described the proposed intervention to the Cabinet as a "quixotic undertaking" and noted in his memoirs "It was impossible to foresee the end of the operation. It might have grave consequences for the nation and for the Government."[278]

4.1 The FCO

Despite the lack of formal learning from Suez, much had been learned in the FCO from Musketeer. The events had a profound effect on many diplomats within the service and Charles Johnston, the British Ambassador to Jordan during the 1958 operation, wrote "we had lost our confidence in our own ability to deal with situations. Indeed our Suez fiasco seemed to have left a far deeper scar on ourselves than on the Arabs".[279] As a result, many diplomats were hesitant to send British troops back to the region, but the FCO was led by the driving forces of the PM, Harold

[277] Mason to Foreign Office, 16th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/276.
[278] Cabinet Conclusions, 16th July 1958, TNA CAB128/32; Macmillan, *Storm*, 519.
[279] Charles Johnston, *The Brink of Jordan* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972), 171.

Macmillan, and FS, Selwyn Lloyd, who saw Jordan as an opportunity to reassert British power in the region and rebuild a working relationship with the US.

4.1.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

Immediately following Musketeer, PM Anthony Eden identified lessons to be learned from the events. These were circulated to just three recipients, including the FS Selwyn Lloyd. Eden highlighted the biggest lesson for the FCO moving forward: "The conclusion of all this is surely that we must review our world position and our domestic capacity more searchingly in the light of the Suez experience, which has not so much changed our fortunes but revealed our realities".[280]

Nine months later, on the instructions of Cabinet Secretary Sir Norman Brook the PM's Private Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Guy Millard, was asked to write an internal history of the events of Suez.[281] The history was kept confidential and not widely circulated but it echoed the lessons identified by Eden, stating "For Britain, Suez was a climacteric. It had severely shaken the basis of Anglo-American relations and exposed the limitations of our strength. This fact defines the conditions within which British foreign policy must henceforth operate."[282] Consequently, Millard agreed with Eden's

[280] Eden, 28th December 1956, TNA PREM11/1138.
[281] Millard, "Memorandum on relations between the United Kingdom, the United States and France in the months following Egyptian nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company in 1956", 21st October 1957, TNA FO800/728.
[282] The history remained in a slim file marked "Personal Papers kept by the Secretary of State". Its secrecy is emphasised by the other documents kept within the same file, including a letter from Selwyn Lloyd to Norman Brook criticising the former PM Anthony Eden and ending "Naturally I would not want anyone other than you, except at your discretion the Prime Minister, to see this letter." Lloyd to Brook, 8th August 1959, TNA

requirement for a reassessment of foreign policy but also identified the necessity to work with the Americans in the future by concluding "We could never again resort to military action, outside British territories, without at least American acquiescence."[283]

It was not long before the same lesson was identified within the FCO itself. In April 1958 the FCO produced a planning paper for its Foreign Affairs Steering Committee (FASC) which stated: "The last fifty years have seen a drastic diminution in our world status...our policies have outstripped our capacity or willingness to provide the means to meet them...This looks like the classic picture of an Empire in decline."[284] Looking specifically at the Middle East, the paper revealed that Britain had been unable to resist recent attacks on colonial, strategic and commercial interests due to post-Suez domestic and world opinion about actions in the region and because of the prohibitive costs. The stark lesson was identified; "we are no longer in a position to 'go it alone'".[285] Instead, to achieve British objectives in the region it was identified that it was necessary to "Promot[e] United States involvement and the harmonisation of Anglo-American policy".[286]

Between 1956 and 1958, the PM and FS had identified the same lesson. Despite harbouring some resentment for American behaviour during Suez – Harold Macmillan described President Eisenhower and US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles as "inept" and "emotional and vindictive" in an early draft of his memoirs –

FO800/728; Millard, "Memorandum", 21st October 1957, TNA FO800/728, 29.

[283] Millard, "Memorandum", 21st October 1957, TNA FO800/728, 29.

[284] Foreign Affairs Steering Committee (FASC), "British Obligations Overseas", 14th April 1958, TNA FO371/135611, 3-4.

[285] FASC, "Obligations", 3.

[286] FASC, "Obligations", 12.

the PM and FS immediately looked to repair the US-UK relationship and influence US policy, thus implementing the identified lesson.[287]

The PM sought to formalise and institutionalise a new alliance in the region through joint working committees and contingency planning. The FCO were significant in these working committees and endeavoured to implement the lesson of promoting the US-UK relationship, even with animosity towards the Americans remaining amongst diplomats.[288] As Macmillan stated on the eve of the Lebanon and Jordan landings, "We would rather be wrong together than right separately" and the attempts at reconciling the relationship were largely successful.[289] Indeed, by June 1958, when Macmillan visited the US, *The Washington Post* reported "Mr Macmillan will find the scars of Suez all but healed here".[290]

The US-UK working groups included the creation of contingency plans for the prevention of a coup in Lebanon or Jordan, the codename for which was Operation Broil.[291] However, the FCO had also separately identified that any British intervention in the region would be unpopular and lead to accusations of imperialism, even with US support. As a result, it was stated that any assistance

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[287] BBC News, "How Macmillan shocked officials", 22nd February 2005, *news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4285909.stm*, accessed 29/04/2013; for more on this see Louise Kettle, "Learning To Pull the Strings After Suez: Macmillan's management of the Eisenhower Administration during the intervention in Jordan, 1958" *Diplomacy and Statescraft*, (forthcoming 2016).

[288] Earlier in 1958 the FCO had complained of "dilatoriness" in US Middle East policy. Laskey to Bishop, 3rd April 1958, TNA FO371/132330.

[289] N.a., "Wrong Together", *The Spectator*, 18th July 1958, 78.

[290] The Washington Post, "Ike and Macmillan", 7th June 1958, TNA FO371/133823.

[291] Washington to Foreign Office, 8th November 1957, TNA PREM11/2521; Morris to Hayter, 11th October 1957, TNA PREM11/2521.

would have to be requested by King Hussein and involve a limited operation for troops:

> "[t]here should be no question of United Kingdom/United States intervention without a clear invitation from at least the legitimate authority in Jordan...[if] it should be necessary to introduce United Kingdom/United States ground forces our aim should be to withdraw them as quickly as possible."[292]

Consequently, when news of the Iraqi coup arrived in London, the FCO quickly began implementing this lesson by working with the US State Department to recommend wording for the King of Jordan, should a formal appeal for help become necessary.[293] The appeal had to be written satisfactorily for both public and international opinion:

> "We have also considered the precise form of wording which the King should use if he decides to make a formal appeal for help from the two governments. This question, which is important in terms of public opinion and the United Nations, will be discussed in Washington."[294]

In the meantime, continuing to implement the lesson of working with the Americans, the PM contacted President Eisenhower to urge for a US-UK "joint intention" for an intervention and dispatched Selwyn Lloyd to Washington to secure as much support as possible.[295] Whilst Lloyd was en route, on the evening of 16th July, the formal request for a military intervention in Jordan arrived but

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[292] Foreign Office to Washington, 6th December 1957, TNA PREM11/2521.
[293] Foreign Office to Washington, 15th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/314.
[294] Foreign Office to Amman, 16th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/280.
[295] Foreign Office to Washington, 15th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/314.

Macmillan refused to provide any commitment until he had received confirmation of support from the US President. As a result, the first consideration listed on notes taken from a meeting with the Minister of Defence and the COS, as to whether military assistance should be provided to Jordan, was "the reply from President Eisenhower".[296]

The PM also called an emergency Cabinet meeting. During the course of the three hour meeting, he twice phoned the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, to gain assurance of US support and to confirm the American position.[297] In the early hours of 17th July, once Macmillan had received assurances from Dulles and had Cabinet agreement, the FCO were advised to inform the King that his request for military assistance had been granted.[298] The telegram sent to the British Embassy in Amman emphasised that this decision had been made in consultation with the Americans.

In addition, Macmillan had identified his own lessons from Suez about managing support for the operation within Parliament. From the outset of the crisis he had decided to keep the opposition informed, taking Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell into his confidence and agreeing with him how to handle the House of Commons. This implementation had worked well and he noted "The whole atmosphere, tho [sic] charged, was different to Suez" and "There is none of the rancour of Suez."[299] He had also identified the necessity of keeping the Cabinet informed and committed to the operation.

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[296] Wilson to Macmillan, 16th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/292.
[297] Memorandum of a telephone conversation between Macmillan and Dulles, 16th July 1958, Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), "Lebanon and Jordan, 1958-1960", Volume XI, document 184, uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/FRUS, accessed 14/08/2014.
[298] Foreign Office to Amman, 17th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/268.
[299] Macmillan Diaries, 14th and 17th July 1958, The Bodleian Library.

He wrote in his diary "I was determined not to repeat Anthony's [Eden] mistake and let them say – if this venture were attempted and proved a disaster – that they had not been properly informed."[300] Consequently, he implemented the lesson by insisting that the Attorney General sat in on all relevant Cabinet meetings and providing the opportunity for each member to ask questions, express doubts and views, before taking a final vote for intervention.

4.1.2 Learning from history during the intervention

Despite learning from history in the planning of the operation, Fortitude was almost immediately placed in jeopardy because of an identified but forgotten lesson. In April 1958, the FCO had identified that the UAR and Israel presented an air barrier for the military to move between Europe and the Arab states. It concluded: "The value of these overflying rights, the measures necessary to secure them and the prospects of their being denied to us...are at present worth active study."[301] In the confusion of the FS being sent to Washington, the lesson was implemented by requesting authorisation to overfly Israel but not until the last minute and the Israeli PM, David Ben-Gurion, initially refused the request. It soon became clear that the Israelis had also identified the lesson from Suez of securing US support and Ben-Gurion would not give his consent until he received assurances from Washington that aid would be provided in the event of any retaliatory action from Arab countries. Similar to Macmillan, Ben-Gurion only conceded approval after having awoken Dulles at 2:30am to receive personal assurances.[302]

[300] Macmillan Diaries, 16th July 1958, The Bodleian Library.
[301] FASC, "Obligations", 21.
[302] Although initial approval was granted, issues of overflying Israel continued to prove problematic and eventually Eisenhower agreed to US

The FCO also continued to implement the lesson of working with the Americans throughout the campaign, despite some strong disagreements of opinion. From the outset Washington was sceptical about the benefits of an intervention in Jordan and believed that the monarchy would collapse upon withdrawal of troops.[303] On the ground in Amman, British Ambassador Johnston strongly disagreed with a number of American assessments writing "I distrust these facile statistics which rest on no scientific evidence whatever".[304] When the Americans began evacuating women and children he accused them of being "well-known panickers" and in his annual dispatch he also concluded "The line taken by the United States Embassy here during the crisis was often faint-hearted, or wrong-headed, or both."[305] Nonetheless, Johnston's annual despatch also revealed that he had managed to work with the Americans in Amman, whilst in Washington an informal working committee was soon established within the British Embassy to coordinate issues specifically related to Jordan. This committee met once a day and was described by John Foster Dulles as performing "an excellent job".[306] At the end of the campaign President Eisenhower wrote to Harold Macmillan "We can take special satisfaction in the complete understanding and special cooperation which was evident between our two governments".[307]

Globemasters taking over all of the British airlift requirements. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965), 279.

[303] Johnston, *The Brink*, 108.

[304] Johnston to Foreign Office, 24th August 1958, TNA PREM11/2381.

[305] Johnston, *The Brink*, 108; Johnston, "Annual Review of Developments in Jordan 1958", 22nd January 1959, TNA FO371/142100.

[306] Foster to Macmillan, 1st August 1958, TNA PREM11/2399/20.

[307] Eisenhower to Macmillan, 4th November 1958, TNA PREM11/2389/10.

As well as learning to work with the Americans, the FCO recognised that securing UN support for the operation was required to implement a number of other lessons identified from the past; avoiding accusations of imperialism, saving British resources, keeping the public happy through a quick withdrawal and avoiding the abrupt and embarrassing withdrawal scenes reminiscent of the Suez crisis.[308] Therefore, from the outset of contingency planning for Jordan, the FCO had considered ways to make British actions "look more like another Korea and less like another Suez".[309] As well as wording King Hussein's appeal for assistance – to validate the intervention within the UN General Assembly without seeking a specific resolution – there was also concern throughout the operation that, unlike during Suez, the UN was to be "handled".[310] The FCO began to implement this lesson by negotiating with the UN Secretary General, Dag Hammerskjöld, for the replacement of British troops with a UN force shortly after the operation commenced and eventually a resolution was passed which paved the way for British withdrawal.[311] Ironically, in support of the UN resolution, the UAR allowed the 16th parachute brigade to be evacuated over Syrian airspace.[312]

The FCO had also identified the dangers of declining press and public opinion at home and abroad. The FCO paid close attention to monitoring public opinion internationally, particularly in the US, and worked to implement the lesson and maintain support by managing

[308] Beeley to Foreign Office, 25th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/66.
[309] Dixon to Hayter, 1st July 1958, TNA FO371/134156.
[310] Hood to Foreign Office, 5th August 1958, TNA PREM11/2381/384; Foreign Office to Amman, 16th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/280; Foreign Office to Amman, draft telegraph, n.d., TNA PREM11/2380/296; Foreign Office to Washington, 15th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/314.
[311] UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1237 (ES III).
[312] Shattock to Foreign Office, 29th October 1958, TNA FO371/134024.

the reporting of actions in Jordan.[313] This included avoiding the publication of undesirable news stories which could influence public perception. In one case Ambassador Johnston had to persuade King Hussein against the public execution of opposition collaborators, advising that such actions would be received badly in Britain.[314]

Another lesson which the FCO identified and implemented during the operation was the need to protect the British economy. The FCO had already recognised Britain's diminishing means to achieve its ambitions but just before the intervention, on 7th July 1958, a Cabinet meeting – which included Selwyn Lloyd and his Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar – considered "The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs".[315] As part of this meeting the Chancellor of the Exchequer emphasised the steady increase in the size of financial commitments to aid allied and dependent states – of which Jordan was one – and the requirement to reduce government expenditure overall. A British subsidy of approximately £1 million a month was being used to fund the Jordanian army and the intervention, therefore, provided the opportunity to readdress this balance.[316]

At the outset of the operation the Minister at the Washington Embassy, Lord Hood, was asked to stress the British economic position to President Eisenhower and during the intervention the FCO convinced the US to provide payment to Shell and British

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[313] Stephen Blackwell, *British military intervention and the struggle for Jordan: King Hussein, Nasser and the Middle East crisis, 1955-1958* (London: Routledge, 2009),136; record of telephone conversation between Macmillan and Lord Hood, 15th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2388/195; Lord Hood to Foreign Office, 19th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2388/103.
[314] Johnston to Foreign Office, 4th August 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/10.
[315] Cabinet meeting minutes, 7th July 1958, TNA CAB 130/153.
[316] Johnston, *The Brink*, 8.

Petroleum for the initial supplies of oil to reach Aqaba.[317] By 25th August Harold Macmillan and Selwyn Lloyd had decided to persuade the Americans to pay for Jordan on an ongoing basis, to be negotiated by the FCO.[318] This was successfully implemented and by the time of withdrawal the Americans had taken over the funding of the Jordanian Royal Family and Army – totalling around $40.5 million per year – and earmarked $10 million for Jordanian development.[319] Despite the British inability to pay this large sum, Macmillan noted "It will be cheap if it helps get our troops out" whilst Ambassador Johnston remarked "it is only a fraction of what the United States spends each year on Korea".[320]

4.1.3 Learning from the intervention

Despite the success of the intervention, the FCO made little reflection upon lessons from Fortitude. No internal inquiries took place, nor were there parliamentary calls for an external inquiry or any official or internal histories written.

The only identified lessons came from Ambassador Charles Johnston in his annual review despatch.[321] Primarily, Johnston identified that the decision to support allies in their time of need was correct and beneficial. He claimed "We have showed both types of Arab extremists that we (the West in general and the British in particular) are people to be reckoned with...We have not only gained time for the Nasser-Qassim split to develop, but have made

[317] Record of a telephone conversation between Macmillan and Hood, 15th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2388/196; Jarratt to Bishop, 18th July 1958, TNA AIR20/10110.
[318] Macmillan, note, 25th August 1958, TNA PREM11/2381; Cabinet meeting minutes, 25th August 1958, TNA CAB130/153.
[319] Robert V. Keeley, FAOH, 17-18.
[320] Macmillan, minute, 22nd August 1958, TNA PREM11/2381; Johnston to Foreign Office, 24th August 1958, TNA PREM11/2381.
[321] Johnston to Lloyd, 22nd January 1959, TNA FO371/142100.

sure that we are still in the game, with a political foothold".[322] Furthermore, for him, the intervention revealed two key lessons; "it proved that Anglo-American cooperation in the Arab world is possible, not only on the inter-governmental level, but in the field" and "Britain still can and should play in the Arab world".[323] Johnston mused that the British were still the best placed Westerners to act in the Middle East and concluded that "[we] should not be inhibited by unnecessary feelings of guilt or mistaken complexes of inferiority".[324] Thinking about relying on the Americans in the future he advised: "we shall, I fear, find the Americans alone unequal to the task. (Their performance in Jordan this year shows how badly they need interjections of good sense and resolution from us in times of crisis.)"[325]

The despatch was distributed to and read by only four officials before submission to the FS.[326] Whilst one official simply signed in acknowledgment, another commented "a beautiful despatch". The other two were quick to dismiss the identified lessons because they felt much of the content was self-congratulatory and overestimated the importance of the operation and Jordan's continued survival.

However, changes in the region, coupled with a major review in the US of its Middle East policy, led the Cabinet's Official Committee on the Middle East to reconsider Britain's policy towards the region and the FCO began to produce the paper *Points for a Middle East Policy* in October 1958, whilst British troops were still stationed in

[322] Johnston to Lloyd, 22nd January 1959, TNA FO371/142100, 3.
[323] Johnston to Lloyd, 22nd January 1959, TNA FO371/142100, 4; 6.
[324] Johnston to Lloyd, 22nd January 1959, TNA FO371/142100, 6.
[325] Johnston to Lloyd, 22nd January 1959, TNA FO371/142100, 7.
[326] Notes, 17th-19th February 1959, TNA FO371/142100.

Amman.[327] The paper was written in two parts; part one dealt with UK aims in the region in a stable setting and in the long-term; part two examined UK aims in the region in the face of unrest and in the short-term; each identified a number of lessons for the future which mirrored the recent Jordan experience and some of the lessons identified by Ambassador Johnston. In particular, both parts acknowledged the stabilising factor and deterrent to President Nasser of the presence of British troops.[328] The paper also suggested that although the operation could not be repeated in Jordan again with the same level of success, British troops could be used to advantage, with the consent of the Government concerned, to prevent or forestall crises or coups elsewhere in the region in the future.[329]

The paper also reiterated the lesson that any future interventions would have to occur with American support: "It seems clear that the UK cannot now successfully use force in the Middle East without at least moral support from the US."[330] The PM's Private Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Philip de Zulueta, had reached the same conclusion two months before. He wrote to the PM identifying "I doubt whether action without the United States now has a chance of success".[331]

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[327] Cabinet Official Committee on the Middle East, "Points for a Middle East Policy", Part I - 15th October 1958, Part II - 19th November 1958, TNA CAB134/2342.
[328] Cabinet Official Committee on the Middle East, "Points for a Middle East Policy", Part I, TNA CAB134/2342, point 16; Cabinet Official Committee on the Middle East, "Points for a Middle East Policy", Part II, TNA CAB134/2342, point 10i.
[329] Cabinet Official Committee on the Middle East, "Points for a Middle East Policy", Part II, TNA CAB134/2342, point 30; point 11i.
[330] Cabinet Official Committee on the Middle East, "Points for a Middle East Policy", Part II, TNA CAB134/2342, point 13.
[331] De Zulueta to Macmillan, 10th September 1958, TNA PREM11/2397.

In addition, the papers re-emphasised the importance of working with the UN, especially to aid in British disengagement from the region.[332] The management of public opinion for any future interventions was also stressed and the papers prophetically considered that whilst the public may rally behind interventions, providing it was in defence of a British interest, "it is not certain that it would remain steadfast over a long period of occupation."[333]

4.1.4 An analysis of learning from history

Little was formally learned from Suez in the institutional sphere, however, it is clear that Suez haunted the FCO during the Jordan operation. Lessons which had been identified in the FCO had primarily occurred internally and in the individual sphere through a number of methods; from a personal note to a written history. The one exception for the institutional sphere was the paper *British Obligations Overseas* which internally identified lessons which echoed many of those identified in the individual sphere months before. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that these institutional lessons were formally implemented or retained for future implementation. Although they were distributed, this was limited.

Instead, the learning which had the greatest impact in the planning of the intervention came from the driving forces of learning in the individual sphere from the PM and FS. Although similarly identifying the lessons of working with the Americans and managing British decline and economics, Harold Macmillan and Selwyn Lloyd moved the learning process forward to the implementation of these lessons at an operational level, through the establishment of working committees and joint contingency planning. Following their lead the

[332] Cabinet Official Committee on the Middle East, "Part I", point 25.
[333] Cabinet Official Committee on the Middle East, "Part II", point 14.

FCO also implemented these lessons which were, therefore, learned.

Whilst most of the lessons from Suez were negative in nature – what not to do – there were many positive lessons to be learned from Jordan. However, equally to Suez, very little lesson identification took place, revealing that learning from history was not dependent upon operational outcomes. There was no attempt to identify lessons through specific inquiries or full histories and, unlike Suez, the idea was not even debated. Instead, there is only evidence of two attempts to learn from the operation itself; one in the individual and one in the institutional sphere.

In the individual sphere, Ambassador Johnston identified positive, strategic lessons through the formal and routine method of the annual review despatch. However, the despatch was only distributed to and read by four officials, two of which dismissed its content. Consequently, despite some lesson identification, there is no evidence that the identified lessons were implemented or retained for learning purposes. In the institutional sphere, *Points for a Middle East Policy* identified lessons through an extraordinary method, formalising and retaining them for the future. This included the identified lesson that British troops could be successfully used again in a similar situation; a lesson which would become significant three years later.

Overall, learning in the FCO was primarily within the individual sphere. Little consideration was recorded of tactical or operational lessons and more lessons were drawn from the negative experience of Suez than identified from the positive experience of the Jordan operation. The incident with Israel also revealed a barrier for learning. Whilst Britain had identified the need to secure overflying

rights, Israel had learned to secure US support before granting such permission. This demonstrated the potential of other learners to inhibit implementing the lessons of history.

4.2 The MoD

The Jordan campaign was very different to Suez for the MoD. Only two parachute battalions, a parachute brigade headquarters (16th Parachute Brigade Group) and an RAF signals detachment, totalling around 1,500 men, were sent from Cyprus on 17th July 1958.[334] These troops were used to provide defensive, rather than offensive, capabilities and acted with the support and at the request of the King and local government.

During the time in Jordan, the troops met with little opposition. The operation was supported by reinforcements, one battalion of Cameronians, which landed on 6th August.[335] Withdrawal began on 20th October and was completed by 2nd November with the troops returning alongside two horses as gifts for Her Majesty the Queen from King Hussein.[336] Overall, the military response to the crisis was considered to be a success. King Hussein wrote "The British force was small, but its very presence had given us a chance to breathe. The famous red berets in the streets made people realise we were not alone, that this was no time to despair".[337] Ambassador Johnston stated, "[the intervention] was extremely well conducted both by London and by the Commanders-in-Chief in

[334] Foreign Office to Amman, n.d., TNA PREM11/2380/296.
[335] Foreign Office to Amman, 4th August 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/12.
[336] Air Chief Marshal Sir David Lee, *Wings in the Sun: A History of the Royal Air Force in the Mediterranean 1945-1986* (London: HMSO, 1989), 144.
[337] King Hussein of Jordan, *Uneasy Lies the Head: An Autobiography of H.M. King Hussein of Jordan* (London: Heinemann, 1962), 172.

Cyprus. It was a model politico-military operation and achieved everything that it set out to do."[338]

4.2.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

The MoD formally identified a number of lessons from Suez using several different methods and produced a vast number of reports.[339] As early as 26th November 1956, the School of Land and Air Warfare requested a team from Suez to be flown home to discuss lessons from the intervention. By 14th November 1956 a report on the airborne operation at Gamil Airfield had been produced, including lessons from air transport, technical, signals and the army. This report was shared by the Air Ministry with the War Office in January 1957 who declared "The Air Ministry considers that the Report discloses a number of points...which merit closer examination and follow up action in order that the lessons learned from the operation are not lost".[340] In order to ensure that historical lessons were implemented, a conference was held to discuss the lessons which had been identified by the report and to attribute relevant actions for implementation.[341]

Many of the lessons were further formalised through the 1957 Defence White Paper.[342] This paper re-evaluated British defence needs based upon economic constraints, decolonisation, nuclearisation and lessons from Suez. An early draft of the paper

[338] Johnston, *The Brink*, 120.
[339] See, for example, Williams to the Under-Secretary of State for War, 11th February 1957, TNA WO32/21899/4A; "Report on Operation Musketeer", n.d., TNA WO32/21899/12A; Eustace, memorandum, 15th March 1957, TNA WO32/21899/9.
[340] Stubbs to the War Office, 2nd January 1957, TNA WO32/21899/8A.
[341] Minutes, 29th January 1957, TNA WO32/21899/8A.
[342] For more on this review see Wyn Rees, "The 1957 Sandys white paper: New priorities in British defence policy?", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, (1989) 12/2, 215-229.

explicitly stated "The operations undertaken in Egypt at the beginning of November 1956 have been studied."[343] Soon after the publication of the paper the contingency planning for Jordan began in earnest and consequently many of the lessons identified from Suez were incorporated, with Jordan becoming a testing ground for the long-term changes that were being commissioned.

In particular, just as Anthony Eden had identified lessons for the FCO, he had also written notes on the strategic lessons for the MoD and sent a copy to the Minister of Defence, Antony Head, who was soon replaced by Duncan Sandys.[344] There had been severe difficulty and delay in putting together an expeditionary force for Suez and, embarrassingly, the French had been able to send almost double the numbers of paratroopers. Eden therefore identified that the MoD required a more mobile force supported by modern equipment: "This probably means that we have in proportion to our total army too much armour and too much infantry but too small a paratroop force".[345] The lesson was echoed by the C-in-C of Musketeer, General Charles Keightley, and the 1957 Defence White Paper.[346] Consequently, the lesson was implemented through force restructuring and by the time of Jordan the new force was ready to be tested and was subsequently sent to Amman.

The MoD had also identified the importance of working with the Americans in future operations. Upon a review of a paper in December 1957, the Joint Planning Staff stated that it should be read against the "salient factor" that "in a limited war in the

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[343] Powell, 2nd January 1957, TNA DEFE7/982.
[344] Eden to Minister of Defence, 28th December 1956, TNA PREM11/1138.
[345] Eden to Minister of Defence, 28th December 1956, TNA PREM11/1138, 3.
[346] Keightley "Operations in Egypt", n.d., TNA DEFE11/137, paragraph 12; MoD, *Defence: Outline of Future Policy* (London: TSO, 1957), 2.

Mediterranean or Far East the United Kingdom would only act in co-operation with the United States".[347] However, the MoD found that US and UK political and military objectives did not align, causing difficulty in lesson implementation. During contingency planning neither the British military nor their US counterparts were prepared to sacrifice national autonomy or command structure to create a truly joint enterprise. On 19th November 1957, the COS admitted that whilst ministers assumed effective military plans existed, hesitancy on both sides had meant that "nothing of the sort was taking place".[348] The result was that a division of labour was agreed with the US intervening in Lebanon and British forces being sent to Jordan.

The MoD had further identified from Suez the importance of politics in any intervention, particularly understanding the political context and agreeing the political aims in advance. The *Lessons from Musketeer* document produced by the Deputy Chief of the Imperial Staff in June 1957 had clearly identified "The lack of a clear political aim and of consistent political direction bedevilled the mounting and execution of the operation."[349] General Keightley had noted the same lesson and urged that a "sound and comprehensive political appreciation must be made beforehand".[350]

For the COS, this lesson was easier to implement than working with the Americans and, by example, a combined contingency plan produced by the Washington Working Group in November 1957 was firmly rejected because of the lack of political information and

[347] Joint Planning Staff paper, 11th December 1957, TNA DEFE11/137, annex, 4.
[348] Blackwell, S*truggle for Jordan*, 91-94; Meeting minutes, 19th November 1957, TNA DEFE4/101.
[349] ECAC, n.d., TNA WO32/16731.
[350] Keightley "Operations in Egypt", n.d., TNA DEFE11/137.

direction included. Writing to the Minister of Defence, Duncan Sandys, the COS advised "The Chiefs of Staff have examined this plan and find it quite unsuitable as a basis for detailed planning since it disregards all political factors...The Chiefs of Staff have instructed the British team in the working party in Washington not to resume military planning until the political background has been agreed."[351] Digging their heels in worked and by the start of Fortitude the operational plans had been amended to include limited political objectives: "secure the airfield, and support the King and Government of Jordan...confine operations to the Amman area".[352] Throughout the campaign the COS also continued to ensure the regular updating of contingency plans with similarly focused objectives.[353]

4.2.2 Learning from history during the intervention

Once the operation began the implementation of the restructuring of forces proved beneficial but revealed that further lessons needed to be learned. Whilst Duncan Sandys had envisaged that the Strategic Reserve would ensure British troops arrived quickly into trouble-spots, Jordan demonstrated the restricted capabilities that remained in air power, specifically, limited flying routes and take-off bases. No British transport aircraft could fly direct from Britain to the Middle East without passing through the air space of other countries or refuelling, causing ongoing difficulties with Israel throughout the operation.

[351] COS to minister, 6th December 1957, TNA DEFE32/5.
[352] Pearson, 29th July 1958, TNA WO305/5597; Wilson, notes, 16th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/293.
[353] See, for example, Joint Planning Staff, "Action that may be required if military situations develop which threaten the position of our forces in Jordan", 11th August 1958, TNA DEFE5/50.

The MoD had also identified the importance of media management and maintaining public support from the 1956 intervention. Lessons reports from Suez featured "Public Relations" and "World Opinion" as high amongst the lessons identified across the three services and one report declared "The one overriding lesson of the Suez operations is that world opinion is now an absolute principle of war and must be treated as such".[354] Another stated "There is little doubt that the failure to provide adequate reporting of the assault phase of Musketeer has had considerable repercussions."[355]

Consequently, the MoD worked to implement these lessons throughout the intervention by ensuring that an Embassy Press Officer and Public Relations Officer were assigned to the British Forces on the ground. It also took the decision not to impose a "D-Notice" – an official request to the media not to publish or broadcast specific stories for reasons of national security – upon journalists in the field.[356] In addition, the MoD worked with the Central Office of Information (COI) to put together a documentary on the operation and provided illustrated profiles of service personnel to the press. There was even some competition amongst the services to secure the most positive publicity, with reporters and cameraman being treated to ground and flying sequences to provide interesting footage.[357]

However, some members of the press were still unhappy and complaints were made that, even though there was no official "D-Notice", much information was withheld.[358] Even worse, information

[354] Keightley "Operations in Egypt", n.d., TNA DEFE11/137, paragraph 4.
[355] Commander 2(BR) Corps, "Operation Musketeer", TNA WO288/79.
[356] Sandys, 25th July 1958, TNA AIR23/8580.
[357] Headquarters Middle East Air Force to Air Ministry, 27th July 1958, TNA AIR20/10110.
[358] Johnston to Foreign Office, 8th August 1958, TNA DEFE11/173.

was often only censored locally with the MoD in Whitehall providing more details of the operation to journalists in London than those in theatre.

Furthermore, the C-in-C of the RAF in the region revealed that an identified lesson from Suez had been forgotten. In the Operations Record Book he reported that, just as they had in Suez, the two airfields of Akrotiri and Nicosia had become grossly overcrowded. This not only impacted upon the efficiency of the operation but also risked major disaster including fire and collisions.[359]

Despite the difficulties during planning, the MoD did continue to try to implement the lesson of working with the Americans throughout the operation. Prior to sending troops, Britain and the US set-up operational liaison of forces locally and planning liaison in London, with this relationship continuing throughout the Jordan campaign.[360] As the operation progressed US-UK military liaison became increasingly important as the Americans took over the airlift responsibilities and the COS continuing to consider ways to engage the Americans further. Ideas included the provision of civilian technicians to maintain US aircraft flying into Amman and ancillary forces to open-up communications.[361] Two weeks later, further suggestions were made at the Cabinet Defence Committee meeting including, perhaps controversially, asking the US to charter merchant vessels to fly the American flag and bring supplies to the British down the Suez Canal. Requests were made for everything from the transport of drummed aviation fuel to maintenance of an

[359] Lee, *Wings in the Sun*, 145.
[360] Hood to Foreign Office, 17th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/237; Record of a Luncheon meeting, 27th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2399/31.
[361] Cabinet Defence Committee Minutes, 24th July 1958, TNA CAB131/20/35.

airstrip and refrigerated containers.[362] As the operation came to an end there was a need to coordinate simultaneous withdrawal of US troops in Lebanon and British troops in Jordan, to ensure that Britain was not left exposed in the region.[363] This was successfully achieved and it was hoped that the relationship which developed between the two militaries during the operation would aid more successful US-UK joint military planning for the region in the future.[364]

4.2.3 Learning from the intervention

MoD records evidence that only two significant attempts to learn lessons from Fortitude were made. Firstly, the Commander of 16 Independent Parachute Brigade Group held a debriefing conference at General Headquarters Middle East Land Forces (GHQ MELF) "to hear from Brigadier Pearson the outstanding lessons of Op 'Fortitude' from his point of view".[365] The conference was attended by members of the Brigade and GHQ MELF and it was intended to examine and record "the major lessons of this OP, against the time when we have to undertake a similar one in the future".[366] The lessons identified included the need for interpreters, the importance of training for the air transport role and the requirement of a Staff Officer from the Transport Task Force to be made available during planning phases. However, the conference record was short and did not state that actions for implementation were attributed. In addition, identified lessons were not widely distributed. Beyond the

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[362] Cabinet Defence Committee Minutes, 6th August 1958, TNA CAB131/20/42; Macmillan to Dulles, 27th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380/51.
[363] London to Washington, 11th August 1958, FRUS "1958-1960", Volume XI, Document 26.
[364] COS Committee, 15th September 1958, TNA DEFE5/84/199.
[365] General Headquarters Middle East Land Forces (GHQ MELF), loose minute, 4th November 1958, TNA WO305/5597.
[366] GHQ MELF, loose minute, 4th November 1958, TNA WO305/5597.

attendees of the conference, who were involved in the operation, the record was only distributed to four others.

Secondly, in response to the identified difficulties of air movement during the entering and withdrawing from Jordan, the Joint Planning Staff were asked to consider a new system of Joint Planning Instructions and Joint Operations Instructions.[367] These were presented to the COS and included the re-examination of air routes as well as, crucially, that responsibility for ensuring clearance for overflying other countries would be given to the Air Ministry for future operations.

Individually, some one-off lessons were identified through telegrams, including updates from MELF and briefs for the Chief of the Air Staff. These included how to overcome the denial of overflying Israel and the adoption of measures to ensure the maintenance of forces.[368]

An official history of Jordan was not considered until 1973. At that time the Working Party on Joint Service In-House Histories described the Jordan intervention as a "minor operation", arguing that a history of Fortitude did not warrant a monograph, only a narrative, and thus did not merit a full Joint Service History. However, it was concluded that the history of the Jordan intervention was to be researched and written as part of a wider study, examining the history of post-war deployment and intervention operations, written as an account without any analysis of lessons.[369] It was not until 1989, when the Air Historical Branch

[367] COS Committee, 5th November 1958, TNA DEFE6/52/140.
[368] Boyle to Chief of Defence Staff, 22nd July 1958, TNA AIR20/10110.
[369] Joint Service In-house History Working Party, loose minute, 5th March 1973, TNA DEFE24/649.

published *Wings in the Sun*, featuring a small section on Jordan, that a few additional lessons were identified and retained by this method.[370]

4.2.4 An analysis of learning from history

In the MoD, and in contrast to the FCO, many lessons were formally identified and implemented within the institutional sphere after Suez. A plethora of methods were used, including conferences and reports, in order to identify tactical, operational and strategic lessons. Although the learning was restricted to internal learning and the lessons were identified as part of a routine process of post-operational reflection, the scale of this process was extraordinary.

Many of the strategic lessons which were identified were further formalised in the institutional sphere and distributed publicly, through the 1957 Defence White Paper. This paper also echoed some of the lessons identified by individuals, including Anthony Eden and Charles Keightley, but it is unclear whether it was individual learning which influenced the institutional sphere or simply that the same lessons were identified independently in the different spheres.

During the planning phase of the operation the MoD implemented a number of lessons from Suez but was successful to different extents. In particular, the COS insisted upon establishing the political aims and direction of an operation before they would consider contingency planning but working with the Americans proved significantly more challenging. The experience revealed a new barrier to learning; opposing external actors.

[370] Lee, *Wings in the Sun*.

Other identified lessons were not successfully implemented during the operation. These included the management of the media and ongoing working relations with the US military, reiterating the aforementioned barrier to learning. For the media specifically, the methods of personnel provision, access to increased information and the lack of imposed restrictions did not go far enough, especially as the MoD did not manage a consistent policy in London and Jordan. For the US, working together was successful in terms of coordinated, but not integrated, action but did not last long-term, with the working group collapsing shortly after Fortitude.[371]

One identified lesson from the C-in-C of the RAF regarding air traffic also revealed that, despite the large amount of post-Suez lesson identification, a number of lessons had already been forgotten. However, forgotten lessons from Suez did not encourage the retention of lessons from Jordan. Although the MoD had the methods available for retention, through in-house histories, the Jordan operation was dismissed as "minor" despite its strategic and political importance. At the same time, Suez was deemed a "major" operation, suitable for a monograph study, were it not for political difficulties.[372]

4.3 The IC

Intelligence from within Jordan was lacking as the events of Suez had disrupted many of the relationships upon which the IC had

[371] For more on this see Matthew Jones, "Anglo-American relations after Suez, the rise and decline of the working group experiment, and the French challenge to NATO, 1957-59", *Diplomacy and Statescraft*, (2003) 14/1, 47-79.
[372] Joint Service In-house History Working Party, loose minute, 5th March 1973, TNA DEFE24/649.

come to rely for information.[373] However, despite the post-Suez difficulties, the IC maintained some prestige in the region and proved instrumental in the commencement of Fortitude. On 16th July 1958, British intelligence provided King Hussein with an assessment that a coup would take place against him the following day, orchestrated by President Nasser.[374] This assessment was based upon the monitoring of UAR subversive activities and it was this intelligence briefing which convinced the King to make a formal request for military assistance.[375]

A number of academics have argued that the IC manufactured the intelligence assessment as part of a plan to allow British troops to return to the region.[376] However, John Foster Dulles had also seen intelligence reports of an impending coup and took the threat equally seriously. He spoke to the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), Allen Dulles, about the reports and the DCI advised that the US had also sent a warning to the King.[377]

4.3.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

Individually, lessons from Suez were identified by the regional Chair of the JIC Middle East (JIC(ME)), Henry Hainworth, and were sent to the JIC as a memorandum. Institutionally, the JIC(ME) produced a report which identified a number of lessons "which may be of use in

[373] This included King Hussein's dismissal of the British Director General of Intelligence, Colonel Sir Patrick Coghill, in March 1956. Anthony Eden, Hansard (Commons), DXLIX, c2112, 7th March 1956; Tom Bower, *The Perfect English Spy* (London: Heinemann, 1995), 230.
[374] N.a., "Middle East Crisis – 1958", n.d., TNA WO216/930.
[375] JIC(58)78, 8th August 1958, TNA CAB158/33; Mason to Foreign Office, 16th July 1958, TNA PREM11/2380.
[376] See, for example, Ashton, "A microcosm", 1074.
[377] Memorandum of a conference with the President, 16th July 1958, FRUS "1958-1960", Volume XI, Document 179, footnote 2.

any future limited war".[378] These included increasing communications with London during planning and coordination as well as lessons on command, security and liaison of intelligence throughout the operation. In particular, the JIC(ME) stressed the importance of collection and assessment of intelligence locally, where there was expertise. They emphasised that local assessment of Middle East intelligence was important because of understanding the specific tendency of sources in the region to "exaggerate and dramatise the most ordinary events".[379] It was also identified that "the intelligence plan produced in London failed to take important local problems into account."[380]

However, the memorandum and report were quickly dismissed in London. The British Defence Coordination Committee (BDCC)(ME) considered it without offering any comment and it was agreed that the report was to be shelved until General Charles Keightley's report was produced.[381] Once Keightley's report was complete the Chair of the JIC, Patrick Dean, asked his Secretary to take a view on referring the JIC(ME) report to the JIC in London. By then it was August 1957 and the Secretary sceptically concluded "that an inquest on intelligence in 'Musketeer' per se would be profitless, the more so since the episode is now nearly a year old and the official reports to be suppressed."[382] Dean, who had been heavily involved in the Suez debacle, noted on the minute that he agreed.

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[378] Cooper, minute JIC/534/57, 26th February 1957, received under FOI; JIC(ME)(56)-52, 28th January 1957, received under FOI.
[379] JIC(ME)(56)-52, 28th January 1957, received under FOI, annex.
[380] JIC(ME)(56)-52, 28th January 1957, received under FOI, annex.
[381] Cooper, minute JIC/534/57, 26th February 1957, received under FOI.
[382] Secretary to Dean, JIC/1792/57, 22nd August 1957, received under FOI.

It was not long before the JIC(ME) was made obsolete, removing the opportunity to retain lessons of Suez through continuity of personnel. At the beginning of 1958, the local British intelligence organisations were re-evaluated and the BDCC(ME) suggested that the JIC(ME) – whose responsibility included Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt – be replaced by a smaller organisation at a lower level that would receive evaluated evidence from London thus providing more of a liaison role.[383] This proposal was agreed.[384] Consequently, by the time of Fortitude the IC had very few Arabists in the region. Responsibility for the Middle East had been assigned to a European expert, Bruce Lockhart, whilst the new station chief sent to Beirut was Paul Paulson, a former solicitor who only spoke French.[385] In light of these limitations, on 7th July 1958, seven days before the coup, a meeting was held with the PM and it was identified that in the Middle East "further expenditure would be necessary on political intelligence and counter subversion".[386] However, this lesson was identified too late to be implemented and help the IC warn of the Iraqi coup.

Suez did not rupture US-UK intelligence liaison and working with the Americans had consequently not been identified as a lesson.[387] In fact, Chester Cooper, a CIA representative who regularly sat in on the JIC, was – according to the former JIC Chairman Percy Cradock – at one point the sole channel of communication between

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[383] Bromley, note on JIC(58)19, 12th February 1958, TNA CAB158/31; JIC Report, "Joint Intelligence Organisation, BDCC (ME) After 1st April 1958", 5th February 1958, TNA CAB158/31.
[384] JIC(58)39, 20th March 1958, TNA CAB158/32.
[385] Bower, *English Spy*, 232.
[386] Meeting minutes, 7th July 1958, TNA CAB130/153.
[387] For more on US-UK intelligence relationship at this time see, for example, Richard J. Aldrich, "British intelligence and the Anglo-American 'Special Relationship' during the Cold War", *Review of International Studies*, (1998) 24, 331-351.

Washington and London.[388] Intelligence proved to be a useful diplomatic tool for improving Anglo-American relations in general and cooperation in the region in particular. Therefore, although the importance of the relationship had not been identified as an explicit lesson, the IC continued to make efforts to work with the Americans throughout the planning for Jordan. In particular, the IC had encouraged closer workings through a Joint Intelligence Liaison Committee based in Washington which provided the structure "to act as a link between the Intelligence authorities in this country and in the USA".[389] At the time of the coup this relationship proved invaluable as the US shared news and intelligence on Iraq, including the information on the state of the British Embassy in Baghdad.[390]

4.3.2 Learning from history during the intervention

During the intervention itself, nothing further was learned within the IC. With the main objective focused upon looking to the future and providing predictive assessments, there was little reflection on the past. Instead, assessments were made on the outlook for Jordan, Soviet reaction to British actions in the Middle East and how Jordan would affect President Nasser's ambitions and objectives for the Middle Eastern region. Reports also examined the ongoing subversive activity of the UAR in Jordan but none of the reports assessed the past actions of the IC itself.[391]

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[388] Cradock, *Enemy*, 128; 279.
[389] JIC(58)36, 17th March 1958, TNA CAB158/32.
[390] Memorandum of a telephone conversation between Eisenhower and Macmillan, 14th July 1958, FRUS "1958-1960", Volume XI, Document 131; Minutes of Cabinet Defence Committee meeting, 14th July 1958, TNA CAB131/19.
[391] JIC(58)78, 8th August 1958, TNA CAB158/33; JIC(58)75, 21st July 1958, TNA CAB158/33; JIC(58)77, 1st August 1958, TNA CAB158/33; JIC(58)83, 8th August 1958, TNA CAB158/33.

The lack of attempt to identify lessons was surprising considering the number of intelligence limitations and failures that occurred during the intervention. In particular, intelligence sources predicted another Jordanian coup on 12th and 13th August – causing all of the flying squadrons in Cyprus to be brought to a state of readiness – but, similar to the predicted coup of 17th July, it did not materialise.[392] However, there is no record within the JIC files of attempts to learn from either the inaccurate predictions or the conduct of intelligence gathering and assessment.

The assessments made on the impact of the operation in protecting Jordan further suggested that Fortitude had very little long-term benefit: "the situation remains fundamentally unstable, with only a fine balance between loyalist elements and those with pro-UAR leanings".[393] However, the assessments also identified that as a by-product the operation had created unrest elsewhere in the region. The JIC noted the impact of British actions upon a possible coup in Lebanon, whilst in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar a relationship with the British was beginning to be viewed as a liability.[394] The Ruler of Kuwait had become particularly nervous, believing a connection with the British to be "outmoded" and that any further success by Nasser, or an additional Western intervention, would spark riotous demonstrations within his own country. A JIC assessment stated "The Anglo-American interventions in Jordan and Lebanon have not reassured him – rather the contrary – since he does not believe his regime can in the long run be bolstered."[395] In addition, the Ruler considered that "the introduction of British troops, even with the

[392] Lee, *Wings in the Sun*, 144.
[393] JIC(58)103, 16th October 1958, TNA CAB158/34.
[394] JIC(58)68, 15th August 1958, TNA CAB158/33.
[395] JIC(58)85, 21st August 1958, TNA CAB158/34.

Ruler's consent, would stimulate unrest and might provoke strikes and sabotage in the oil fields."[396]

4.3.3 Learning from the intervention

Following the end of the operation, there is no evidence that any further lesson-learning occurred. There is no record that internal reflections upon the improvement of intelligence for the future were made either institutionally or individually and, with the removal of JIC(ME), no lessons reports were produced.

Externally, some lessons were identified in the individual sphere. Philip De Zulueta wrote to the PM to complain that "the MI6 activities in the area ought to be looked at very carefully in any case. We have lamentably failed to get information of any of the recent major events."[397] Ivor Lucas, who worked in the Eastern Department of the FCO, thought that during 1958 political intelligence was poor: "expertise was on occasions rather sadly lacking... The Iraq Hashemite monarch was overthrown and assassinated; there was trouble with Jordan and the Lebanon...and all these crises seemed to have occurred without...foreseeing them at all."[398]

At the same time, Macmillan's son-in-law, the MP and SIS agent Julian Amery, wrote a paper identifying that Britain's subversive and propaganda activities in the Middle East needed strengthening in general in order to help counteract the rising tide of Arab nationalism.[399] Anthony Parsons, in the Amman Embassy, agreed:

[396] JIC(58)85, 21st August 1958, TNA CAB158/34.
[397] De Zulueta to Macmillan, 10th September 1958, TNA PREM11/2397.
[398] Ivor Lucas DOHP 93, 9.
[399] De Zulueta to Macmillan, 10th September 1958, TNA PREM11/2397.

> "During my short stay in Jordan I had experienced the palpable influence which Nasser's activities exercised over the political climate...Everyone read the Cairo newspaper (except when they were banned) as their main source of information and political guidance, just as they listened to Cairo Radio...Cairo was the centre of the Jordanian universe and, love him or hate him, Nasser was the man who made Cairo's heartbeat audible."[400]

By December 1958 the JIC had written a full report on *The Activities and Influence of Cairo Radio* but again the nature of the document was to report, not to identify any lessons for the future.[401]

Outside of the formal methods of learning, the success of the intervention did allow the British to reinstate some intelligence networks within the country. In particular, in October 1958, Duncan MacIntosh, the former British security advisor to Baghdad who had escaped the recent coup, was appointed advisor to Jordan. He identified the need to reorganise the Jordanian police and laid the foundations for the General Intelligence Department which remains today, with the responsibility to "safeguard the security of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan domestically and abroad by means of carrying out necessary intelligence operations".[402] However, despite the success of the action in implementing a lesson, the learning process cannot be traced to the IC.

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[400] Anthony Parsons, *They Say The Lion* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1986), 42.
[401] JIC(58)63, 3rd December 1958, TNA CAB158/33.
[402] Jordan General Intelligence Department, (n.d.), "G.I.D. Law and Establishment", *www.gid.gov.jo/en/Law.html*, accessed 04/05/2013.

4.3.4 An analysis of learning from history

In the IC some learning from Suez occurred in the institutional sphere, through restructuring (see 1.5) and in the individual sphere by the Chair of JIC(ME). However, such learning was much less than the MoD and the response to the lesson document produced by JIC(ME) in London revealed this method of lesson identification to be extraordinary and was not to become part of a routine process by the time of Jordan. Instead, many of its lessons were ignored. Unlike the MoD, no lesson-learning documentation was produced, and those reports which were produced by the JIC did not turn observations into identified lessons; there was no interpretation of knowledge to identify a lesson, information was merely presented.

During planning the only evident implementation was working with the Americans but, unlike in the FCO and MoD, this cannot be formally traced to an identified lesson through the IC. During the operation itself lesson identification was restricted to the institutional assessment of other actors, not an internal reflection upon the conducting of the intelligence operation or learning in the individual sphere. Once the operation was complete, some learning occurred externally in the individual sphere by Philip de Zulueta, Ivor Lucas and Julian Amery. However although the identification of lessons by Amery led to a further JIC report, it was written in the same way as previous reports and assessments, without any reflection upon lessons.

Overall, whilst the IC learned little from Suez, even less was learned from Jordan. The method which had identified the most lessons from Musketeer was extraordinary and not repeated after Fortitude. A number of IC failings that were present in the Suez crisis were still evident in the Jordan crisis and, as a result of the lack of learning, seemed as if they would remain unaddressed.

Consequently, the biggest barrier to learning was revealed; the lack of a learning culture.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the UK intervention in Jordan in 1958; an intervention that occurred in the shadow of Suez and thus presented the opportunity to demonstrate that lessons had been learned from that experience. Following Suez, the lessons which were identified were primarily negative and based in the individual sphere in the FCO and institutional sphere in the MoD. However, the MoD had existing methods in place for the identification of lessons and many of them were retained and implemented through the 1957 Defence White Paper. The IC showed limited learning from Suez but some lessons were identified in both the individual and institutional spheres.

When planning for the intervention began, the FCO revealed that despite limited formal lesson identification from Musketeer, many lessons were successfully implemented, led by an enthusiastic PM and FS. For the MoD, a number of attempts were made to implement lessons but not all were successful, whilst the IC demonstrated little attempt to implement any lessons at all. Across all three, the importance of working with the Americans was clear, with the FCO and IC managing UK-US liaison well whilst the MoD struggled to connect with their US counterparts in a meaningful way. Nonetheless, the experience of working with American support in Jordan would set a precedent for all future British interventions in the region.

During Fortitude further learning was revealed as well as some lessons which had been forgotten: the FCO implemented lessons which had been formally identified; managing the economy, the UN,

the press and public opinion. The MoD tested the implemented lesson of a newly restructured force and endeavoured to implement other lessons, but with less success, including in the management of the media. In addition, some lessons which had been identified in Suez had since been forgotten including those related to air traffic. The IC implemented no further lessons.

After the operation, there was much less emphasis on learning than there had been from Suez. Lesson identification in the FCO was limited to one routine method, from which the lessons were quickly dismissed, and one extraordinary method as part of a wider review of the Middle East. In both cases, lesson identification was internal and primarily strategic. However, in contrast to Suez, many of the lessons were positive in nature. Similarly, in the MoD, lesson identification remained internal with the outcome of strategic and operational lessons which were not as widely distributed as they had been in Suez, despite being equally negative in nature. The IC also had very little lesson identification but the methods which were revealed were external and in the individual sphere. The lessons which were identified were also negative and strategic.

Consequently, after Suez and during the intervention in Jordan, learning was primarily in the individual sphere in the FCO, the institutional sphere in the MoD and across both – although significantly limited – in the IC. This is likely to have been heavily influenced by the structure of these organisations as well as their general culture and specific approach to learning. For the FCO there was a clear driver of learning, the PM and FS, in the MoD the driver was the institutional post-operational process of reporting, whilst in the IC, Patrick Dean, in the influential post of JIC Chair, acted as a barrier to learning by dismissing a number of identified lessons. Other barriers to learning were also demonstrated; lessons learned

by others, learning which requires working with external actors and the lack of a learning culture.

Learning across all three overseas security bodies was primarily at the identification and implementation stages, from internal sources and methods. There was little evidence of wide distribution or retention. In fact, no external inquiries took place and no histories were written with any form of analysis. Those lessons from Suez which were both identified and implemented – such as the FCO working with the Americans, the MoD creating a new force and the IC restructuring – can be claimed to have been learned. However, despite Fortitude lasting twelve times as long as Musketeer, more appeared to be learned from the latter than the former.

Chapter 5: Kuwait 1961 – Operation Vantage

> "History this weekend is staging a brief flashback of the far-off days of Pax Britannia. It is nothing to be ashamed of. It is not, of course, another Suez...Rather it is Jordan and the Lebanon again, without the Americans."
> (Author unknown, *The Sunday Telegraph*, 2nd July 1961)

Three years after the intervention in Jordan, events in the Middle East led the British to return to the region in defence of Kuwait: Operation Vantage. Vantage provided the opportunity to utilise and test lessons from Suez and Jordan, and to demonstrate to the British public and the international community that lessons from these previous crises had been learned for the long-term. Furthermore, policy-makers at the time could not have predicted that the lessons from Vantage might prove invaluable for informing the planning of an operation almost 30 years later, when the need to defend Kuwait against Iraqi attack reoccurred.

Following the 1958 Iraqi coup which had led to the Jordan intervention, attempts were made to establish diplomatic relations between Britain and the Iraqi revolutionaries. Humphrey Trevelyan, who had been the British Ambassador to Egypt during the Suez crisis, was sent to represent Her Majesty's Government (HMG) on the ground. However, relations between the two nations did not improve and a few months later Iraq withdrew from the Baghdad Pact.

Between 1958 and 1961, the dynamics between Britain and Kuwait – a British protectorate – also changed. Britain had become increasingly reliant upon Kuwaiti oil but at the same time the protectorate was rising in wealth and becoming less reliant upon

British patronage.[403] Consequently, there were increasing calls from the Kuwaitis for formal independence from Britain and in June 1961 a compromise was reached; independence would be granted but, in order to protect British assets and interests, Kuwait could call upon British military protection if required. This agreement was formalised through an Exchange of Letters on 19th June 1961.[404]

Days after the declaration of Kuwaiti independence, President Qasim of Iraq caused alarm by verbally annexing Kuwait, asserting it as part of Iraqi territory based on historic claims. By 28th June 1961, Humphrey Trevelyan was reporting from Baghdad that a military attack on Kuwait, to annex the country forcefully, was imminent.[405] On 30th June, Emir Abdullah III Al-Salim Al-Sabah made a formal, urgent, request for British military assistance under the terms of the Exchange of Letters for protection against such annexation. The first forces landed the next day and British troops remained in the country until 19th October 1961, when Kuwait's security was handed over to an Arab League Security Force (ALSF).

5.1 The FCO

For the FCO very little had changed since Jordan. Few lessons had been identified and even less had been implemented. Attempts to develop a meaningful relationship with the US over planning for the Middle East region had faltered with many of the working groups disintegrating not long after Fortitude. In addition, with the Berlin crisis starting in November 1958, almost all of Washington's focus had quickly turned away from the region. When the crisis in Kuwait

[403] In 1961 40% of all crude oil imported by Britain was produced in Kuwait. Anthony Verrier, *Through the Looking Glass* (London: W. W. Norton and Company Ltd, 1983), 171; Research Branch, "Report No.9/62", December 1962, TNA AIR38/399.
[404] Exchange of Letters, 19th June 1961, TNA FO93/137/15.
[405] Trevelyan to Foreign Office, 28th June 1961, TNA PREM11/3427.

began to unfold, the US, by now under the administration of President John F. Kennedy, took very little interest, providing a new and diplomatically risky backdrop to any British military action in the region.

5.1.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

The FCO was deeply involved in the run-up to the Kuwaiti crisis and thus had the opportunity to incorporate identified lessons into the planning of the intervention. It was Ambassador Humphrey Trevelyan who provided a stream of reports from Baghdad and advised on troop movements and the Iraqi threat. Initially, Trevelyan believed Qasim's speech was sabre rattling but his tone soon changed.[406] By 27th June, Trevelyan appeared even more alarmed; "On further consideration I am inclined to think that... Qasim's original plans may have been further developed than we guessed."[407] The next day two further telegrams were sent: the first emphasised that an early warning of an Iraqi attack could not be given,[408] the second recommended a pre-emptive, deterrent British force be sent to Kuwait.[409]

In some quarters of the FCO post-Suez nervousness towards intervention still remained and the Eastern and Arabian Department were split over Trevelyan's recommendation.[410] Sir William Luce, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, advised "I cannot believe that even Kuwaiti oil could make it worth our while to take part in

[406] Trevelyan to Foreign Office, 26th June 1961, TNA FO371/156845.
[407] Trevelyan to Foreign Office, 27th June 1961, TNA PREM11/3427.
[408] Trevelyan to Foreign Office, 28th June 1961, TNA FO371/156873.
[409] Trevelyan to Foreign Office, 28th June 1961, TNA PREM11/3427.
[410] Walmsley, "Formal assurance to the Ruler of Kuwait", 27th June 1961, TNA FO371/156845.

such a putting back of the clock, with all its dire political and military consequences".[411]

To avoid receiving accusations of imperialism, a previously identified lesson, the FCO worked hard to gain Arab support for the operation and, in an ironic turn of events, President Nasser of Egypt allowed British warships to pass through the Suez Canal to reach Kuwait. He used the intervention to scold Iraq for attacking fellow Arab nations rather than criticising Britain for its response.[412] These sentiments were echoed by the Egyptian media with the newspaper *Ahram* declaring Vantage to be "Suez in reverse".[413]

In addition, the decision was taken to draw upon other lessons identified from Jordan – which had shown that British troops could be used to benefit in such a situation with the consent of the Government concerned (see 4.1.3) – and to try to replicate the success of Fortitude in the approach to Vantage. The FCO advised, "What we wish to achieve, if we have to move, is something like the Jordan situation".[414] In the first instance, lesson implementation meant insisting that the Emir of Kuwait formally requested British military assistance under the terms of the Exchange of Letters. This allowed the FCO to present the intervention as a Kuwaiti initiative.[415] Secondly, the lessons from Jordan were also implemented in the approach to the UN Security Council. The UK representative in New York, the former Chairman of the JIC, Patrick Dean, advised "we should aim to follow the Jordan precedent as closely as possible".[416]

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[411] Luce to Stevens, 16th July 1961, TNA FO371/156884.
[412] Cabinet conclusions, 6th July 1961, TNA CAB128/35.
[413] Beeley to Foreign Office, 2nd July 1961, TNA FO371/156875.
[414] Foreign Office to New York, 29th June 1961, TNA FO371/156874.
[415] Defence Committee Note, 29th June 1961, TNA CAB131/26.
[416] Dean to Foreign Office, 30th June 1961, TNA FO371/156874.

The British further implemented the lesson of keeping the Americans informed throughout the planning stage of the intervention. Anglo-American discussions about the possibility and consequences of military action in Kuwait had taken place for some time and by the summer of 1961 a specific study had been produced.[417] As a result of this planning PM Harold Macmillan was confident of gaining US support for the operation and declared "I think the Americans will be alright on this occasion".[418] Despite this confidence, reassurance from Washington was still sought. On 28th June, the FCO instructed the British Ambassador, Harold Caccia, to advise the US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, of London's intentions to intervene. Macmillan explicitly referenced the close working relationship between John Foster Dulles and the former FS Selwyn Lloyd during the Jordan intervention and advised of his hope that "we could act in the closest cooperation" again.[419] He was quickly reassured "Your thinking coincides with ours...and we are prepared to render the full political support you request."[420]

PM Harold Macmillan also remained aware of the lessons which he had identified from Suez on the importance of maintaining Cabinet and Parliamentary support (see 4.1.1). In the first instance, to implement the lesson and try to avoid the dithering that had occurred over launching Musketeer and Fortitude, Macmillan convinced the Cabinet to leave the management of the crisis to him. However, he was also cautionary with this approach and wrote in his diaries: "Remembering Suez, I was careful throughout to have

[417] Arabian Department, "United Kingdom/United States Military Planning in the Middle East (especially Kuwait)", 6th June 1961, TNA FO371/156694.
[418] Macmillan to Holyoake, 30th June 1961, TNA PREM11/3427.
[419] Foreign Office to Washington, 28th June 1961, TNA FO371/156874.
[420] Wells to Samuel, 30th June 1961, TNA FO371/156670.

meetings of Ministers (including Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Chancellor and Home Secretary) and also – before the final decision to launch the forces – of the whole Cabinet".[421]

5.1.2 Learning from history during the intervention

Once the operation began, the issue of overflying rights re-emerged, despite it previously being identified as a lesson. There was already a ban on the British overflying certain Middle East countries, forcing long routes from Cyprus via Turkey and Iran into Kuwait. Although Iran granted permission, Turkey and Sudan initially refused to permit flying in their air space.[422] As a result, within hours of taking the decision to implement Vantage, the Defence Committee was recalled and the parachute battalion was forced to stand down, just as it had in Fortitude. Emergency alternative flying routes were considered, all of which were longer (at least 7,000 miles more) and had additional complications.[423]

The failure to successfully implement the lesson forced the FCO to request that the US Ambassador in Ankara, Raymond Hare, persuade the Turkish Foreign Minister to grant overflying rights. Washington agreed and Hare drew upon the analogy of the US approval of overflying rights from Israel in the 1958 intervention in Jordan to provide reassurance.[424] The next day Turkey agreed to overflying, but only by night and with specific conditions.[425] This meant that aircraft could not fly and return in one day, leading to

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[421] Harold Macmillan, *Pointing the Way 1959-1961* (London: Macmillan, 1973), 385.
[422] Foreign Office to Tehran, 1st July 1961, TNA FO371/156874.
[423] Defence Committee Meeting, 30th June 1961, TNA CAB131/26; Air Chief Marshal Sir David Lee, *Flight from the Middle East* (London: HMSO, 1981), 174.
[424] Burrows to Foreign Office, 1st July 1961, TNA FO371/156876; Burrows to Foreign Office, 2nd July 1961, TNA FO371/156876.
[425] Burrows to Foreign Office, 1st July 1961, TNA PREM11/3427.

congestion and aircraft grounded and exposed to attack in Kuwait during the day.[426]

In the case of Sudan, the government refused overflying and refuelling. However, not wishing to irritate the British, the Sudanese Minister for Foreign Affairs hinted that flying should continue without a request. If all went well no-one would ever know and he advised "even if by ill fortune an aeroplane landed in Sudan it could easily be hushed up".[427]

Despite these difficulties, the identified lesson of securing overflying rights was still not fully implemented. There was soon an additional requirement to overfly Saudi Arabia with troop supplies, but gaining these rights proved equally difficult. The Saudis had broken off diplomatic relations with Britain after Suez and residual animosity remained. Consequently, King Saud insisted the request for overflying came from the Emir, not from the British or via the Americans.[428] Even worse, the Air Ministry had been overflying Italy for four days before it was realised that permission had been overlooked. The unfortunate British Ambassador was dispatched to apologise and handle the situation in Rome only to report back to London that the Italian Air Ministry were "maddened".[429] Later the Gulf Political Resident, Sir William Luce, would again identify the ongoing issue of securing overflying rights. To implement this lesson in the short-term it was agreed that a parachute battalion would be permanently stationed in Bahrain, despite the vast

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[426] Lee, *Flight*, 175.
[427] Brenchley to Foreign Office, 1st July 1961, TNA FO371/156876.
[428] Foreign Office to Washington, 3rd July 1961, TNA FO371/156876; Caccia to Foreign Office, 3rd July 1961, TNA FO371/156876; Foreign Office to Kuwait, 6th July 1961, TNA PREM11/3429.
[429] Foreign Office to Rome, 3rd July 1961, TNA FO371/156878; Clarke to Foreign Office, 5th July 1961, TNA FO371/156878.

expense of building and maintaining new air conditioned barracks.[430]

In order to avoid a prolonged operation and declining public support, plans for a prompt withdrawal of British troops were immediately considered.[431] The lessons of history were again examined to consider how the UN could assist. The FCO UN Department identified a number of lessons from past case studies including the emergency UN force sent to Suez in 1956 and the observation group which lead to a resolution allowing the withdrawal of UK and US forces in Jordan and Lebanon in 1958.[432]

The previously identified lesson of cost management (see 4.1.2) was also implemented, especially as the economic situation at home remained difficult. Harold Macmillan wrote in his diary, just before writing about the Kuwaiti intervention, "Economic situation at home has not improved...The real question is how to cut down military expenditure...something must go."[433] As early as 2nd July 1961 it was agreed in a Defence Committee meeting that the FCO should begin to recover as many costs as possible.[434] A month later Macmillan wrote to the FS "I know it is bad manners to talk about money with Sheiks but at some point we must raise the question of a contribution by the Sheik to our very heavy expenses".[435] The FCO also drew on the identified lessons of recovering costs from Jordan in order to negotiate its position with Kuwait. The Embassy specifically wrote to London "It would be most useful for me to

[430] Defence Committee Meeting, 18th July 1961, TNA CAB131/26.
[431] Macmillan, *Pointing*, 385.
[432] Minute, "Kuwait and the United Nations", 10th July 1961, TNA FO371/156883.
[433] Macmillan's Diaries, 8th July 1961, The Bodleian Library.
[434] Defence Committee Minutes, 2nd July 1961, TNA CAB131/26.
[435] Macmillan to Home, 12th August 1961, TNA PREM11/3429.

know, in context of forthcoming negotiations with Kuwaiti authorities, what settlement of both local and general costs was reached with the Jordan Government, after the 1958 operations".[436]

5.1.3 Learning from the intervention

Following Kuwait, no official history was written about the events. This followed the PM's express request that official histories "should be in the political field e.g. Britain's history of de-colonisation; or the independence of India, rather than in the military field e.g. Suez and Kuwait".[437] However, a debate about what lessons the FCO could identify from the handling of the Kuwait crisis erupted in response to two despatches; one from Alan Rothnie, the Charge d'Affairs in Kuwait, and one from Sir William Luce.[438]

Alan Rothnie firstly reflected upon the wide acclaim of the British intervention and reported that a member of the Ruling Family had specifically drawn comparisons between 1961, 1958 and 1956 and concluded that Britain's actions in Vantage had been commendable.[439] However, he also warned that there were many more lessons to be learned. In particular, he identified the importance of Kuwait becoming part of the Arab community and stressed the need for Arab solutions to Arab problems in the future. He advised that this was one of the lessons which had been identified by the Kuwaiti officials and concluded that the country would begin to mark its independence at the expense of the British "special position" and by becoming a closer part of the Arab community. This was soon implemented as the Emir chose to accept the Saudi Ambassador as his first diplomatic representative, despite

[436] Richmond to Foreign Office, 17th July 1961, TNA FO371/156882.
[437] Note, 28th November 1963, TNA PREM11/4282.
[438] Rothnie to Home, 8th November 1961, TNA FO371/156894; Luce to Foreign Office, 22nd November 1961, TNA FO371/156670.
[439] Rothnie to Home, 8th November 1961, TNA FO371/156894.

a request from the FCO for a British appointment.[440] In London, the notes made on the despatch suggested it was well received, describing it as a "useful, comprehensive" and "good" despatch.[441]

Sir William Luce took Alan Rothnie's thinking further and reflected upon the lessons which could be identified to inform the wider strategy of Britain in the Gulf. He firstly endorsed Rothnie's summary of the overall operation and added:

> "It is indeed remarkable that in this day and age it should be possible for British forces to intervene in defence of an Arab country against another and, in the process, to strengthen Anglo-Kuwaiti friendship without, as I believe, harming British relations with the rest of the Arab world".[442]

However, one of the biggest lessons identified by Luce was that Iraq had the ability to attack with little, if any, warning. For him this meant that a stronger deployment of British forces was needed in the Persian Gulf with the Kuwaiti forces bolstered to withstand an Iraqi attack until British forces arrived. This was due to FCO "inability so far to devise any policy other than the exercise of military power to protect our interests in the area and to meet our treaty and moral obligations".[443] Luce therefore concluded "there is at present no policy within Her Majesty's Government's grasp which would enable us to withdraw from the Gulf".[444] This was also identified by the Cabinet and, as part of a paper produced on Kuwait in October 1961, alternative policies to ensure Kuwaiti independence were considered. However, it was also concluded that

[440] Cabinet conclusions, 19th September 1961, TNA CAB128/35.
[441] Rothnie to Home, 8th November 1961, TNA FO371/156894.
[442] Luce to Foreign Office, 22nd November 1961, TNA FO371/156670.
[443] Luce to Foreign Office, 22nd November 1961, TNA FO371/156670.
[444] Luce to Foreign Office, 22nd November 1961, TNA FO371/156670.

there was no practical alternative to maintaining British forces in readiness to come to Kuwait's assistance.[445] Luce's only suggestion for escaping the quagmire was to encourage the US to play a more active role in the region and Kuwait's protection.

Notes suggest that whilst Alan Rothnie's despatch was read by at least five recipients, Sir William Luce's despatch was widely circulated within a number of FCO departments before being further distributed to the Head of the War Office, Air Ministry and Admiralty. It sparked a debate inside the FCO which revealed that different individuals had identified different, and often conflicting, lessons from the same intervention. The Arabist Harold Walker dismissed a number of Luce's points stating "he does not come to any original conclusions" but did agree that "planning with the Americans is desirable, and although we have tried to achieve this in the past without success and can hardly be sanguine of obtaining better results if we try again, I think we should do so."[446] Other diplomats objected to Luce's assumption that British military presence in the Gulf did little harm elsewhere in the Arab world and others advised that it also affected Africa and Asia.[447] However, all of the FCO officials who commented on the despatch agreed that working with the Americans was an important lesson and that there was a requirement for Britain to continue its commitment to the Gulf, but in a manner which avoided appearing imperial. This was aptly described by P. S. Ziegler as "a bad job and all that we can do is to make the best of it by making our military presence as inoffensive as possible".[448]

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[445] Cabinet memorandum, 2nd October 1961, TNA CAB129/106; Cabinet conclusions, 5th October 1961, TNA CAB128/35.
[446] Walker, 9th January 1962, TNA FO371/156670.
[447] Maynard, 12th January 1962, TNA FO371/156670; Blaker, 17th January 1962, TNA FO371/156670.
[448] Ziegler, n.d., TNA FO371/156670.

Cabinet Secretary, Sir Norman Brook, however, had identified a different lesson from the FCO diplomats and advised the PM that maintaining the position with Kuwait was untenable. He wrote to Macmillan "We are fighting a losing battle propping up these reactionary regimes...We ought to recognise that our policy in relation to each one of these places is a pretty short-run affair."[449] The FCO did not catch up with this thinking for a few years. It was not until 1965 that Luce revised his position and suggested Britain should reconsider its military commitment to Kuwait. The Cabinet Official Committee on Defence and Overseas Policy came to a similar conclusion a few months later.[450]

5.1.4 An analysis of learning from history

Kuwait demonstrated that many lessons from Suez and Jordan had been learned within the FCO. Whilst Suez continued to provide negative identified lessons, of what not to do – appear imperial or intervene without support, especially from the US and local actors – Jordan provided a template of positive identified lessons on how to act throughout a crisis. As a result, Kuwait provided the opportunity to test both positive and negative identified lessons for the first time and revealed each as equally useful.

The precedent of Jordan was used as a method of learning for issuing a request for assistance and how to handle the UN. It was also drawn upon during the operation for negotiating a force for British withdrawal and ensuring the recovery of costs to protect the British economy. Although this proved to be a successful method of learning during Vantage, many of the personnel in the FCO had remained since 1958 and therefore it was possible for this learning

[449] Brook to Macmillan, 13th September 1961, TNA PREM11/3430.
[450] Luce to Brenchley, 31st May 1965, TNA FO371/179839.

to occur exclusively within the individual sphere with the consequent danger that it might not be retained over time.

Learning in planning and from the operation also revealed a new challenge within the learning process. Where two spheres overlap – in this case the individual and institutional – disagreements can occur over which is the correct identified lesson. Where such an individual remains within a government institution, their beliefs about lessons may be undermined by more senior individuals or those of the institution, with their professional role forcing their acceptance of working within the environment of a contradictory approach. For diplomats, this can cause particular challenges in presenting and defending overseas security policy if it runs contrary to their own ideas.

A number of strategic and operational lessons remained learned within the institutional sphere including the importance of world and public opinion and the importance of the US and cost management. All of these were beginning to form part of the best practise of crisis management and overseas military intervention. In the individual sphere, Harold Macmillan demonstrated that the identified lesson of Cabinet and public support also remained learned; both a negative lesson identified from Suez and a positive one from Jordan. However, these lessons were only identified within Macmillan's personal diaries rather than widely distributed for the benefit of future PMs.

A number of lessons were also forgotten, barriers to learning reoccurred and new barriers emerged. The issue of overflying permissions was an institutional, operational and negative lesson which had been forgotten but also faced reoccurring learning barrier of the actions of other learners.

Learning by other states also forced new lessons to be identified in the FCO. Officials noted that lessons identified by Kuwait would propel Britain into a different relationship with the Gulf state, and the FCO would have to learn to adjust accordingly. However, the inability to think of viable alternatives or means of implementation to protect British interests revealed a further barrier to learning. Whilst the FCO identified the lesson that alternative policies towards Kuwait were required – to avoid ongoing military protection – officials could not imagine a means by which this would be possible. In fact, Vantage revealed that the FCO was often uncreative and slow to respond to changes in the region. It also had a culture of hesitation in implementing strategic lessons which risked disruption in policy elsewhere, preferring to maintain stability and the status quo. As a result, long-term underlying difficulties remained unresolved: the British were on military alert to protect Kuwait again by Christmas and Britain was forced to maintain an expensive base in Bahrain to ensure ongoing military readiness.

Nonetheless, Vantage provided the first example of significant formal and institutional learning after the operation. This, again, was not through official histories or lessons reports but through the internal, formal and explicit method of despatches which identified lessons. However, more significantly, the two despatches from Alan Rothnie and Sir William Luce sparked a formal debate about which identified lessons were to be learned. This was a new method but worked well and also revealed the power of personality and seniority in the learning process within the FCO; it was the despatch from the senior figure, Sir William Luce, which was the most widely debated and distributed. Notably, the new FS, Lord Douglas-Home, was much less active in implementing lessons than his predecessor, Selwyn Lloyd.

5.2 The MoD

For the MoD, much had changed since Jordan but not because of it. Instead, Jordan had occurred during a period of transition in the military – after Suez and the reforms of the 1957 Defence White Paper – and had provided an initial, small scale, test of these changes. The Defence White Paper was subject to a five year development plan and thus was coming towards its conclusion and Kuwait offered the first large scale test of the amendments under emergency conditions. As a result, the success of the operation was politically important to the MoD. Similarly, the lessons identified from the operation were significant for revealing weaknesses which would stimulate military thinking across a number of areas. They would also feed into the 1962 Defence White Paper, shaping Britain's future defence policy as it withdrew east of Suez.

The military operation in Kuwait saw the largest mobilization of British forces in the Middle East post-Suez; a scale which would not be exceeded until the British troop contribution to the Gulf War in 1991.[451] On 1st July 1961, Royal Marine Commandos landed by helicopter from HMS Bulwark, Paratroopers arrived by air, Centurion Tanks landed from HMS Striker and the Coldstream Guards were flown in from Bahrain. Units of the Kuwaiti Army were also deployed. By 7th July, the force had been substantially reinforced. All three services had major units involved[452] with a total of 7,000 servicemen taking part and an additional 3,000 on standby and auxiliary duties.[453] Despite this demonstration of force, and in similarity with Jordan, not a single shot was fired.

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[451] Ashton, "Kuwaiti Crisis", footnote 1.
[452] Philip Darby, *British Defence Policy East of Suez: 1947-1968* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 219.
[453] Alani, *Vantage*, 248.

5.2.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

Rumblings of an Iraqi threat to Kuwait had been circulating for some time and the MoD had continued to try to implement the lesson of working with the Americans in joint planning to counter the concern. Immediately after Jordan, in September 1958, a US-UK Planning Group was set-up for this purpose and Macmillan expressly wrote to Washington in 1959 requesting that the Group be used to develop "joint planning on the lines we prepared for Lebanon" for the protection of Kuwait.[454]

In the early stages of planning the MoD experienced the same challenges of working with their American allies as they had in planning Fortitude, with the US continually reluctant to share any military plans.[455] By June 1961, the Arabian Department at the FCO identified the American's lack of commitment: "The net result therefore is that we have no details of American plans, the Americans have always refused to discuss joint planning and seem now, on the military level, likely to close the door".[456] The Under-Secretary at the FCO, Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar, wrote on the memo "It is also rather ludicrous that there should be an American Admiral stationed in Bahrain alongside a British Admiral and a British Brigadier both of them working in water-tight compartments and not having much idea what the other is doing".[457]

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[454] Arabian Department, "United Kingdom/United States Military Planning in the Middle East (especially Kuwait)" 6th June 1961, TNA FO371/156694, annex A.

[455] Defence Committee Meeting Minutes, 27th April 1961, TNA CAB131/25.

[456] Arabian Department, "United Kingdom/United States Military Planning in the Middle East (especially Kuwait)" 6th June 1961, TNA FO371/156694, annex A.

[457] Hoyer Millar, memorandum, 25th May 1961 in Arabian Department, "United Kingdom/United States Military Planning in the Middle East (especially Kuwait)" 6th June 1961, TNA FO371/156694, annex A.

Nonetheless, contingency planning continued. As a result, military plans for Vantage had been drawn up since November 1959 and were continuously revised, even further in advance than the contingency plans for Jordan or Suez. This had allowed some brigades to run a valuable rehearsal exercise of Vantage in the Trucial States at the beginning of 1961. Further lessons were identified from the exercise and a revised concept was in preparation, codenamed Bellringer, which would have implemented the lessons and become effective in September 1961. When the Iraqi threat emerged sooner than expected a number of elements of Bellringer were quickly incorporated into Vantage.[458]

5.2.2 Learning from history during the intervention

Once the operation began, the implementation of many lessons identified from 1956 and 1958 was immediately tested, beginning with the movement of troops by air (see 4.2.3). In fact, the air movement of around 7,000 men and 700 tons of stores in the first six days of the operation revealed a significant increase in speed and efficiency due to intensive and combined training of the Army and the RAF.[459]

The operation was also a test for the new Middle East Command (MEC) based in Aden. One of the lessons identified from Suez had been that the existing command structure was unreliable and "not a set-up recommended in any future operations".[460] The lesson was subsequently implemented through the division of the existing MEC into two in 1959; one based in Aden and one in Cyprus (which was

[458] Elworthy to Chief of the Defence Staff, 30th September 1961, TNA DEFE5/118, 10; 5.
[459] Julian Amery, Hansard (Commons), DCXLIV, c1224, 19th July 1961.
[460] Chiefs of Staff Committee, 11th October 1957, TNA DEFE11/137.

renamed Near East Command). The new MEC allowed for a C-in-C to have regional command of decision-making and report directly to the COS in London.

Once troops had landed, the C-in-C, Air Marshal Charles Elworthy, moved 1,200 miles closer to theatre – joining Sir William Luce in Bahrain, which allowed daily visits to Kuwait and twice daily meetings with all Commanders.[461] Being situated in the Residency also enabled the C-in-C to be provided with copies of all FCO telegrams and intelligence. In his post-operational report, C-in-C Elworthy identified "The Command structure established at Bahrein [sic] worked very well and I am convinced of the need for the source of military command and political direction to be situated together in an operation of this type."[462]

However, the command structure was still not successful for managing a tri-service operation. To add further complication, further down the Vantage command structure, infantry came from three brigades, each organised differently. There were also equipment and communication incompatibilities and, as a result, organisation and standardisation issues became overwhelming for the Joint Administrative Headquarters in Bahrain. This lesson was quickly identified and a team from The School of Land and Air Warfare was promptly despatched to study the difficulties, implementing their lessons through an update to the Army/RAF operating procedures and techniques.[463]

[461] Lee, *Flight*, 177-178.
[462] Elworthy to Chief of the Defence Staff, 30th September 1961, TNA DEFE5/118, 4; 13.
[463] Lee, *Flight*, 182.

Whilst the Army and RAF were happy to work within a joint service headquarters, the RN resisted and Admiral Talbot insisted on operating off-shore.[464] C-in-C Elworthy also concluded "The lack of an established joint organisation and procedure was seriously felt...More practise is required to improve inter-service working".[465] This lesson was soon implemented and the 1962 Defence White Paper announced the set-up of a permanent Joint Service Staff within the MoD to improve the framework of joint working in the future and to run joint service exercises worldwide.[466] In 1963, an additional White Paper, *Central Organisation for Defence*, increased defence coordination further with four new organisations created to work with the Joint Planning and Joint Warfare Staff; the Defence Operations Executive, the Defence Operational Requirements Staff, the Defence Signals Staff and the Defence Intelligence Staff.[467]

The previously identified lesson of managing the media was implemented in Kuwait but was only partially successful. A Public Relations (PR) team was immediately established, with the first officer arriving just after the troops, albeit that he quickly contracted chicken pox resulting in initially incomplete and imbalanced reporting.[468] Once in place, the team in Kuwait worked hard to keep the media informed and onside but were hindered by poor communications and a lack of MoD direction on what could be released to the press. C-in-C Elworthy later identified "a lack of

[464] Munro, *Flag*, 44.
[465] Elworthy to Chief of the Defence Staff, 30th September 1961, TNA DEFE5/118, 21.
[466] Harold Watkinson, Hansard (Commons), DCLV, c45, 5th March 1962.
[467] MoD, *Central Organisation for Defence* (London: HMSO, 1963).
[468] Monthly diary of events, 25th June - 24th July 1961, TNA FO371/156824.

clear positive guidance from London made it more difficult to present the situation to the Press in the best possible light."[469]

Furthermore, difficulties associated with working within extreme weather conditions were identified and reported back to Britain by the media before the MoD could learn the relevant lessons. Extreme temperatures had caused grenades to smoke, batteries to lose charge, boots to degenerate, explosives to give off head-ache inducing fumes and water jerrican linings to disintegrate causing nausea and vomiting. In addition, Centurion tanks were too hot to carry Infantry and it was suspected that, due to disintegration, much of the ammunition would have been useless if it had been used.[470] With troops flown in from all over the world, no time for acclimatisation, poor discipline in heat protection and a lack of suitable equipment and food, there were also many heat casualties. A report by the Army's Operational Research Group (AORG) identified that 10 per cent of troops arriving from the UK were out of action due to heat disorders within the first five days.[471]

Much to the dismay of the MoD, by 6th July the *Daily Mirror* was claiming that a Royal Marine Commando had been withdrawn because one third of the men were suffering heat exhaustion.[472] Another story stated that a Commanding Officer was forced to pay for ice for his troops out of his own pocket, causing one sympathetic

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[469] Elworthy to Chief of the Defence Staff, 30th September 1961, TNA DEFE5/118, 2.
[470] Army Operational Research Group (AORG), n.d., "Operation Vantage", Report No. 6/61, TNA WO291/2240, 18-23.
[471] Darby, *Defence Policy*, 248.
[472] Lieutenant Colonel John Cordeaux, Hansard (Commons), DXLIV, c1216, 19th July 1961.

member of public to guarantee the supply of £10,500 worth of ice to the troops.[473]

To counteract the reports, the Under-Secretary of State for War, James Ramsden, was quickly dispatched to Kuwait. The trip achieved its objective and was triumphantly described in a letter from John Profumo, the Minister of War, as "a great success and the publicity here has been splendid". However, it was not appreciated by all; one War Office bureaucrat noted "P.S. Have just seen signal from C-in-C asking to be protected from such visits".[474] Ramsden wrote a report on his visit which identified lessons surrounding the conditions of the troops. This report was distributed to relevant departments for the implementation of lessons.[475]

In addition, as early as 13th July the War Office commissioned AORG to conduct two pieces of operational research. The first sent a scientist to collect data across seven specific areas of concern, including equipment and weapons. The second saw a specialist in physiology survey all factors related to the health and efficiency of serving personnel, particularly heat and acclimatisation difficulties.[476] Both research groups produced reports which identified lessons for the future. The reports led to further heat exercises, conducted in Aden in 1962, to identify lessons through the study of the acclimatisation of troops, appropriate rations for hotter climates and new equipment. Consideration for

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[473] The Daily Telegraph, 6th July 1961, TNA WO32/20372, 28; Young, 6th July 1961, TNA WO32/20372.
[474] Profumo to Ramsden, 13th July 1961, TNA WO32/20372; n.a., note, 17th July 1961, TNA WO32/20372.
[475] Ramsden to Profumo, 25th July 1961, TNA WO32/20372.
[476] AORG, "Operation Vantage", n.d., TNA WO291/2240; AORG, "Survey of Factors Affecting the Health and Efficiency of Troops on Operation 'Vantage'", December 1961, TNA WO291/2242.

implementation included acclimatising soldiers through heat chambers or carrying them to theatre in heated aircraft. The lessons identified from the reports and exercises were widely distributed through lectures to the War Office, Strategic Reserve and Southern Command.

5.2.3 Learning from the intervention

Overall, Vantage was considered a success in two ways. Firstly it demonstrated that the MoD had implemented a number of lessons identified since Suez. In Parliament, on 5th March 1962, the Minister of Defence, Harold Watkinson, confidently concluded "there were lessons to be learned, and they have been learned". He made specific reference to the unified command of joint service operations and the new mobile task force concept.[477] Secondly, testing the implementation of lessons in Kuwait provided the opportunity to identify weaknesses and to argue for further investment into the development of new policies within the 1962 Defence White Paper. Harold Watkinson told Parliament that the operation's identified lessons had been the basis of "much of our future planning".[478]

As well as the AORG reports and subsequent exercises, many other lessons were identified through a variety of methods. As part of the standard process, the C-in-C produced a full report on the operation, with lessons identified for the future.[479] This was considered by the COS and referred to the Joint Planning Staff.[480] In addition, the report noted that the C-in-C's subordinate Commanders were providing their own reports identifying lessons on matters of single service concern and detailed reports were

[477] Harold Watkinson, Hansard (Commons), DCLV, c45, 5th March 1962.
[478] Harold Watkinson, Hansard (Commons), DCLV, c44, 5th March 1962.
[479] Elworthy to Chief of the Defence Staff, 30th September 1961, TNA DEFE5/118.
[480] Watkins, note, 18th October 1961, TNA DEFE5/118.

being written on joint matters including medical and communications "through the normal channels".[481]

C-in-C Elworthy's report identified a number of lessons for the future including that greater direction was required from the Government on enemy engagement and the failings of relying upon local cooperation. He also identified the benefit of developing a "Goodwill with the Kuwaitis" scheme. As there had been no operational role for the Psychological Warfare Unit during Granby, they developed and issued a pamphlet on the customs and susceptibilities of the Kuwaitis. These were given to all Commanding Officers for dissemination. The aim of this information was to encourage cultural awareness and understanding to foster a positive relationship.[482] Elworthy also identified the need for tactical loading of aircraft so that men and equipment would arrive together. This led the Director of Land/Air Warfare to request further lesson identification and implementation on this issue by the School of Land Air Warfare.[483]

The War Office also held its own debriefing and a meeting specifically to identify the lessons of Vantage, distribute them to relevant Commanders and delegate lesson implementation.[484] In addition, a working party was set-up to examine Vantage and draw upon "various post-mortem reports" to produce a report for distribution on the lessons to be learned.[485] Lesson implementation

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[481] Elworthy to Chief of the Defence Staff, 30th September 1961, TNA DEFE5/118, 26.
[482] Elworthy to Chief of the Defence Staff, 30th September 1961, TNA DEFE5/118, 23.
[483] Weston to School of Land/Air Warfare, 8th February 1962, TNA WO32/20721.
[484] War Office, "Debriefing of Vantage", n.d. TNA WO32/20720; Meeting notes, 1st August 1961, TNA WO32/2072.
[485] N.a., loose minute, 4th August 1961, TNA WO32/20720.

was then pursued by both the War Office and the Minister of Defence.[486] Even a year later, Minister for War John Profumo was still attending meetings on Kuwait and following-up on lessons.[487]

However, it was considered that the distribution of such identified lessons should be restricted. One barrier to wider learning was that there were limits to the extent to which the MoD was prepared to admit faults outside of its own walls. Even eighteen months later John Profumo's Private Secretary explained that documents needed to be treated in "a 'need to know' circle within the War Office to avoid any subsequent embarrassment" and it was decided that the AORG report "will not be distributed to other Government Departments in view of the criticisms it contains".[488] In addition, the MoD took criticism from outside of the department very personally; the Director of the Royal Artillery called accusations relating to the heat casualties by the Labour MP George Wigg "a slur on the good name of the British Army".[489]

Lesson identification also occurred due to the ongoing Iraqi threat to Kuwait which forced the revision of plans for intervention in the future. These drew upon many lessons from Vantage. For example, throughout the operation communications difficulties had persisted due to the electrical disturbance from sun spots.[490] Even after withdrawal, communications difficulties between London and Bahrain continued and the revised intervention plan noted "although

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[486] War Office to General Officer Command MELF, 30th January 1962, TNA WO32/20721; Assistant Secretary, 2nd January 1962, TNA WO32/20721.
[487] Profumo to Quarter Master General, 29th November 1962, TNA WO32/20372.
[488] Wilson to Secretariat, 14th February 1963, TNA WO32/20372; confidential note, 8th January 1961, TNA WO32/20721.
[489] Director of the Royal Artillery to Secretary of State for War, 29th October 1962, TNA WO32/20372.
[490] Defence Committee Meeting, 3rd July 1961, TNA CAB131/26.

communications between London and Bahrein [sic] have been improved, they are by no means certain when conditions are adverse."[491] Consquently, authorisation was delegated to the C-in-C to carry out necessary attacks, without the go-ahead from London if necessary, thus implementing the lesson.[492]

To inform the revised plans, a working party was established by the COS Committee to report on the operation. It identified that relying on a plan that required a four day warning period had been a major weakness of the previous Kuwait contingency plan.[493] As a result, the new plan, codenamed Operation Sodabread, implemented the lesson by reducing the warning period to 36 hours.[494] In 1967, the MoD used the Kuwait contingency plan, by this time codenamed Operation Livid, as the basis of a War Game to identify further lessons on optimum force position and build-up in a limited war.[495]

Beyond the initial reflex to draw lessons from the operation, the MoD also went on to write a number of official histories from which further lessons could be identified. Although the Joint Service In-House Historians deemed Kuwait as "Essentially a Deployment Operation, not justifying more than a monograph" the Naval Historical Branch produced a history summarising the operational aspects for naval education purposes and the Army Historical Branch produced a factual narrative of the operation following the chronology of events.[496] Air Chief Marshal Sir David Lee also

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[491] Watkinson, memorandum, 13th April 1962, TNA CAB129/109.
[492] Watkinson, memorandum, 13th April 1962, TNA CAB129/109.
[493] COS Committee, 16th October 1961, TNA DEFE5/116.
[494] Watkinson, "Kuwait", 1st September 1961, TNA CAB129/106.
[495] MoD, "Notes on the Development of a Limited War Game", January 1967, TNA DEFE48/737.
[496] Joint Service Historians, "Report by the Working Party of Joint-Service In-House Histories", 13th April 1973, TNA DEFE11/567, annex C; "Policy

included Kuwait as a chapter in his works, *Flight from the Middle East*, for the Air Historical Branch and specifically identified a number of lessons.[497]

5.2.4 An analysis of learning from history

Learning within the MoD continued in the institutional sphere but was also driven forward, in some cases, by learners in the individual sphere. It had increased since Jordan, despite a similar level of operational success, thus revealing little correlation between the learning process and the success or failure of an operation. Instead, it was arguably the timing of the operation which was crucial to the effort and importance placed upon lesson identification – straddled between the end of a five year change in strategy and before the next strategic defence review of 1962. Consequently, in contrast to Fortitude or the response of the FCO to Kuwait, MoD records on identifying lessons from Vantage are abundant.

The planning of the intervention demonstrated the ongoing attempts to implement the lesson of working with the Americans whilst faced with the continual barrier of an uncooperative ally. However, it also revealed a new method of lesson identification through rehearsal exercises. This extraordinary method was hugely beneficial as it allowed lessons to be implemented and new lessons to be identified within a safe environment. A similar method was also used after the operation through the war game for Livid.

Once the operation began, many of the identified strategic lessons from Suez were demonstrated as learned. This included air movement and command and control. Joint Service working,

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for Official Histories on Defence Since World War II", 29th September 1972, TNA DEFE11/567, annex F.

[497] Lee, *Flight,* 165-188.

however, had not been successfully learned and the C-in-C called upon the institutional sphere – the School of Land and Air Warfare – to study the problem, leaving lesson identification internal but extraordinary. The School implemented the lessons they identified through the explicit and formal methods of operating procedures and techniques which also acted as a method of lesson retention for the future.

The operation also revealed the role of the media as an external learner in identifying lessons. The lessons identified by the media forced extraordinary and formal methods of further lesson identification, through the AORG, and implementation encouraged by the Under-Secretary of State, James Ramsden. It also led to further internal research, development and testing to identify additional lessons which were widely distributed by the formal but tacit method of lecturing.

Once the operation was complete many reports identifying lessons were produced, as there were after Suez. However, the role of the School of Land and Air Warfare in identification and implementation was reemphasised and the distribution of lessons went further than just the COS. The War Office debriefing ensured lessons were distributed to all relevant Commanders whilst the working party saw that lessons were learned pushed forward by an insistent Minister. This revealed the importance of an individual driver of learning and a formal body for overseeing lesson implementation. A new method of lesson implementation and retention was also revealed through the revised plans for intervention both before and after the operation.

Overall, much more learning occurred from Kuwait than Jordan and even the official histories took greater note of Vantage than

Fortitude. In addition, the MoD continued to learn more formally than the FCO and was beginning to reveal itself as a learning organisation through routine reporting, research and development, exercises, schools, lecturing, training and restructuring. However, there were also warning signs of increasing barriers to learning. Whilst the MoD was reflexive internally, it was becoming clear that it did not want to distribute lessons across other Whitehall departments or publicly air faults and weaknesses. There was a hostile reaction to external criticism and the ministry was coming under increasing pressure to implement lessons without the necessary finances. Economic restrictions had already led to a reduction in manpower and it would soon lead to the enemy overtaking Britain in access to modern equipment.[498]

5.3 The IC

For the IC, the Kuwait crisis marked the end of a long period of monitoring and assessing the threat of an Iraqi invasion. In contrast to Suez and Jordan, the IC had been predicting Iraqi aggression towards Kuwait for some time and after the 1958 Iraqi coup the IC focused attention towards Kuwait and Iraq. A new SIS station was opened in Kuwait, in 1958, by one of the few Arabists in the service at the time, John Christie, and the SIS liaised with the Kuwaiti army.[499] Across the border in Iraq there was also a SIS station in Baghdad, under Henry Coombe-Tenant.[500] However, as the crisis began to unfold, it soon became clear that the IC remained limited in its collection capabilities.

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[498] Darby, *Defence Policy*, 252.
[499] Verrier, *Looking Glass*, 178; 184; 168.
[500] See, for example, Pyman to Foreign Office, 2nd July 1961, TNA FO371/156876; Pyman to Foreign Office, 3rd July 1961, TNA FO371/156876.

5.3.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

Between 1958 and 1961, the IC demonstrated some lesson identification and implementation through the continual re-evaluation of assessments on the Iraqi threat to Kuwait, often at the request of the MoD. Initially, in 1958, assessments predicted that the new Qasim regime would maintain claims to Kuwait but aimed to achieve its objectives of annexation through internal subversion rather than outright aggression.[501] In March 1959, military planners asked the JIC to disregard assessing the *likelihood* of an invasion and focus upon *how* an Iraqi invasion into Kuwait might take place. The JIC assessed Iraqi attack scenarios and provided predicted warning times for Iraqi aggression which fed into the MoD plans. It concluded that Britain could expect "to receive not less than four days' warning of the assembly of an invasion force in the Basrah area, but, once this is assembled [Britain] could expect little or no warning of an actual invasion."[502] It was on this basis that military planning proceeded.

At the beginning of 1961, the JIC provided another long-term assessment which concluded that Qasim was focused upon improving relations with Arab countries and was therefore unlikely to act aggressively towards Kuwait, another Arab country.[503] The report also concluded that the Iraqi Army was incapable of conducting an operation outside of Iraq due to being both disorganised and lacking training and experience. This assessment led to a lack of urgency in updating the contingency planning of Vantage with Bellringer.[504]

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[501] JIC(86)76, 5th August 1958, TNA CAB158/33.
[502] JIC(59)28, 6th March 1959, TNA CAB158/36.
[503] JIC(61)10, 15th March 1961, TNA CAB158/42.
[504] Elworthy to Chief of the Defence Staff, 30th September 1961, TNA DEFE5/118, 26.

However, the IC identified its collection weaknesses during planning. In an attempt to corroborate human intelligence (Humint) the IC relied on signals intelligence (Sigint) from Baghdad and Cyprus, the continued monitoring of Iraqi media and increasing the observation of trains on the Baghdad to Basra line.[505] The IC also placed much emphasis on the use of imagery intelligence (Imint) to substantiate Humint reports. The benefit of reconnaissance for substantiating reports had been identified as a lesson by the C-in-C in Musketeer and the IC had agreed.[506] Upon reading the report the JIC stated "this report only serves to re-emphasise the pressing need for the maintenance of an adequate and up-to-date reconnaissance force...in any theatre of operations".[507] Furthermore, in January 1960 the Air Ministry had suggested that Canberras could deliver blanket coverage of photo reconnaissance of Southern Iraq to implement this lesson.[508]

There soon proved to be a number of difficulties at the operational level with lesson implementation of Imint. In particular, entering another state's territory during peacetime required approval from the Cabinet and this caused significant delays in the process. Once approval was given, reconnaissance did not solve the problem as missions were unable to locate an armoured regiment which was reportedly on the move. Canberras were routinely flown but severe haze often degraded their images and by mid-August the JIC was still unable to confirm any reports of movement.[509] This was

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[505] Tom Bower, *The Perfect English Spy* (London: Heinemann, 1995), 236; Verrier, *Looking Glass*, 188.
[506] COS Committee, 11th October 1957, TNA DEFE11/137, 8.
[507] JIC Secretary to COS, 25th November 1957, TNA DEFE11/137.
[508] MoD, "Intelligence on Kuwait", 12th January 1962, TNA DEFE13/268; COS Committee, "Air Reconnaissance in the Basrah [sic] Kuwait Area", 12th January 1962, TNA DEFE5/99.
[509] Richard A. Mobley, "Gauging the Iraqi Threat to Kuwait in the 1960s", *Studies in Intelligence*, (2001) 45/5, 23.

significant as George Hiller, the head of the FCO Western Department, admitted "[the] decision to send troops was based on [a] military appreciation [of the] situation following [the] realization [that] Intelligence had lost track [of a] squadron".[510]

When Qasim announced Kuwait's annexation, on 25th June 1961, the SIS station in Baghdad assessed that the announcement was propaganda.[511] However, intelligence reaching the FCO soon contradicted this assessment, with reports from the Ambassador and his Military Attaché, Colonel Bowden, showing increasing concern over the movement of troops.[512] Having failed to implement the lesson of the necessity for further collection assets, the IC had to lean increasingly upon the British Embassy for intelligence.[513] In his memoirs Ambassador Trevelyan described the different methods through which information was sought, including monitoring large orders of aviation spirit and requisitioning of railway wagons, as well as noting the widening of the road from Basra to Kuwait at night for heavy traffic.[514] On 5th July the FCO wrote to Baghdad, "War Office greatly appreciate[s] information Her Majesty's Consul General Basra has been able to supply under difficult conditions and much regret lack of other sources compels them to ask for more".[515]

Britain's alert status was heightened on 28th June and it was also on this day that Humphrey Trevelyan advised that he could no longer guarantee the anticipated warning time that had been determined

[510] Cited in Ashton, "Kuwaiti Crisis", 170.
[511] Bower, *English Spy*, 237; Verrier, *Looking Glass*, 189.
[512] See, for example, TNA PREM11/3427; TNA FO371/156876.
[513] Humphrey Trevelyan, *The Middle East in Revolution* (Boston: Gambit Incorporated, 1970), 188-189.
[514] Trevelyan, *Middle East*, 189.
[515] Foreign Office to Baghdad, 5th July 1961, TNA FO371/156876.

by the IC for the military contingency planning, causing great difficulties for the MoD.

5.3.2 Learning from history during the intervention

During the intervention there was little further learning demonstrated in the IC, with one exception; implementing the lesson of working with the US, although this was not without incident. In planning the operation, the IC had kept in contact with the Americans and shared intelligence with Washington. However, a few days after the operation launched, rumours began to circulate of a secret collusion between Qasim and HMG.[516] After the Iraqi threat of annexation, the IC repeated its approach to Jordan by providing intelligence directly to the Emir of Kuwait, with daily assessments from Baghdad and Basra passed on by John Christie. It was believed that Britain had good intelligence on Iraq and, as a result, these reports soon convinced the Emir of a significant threat and the need to formally request British military assistance.[517] Once Vantage had begun accusations were made that the threat had been fabricated or exaggerated to create the environment within which Britain could legitimately return to the region. This included allegations that the IC had leaked stories to the Kuwaiti press to create an atmosphere of fear.[518]

The rumours eventually led to concerns from allies that the British were trying to reassert power and prestige in the region.[519] The US Embassy in Baghdad had been unable to substantiate the claims coming from the FCO of a threat, and on 4th July the US Ambassador reported that there was still no direct evidence of Iraqi

[516] Beeley to Foreign Office, 6th July 1961, TNA FO371/156878.
[517] Alani, *Vantage*, 209.
[518] Fletcher, "'The Shambles' at Kuwait", *Tribune*, 16th August 1963, 511; Verrier, *Looking Glass*, 186-187.
[519] Richmond to Foreign Office, 6th July 1961, TNA FO953/2035.

movement in Baghdad. The US Consul General in Basra had also not seen any evidence of troop movements.[520] Instead, American intelligence cited the nature of the road, a dirt track between Basra and Kuwait, as impeding any rapid annexation.[521]

Despite ongoing intelligence liaison, the US eventually accused the British of intelligence exaggeration. Philip Talbot from the Far East section of the US State Department advised Dean Rusk "the British have placed more force in and on Kuwait than was justified by the magnitude or even seriousness of the Iraqi threat".[522] The US delegation to the UN also expressed concerns over the lack of fresh evidence of any Iraqi aggression.[523] Rusk even challenged the FS, Lord Douglas-Home, on the extent of the Iraqi threat and the CIA's deputy liaison officer in London, Carlton Swift, demanded that the raw intelligence be shared.[524]

This was embarrassing for the IC and plans were considered to leak the contents of the diplomatic telegrams from Humphrey Trevelyan to a "discreet American correspondent" to counteract the accusations. To ensure the correct audience was reached, Dana Schmidt of *The New York Times* was suggested. However, the idea was soon dropped, with reassurance that "arrangements are being made elsewhere".[525]

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[520] Caccia to Foreign Office, 28th June 1961, TNA PREM11/3427; Caccia to Foreign Office, 5th July 1961, TNA FO371/156878.
[521] FAOHP Seelye, 1993, 33.
[522] Ashton, "A microcosm", 1078.
[523] Caccia to Foreign Office, 5th July 1961, TNA FO371/156878.
[524] Conversation between Home and Rusk, 6th August 1961, TNA PREM11/3429; Bower, *English Spy,* 237.
[525] Richmond to Foreign Office, 6th July 1961, TNA FO953/2035; Trevelyan to Foreign Office, 11th July 1961, TNA FO953/2035; Foreign Office to Kuwait, 10th July 1961, TNA FO953/2035.

Other lessons which had been identified were not implemented, whilst previous difficulties which had never been formally identified reoccurred, demonstrating the importance of lesson-learning. Following Musketeer, a number of learning documents identified that the security of intelligence, and issues of security in IC-MoD liaison, were hindering operations. General Keightley had concluded under the subject of "Intelligence" that "Security of plans and operations generally proved a serious problem", whilst one Commander noted "A constant tug-of-war exists between the dictates of security and the need for adequate briefing".[526] The JIC(ME) had agreed and identified that the virtual exclusion of the MoD command structure denied any effective role to the commanders prior to troop arrival.[527] However, issues of security re-emerged as a problem in Vantage. C-in-C Elworthy identified "there was an over use of Top Secret classification which led to delays".[528]

5.3.3 Learning from the intervention

Once British troops withdrew from Kuwait, the JIC continued to assess that Qasim had not abandoned his claim to the country and provided six-week updates to the COS.[529] Reconnaissance flights over the Iraq-Kuwait border continued, only reducing to bi-weekly intervals by 1964 and ending in 1968.[530] The JIC also continued to report on tank movements and provide intelligence assessments of the Iraqi force and its movements, with an update on Iraqi

[526] COS Committee, 11th October 1957, TNA DEFE11/137, 8; Commander 2(BR) Corps, "Operation Musketeer", TNA WO288/79.
[527] JIC(ME)(56)-52, 28th January 1957, received under FOI, annex, point 6.
[528] Elworthy to Chief of the Defence Staff, 30th September 1961, TNA DEFE5/118, 21.
[529] Cradock, *Enemy*, 207.
[530] Mobley, "Iraqi Threat", 26.

intentions every four to six weeks.[531] The ongoing intelligence requirements for Kuwait and Iraq as well as the imminent threat to British interests, forced some internal reflection into the handling of the operation and what lessons could be identified for the future.

The Joint Planning Group immediately requested a new assessment. The JIC report, *Iraqi Threat to Kuwait during the Next Twelve Months*, offered a re-evaluation of previous assessments and identified that collection capabilities had been, and continued to be, unable to provide the required warning period for British intervention.[532] A Cabinet memo on 2nd October 1961 also admitted that the experience had revealed "difficulties in securing accurate intelligence of Iraqi military preparations".[533]

However, instead of implementing the identified lesson to address the issues of collection, the IC focused upon the issue of providing a warning period. The JIC reassessed scenarios for attack and developed a list of warning indicators for each scenario, but a heavy reliance upon Embassy staff and the military Attaché continued.[534] By September 1961, the warning indicators had been reassessed again and it was identified that they remained insufficient.[535] Two months later three scenarios of attack had been predicted, but for two of these scenarios it was concluded "We cannot rely on any warning of these attacks".[536] To make matters worse, in November 1961, the MoD asked the JIC explicitly to assess the likelihood of an

[531] Cradock, *Enemy*, 207; Minister of Defence, 1st September 1962, TNA CAB129/106.
[532] JIC(61)58, 18th August 1961, TNA CAB158/44.
[533] Cabinet memorandum, 2nd October 1961, TNA CAB129/106.
[534] JIC(61)58, 18th August 1961, TNA CAB158/44.
[535] COS Committee, 12th September 1961, TNA DEFE4/138.
[536] JIC(61)88, 23rd November 1961, TNA CAB158/44.

attack as well as Iraq's capability.[537] The resulting paper revealed that the JIC had gained little further intelligence on Qasim and his intentions, offering mixed messages: "Qasim has in no way modified his claim to Kuwait...He is unpredictable and given an opportunity, he could move swiftly without warning...HM Ambassador at Baghdad has warned us, however, that we can easily over-estimate Qasim's capability for crazy action and under-estimate his peasant cunning".[538]

Nonetheless, by 5th October the JIC reassured the COS that the lesson of the lack of intelligence collection assets had been identified and implemented: "steps had been taken to improve our position".[539] Liaison with the Kuwaiti military intelligence was increased, GCHQ hired additional Arab linguists to increase Sigint and focus was shifted to reporting on Kuwaiti internal affairs, as there were fresh concerns that Qasim would attempt annexation through subversion.[540]

In the meantime, Cabinet Secretary, Sir Norman Brook, wrote sceptically to the PM and identified "Our present intelligence coverage in Southern Iraq is, however, inadequate to enable us to assess accurately whether Iraq is capable of launching an attack on Kuwait".[541] Brook also identified that the IC continued to rely upon Imint as the best source of confirming or denying Humint: "Although steps are being taken to improve our intelligence in Iraq itself, the best and at present the only means of confirming the strength and dispositions of the Iraqi forces in the

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[537] JIC minutes, 9th November 1961, TNA CAB159/36.
[538] JIC(61)88, 23rd November 1961, TNA CAB158/44.
[539] COS meeting, 5th October 1961, TNA DEFE32/6.
[540] Rothnie to Foreign Office, 23rd September 1961, TNA FO371/156891; MoD, "The Threat to Kuwait", December 1963, TNA DEFE7/2122.
[541] Brook to Macmillan, 18th October 1961, TNA PREM11/3430.

Basra/Shuaiba/Zubair areas is by vertical aerial photographic reconnaissance."[542] He went on to advise "without this information the Joint Intelligence Committee is obliged to use for this purpose unconfirmed information" before identifying "there are at present no alternative means of obtaining the intelligence needed".[543]

By the end of November, the situation had not significantly improved through implementation and the JIC noted that even the reliance upon Imint was strained: "every possible effort is being made to improve our intelligence coverage of the area but the build-up of this coverage takes time."[544] There were also political difficulties. In October, the JIC had proposed another reconnaissance flight over Iraq in an attempt to locate the lost regiment and to inform military planning. However, the FCO were concerned about political embarrassment and delayed the flight by several weeks.[545]

When Humint reports suggested a new threat of invasion, in December 1961, with GCHQ also reporting anomalies in Iraqi ground communications, the IC were still reliant upon reconnaissance missions alone to collaborate the reports which also continued to be delayed by the required approval process.[546] However, this time the lesson was identified and the IC concluded that for implementation they needed the collection of intelligence to

[542] Brook to Macmillan, 18th October 1961, TNA PREM11/3430.
[543] Brook to Macmillan, 18th October 1961, TNA PREM11/3430.
[544] JIC(61)88, 23rd November 1961, TNA CAB158/44.
[545] COS meeting, 5th October 1961, TNA CAB159/36; COS meeting, 12th October 1961, TNA CAB159/36; COS meeting, 9th November 1961, TNA CAB159/36.
[546] JIC to Cabinet Office, "Assessment of Iraqi Threat and UK collection posture", 22nd December 1961, TNA PREM11/4359; Brook to Macmillan, 12th January 1962, TNA DEFE13/268.

be "within our control".[547] Macmillan's Private Secretary, Philip de Zulueta, agreed stating "It seems inevitable that we shall continue to get alarmist bazaar rumours of Qasim's intention and if we are to avoid politically embarrassing and unnecessary and expensive military movements we must have means to confirm or reject such reports."[548]

The JIC's suggestion for short-term lesson implementation was that the UK Political Resident be delegated to authorise one reconnaissance flight immediately over Iraq should indications suggest an impending attack.[549] Macmillan approved the proposal with a requirement for re-approval every 90 days and a Canberra was permanently stationed in Bahrain for this purpose.[550] At the end of 1962 the JIC again reassessed warning times and advised that at least 28 hours warning would be received.[551]

5.3.4 An analysis of learning from history

The IC continued to show much less formal or traceable learning than either the FCO or MoD during Vantage. Although this is partly the nature of the work conducted and the availability of archival sources, it is also clear that the IC did not have a culture of lesson identification nor were "lessons" part of the routine lexicon within the IC. Nonetheless, it is also clear that the IC learned more from Kuwait than it had from Suez or Jordan because the ongoing threat to British interests, before and after Vantage, forced constant reassessment of intelligence and reflection upon collection and assessment capabilities. The identification, implementation and retention method of reassessment was internal, routine, formal,

[547] Brook to Macmillan, 12th January 1962, TNA DEFE13/268.
[548] De Zulueta to Cabinet Office, 15th January 1962, TNA DEFE13/268.
[549] Memorandum to Macmillan, 15th January 1962, TNA DEFE13/268.
[550] Brook to Macmillan, 9th February 1962, TNA DEFE13/269.
[551] JIC(62)87, 30th November 1962, TNA CAB158/47.

strategic and operational but was often led by an external driver through the intelligence requests submitted by the MoD. In part, this is the way in which the IC operates, through the provision of intelligence based upon "customer" requests, but more could also have been achieved through proactive reassessment.

The results of the reassessments were often limited, with a focus upon lessons identified from the content of the intelligence itself, rather than identification of lessons on how the collection and assessment were conducted and could be improved for the future. When collection weaknesses were identified, the lesson was either forgotten, met with a barrier or was only implemented as a short-term fix. Furthermore, although new assessments adjusted the warning of aggression, at no point did the IC attempt to identify the nature of the warning indicators being used. Even in the late 1970s when – in an unprecedented demonstration of learning – Doug Nicoll was explicitly asked by the IC to examine the JIC's past warnings of aggression and identify lessons to be learned, the case study of Kuwait was overlooked.[552]

Other previously identified lessons were also forgotten, including the lesson of security protocol of intelligence, whilst lessons which had not been formally identified caused problems to re-emerge. In the case of security, the lesson being forgotten was unsurprising given that the reports identifying the lesson were created by the MoD (and thus unlikely to have been widely circulated in the IC) or by the JIC(ME) (whose suggestions were quickly dismissed in London). Nonetheless, this only seeks to emphasise the importance of lesson distribution across relevant government departments, as well as internally.

[552] For more on this see Goodman, "The Dog".

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the case study of Kuwait and revealed a disparity of learning from history across the three main British overseas security bodies, in comparison to each other and in comparison to the experiences of Suez and Jordan. During Vantage, lessons identified from Musketeer remained prevalent in the approaches of both the FCO and the MoD but some positive identified lessons from Fortitude also had an impact. For the FCO, the implementation of lessons was mainly attributable to learning in the individual sphere and consistency of personnel, but the setting of precedent in Jordan also revealed a new method of lesson retention. Whilst Suez had revealed negative identified lessons, on how not to act, Jordan had provided positive identified lessons or best practices for managing a similar crisis.

In the MoD, lesson implementation was part of a formal process within the institutional sphere and culminated in the implementation and retention of lessons from Suez in strategies, organisational structures and policies which had been in development since 1957. For the MoD, Jordan had merely provided a smaller scale rehearsal for Kuwait and therefore had not reaped as many identified lessons as Musketeer. For the IC, very little had changed since Jordan; neither Musketeer nor Fortitude were considered in the planning of the intervention.

The crisis in Kuwait also led to the identification of further lessons. The FCO formalised some of these through written despatches which were widely circulated, commented upon and debated. Thus some institutional mechanisms for learning had begun to develop – although the majority of lesson identification continued to occur exclusively within the individual sphere – and the FCO's

commitment to stability provided a barrier to lesson implementation. In contrast, the MoD continued to identify lessons very formally and routinely, with Kuwait providing the widest variety of institutional lesson identification and implementation methods, demonstrating that the MoD was just as committed to learning from success as failure, especially when approaching the time for a strategic review. The IC identified more from Kuwait than either of the previous operations. The need for updating assessments, driven by the external actor of the MoD, forced some identification in the institutional sphere for the first time outside of the restructuring post-Suez. However, these lessons were primarily focused upon the content of the assessment and collection capabilities with the method of assessment remaining largely unconsidered.

Overall, despite the success of the operation, the threat to Kuwait remained. Even in 1969, the Research Department at the FCO concluded that Iraq continued to pose a serious threat.[553] In fact, the unresolved Iraqi threat would remain bubbling under the surface only to re-emerge 30 years later with more disastrous consequences. Britain had not learned to solve the deeper Iraq-Kuwait problem.

[553] Research Department memorandum, 6th February 1969, TNA FCO51/49.

Chapter 6: The Gulf 1990-1991 – Operation Granby

> "If history teaches us anything it is that we must resist aggression or it will destroy our freedoms. Appeasement does not work. As was the case in the 1930s, we see in Saddam Hussein an aggressive dictator threatening his neighbours." (George H. Bush, 8th August 1990)[554]

Almost thirty years after Vantage, the Gulf War – codenamed Operation Granby – occurred in a very different international context. The recent end of the Cold War had changed the security environment and the events of 1990-1991 provided an opportunity to establish a new world order. Nonetheless, many lessons from Vantage – due to similarity of geography, culture, enemy and type of intervention – were still relevant and thus Granby offered the chance for learning to be demonstrated in the generational sphere.[555] In addition, the lessons identified from Granby itself would become highly significant when an intervention against the same foe took place thirteen years later.

During the 1980s, the West and Iraq realigned as allies with Britain and the US supporting the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, in his fight against Iran in the prolonged and bitter Iran-Iraq War. However, by early 1990, Iraq's struggling economy,[556] combined

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[554] George Bush, "President George H.W. Bush's Address on Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait, 1990", 8th August 1990, *www.cfr.org/iraq/president-george-hw-bushs-address-iraqs-invasion-kuwait-1990/p24117*, accessed 24/06/2015.

[555] A few personnel remained from Vantage, including the British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Sir Alan Munro, and C-in-C, General Peter de la Billière, but these were exceptions.

[556] During the Iran-Iraq war Iraq's per capita income halved. Seven-eighths of Iraq's oil export revenue was attributed to foreign debt servicing and defence costs alone. Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC), *The*

with increasing anti-Western propaganda, began to raise suspicions about Saddam Hussein's intentions and the JIC concluded that Iraq had returned to being "a potential predatory power, whose victims might be Kuwait or Syria."[557]

During the summer of 1990, tensions between Kuwait and Iraq rose and on 17th July Saddam Hussein delivered a speech threatening the Gulf state. Four days later Iraq moved approximately 20,000 troops to the Kuwaiti border. These actions were quickly dismissed by the FCO and IC as sabre rattling to generate leverage for negotiations at the upcoming Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting.[558] In addition, Saddam assured his fellow Arab leaders, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and President Mubarak of Egypt, that he had no military intentions and agreed to a meeting with the Kuwaitis in Jeddah to negotiate a solution to the tensions.[559] Participation in the Jeddah talks proved to be a bluff and in the early hours of 2nd August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait, deposed the Al-Sabah ruling royal family and maintained a military occupation of Kuwait as an annexed territory.

The same day the UN Security Council condemned the invasion and called for Iraq's immediate and unconditional withdrawal.[560] On 8th August the British government announced that in response to a request from Saudi Arabia it would be contributing forces to a coalition effort for its collective defence and to prevent any further Iraqi action.

Middle East After the Gulf War (London: HMSO,1991), vi; Dilip Hiro, *Iraq: A Report from the Outside* (London: Granta Publications, 2003), 32.

[557] Percy Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests* (London: John Murray, 1997), 170.

[558] Thatcher, *Downing Street*, 816.

[559] John Dickie, *Inside the Foreign Office* (London: Chapmans, 1992), 183.

[560] UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/660 (1990).

As the weeks went by it became clear that Saddam Hussein had no intention of leaving Kuwait. On 29th November 1990, the UN Security Council gave him six weeks to withdraw before the coalition was authorised to "use all necessary means" to remove Iraqi troops from the Gulf state.[561] The deadline expired on 15th January 1991 and 48 hours later coalition air forces began attacks. The whole campaign was concluded in 43 days, on 28th February 1991, and the responsibility for the demilitarised zone eventually passed from the coalition to UN forces.[562]

6.1 The FCO

Just like Suez, and unlike 1961, the FCO was unprepared for the events of 1990. The assurances given to Arab leaders and the maxim that one Arab country would never attack another had provided false reassurance and the FCO was busy counselling Kuwait to handle the Iraqi dispute diplomatically. The threat from Saddam Hussein was disregarded to such an extent that, although the FCO special emergency unit was put on precautionary alert, at the time of the invasion the FCO Iraq desk was manned by just one young diplomat.[563] Furthermore, both the FS, Douglas Hurd, and Minister of Defence, Tom King, were away on holiday, the PM, Margaret Thatcher, was en route to a conference in Aspen and neither the British nor the US Ambassador to Iraq were in Baghdad.[564] The British Ambassador and Consul to Kuwait were also taken unawares and remained under siege for several months in the Kuwaiti Embassy, surrounded by Iraqi troops, without electricity

[561] UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/678 (1990).
[562] COI, *Britain and the Gulf Crisis* (London: HMSO, 1993), 41.
[563] Mark Urban, *UK Eyes Alpha: Inside British Intelligence* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 145.
[564] Munro, *Flag*, 226.

and water supplies, living off tinned tuna and a vegetable patch.[565] The British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Alan Munro, would later conclude that the Iraqi invasion "at a stroke demolished assumptions about regional amity and balance"[566] whilst the Middle East Heads of Mission would be asked "Why did we fail to foresee the Gulf Crisis and take preventative action?...The beginning of wisdom is to acknowledge mistakes."[567]

6.1.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

Once the FCO overcame the shock, it quickly sprang into action. On 2nd August the Emergency Unit was opened, in a blast-proof basement, and the crisis management team formally assembled under the Head of the Middle East Department, Rob Young.[568] 25 members of staff were available around the clock to take an average of 2,000 telephone calls a day. Direct phone lines were established to other Whitehall departments and British posts in the Middle East, the UN and Washington. Additionally, situation reports consisting of around three million words arrived each day by telegram.[569] This streamlined and effective process was the product of lesson implementation not from 1961, but from the Falklands War of 1982 (Operation Corporate).[570]

A quick and decisive response was also led by the PM who, upon hearing of the invasion, immediately instructed two RN ships to head for the Gulf.[571] Her response was also the implementation of a

[565] Munro, *Flag*, 236.
[566] Munro to Hurd, 5th January 1991, received under FOI.
[567] N.a. to Policy Planning Department (PPD), 15th April 1991, received under FOI.
[568] Dickie, *Inside*, 182.
[569] Dickie, *Inside*, 182.
[570] David Parry-Evans, "Report by the Granby Coordinator: Lessons Learned from the Gulf War", 10th December 1991, received under FOI.
[571] Thatcher, *Downing Street*, 816.

lesson from history, but again not from 1961. Instead, it was the impact of Suez, an event that occurred three years before she became a Member of Parliament (MP), and her experience in the Falklands which determined her resolve. In her memoirs, Thatcher described "Suez syndrome" as a distorted perspective of Britain's place in the world; having previously exaggerated British power, after 1956 Britain exaggerated its impotence, ignoring successes and overemphasising failures.[572] For Thatcher the Falklands campaign changed this state of mind and the Gulf crisis offered the opportunity to reinforce British success.[573]

Furthermore, Thatcher's opinion on how to handle Saddam Hussein was marred by her experience of living through WWII. For her, Saddam, the aggressor, was the new Adolf Hitler, and his annexation of Kuwait was as defiant as Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia. In opening the two-day debate on the Gulf crisis in the House of Commons Thatcher identified "We have bitter memories of the consequences of failing to challenge annexation of small states in the 1930s. We have learned the lesson that the time to stop the aggressor is at once."[574] Douglas Hurd, on the other hand, preferred the analogy of Korea. He declared "One way or another Kuwait must be freed. Forty years earlier we had fought a war in Korea to reverse an act of aggression. The same principle, even more blatantly, was at stake here."[575] It was also the "Korean precedent" which was agreed to be followed by the FCO in the pursuit of UN resolutions.[576] Consequently, many different identified lessons, from contrasting events of history, were drawn upon in

[572] Thatcher, *Downing Street*, 8.
[573] Thatcher, *Downing Street*, 173.
[574] COI, *Britain and the Gulf*, 56. For more on this see Alex Danchev, "The Anschluss", *Review of International Studies*, (1994) 20, 97-106.
[575] Hurd, *Memoirs*, 391.
[576] Munro, *Storm*, 89.

planning the intervention but little reflection was made upon Vantage. In fact, from July 1990 to May 1991 the FCO Policy Planning Department (PPD) produced 14 substantive analytical papers on Kuwait, Iraq and the Gulf War, none of which reflected upon the experience in the region 30 years before.[577]

The quick suggestion of military action – two days after securing UN-imposed sanctions on Iraq – divided the FCO, in a way similar to the division of opinion in 1961, because of Britain's historical experience of imperialism (see 5.1.1). [578] Alan Munro further identified "We were ever conscious, perhaps to the point of oversensitivity, of latent Arab resistance to foreign military involvement. The bogey of Western imperialism still sent its echoes down the years from the Arab nationalism of Nasser's Egypt...To those of us on the ground [military intervention] therefore came initially as a jolt."[579] He also later reflected "Conditioned as I [was] by spending much of the past thirty years implementing Britain's withdrawal from direct military engagement in the Arab world this reversal of hallowed policy [took] my breath away".[580]

However, in line with the lessons identified from Jordan and Kuwait, the PM insisted that troops could only be sent to Saudi Arabia in response to a specific request from King Fahd.[581] There was also great emphasis placed upon the inclusion of Arab states within the military coalition.[582] The PPD identified that "UK military action in the sole company of the US would have serious political

[577] All 14 papers received under FOI.
[578] UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/661 (1990).
[579] Munro, *Storm*, 75.
[580] Munro, *Flag*, 228.
[581] Thatcher, *Downing Street,* 818.
[582] Adrian Sindall, DOHP 120, 60.

implications".[583] The Granby Coordinator, David Parry-Evans, noted that the "strategy was to build up the role of the Arabs...to make sure that the campaign could not be interpreted afterwards as a Western, anti-Arab, engagement".[584]

The crisis also saw a strong US-UK working relationship, a lesson which had been identified previously but had become increasingly necessary. The PPD declared "We must keep as close to American decision makers as possible."[585] As a result, and to implement the lesson, it was consistently emphasised that policy should be discussed with allies in Washington before implementation.[586] This was made easier by good working relations between Margaret Thatcher and President Bush and between Douglas Hurd and Secretary of State James Baker. Hurd described the relationship as "work[ing] together in close confidence as friends".[587]

Maintaining domestic and international support for the operation had also remained key strategic objectives. The PPD identified "Our aim should be to secure the broadest domestic and international support".[588] It was concluded that this lesson was most likely to be successfully implemented if Britain had specific UN authority and could "avoid being thought to be acting beyond our UN cover", especially as a US/UK led attack without UN cover would produce a

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[583] PPD, "Iraq: Partial Withdrawal from Kuwait", 12th December 1990, received under FOI, 4.
[584] Parry-Evans, "Report", 4.
[585] PPD, "Iraq/Kuwait: Political Consequences of Military Action", 7th November 1990, received under FOI, 1.
[586] PPD, "Iraq/Kuwait: The Long Haul", 26th November 1990, received under FOI, 5; PPD, "Gulf Crisis: Strategy after Iraqi Defeat", 24th January 1991, received under FOI, 8.
[587] Hurd, *Memoirs*, 392.
[588] PPD, "Consequences", 2.

"backlash from and in non-Arab Muslim countries...There would also be discontent in the British Muslim community."[589]

Similar to 1958 and 1961, there was also concern over how long support could be maintained, especially given the weight of history. The PPD identified "If we became embroiled in a long war, domestic and international opposition would increase even if we had specific UN cover. Comparisons would be drawn with Suez and Vietnam. Parliamentary unity would be threatened. Casualties would mount, and additional deployments would be unpopular."[590] Consequently, support would be sustained by ensuring the war was as short as possible; achieving defined objectives quickly and efficiently.[591]

To help manage domestic opinion, Parliament was recalled from recess for a two day debate on the crisis and a cross-party consensus was carefully managed as it had been by Harold Macmillan, thus implementing a previously identified lesson. Drawing upon history, Douglas Hurd identified, "Remembering Suez I felt that it would be wrong to commit British troops to a war denounced by the official opposition" and subsequently "At home the new Prime Minister and I knew we must do our utmost to keep the opposition on board".[592] John Major, who became PM on 28th November 1990, was also aware that history provided no precedent for Granby and further identified the need for good media management: "This was going to be a different sort of war...they were not fighting for home and hearth as in the two great wars of our century. Nor were they fighting for the recovery of a British possession as in the Falklands. They were fighting for something

[589] PPD, "Consequences", 2-3.
[590] PPD, "Consequences", 3.
[591] PPD, "Consequences", 2.
[592] Hurd, *Memoirs*, 393-394; 409.

much less tangible: the maintenance of international law."[593] Consequently, a number of meetings took place with Labour leaders and Commons debates were carefully handled, often with orchestrated parliamentary exchanges and Prime Minister's Questions.[594]

6.1.2 Learning from history during the intervention

The issue of overflying continued to cause difficulties, a lesson which had been repeatedly identified in past interventions, but implementation persistently got lost between the FCO and MoD. France refused to give priority to RAF flights, whilst Egypt insisted on 72 hours notice for a pre-cleared call sign slot to be allocated.[595] In addition, securing clearance to overfly the Saudis on the way to Bahrain was forgotten until the night of departure.[596] This was combined with the late realisation that the legal status of British forces in Saudi Arabia had not been agreed (this was not finalised until mid-October 1990) and, the night before the launch of the offensive, that Saudi consent had not been given to attack from their territory.[597]

Once British forces landed, the FCO did all it could to avoid accusations of imperialism and implemented this identified lesson by ensuring that Arab culture was respected. Imported magazines had female flesh blacked out, women were forbidden from driving and there was prohibition on pork and alcohol, although local supermarkets tended to stock the basic ingredients for home

[593] Major, *Autobiography*, 234.
[594] Hurd, *Memoirs*, 410; Major, *Autobiography*, 224.
[595] Group Captain Jerry King, speaking at a meeting of the RAF Historical Society (RAFHS), 13th March 2013.
[596] Munro, *Storm*, 87.
[597] Munro, *Storm*, 92; Munro, *Flag*, 244.

brewing.[598] Christian worship was done discreetly, on a Friday (the Muslim day of rest) by a Nigerian dentistry lecturer, who was also ordained as a priest, or Army chaplains reclassified as "morale officers". The Saudi ban on public music also meant that despite the presence of 19 military bands there were no musical performances and entertainment for off-duty officers was limited to male magicians and comedians; Paul Daniels and Harry Secombe obliged.[599]

The FCO were also careful to manage the media reporting back to Britain; implementing another previously identified lesson. However, the policy was adopted in a new climate where Granby was the first conflict in history in which reporting could no longer be controlled by routing content through military channels because journalists had their own, portable, real-time satellite communications. Ambassador Munro recalled that the strategy was "maximum briefing material, no matter how trivial, in order to keep the editors' appetite fed."[600]

Much was done by the Embassy in Riyadh to facilitate access for journalists but it was a delicate process and often loopholes or "blind eyes" had to be negotiated. When the Saudi Embassy in London stopped issuing press visas, journalists were flown by RAF Hercules to Dharan where they received briefings and were able to observe squadrons on patrol as long as they remained on the airbase.[601] Once they had arrived in the field, difficult journalists were often "handled". The unpredictable editor of *The Sunday*

[598] Munro, *Flag*, 216.
[599] Munro, *Flag*, 232.
[600] Munro, *Flag*, 247.
[601] Munro, *Storm*, 361.

Times, Andrew Neil, was promptly sent off to a maritime patrol to divert him out of the way.[602]

The identified lesson of cost management remained prominent too. Early on in the operation FCO Economic Advisors worked on a paper on the economic consequences of intervention.[603] It was agreed that "for reasons of cost" Western forces should be temporary and by January 1991 it was recommended that means of securing compensation be taken out of Iraqi revenues.[604] The FS recalled on lesson implementation: "A sub-theme of my foreign visits at this time could have become embarrassing. Long gone was the British tradition of financing our allies in time of war. In 1991 we expected well-to-do friends to finance us...I begged my way around the world".[605] In total Granby cost approximately £2.5 billion and £2 billion was negotiated in cash contributions from other countries. In addition, assistance in kind – including transport, accommodation, medical services, fuel and food – was received from 18 different countries.[606] Saudi Arabia as the host nation provided much assistance[607] and a post-Granby report concluded the "benefits of conducting operations from the forecourt of the world's largest petrol station should not be overlooked".[608]

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[602] Munro, *Flag*, 247.
[603] PPD, "Gulf Crisis", 19th September 1990, received under FOI.
[604] PPD, "Winning the Peace", 31st January 1991, received under FOI, 2; PPD, "Gulf Crisis: Strategy after Iraqi Defeat", 24th January 1991, received under FOI, 8.
[605] Hurd, *Memoirs*, 410.
[606] COI, *Britain and the Gulf*, 32.
[607] The UK also had an economic interest in protecting Saudi Arabia. It was supplying trade of at least one market (redacted) worth £2.4 billion. Munro to Hurd, 5th January 1991, received under FOI, 6.
[608] Parry-Evans, "Report", 39.

6.1.3 Learning from the intervention

Since 1961, the FCO had experienced a few changes. The FAC had been established in 1979 to scrutinise the policy of the FCO. This encouraged accountability – and in turn self-reflexivity, including identifying lessons – but the FAC itself did not offer much in the way of contribution to the learning process. It examined the Gulf War on two occasions; in October 1990 and at the end of the conflict in 1991. The first session acted as a fact-finding mission but did not discuss any lessons from history or attempt to identify lessons from the actions of the FCO. [609] The second session reached a number of conclusions but these were focused upon summarising actions, offering approval to policy or supporting declarations, not reflecting upon lesson identification.[610]

Internally, however, the FCO had begun to reflect upon crises. Although the FCO confirmed that no lessons reports were written during Granby, following British withdrawal a conference was organised with all of the Middle East Heads of Mission to review the recent events. [611] No minutes from the meeting remain[612] but a Chairman's Steering Brief was circulated in advance which identified three lessons from the experience.[613] The first lesson related to Gulf state security and identified ineffective defence and that non-aggression pacts between regional states alone did not provide security.[614] The historical examples of the 1975 Algiers agreements between Iraq and Iran and the 1989 non-aggression pact between Iraq and Saudi Arabia were particularly referenced. The second

[609] FAC, *Gulf Crisis* (London: HMSO, 1990).
[610] FAC, *After the Gulf War*.
[611] Moden to Kettle, 12th April 2013, response to FOI request.
[612] Khan to Kettle, 30th December 2014, response to FOI request.
[613] PPD, "Middle East Heads of Mission Conference: Theme Paper", 25th March 1991, received under FOI.
[614] PPD, "Conference", 1.

lesson focused upon arms control and non-proliferation, identifying that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) would at best provide only partial protection from weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and long range delivery systems.[615] The third lesson identified was "that a serious effort must be made to break the Arab/Israel logjam."[616] During the conflict Iraq had attacked Israel with Scud missiles in the hope of drawing it into the war and recapturing some Arab support.

The Steering Brief also provided six key conclusions, one of which remains redacted. The other five conclusions identified were; to support the establishment of security arrangements for the GCC, restore stability in Iraq, support the US initiative on Arab/Israel, continue to improve relations with Iran and Syria, restore the relationship with Jordan and maintain contact with the PLO, and, finally, "we should begin serious consideration of ways to reduce our dependence on oil".[617] These identified lessons were subsequently implemented to different extents but there was no follow-up process in place to ensure implementation, further distribution or retention of lessons. Furthermore, there was little else written on learning, and no official history – although the FCO and MoD did cooperate in the publication of a more general history written by the Central Office of Information (COI).[618]

There were questions after withdrawal as to whether British forces had done enough. The FAC reported that despite the removal of Iraqi forces, Kuwait remained apprehensive and pessimistic about its position.[619] There were also several further scares of Iraqi aggression which led to the prompt return of British troops to Saudi

[615] PPD, "Conference", 3.
[616] PPD, "Conference", 4.
[617] PPD, "Conference", 8.
[618] COI, *Britain and the Gulf*.
[619] FAC, *After the Gulf War*, v.

Arabia.[620] However, the lessons identified from history informed the US and British decision not to depose Saddam. In August 1990, the FCO prophetically assessed that, if Saddam was removed or killed by multinational forces, "There would be an upsurge of popular nationalist and anti-Western sentiment in Iraq, probably including violence against Western interests. Possibly an upsurge of Islamic fundamentalist sentiment too. The situation would not be easy to control."[621] If Saddam stepped down voluntarily it was still considered to be a difficult situation: "There is no prospect of Western style democratic regime emerging internally in the short-term: there is simply no democratic infrastructure or tradition, and very powerful anti-democratic forces."[622] Furthermore, the FCO was keen not to become involved in any form of occupation. Margaret Thatcher had long warned of not letting Britain's arm get caught in Iraq's mangle whilst the FS had stressed that the British had no right to decide Iraq's leadership.[623] Alan Munro identifed a number of historical lessons which informed all of these decisions:

> "there were the lessons of our own experience in the Twenties, Thirties and Forties of an association - tutelage association with the government of Iraq. Iraq is not a homogeneous political society - it is split three ways...[If we sought] to establish an alternative government of reconciliation and recovery in Iraq, I rather doubt if we would have got away with it. A role of tutelage which would have been a thankless one and perhaps an enduring one and not an effective one, because all the currents of Iraqi politics would have come into play and would have resisted the

[620] David Gore-Booth, DOHP 49, 22.
[621] PPD, "Future regime of Iraq", 30th August 1990, received under FOI, 8.
[622] PPD, "Future regime", 8.
[623] COI, *Britain and the Gulf*, 68.

> regime we might have established. It would have been in effect an anachronism and frankly would have been impossible to operate."[624]

There were also other complications: the UN mandate was limited and in a post-Cold War era establishing its legitimacy was vital. In a reflection, offering a warning of what was to come in 2003, John Major advised:

> "If the nations who had gone to war on the basis of international law were themselves to break that law, what chance would there have been in the future of order rather than chaos? What authority in the future would the great nations have against law-breakers if they themselves broke the law and exceeded the United Nations mandate? They would never have trusted us again."[625]

6.1.4 An analysis of learning from history

Overall, during Granby, learning was present across all three spheres and from a number of past experiences. However, Vantage was not explicitly referenced whereas analogies of appeasement, Suez, Korea, Vietnam and the Falklands were frequent. In the individual sphere the role of Margaret Thatcher and her identified lessons from appeasement, Musketeer and Corporate, in combination with her power of personality – reportedly declaring to the US President "this is no time to go wobbly George" – were crucial for the British crisis response. This was especially so as they contradicted the lessons of individuals within the FCO on the trajectory of British withdrawal from the region.[626] Douglas Hurd

[624] Alan Munro, DOHP 13, 18.
[625] Major, *Autobiography*, 240.
[626] Andrew Wood, DOHP 77, 65.

and John Major also reflected upon lessons identified from history, but whilst Hurd focused upon Korea and Suez, Major reflected that history provided little assistance for the operation at all.

Existing principles continued to be important in the institutional sphere, particularly informing the FCO approach to the UN and a number of lessons had also been identified and implemented from Corporate. In the overlapping generational and institutional sphere the FCO continued to identify concerns over British history, particularly Iraqi tutelage, imperialism and Suez, which impacted policy decisions. Conversley, more operational lessons, including the securing of overflying rights, had been forgotten whilst a number of previously identified lessons were implemented from necessity rather than any explicit reference to learning; working with the Americans, dealing with the media and cost management.

Once the operation was over the FCO showed some attempt to identify lessons through the holding of a conference and it's Steering Brief. However, the conference itself ended up being focused upon forward planning rather than significant reflection on the past and lessons were not widely distributed.[627] The FAC also proved itself an ineffective method for identifying lessons. However, the PPD and individual learners did offer a number of identified lessons on the requirement to limit British action in the region and respect the UN mandate. Unfortunately, a lack of institutional implementation or retention of these lessons would lead them to be easily disregarded by 2003.

[627] Interview with Sir Alan Munro, 16th July 2014.

6.2 The MoD

Granby was an operation of huge scale and significance for the MoD. The expectation of a "peace dividend" at the end of the Cold War had led the government to reconsider its military expenditure and the MoD had responded with the *Options for Change* defence review.[628] This review proposed creating a "smaller but better" force, designed primarily for deployment in Eastern Europe. Within a week of its announcement Iraq invaded Kuwait. Consequently, the post-operation lesson-learning process became hugely significant for wider strategic and long-term planning.

Furthermore, the Gulf War saw the largest deployment of British forces since WWII. 45,759 personnel – three times the force involved in the Falklands – and 15,000 vehicles were deployed with 52,661 tonnes of equipment airlifted and 300,000 tonnes delivered by over 130 ships.[629]

6.2.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

Unlike in 1961, the MoD was unprepared for Iraqi aggression. No serious contingency plans had been considered for the out of NATO area (OOA) high intensity conflicts (HIC) in the previous twenty years.[630] Nor had any contingency plans been generated for large-scale operations. The Assistant Under-Secretary of State identified to the DC "We did not have a contingency plan for an operation of this scale, so to that extent we did have to initiate planning from scratch".[631] In fact, the lack of planning soon earned Headquarters British Forces Middle East (HQBFME) the nickname "Baldrick lines"

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[628] Tom King, Hansard (Commons), CLXXVII, c468-486, 25th July 1990.
[629] Parry-Evans, "Report", 31.
[630] Parry-Evans, "Report", 4.
[631] Defence Committee (DC), *Preliminary Lessons of Operation Granby* (London: HMSO, 1991), xiii.

after the Blackadder character who claimed "I have a cunning plan".[632]

Instead, the MoD were fortunate to benefit from the time between the commencement of defensive and offensive operations, allowing five months for necessary planning, training and equipment modifications in theatre. There was also good fortune in the availability of forces at short notice, a lesson later identified by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine: "we were fortunate to have a sizeable force, well-trained and immediately available for release from NATO tasks, for Granby. We should not assume that we would always be able to respond similarly in the future".[633] In fact, Special Forces, due to other tasks, were not able to fully deploy until January 1991.[634]

There was very little learning explicitly referenced in planning, although there were some differences which reflected change since 1961. The operation was planned for the cooler months to avoid the summer temperatures and priority was given for adequate acclimatisation time for the troops.[635] By the end of the operation the DC concluded that excellent general health was maintained amongst personnel through good training in personal hygiene, heat discipline and enforced abstinence from alcohol.[636]

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[632] DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, xiii.
[633] Hine to Vincent in Parry-Evans, "Report", annex B, 1.
[634] Hine to Vincent in Parry-Evans, "Report", annex B, 17.
[635] Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine, "Despatch by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine GCB ADC FRAES CBIM RAF Joint Commander of Operation Granby", *The London Gazette*, G47; National Audit Office (NAO) *Ministry of Defence: The Costs and Receipts Arising from the Gulf Conflict* (London: HMSO, 1992), 3.
[636] DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, xxv.

The desire not to appear imperialist and to respect local culture had also permeated into implementation by the MoD. As well as planning the operation well before Ramadan, much care was taken to avoid attacks on archaeological, cultural and religious sites. In particular, the Shia holy shrines of Karbala and An-Najaf were regularly photographed to prove that no damage had been caused.[637] C-in-C General Peter de la Billière, who spoke colloquial Arabic, wrote an information pamphlet for circulation to all troops which included an introduction to the Arabs, their way of life, the importance of religion in Arab culture, tips on how to behave in an Arab society and some basic vocabulary.[638]

There was also no explicit reference to implementing the identified lessons of working with the Americans in planning but, in fact, working with the trans-Atlantic allies was a necessity because of the coalition. However, one of the most significant lessons identified for the British during Granby echoed those previously identified in 1956; that in the future Britain could not plan major OOA operations without ally support.[639] A post-Granby report particularly stressed the importance of the US: "without the United States, who would have provided the leadership, the associated strategic HQ and the strategic doctrine?...In short, Operation Granby may have taught us that HIC (in NATO or OOA) without the United States would be an option from which we might wish to draw back."[640]

However, implementing the lesson of working together in the past had earned the British the privileged position of being the only coalition member to participate in US-led planning and the ability to

[637] Major, *Autobiography*, 236.
[638] De la Billière, *Storm Command*, 16.
[639] DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, ix.
[640] Parry-Evans, "Report", 7.

continue to implement the identified lesson. A senior British Brigadier was fully integrated into US C-in-C General Norman Schwarzkopf's personal planning team of five US Officers. A similar arrangement was made for an RAF Wing Commander to be placed within the planning staff of General Horner, Commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM) Air Force.[641] In addition, Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine, Air Vice Marshal Bill Wratten and C-in-C Peter de la Billière all helped prepare and agree the coalition air campaign and Air Vice Marshal Wratten retained the power of veto over all targets.[642] The British Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ) in Riyadh was located near to CENTCOM headquarters, allowing close liaison and de la Billière to attend Schwarzkopf's daily briefings.[643] Eventually about 100 British officers were placed within the American command system.[644] Air Chief Marshal Hine identified "it is clear that our voice within the councils of the Coalition was much stronger than the scale of our military contribution justified, which reflects the continuation of the special relationship between the UK and the US...These ties have been nurtured over a prolonged period and we must do all we can to maintain them in the future."[645]

6.2.2 Learning from history during the intervention

Since 1961, a third tier had been added to the command structure for British operations; HQBFME headed by the C-in-C, Joint Headquarters (JHQ) at High Wycombe commanded by Air Chief Marshal Hine and the MoD under the Minister of Defence, Tom King. JHQ had been added in an endeavour to overcome many of the difficulties previously experienced in an operation involving all three

[641] DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, xi.
[642] DC, *The Conflict in the Gulf: Minutes of Evidence* (London: HMSO, 1991), 9; DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, xi.
[643] De la Billière, *Storm Command*, 39.
[644] Air Chief Marshal Patrick Hine, RAFHS.
[645] Hine to Vincent in Parry-Evans, "Report", annex B, 23.

services but, although this had been a lesson identified in Vantage, the new system was only implemented from a lesson identified from Corporate twenty years later. The relationship between JHQ and HQBFME worked "excellently" but relations between JHQ and the MoD were often strained.[646] This was partly due to clashes of personality but there was also a feeling that Whitehall bureaucracy was inefficient and lacked urgency.[647] Following the crisis, this lesson was formally identified and it was recommended that a Defence Secretariat be included within JHQ in the future.[648]

There was, however, a good working relationship between the forces and the FCO. Two senior FCO officials were seconded to JHQ for the duration of the crisis.[649] As in 1961, C-in-C de la Billière used the Embassy for political advice and senior staff would attend the Embassy's briefing meetings.[650] De la Billière later echoed the lesson of Air Marshal Sir Charles Elworthy 30 years earlier by identifying the importance of the close working relationship. He declared "There are important lessons to be reemphasised in this in terms of the necessity of the in theatre British Embassy and military command working closely together in harmony."[651]

From the outset, the MoD had also been keen to manage media relations well. Although this principle had been long established, the lessons specifically referenced only dated back to DC lessons identified from the Falklands.[652] However, since 1982 a considerable amount of work had been done; plans had been made to meet the

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[646] Hine to Vincent in Parry-Evans, "Report", annex B, 2.
[647] Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Johns, RAFHS.
[648] Parry-Evans, "Report", 16.
[649] Munro, *Storm*, 102.
[650] Munro, *Storm*, 179.
[651] De la Billière to Hine, in Parry-Evans, "Report", annex C, 8.
[652] DC, *Conflict in the Gulf*, 3.

PR requirements of all future conflicts with contingency plans including PR annexes. The PR staff had become part of the internal planning process and relationships with editors and senior media staff had been nurtured. A central document had also been produced for quick reference which identified, distributed and retained lessons; *Proposed Working Arrangements with the Media in time of Tension and War*.[653]

In theatre, over 80 military personnel were responsible for ensuring good relations between the forces and journalists.[654] Tom King held major press conferences in the desert, arriving by tank for added drama, and a number of reporters were attached to major army formations, RN ships at sea or RAF detachments.[655] The reporters who accompanied Armoured Brigades took small satellite dishes to broadcast live, for the first time, from just behind the front line and British reporters were fully briefed on the details of the Battle Plan weeks before much of the rest of the military. The generous treatment of the British press was appreciated by the journalists and was in stark contrast to their US counterparts whose military-media relationship "started at rock bottom and then deteriorated", a hang-up on both sides from Vietnam.[656]

The good management of the media also improved morale and public support. On 11th January 1991, C-in-C de la Billière wrote a letter to all of the British newspapers thanking them for their support throughout the campaign. In response the *Daily Star* encouraged the public to bake "battle cakes", based on a dense

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[653] Parry-Evans, "Report", 20.
[654] Hine, "Despatch", G46; DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, xxv; DC, *Conflict in the Gulf*, 12.
[655] Hine, "Despatch", G46.
[656] Kate Adie, *The Kindness of Strangers* (London: Headline, 2002), 387; 379.

fruitcake recipe, to send to the troops.[657] The response was so overwhelming that the delivery of cakes began to hamper the flow of essential military kit.[658]

Other previously identified lessons on equipment and logistics were forgotten. The poor handling of cargo left many troops without sufficient equipment and quickly earned the British the nickname "the Borrowers".[659] Some of the equipment which did arrive was unsuitable, as it had been in 1961. Much of the weaponry was designed for counteracting the Soviet threat, whilst Special Forces suffered from particularly poor equipment due to their recent focus on counter-terrorism operations.[660] Logistics vehicles had also all been procured for operations in Europe and thus lacked cross-country capabilities,[661] whilst suits were inappropriately designed for hot climates due to a decision in the 1960s that the British would not go East of Suez again.[662] The DC identified "there was no clear basis for provisioning, and several evident deficiencies, such as the absence of desert clothing and footwear".[663]

In addition, the British did not have enough stockpiles of ammunition and £260 million worth of ammunition had to be borrowed from NATO allies. Furthermore, there were not enough spare parts available and at any one time over 75% of Challenger I tanks were under repair or out of service.[664] However, this time the

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[657] De la Billière, *Storm Command*, 3.
[658] Munro, *Flag*, 234.
[659] Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Alcock, RAFHS.
[660] Much has been written about the results of such failings, particularly by members of the SAS patrol Bravo Two Zero.
[661] Parry-Evans, "Report", 5, 69.
[662] DC, *Implementation*, 33.
[663] DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, xiv.
[664] DC, *Implementation of Lessons Learned from Operation Granby* (London: HMSO, 1994), xiv; Parry-Evans, "Report", 35-36.

lesson was identified and implemented; a Battlefield Equipment Reliability Return system was introduced to monitor equipment and spares in the future.[665]

A new lesson was also identified during the operation, brought about by rapid changes in technology. On 16th December 1990, three briefcases and a laptop computer containing Britain's war plans were stolen from the boot of a car. The papers were recovered within a few hours but the laptop remained missing until 7th January 1991 when the self-proclaimed patriotic thief returned the item, although it remained in the MoD post room for some time before its significance was realised.[666] The event led to the identification and implementation of lessons; immediately new rules were enforced for the handling of such data and all fixed hard-disc laptop computers were withdrawn.[667]

6.2.3 Learning from the intervention

Following the end of hostilities Tom King told the DC "There is a very extensive exercise going on, which will continue, to make sure that we have learned the lessons from this whole period of conflict. It is very extensive in that it involves all the services, all the arms, a whole range of different lessons...there are going to be some very, very interesting lessons to learn."[668] A wide range of reports were produced – as they had been in 1961 – with major studies on planning, equipment effectiveness, finances and budgeting, communication and information systems, logistics, withdrawal, intelligence, the use of scientists and military survey as well as a

[665] DC, *Implementation*, xiv.
[666] Parry-Evans, "Report", 30.
[667] Parry-Evans, "Report", 31.
[668] DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, 2.

number of more minor papers.[669] For many reports, lower ranking servicemen were interviewed, which meant incorporating a new spectrum of experience and opinion into the learning process.[670] Furthermore, individual investigations occurred for specific events including the tragic shooting of nine British servicemen by an American A10[671] and despatches, including lesson identification, were written by Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine and C-in-C de la Billière.[672]

The MoD also had lessons identified by external bodies. The National Audit Office (NAO) examined the movement of personnel, equipment and stores to and from the Gulf and concluded that there were difficulties in handling priorities and tracking freight.[673] In fact, 228 aircraft pallets, worth £680,000, and 80 shipped containers were unaccounted for at the end of Granby, with a further 2,800 containing unknown contents.[674] One RAF Group Captain drew upon these identified lessons in a plea for more learning from history. Group Captain Neville Parton explained that during the preparation for Operation Torch, in WWII, tools and spares were packed into containers with a code placed on the outside. For security reasons the list that identified the code number was included as a secret annex to the operation order, with a limited distribution. As a result, when items landed on the beach, the contents and planned destination of the containers were unknown, leading to weeks of delays for equipment. Twenty years later, in 1961, one report from Vantage identified a long, classified, often incorrect, coding list for

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669 Parry-Evans, "Report", annex E.
670 DC, *Implementation*, vi; Parry-Evans, "Report", 62-73.
671 DC, *Conflict in the Gulf*, 5.
672 Parry-Evans, "Report", annex E, 2.
673 NAO, *Ministry of Defence: Movements of Personnel, Equipment and Stores To and From the Gulf* (London: HMSO, 1993), 10.
674 NAO, *Movements*, 3.

containers resulting in over 130 containers being unnecessarily opened to find cooking equipment. By the time of the Gulf War teams worked for months trying to identify thousands of unmarked containers, making it quicker to get spare parts from Europe than from within the country.[675] Following the NAO identification, the lesson was finally implemented and the MoD announced the introduction of new tracking systems including bar coding and other automatic identification systems.[676]

The NAO and the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts also considered the MoD's costs and finance management during Granby and identified lessons.[677] More generally, the DC had been scrutinising the actions of the MoD, providing a new method of learning, since 1979. In response to Operation Granby the committee produced two substantial reports focused on lessons; *Preliminary Lessons of Operation Granby* and *Implementation of Lessons Learned from Operation Granby*.[678] This was an additional lesson-learning process which had been used after Corporate and made the identification and implementation of lessons widely available for public reading and scrutiny. Consequently, not only was the input into lesson identification becoming more democratic, through the interviewing of all ranks, so was the distribution of lessons.

The second report revealed that a new process was in place in the MoD to ensure lesson implementation. In March 1991, Air Chief

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[675] Group Captain Neville Parton, "Why Should We Care About History?", *Spirit of the Air*, (2006) 1/1, 23-24.
[676] NAO, *Movements*, 3.
[677] NAO, *Costs and Receipts*; House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, *Ministry of Defence: The Costs and Receipts Arising from the Gulf Conflict* (London: HMSO, 1993).
[678] DC, *Preliminary Lessons*; DC, *Implementation*.

Marshal Sir David Parry-Evans was appointed Granby Coordinator to prepare a work plan detailing all the tasks to be addressed, all the individuals and groups responsible for their progression and target dates for their completion.[679] Parry-Evans produced a full report in December 1991 and in early 1992 a small cell was established to consolidate identified lessons into one document to ensure implementation. All lessons were allocated an "action manager" who reported to the two-star officer responsible for that area and the Defence Staff monitored the progress.[680] The responsibility for ongoing monitoring of implementation was given to the Director of Defence Policy, Margaret Aldred, who had also implemented lessons from Corporate.[681] The DC concluded "The Ministry has gone to some lengths to discover and analyse the lessons of Operation Granby and monitor their implementation...the evidence suggests that the arrangements have been broadly effective".[682]

An additional inclusion after 1991 was the incorporation of relevant contractors into the lesson-learning process, particularly manufacturers of military equipment. Whilst lessons were discussed with manufacturers during deployment the MoD also invited companies to discuss lessons identified in more detail after the operation to ensure implementation. Furthermore, in July 1992, the MoD attended a supplier's conference and made a presentation specifically on the lessons identified from Granby.[683]

By 1991, the MoD had also become more involved in lesson distribution and identifying lessons from others. Dialogues were had

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[679] Notice to Directors and Heads of Division in Parry-Evans "Report", annex C.
[680] DC, *Implementation*, 44-45.
[681] DC, *Implementation*, 1; 3.
[682] DC, *Implementation*, 8.
[683] DC, *Implementation*, vii.

with allies on relevant issues and a British lesson identification report was prepared for distribution to both NATO and the US.[684] This relationship was reciprocal and the US Defence Department shared its classified report with the MoD.[685] The Granby Coordinator also visited the Pentagon and established principles for the exchange of lessons,[686] whilst NATO identified a number of lessons which were shared with the alliance.[687]

6.2.4 An analysis of learning from history

Despite a robust lesson identification process being used in 1961, it was clear from Granby that learning had failed in the institutional and generational sphere. There was no reference to 1961 in planning and lessons which had been identified 30 years before were re-identified – including the necessity of working with the Americans and the benefit of working with the local Embassy – or had only been implemented as a result of lessons being re-identified during Corporate. Where lessons may have been learned, including respect for local culture and acclimatisation concerns, learning was not explicitly referenced.

Instead, most references to identified lessons were due to institutional and individual learning from the previous large scale campaign in the Falklands, including over the handling of the media and the command structure. The Director of Defence Policy advised the DC "We were lucky in the Gulf conflict because a number of people who were in the department had served in the department during the Falklands conflict and there was a departmental memory over what issues were important and what lessons we had learned

[684] DC, *Implementation*, 1; vi.
[685] DC, *Implementation*, 37.
[686] Parry-Evans "Report", 78.
[687] DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, xxv.

and how we had improved processes".[688] This demonstrated an over reliance on learning in the individual sphere and resonates with the old maxim that the military are always fighting the previous war.

However, the cultural approach to learning lessons had changed in the MoD since 1961. Lesson identification had been extended to external sources of critique – including the NAO, Committee of Public Accounts and DC – who proved far more rigorous in their approach to lesson identification than the FAC. There was also an increased emphasis placed upon lesson implementation, by both the MoD and DC, whilst lesson distribution had extended to the sharing of lessons with allies and relevant contractors. The lesson-learning process had also become more transparent through the DC, and more democratic, by including a range of ranks in the process of lesson identification. However, there was still no formal document within the MoD on how lessons should be learned.[689]

6.3 The IC

The end of the Cold War had come as a surprise to the IC and the JIC had not only failed to predict its end but had continued to invest large amounts of its reducing resources into countering the Communist threat. As a result, the Middle East had received little attention for some time. There was no formal Indicator and Warning system of aggression in Iraq or Kuwait and, as a result, when an old threat emerged, the IC found itself lacking in many areas of intelligence.[690] The former Chief of Defence Intelligence (CDI), Lieutenant-General Derek Boorman, admitted that the area was

[688] DC, *Implementation*, 1.
[689] DC, *Implementation*, 3.
[690] This lesson was quickly identified and implemented, with a system set-up post invasion. Parry-Evans, "Report", 24-25.

"under-resourced" and any intelligence on Iraq was primarily limited to Baghdad or dedicated to sanction busting.[691]

6.3.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

When Saddam threatened Kuwait in his speech on 17th July it was noticed by the IC, but Britain invoked no precautionary measures. The Kuwaitis placed their army on alert, but there was no request for Western assistance, nor any evidence that the British government tried to persuade the Ruler of its necessity.[692] It was not until two days later that the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) reported the threat and Defence Attaché staff travelled by car to Kuwait to identify troop movements. The DIS used their information to confirm that all eight divisions of Iraq's Republican Guard were involved.[693] Corporate had led to identification of the importance of intelligence gathering by Defence Attachés in the 1980s[694] and the report on intelligence support for Granby concurred stating "This intelligence could not have been obtained from any other source" noting that one of the key lessons identified for the IC was that "Attachés can provide a unique source of intelligence on military developments".[695]

American satellites had also picked up the movement of troops and the US informed their Embassy in Baghdad on 20th July but did not

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[691] Urban, *Alpha*, 145; FAC, *Gulf Crisis*, 38.
[692] It was, however, American satellite imagery showing the movement of Iraqi tanks and 100,000 troops to the border of Saudi Arabia which convinced the Saudis to request Western assistance. Thatcher, *Downing Street,* 820.
[693] Parry-Evans, "Report", 24.
[694] Lord Oliver Franks, *Falkland Islands Review* (London: HMSO, 1983), paragraph 313.
[695] Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS), "Intelligence Support to Operation Granby", 1991, received under FOI, 2.

share the intelligence with the British until the 24th.[696] It was only following the American confirmation of movement that the Middle East Current Intelligence Group (CIG) of the JIC met to produce an assessment of the threat. It assessed that Iraqi military action could not be ruled out "in the medium term" but the JIC were less optimistic about the timing and circulated a minute to the government indicating that there was a cause for concern.[697]

The next morning, following the production of the assessment, on Friday 27th July, the Chairman of the JIC and Foreign Affairs Advisor to the PM, Percy Cradock, sent a minute to Margaret Thatcher re-emphasising the threat. He also made clear that the Kuwaiti army would not be able to resist Iraqi aggression and that the emergence of Saddam as a predator in the region would pose a grave threat to British interests.[698] He did not receive a reply to his note and made further inquiries on the morning of Monday 30th July but to no avail. The intelligence warning had not disseminated and the FCO continued to advise safe travel to Kuwait, with a flight taking off on the morning of the invasion.[699]

The predominant difficulty for the IC assessments, echoing the lessons identified from 30 years before, was an ongoing lack of intelligence on the Iraqi President's intentions. With a focus on the Soviet Union, no SIS agents were in a position to obtain access to Saddam Hussein or his close circle of advisers. The PPD identified "There is little we (Britain) can do...we have no access in the Ba'ath Party or the Army".[700] Furthermore, a combination of a police-state creating fear amongst its population and good Iraqi training in

[696] Freedman and Karsh, *Gulf Conflict*, 50; Urban, *Alpha*, 144.
[697] Urban, *Alpha*, 146; Cradock, *Pursuit*, 172.
[698] Urban, *Alpha*, 146; Cradock, *Pursuit*, 172.
[699] Hine, RAFHS.
[700] PPD, "Future Regime", 10.

communication security (Comsec) made the ascertaining of intentions challenging.[701] Charles Powell, the PM's Private Secretary, later identified "The most difficult type of intelligence to have is that about intentions. In the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, we knew where every tank was, but we got his intentions wrong."[702] However, one lesson on the gathering of Humint had been implemented from Corporate. During the Falklands there had been a severe shortage of Spanish speakers but, by the time of Granby, 93 British Arabic-speaking personnel and 78 Kuwaiti civilians were deployed to work in hospitals and prisoner of war camps in order to gather as much Humint as possible.[703]

There was also little existing intelligence on Iraqi capabilities in terms of the strength and efficacy of its army.[704] Consequently, the lesson was identified and implemented by establishing thirteen support groups to advise and assist the DIS in the preparation of detailed assessments. By 16th January 1991, 300 new background studies had been issued.[705] However, the process was challenging as a considerable depth of technical knowledge was required on the wide variety of weaponry used by the Iraqis from all over the world. The DIS report acknowledged the lesson to be identified: "The DIS needs to expand its expertise on weapons systems exported by the

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[701] The Americans had trained the Iraqis in Comsec during the Iran-Iraq War. Richard J. Aldrich, *GCHQ* (London: Harper Press, 2011), 466-467, 469. For more on this see Louise Kettle, "Between Franks and Butler: British Intelligence Lessons from the Gulf War", *Intelligence and National Security*, (forthcoming 2016) available online, 8-10.
[702] Urban, *Alpha*, 150.
[703] DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, xxiv.
[704] DIS, "Intelligence Support", 2. In contrast the CIA had written hundreds of reports during the 1980s which were provided to the US military. CIA, "CIA Support to the US Military During the Persian Gulf War", 16th June 1997, *www.cia.gov/library/reports*, accessed 14/12/2013.
[705] DIS, "Intelligence Support", 3; 10.

west to potential enemies."[706] The Granby Coordinator went further and suggested that a database of such information should be created to implement the lesson.[707]

One of the specific areas which required immediate assessment was Iraq's non-conventional weapons systems and capabilities in order to inform military requirements for planning. To assess these capabilities the IC implemented lessons identified from the Iran-Iraq War and Iraq's past use of chemical weapons (CW), as well as existing intelligence assessments, to determine that Iraq had considerable CW and biological weapons (BW) capability and was seeking to develop a nuclear weapon or acquire WMD by an extensive procurement network.[708] However, as the campaign progressed, little further intelligence was gathered on these capabilities. Following an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection in November 1990, the JIC noted "We have no intelligence that would cause us to change our assessment of Iraq's current nuclear capability."[709]

6.3.2 Learning from history during the intervention

Once Iraq invaded Kuwait, the focus of the IC shifted to the Middle East region and the central intelligence machine sprang into action. After Corporate, the IC was criticised for being "too passive in operation to respond quickly and critically to a rapidly changing situation which demanded urgent attention"[710] and a review of the structure and the position of the JIC Chairman was

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[706] DIS, "Intelligence Support", 15.
[707] Parry-Evans, "Report", 84.
[708] DC, *Implementation*, ix; 26; DC, *Conflict in the Gulf*, 10-11; Cradock, *Pursuit*, 169; For more on this see Kettle, "Franks and Butler", 13-14.
[709] Cited in Lord Robin Butler, *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* (London: HMSO, 2004), 42.
[710] Franks, *Falkland Islands*, paragraph 318.

recommended.[711] This identified lesson was implemented; the JIC was expanded and the central machinery was rebuilt, overseen by Percy Cradock. Granby, therefore, provided the opportunity to test the changes under crisis conditions and to demonstrate that lessons had been learned.

The IC had also been criticised in 1982 by the identification of the failure to work effectively across Whitehall with the FCO and MoD.[712] To implement this lesson Cradock assumed a dual role, attending both the JIC and War Cabinet meetings, and setting-up a series of morning meetings to ensure daily intelligence liaison across ministers and intelligence agencies.[713] The implementation of the lesson was successful and after the operation Parry-Evans wrote "the general assessment by the Cabinet Office of the operation of the Government machinery during the crisis is that it worked well. One principle reason that it did so was that care was taken from the start to take account of the lessons identified in 1982."[714]

The DIS also reacted promptly, although staffing was a challenge. For the first six months the Crisis Cell was manned by only three officers and three support staff per watch. When staff increased there was a heavy reliance upon augmentees – personnel assigned as a temporary duty – and it was uncertain whether the DIS would have had the resources to provide intelligence support had another crisis emerged.[715] By January 1991, the supply of augmentees was exhausted and the lesson was identified for the future: "Sufficient

[711] Franks, *Falkland Islands*, paragraph 319.
[712] Franks, *Falkland Islands*, paragraph 317.
[713] Major, *Autobiography*, 234.
[714] Parry-Evans, "Report", 13.
[715] DIS, "Intelligence Support", 4-5.

augmentees, with clearly defined assignments, must be earmarked to meet all foreseeable crisis requirements."[716]

To counteract the lack of Humint, just as in 1961, reliance was placed upon Imint. However, although there had been much emphasis in the past on maintaining Imint, capability was limited and before hostilities began the British were dependent upon US satellite systems. Once hostilities commenced, the MoD also relied upon other American equipment, including two Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System prototypes, which provided processed, real-time, intelligence on moving targets.[717] This proved invaluable as UK Midge drones were unreliable. Major General Rupert Smith identified to the DC that the Midge often failed to return or returned with unusable imagery.[718]

Instead, the IC offered air reconnaissance primarily through six Tornado GR1As, a new addition for the RAF as implementation of lessons identified from the Falklands.[719] However, the IC had a severe shortage of photographic interpreters (PI) and therefore also relied upon US analysis. The DIS identified the lesson for the future: "Crisis planning must take account of limitations in PI availability and the need to depend in large part on the output of US Agencies."[720]

Similar difficulties occurred in securing intelligence on Battle Damage Assessments (BDA). The IC did not possess appropriate intelligence gathering equipment for BDA and coalition staff became so overloaded with raw intelligence for analysis that the DIS

[716] DIS, "Intelligence Support", 13.
[717] DC, *Implementation*, 20.
[718] The Midge was soon replaced by the Phoenix. DC, *Implementation*, 19.
[719] Hine, "Despatch", G42.
[720] DIS, "Intelligence Support", 13.

struggled to get tactical BDA in a timely manner.[721] The IC identified two lessons; firstly, the reliance upon the US as the only coalition member with large scale BDA capability and, secondly, that a British BDA methodology was required, aligning with the Americans.[722]

More broadly there was much difficulty in the timely analysis, distillation and dissemination of all forms of intelligence. Sigint, for example, was collected from Nimrod R1s, GCHQ's listening base in Cyprus and the US space borne capability which combined to provide huge quantities of unanalysed data to GCHQ.[723] In addition, the CIA alone sent 215 tons of Imint to CENTCOM and after five days it was advised that there was not the capacity to handle the deluge of intelligence.[724] As a result, only a small percentage of available intelligence was analysed and even less was disseminated to the field, let alone disseminated in a timely fashion. C-in-C de La Billière identified to the DC "there was so much [intelligence] available in the end that it was very difficult to cope with it and to extract from it the detail which was required at lower command levels."[725]

Dissemination problems, which were also present throughout Corporate, were compounded by a combination of the lack of secure communication links, document classification and operational security.[726] Many intelligence assessments were classified in a way that required sanitation before being sent to HQBFME, leaving

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[721] DC, *Implementation*, 25.
[722] Parry-Evans, "Report", 26; 104.
[723] Urban, *Alpha*, 159. For more on Sigint learning see Kettle, "Franks and Butler", 16-17.
[724] Parry-Evans, "Report", 25.
[725] DC, *Preliminary Lessons*, 16.
[726] DC, *Implementation*, 23.

Middle East CIG and JHQ knowing more than those in theatre.[727] This lesson had previously been identified during Vantage but was re-identified by the MoD thirty years later.[728] A similar problem also occurred within the coalition where a wide application of US NOFORN (no foreigners) and UK EYES A (UK citizens only) classifications of intelligence caused sharing difficulties.[729] Following the end of hostilities there was wide identification of the lesson to be learned and the distillation and dissemination of intelligence procedures were reviewed.[730]

Furthermore, throughout the campaign the IC retained a close working relationship with the US as it had done in previous operations. Early on, the JIC had worked with the CIA to provide estimates on WMD.[731] Working together in the past had also earned the British a privileged position. Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine confirmed, "The ready availability to us of high-quality US intelligence reflected the mutual trust and rapport established between our intelligence communities over the years".[732] A British Defence Intelligence Liaison Staff was set-up in Washington with mirrored DIA and CIA representatives in London to ensure close communications between the capitals.[733] However, a new lesson was identified; that working with the Americans was not only desirable but had become essential. One British analyst advised "Over 90 per cent of what was in my reports was American

[727] Urban, *Alpha*, 159-160.
[728] DIS, "Intelligence Support", 6.
[729] Parry-Evans, "Report", 29.
[730] DIS, "Intelligence Support", 13; Parry-Evans, "Report", 104.
[731] Cradock, *Pursuit*, 176.
[732] Hine to Vincent in Parry-Evans, "Report", annex B, 9.
[733] DIS, "Intelligence Support", 11.

material. If we didn't have the Americans, I'd have nothing to write about...Without them, we'd be little better than Belgium."[734]

Working with other ally intelligence agencies during Granby was also important.[735] The DIS lessons report noted "European and Arab participation in Coalition forces and the political importance of [redacted] proved the value of connections established by the DIS with many other national intelligence agencies."[736] Parry-Evans agreed and identified the key lesson was "The importance of the UK/US intelligence link cannot be over-emphasised, but many of our intelligence links with a wide range of countries were of particular value, pointing the need to maintain and foster such links."[737]

6.3.3 Learning from the intervention

At the end of the campaign the DIS conducted a major study on intelligence support to Granby.[738] In addition, the Granby Coordinator and the DC identified a number of relevant lessons for the IC. These resulted in lessons being implemented. Many new strategies were developed and the organisation and procedure of intelligence was revisited.[739] To increase the sharing of intelligence across different users and services, an intelligence division was created within PJHQ at Northwood.[740] In addition, to improve the distillation and dissemination of intelligence, all assets were centralised under the CDI, whilst an officer was appointed to

[734] Urban, *Alpha*, 181.
[735] For more on this see Kettle, "Franks and Butler", 21-22.
[736] DIS, "Intelligence Support", 11.
[737] Parry-Evans, "Report", 83.
[738] DIS, "Intelligence Support".
[739] Parry-Evans, "Report", 24; 26.
[740] Aldrich, *GCHQ*, 469.

coordinate and increase intelligence training including running full scale military exercises.[741]

Nonetheless, as part of the MoD, these reports were focused upon DI, with only a few lessons identified for the wider IC and there is little evidence of similar reports or self-reflection across other intelligence agencies. Towards the end of the operation, the IC used identified lessons from the Falklands to assess the likelihood of an Iraqi uprising against Saddam Hussein: "An assumption that we made, not simply an assumption of convenience, but one of serious calculation, was that – rather as in the case of the post Falklands situation – Iraqi public opinion would have reasserted itself – with support from elements within Iraq's still very powerful army, and would have overthrown their regime; the Galtieri syndrome if you like."[742] However, by April 1991 it was clear that this had become increasingly unlikely and yet there was no reflection upon the assumptions of this assessment.[743] It was not until 2004, when Lord Butler conducted an official review of intelligence on WMD, that assessments were revisited, questioned and lessons identified. One such lesson included that assessments of Iraq's CW stock had been based upon the false assumption that weapons had not been leftover from the Iran-Iraq War.[744]

The IC did undergo a number of changes following Granby, but these were the result of entering the post-Cold War era – including disputes over IC legality, oversight and fiscal management – rather than identifying lessons from the Gulf War. Several reviews quickly

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[741] DC, *Implementation*, 22-23.
[742] Alan Munro, DOHP 13, 18.
[743] PPD, "Iraq: How can things go wrong?", 30th April 1991, received under FOI, 4.
[744] Butler, *Review*, 106. For more on this see Kettle, "Franks and Butler", 13-14.

got underway; the Cabinet Office's *Review of Protective Security*, the Permanent Secretary of Defence's *Review of Intelligence Requirements and Resources,* two separate reviews on GCHQ and three on counterterrorism.[745] The Permanent Secretary's review also sparked an internal SIS review leading to a "Christmas massacre" which saw the comprehensive retirement of MI6's Board of Directors to be replaced by a younger generation.[746] In addition, Britain's first legislative intelligence oversight body was established, the ISC, and in 1994 the ongoing existence of MI5 and MI6 was officially recognised in the Intelligence Services Act, bringing forth a new era of scrutiny. As a result, the IC was already involved in implementing much broader lessons, leaving the lessons identified from Granby largely ignored.

6.3.4 An analysis of learning from history

The IC was greatly distracted by the end of the Cold War both before Granby and afterwards. As a result, there was little attention paid to lesson-learning in planning, during or after the crisis. Learning in the generational sphere was noticeably non-existent, with no reflection made upon the events of 1961, even during the initial Iraqi threat. Furthermore, a number of lessons previously identified, including the importance of infiltrating regimes to understand intentions, had not been implemented. Other previously identified lessons, including classification issues and the importance of Attachés and Imint capabilities to overcome Humint weaknesses, had to be re-identified.

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[745] Philip H. J. Davies, *Intelligence and Government in Britain and the United States: A Comparative Perspective* (e-book: ABC-Clio, 2012), n.p.
[746] Philip H. J. Davies, *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying* (Abingdon: Frank Cass, 2004), 300.

Some lessons which had been formally identified from Corporate were implemented in the institutional sphere, perhaps because these emerged as part of a public report – from the external review conducted by Lord Franks – thus forcing a response. In fact, the analysis of CW and BW would not be examined again for lesson identification until the IC was forced to respond to the Butler external review conducted in 2004. Equally, a number of lessons identified from Corporate had not been learned, including issues of the dissemination of intelligence.

6.4 Conclusion

The operation in the Gulf revealed that lessons identified from Vantage had long been forgotten. Although a wide variety of historical events were drawn upon, the events of 1961 were largely ignored. Instead, the FCO focused upon Britain's history of imperialism and the operation in Korea for lesson identification. The FS identified lessons from the experience of Korea and Suez and the PM, Margaret Thatcher, drew upon Suez and the Falklands. Thatcher and President Bush also regularly analogised Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler and warned that a lack of response would be akin to the appeasement of the 1930s. In contrast, by the time John Major arrived to the Premiership he was convinced that history provided few lessons for Granby. Such debates only solidify the idea of subjectivity in learning from history.

In the MoD, lessons identified from the last major campaign, Corporate, remained the primary focus, ignoring other relevant experience, including the last major coalition campaign – Korea – and the experience in the Gulf from the past 10 years as part of the Armilla Patrol. For the IC, learning from history was limited to the identification of lessons from the Iran-Iraq War to assess Iraq's CW and BW capability. Consequently, learning by individuals and

institutions was haphazard with little consistency over which events provided relevant identified lessons for planning Granby. In the individual sphere, Margaret Thatcher's determination to avoid appeasement trumped the lessons identified by individual diplomats regarding the appearance of imperialism. In the MoD, the lessons identified and implemented by C-in-C de La Billière played a key part in teaching the troops about Arab culture. It was also clear that the MoD had become increasingly reliant upon individual learning to ensure the lessons identified in Corporate were implemented.

In the institutional sphere each institution demonstrated some lessons learned from Corporate. The FCO also revealed that despite the lack of a formal lesson-learning process some learning had become part of an informal culture which permeated across generations. These were identified lessons which had become institutional scar tissue originating from past diplomatic disasters; imperialism, Suez and Munich. The MoD also demonstrated that some identified lessons had become institutionally entrenched, and were no longer explicitly referenced as learning, whilst others – despite the large lesson-learning process in place in 1961 – were not learned and had not been passed across generations. In fact, many of the same lessons were re-identified 30 years later. In contrast, the IC failed to demonstrate lesson identification in the institutional or generational sphere. Instead, learning was a distraction from the wider post-Cold War revisions.

The emphasis upon learning from history had, however, begun to change across all three institutions. New methods of scrutiny, through increased media accessibility and coverage, Parliamentary Committees and extraordinary inquiries, forced attention towards lesson-learning and the institutions responded accordingly. In the FCO, post-crisis reflection had begun through the holding of a

conference, although there is no evidence of following-up identified lessons with implementation or distribution. There is also no record of the conference which would have retained lessons and the FAC proved much less concerned with ensuring lessons were identified and implemented than the DC.

In the MoD the learning process had developed the most significantly, with a new focus upon the implementation and distribution of lessons. The IC had begun to acknowledge the importance of learning from history, to some extent, through the implementation of the organisational lessons identified from the Falklands, but many other lessons remained unlearned. Across all three institutions there was recognition of the importance of history to current operations in limiting or empowering British actions. In particular, all three institutions acknowledged that Britain's history of imperialism required increased sensitivity, whilst a history of working with the Americans had earned the British a privileged position in US-led coalitions.

The Gulf War also led to the identification of new lessons for the future. For the FCO, the most significant new lesson was that Saddam Hussein could not be trusted. For the MoD, the new lessons were that Britain could no longer run OOA HIC operations without ally support and needed to be prepared for operations against an enemy with CW and BW. In the IC, the new lessons included the limitations of Sigint when fighting a well trained army and that working with the Americans was essential for increasing collection and assessment capability.

Additionally, Granby offered many identified lessons which would prove important for the future, especially as the operation had not solved the problem of an aggressive Iraq long-term; the

implications of a UN mandate, the risks of a backlash at home and abroad against unauthorised actions, the significance of understanding Arab culture and securing regional support, the importance of limiting the length of operations, ensuring defined objectives. Percy Cradock also identified "The underlying question remained, however: how to deal with post-war Iraq? We had to recognize that Saddam had survived and was probably there to stay...Means had to be found to reassure his neighbours, to maintain long-term pressure on him and prevent him developing his more dangerous weapons."[747] This question would be revisited over the next twelve years until 2003 when the rigour of the lessons identified, implemented, retained and distributed from the Gulf War would be truly tested.

[747] Cradock, *Pursuit*, 182.

Chapter 7: Iraq 2003-2009 – Operation Telic

> "You fought the battle, you won the battle, and you fought it with great courage and valour. But it didn't stop there. You then went on to try to make something of the country you had liberated. And I think that's a lesson for armed forces everywhere, the world over."
> (Tony Blair speech to British forces in Basra, 30th May 2003)[748]

Having conducted operations against Iraq in 1961 and 1990-91, there were many identified, implemented and retained lessons from history which were relevant for consideration in planning and executing the Iraq War, codenamed Operation Telic. However, these lessons were now primarily in the generational sphere – in two separate generations, 1956-1961 and 1990-1991 – and, therefore, Telic would test cross-generational learning. Following the end of the Iraq War, there was also wide recognition that there were many lessons to be learned from the operation itself. In particular, after withdrawal, the government authorised a substantial external inquiry process, under Sir John Chilcot.

After the Gulf War, Britain had maintained a policy of sanctions and containment against Saddam Hussein's regime. A series of UN Security Council resolutions were passed to impose the disarmament of Iraqi CW and BW, missile systems and nuclear capabilities. Throughout the 1990s, Saddam offered little cooperation with UN weapons inspectors who were employed to oversee compliance, causing international condemnation, frustration and suspicion.

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[748] Marc Lacey, "After the war: the Britons; Tony Blair, visiting Basra, tells of challenges ahead", *The New York Times*, 30th May 2003.

When, on 11th September 2001, four passenger airlines were hijacked by the terrorist group al-Qaeda, with three of the planes flown into US public buildings, the international security environment instantly changed. As FS, Jack Straw, stated "Post-9/11, the United States became infinitely more cautious about what risks to its security, direct and indirect, it was willing to entertain."[749] Initially the response to the attacks focused on Afghanistan, where the leader of al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, was believed to be hiding. However, with unknown WMD capability and a dictatorial regime at odds with the West, US attention soon began to turn to Iraq. During the State of the Union address, on 29th January 2002, President George W. Bush accused three states of helping terrorism and seeking WMD, labelling them an "axis of evil"; North Korea, Iran and Iraq.[750]

On 17th March 2003, Britain agreed to join the US, without a UN mandate, in a so-called "coalition of the willing" in a pre-emptive strike on Saddam Hussein to prevent further proliferation, remove his regime and minimise the possibility of Iraqi WMD being passed to terrorists. On 20th March, Telic, codenamed Operation Iraqi Freedom in the US, began. Major combat operations ended 30th April 2003 and the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), which was subsequently succeeded by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), was set-up to act as a transitional government until the election of a democratic government. British forces remained in Iraq trying to establish the new government until 2009.

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[749] Straw, *Last Man*, 365.

[750] George W. Bush, "Text of President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address", 29th January 2002, *www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/transcripts/sou012902.htm*, accessed 28/03/2014.

7.1 The FCO

Despite considerable discussion of intervention in the run-up to Telic the FCO was still, to some extent, surprised by the decision to invade Iraq. By October 2002, President Bush had been granted Congressional authorisation to remove Saddam's regime and promote a democratic replacement. However, PM Tony Blair was keen to obtain a UN resolution for military action. At the beginning of 2003, the FCO worked with the US and Spain to draft a resolution to gain this authorisation but it soon transpired that France intended to veto any such attempts. It was believed in the FCO, however, that the UK would not intervene without such a resolution and there was wide suspicion that Saddam would become more cooperative towards weapons inspectors once he realised the extent of the rising tensions.[751] The Head of the Defence Secretariat for Iraq, David Johnson, declared "Many diplomats couldn't believe it would ever come to war, and behaved accordingly".[752]

7.1.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

Part of FCO reluctance to believe that war was imminent was that it had repeatedly warned of the risks of intervention. Briefs were presented which identified many of the same concerns raised during Granby; the complexities of Iraqi society, the instinct for revenge, the lack of security and that the installation of democracy was unlikely to be successful.[753] Even lessons identified from Suez were drawn upon. The FCO Director of Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Edward Chaplin, advised the FS "we risk a repeat of the Suez debacle, which apart from its short-term effects (e.g.

[751] Chaplin to Straw, "Iraq: Military action", 12th July 2002, TII.
[752] Johnson to Howard, "Op Telic – Lessons for the Secretariat", 6th July 2004, TII.
[753] Chilcott to Chaplin, "Iraq: Day-after issues", 17th January 2003, TII; Straw to Blair, "Crawford/Iraq", 25th March 2002, TII.

sweeping away the Hashemite regime in Iraq) changed Arab popular opinion towards Britain for a generation".[754] Robin Cook, the former FS, agreed with the analogy and mused "I sometimes think that Tony [Blair] ought to worry more about parallels with Suez...Suez lost Britain influence in the Arab world for a generation and in their dark moments [the FCO] fear the experience could be repeated if we go into Iraq."[755]

In fact, in an endeavour to identify and distribute lessons, between 2002 and 2003 the FCO had recalled former Ambassadors to discuss the growing Iraq crisis. The Ambassadors identified two key lessons; firstly, that British experience in Iraq in the 1920s and 30s revealed the tensions within the country which would be unleashed upon intervention and, secondly, that the FCO was being bypassed by the PM as it had been in 1956.[756] No10 had installed a small group of foreign policy advisors within the Cabinet Office thus reducing FCO input and leading key information and intelligence to be withheld from senior FCO officials and ministers.[757] This lack of interaction led to a misunderstanding by the FCO of the PM's determinism for war. When Tony Blair was questioned by a journalist about following US actions with such devotion he replied "It's worse than you think. I believe in it."[758] In response to questions from senior Labour figures, Blair drew upon lessons identified from his previous experience as justification and declared "I've had two wars - Kosovo and Afghanistan – and I think I can

[754] Chaplin to Straw, 12th July 2002, TII.
[755] Cook, *Departure*, 224.
[756] Interview with Sir Alan Munro, 16th July 2014.
[757] FAC, *Foreign Policy Aspects Of the War Against Terror: Seventh Report of the Session 2003-2004* (London: TSO, 2004), 5.
[758] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 337.

claim that we got it right."[759] In response to anti-Iraq War protests Blair even famously declared "Let the day-to-day judgments come and go: be prepared to be judged by history".[760]

When it became clear that war was approaching, FCO concerns turned to US post-invasion plans. FS Jack Straw wrote to the PM voicing fears that the US had a serious "lacunae in their plan, notably...no thought apparently given to 'day after' scenarios."[761] The former Defence Minister John Gilbert reflected much of the feeling in a discussion with Parliamentary Under-Secretary Chris Mullin:

> "'Before opening a new front in Iraq' [Mullin said] 'perhaps the Americans should spend a little more time helping us to clear up in Afghanistan.'
> 'Haven't you heard what they say?'
> 'No.'
> 'Great powers don't do the dishes.'"[762]

When this was raised to the PM, the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, drew upon his own interpretation of history and identified: "They did in Vietnam."[763]

Unconvinced, the FCO began to consider how the UN could contribute to post-conflict assistance, as they had in Fortitude,

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[759] Mullin, *Foothills*, 302. Robin Cook explicitly denied the relevance of a comparison of Iraq with Kosovo in his resignation speech. Robin Cook, Hansard (Commons), CDI, c726-728, 17th March 2003.
[760] Jackie Ashley and Ewen MacAskill, "History will be my judge", 1st March 2003, *www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/mar/01/iraq.foreignpolicy*, accessed 12/04/2014.
[761] Straw to Blair, "Iraq: Contingency Planning", 8th July 2002, TII.
[762] Mullin, *Foothills*, 258.
[763] Mullin, *Foothills*, 265.

Vantage and Granby. Many historical examples were debated; "post WWII models of occupation in Germany and Japan", "a sort of 'Bonn process'", "a Kosovo model", "'lite' operation on the lines of operations in Afghanistan and Cambodia", "full UN administration on the...East Timor model", and even "by analogy with the 1991 action in Northern Iraq".[764] However, as the start of operations drew nearer, the FCO failed to consider post-war strategic planning any further, a lesson which was subsequently widely identified by witnesses at TII.[765]

Nonetheless, the FCO continued to try to implement a previously identified lesson and avoid accusations of imperialism, albeit unsuccessfully. Discussions were held early with Arab states, including sending messages to Iran[766] and the Islamic Media Unit within the FCO was particularly active in 2002; monitoring Islamic opinion and addressing the Arab media.[767] However, the Arab world remained concerned and the Saudi Ambassador, Prince Turki Al Faisal, advised "The view of the Arab world is that this is an exercise in empire building."[768]

One relationship which remained unscathed during planning was with the US. Just as the Thatcher-Bush relationship had led the UK-US relationship in the 1990s, so the Blair-Bush relationship led it in

[764] Chilcott to Chaplin, 17th January 2003, TII; Stephen Pattison, witness statement, January 2011, TII; Ricketts to Straw, "Iraq: Resolutions: The 'Kosovo Option'", 3rd October 2002, TII.
[765] John Williams, witness statement, 9th January 2011, TII; Denis MacShane, witness statement, n.d. , TII; Sir Freddie Viggers, witness statement, 8th December 2009, TII; Stephen Pattison, witness statement, January 2011, TII.
[766] Mullin, *Foothills*, 378.
[767] FAC, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2003* (London: TSO, 2003), 14; Ricketts to Holmes, "France and Iraq", 13th March 2003, TII.
[768] Mullin, *Foothills*, 400.

the 2000s with almost daily phone calls.[769] The British Ambassador to the UN, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, declared "The Prime Minister and the President consult each other more frequently than any of their predecessors did, including Roosevelt and Churchill during World War II."[770] Jack Straw believed that this was the result of lessons identified from history: "The spectre of Suez had been by far the most potent influence over successive British government's engagement with the US since the 50's' and when he [Blair] started his role the advice from Jonathan Powell had been to 'get right up the arse of the Americans'."[771] The problem for the FCO was that there was a poor relationship with the key Washington decision-makers. Sir Jeremy Greenstock later identified this lesson: "The Blair-Bush relationship was very good. The Powell-Straw relationship was very good. But neither Bush for one reason, nor Powell for another, were actually having much effect on operational decision-making, because Rumsfeld and Cheney were running it."[772]

Similar to Harold Macmillan, John Major and Douglas Hurd in previous interventions, PM Tony Blair identified the importance of securing public support. Creating a convincing case for going to war in Iraq became an increasing priority for HMG and, echoing Thatcher, included a number of analogies made by the PM between Saddam and Hitler.[773] The implementation of this lesson was not successful as large-scale anti-war protests took place across Britain and a January 2003 opinion poll suggested that only 30% of the

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[769] Mullin, *Foothills*, 316.
[770] FCO, *Departmental Report 1 April 2003 – 31 March 2004* (London: TSO, 2004), 37.
[771] Straw, *Last Man*, 371.
[772] Jeremy Greenstock, DOHP 99, 54.
[773] Straw to Blair, 25th March 2002, TII; Blair to Powell 17th March 2002, TII; Powell to Blair 19th July 2002, TII; Woodward, *Plan*, 337.

public supported the intervention.[774] However, No10 was convinced that once war began the support for the troops would also lead to a "Blair bounce" in the opinion polls.[775]

The PM was also concerned for securing Parliamentary support, sometimes leading Tony Blair to lobby MP's one-on-one.[776] Furthermore, the former FS, Robin Cook, drew upon lessons identified from circumnavigating Parliament in 1956 to recommend recalling the House of Commons for a formal debate on Iraq. Cook advised the PM "All I ask is that every morning you remember what happened to Anthony Eden".[777] Parliament was recalled in September 2002 and eventually the historic decision was also taken to ask the House of Commons whether to commit Britain to the Iraq War. The vote on 18th March 2003 ended 412 in favour and 149 against, thus implementing the lesson of obtaining Parliamentary support.[778]

However, significantly, Robin Cook had resigned in protest of the impending war the day before the vote. His resignation speech, which received an unprecedented standing ovation, cited a number of failings with the proposed intervention which demonstrated that the previously identified lessons of securing domestic, UN and international support had been forgotten:

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[774] The poll was conducted by ICM on a random sample of 1,002 adults by telephone. 47% were in opposition to the war. Alan Travis, "Support for war falls to new low", 21st January 2003, *www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/jan/21/uk.iraq2*, accessed 25/07/2015.
[775] Cook, *Departure*, 270.
[776] Cook, *Departure*, 190.
[777] Cook, *Departure*, 203; Campbell, *Blair Years*, 636.
[778] BBC News, "Blair wins war backing amidst revolt", 19th March 2003, *news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2862325.stm*, accessed 22/08/2015.

> "The reality is that Britain is being asked to embark on a war without agreement in any of the international bodies of which we are a leading partner—not NATO, not the European Union and, now, not the Security Council...[the war] has neither international agreement nor domestic support."[779]

Echoing the very words of the FASC in April 1958, which stated "we are no longer in a position to 'go it alone'",[780] Cook re-identified "The US can afford to go it alone, but Britain is not a superpower. Our interests are best protected not by unilateral action but by multilateral agreement and a world order governed by rules."[781]

7.1.2 Learning from history during the intervention

As Telic became a reality, the structure of the FCO changed to accommodate the complexity of the operation. In March 2003, two emergency units, a policy unit and a Consular unit were opened, working 24 hours a day.[782] The rapid response was the result of implementing lessons from 9/11, the war in Afghanistan and the threat of an India-Pakistan war, where the lesson had been identified that the handling of emergency operations required improvement.[783]

In Iraq, FCO staff were seconded to the ORHA in Baghdad, Basra and seven of the 18 Governorates. The British Office in Baghdad was quickly opened using a containerised Embassy that could accommodate four people and, implementing a lesson identified from Afghanistan, by June a newly developed "flat pack embassy" arrived. This was a fully, self-supporting container (in terms of

[779] Robin Cook, Hansard (Commons), CDI, c726-728, 17th March 2003.
[780] FASC, "Obligations", 3.
[781] Robin Cook, Hansard (Commons), CDI, c727, 17th March 2003.
[782] Lord Jay Ewelme, witness statement, 21st June 2010, TII.
[783] FCO, *Report 2003-2004*, 55.

electricity and water) which could house up to 40 people.[784] However, the 2004-2005 FCO annual report identified many more lessons to be learned: "Teams in Iraq work under considerable pressure. Unbearable heat, lack of infrastructure and insurgent activities make travelling and working in Iraq extremely difficult."[785] In response to these identified lessons implementation was ad hoc: "Our teams respond to these unpredictable constraints on resources flexibly and creatively. They think on their feet and learn new skills, methods and routes to deliver."[786]

The previously identified lesson of gaining overflying rights, and seeking consent for ground attacks in advance, was attempted to be implemented but was unsuccessful. In contrary to 1961 and 1991 the RAF were so keen to ensure that rights were secured that a duplication of effort emerged, with some individual officers taking it upon themselves to personally task embassies with securing approval rather than following the official command structure.[787] The FCO also allowed plenty of time to negotiate the entry of British forces into Northern Iraq from Turkey, but this soon failed, forcing last minute changes to invasion plans for entry into Southern Iraq from Kuwait and ultimately providing the British with a much more challenging area of the country to manage.

However, the FCO did implement the identified lesson of the importance of managing the British economy. The Iraq Planning Unit, in considering the implications of post-Saddam Iraq, advised at the beginning of 2003 "This would be very expensive and could have wider resource implications. Ministers urgently need to take a

[784] FAC, *Foreign Policy Aspects Of the War Against Terror: Second Report of the Session 2002-2003* (London: TSO, 2003).
[785] FCO, *Report 2004-2005*, 208.
[786] FCO, *Report 2004-2005*, 208.
[787] Johnson to Howard, 6th July 2004, TII.

view on this before the military planning assumptions become a fait accomplis."[788] The funding was drawn from three streams; the baseline spending of the FCO and DfID supplemented by a joint Conflict Pool, the Treasury Reserve and a Special Reserve that had been specifically created in 2002.[789]

Once the conflict phase of the operation was complete, protecting the British economy led to insufficient resources set aside for the task at hand. Head of the Defence Secretariat for Iraq, David Johnson, concluded "it is absurd to spend billions on a short, sharp war and then try to run an area the size of France with hardly two pennies to rub together".[790] He did concede that this was partially the fault of the MoD: "We don't necessarily help our own cause here. Once we are well down the planning route and the tea and medals are in sight, we are too keen to get on with the war to disturb Ministers with the unwelcome thought that we should not proceed further without setting aside large sums for reconstruction."[791]

Cross-Whitehall relations also deteriorated as the campaign progressed. The FCO struggled to coordinate with DfID, as did the MoD. Although Johnson described the department as a "festering sore" he also identified "[The lack of engagement] was a pity because DfID do have quite a lot to offer once one gets past the Guardian-reading pieties."[792] There was also no single minister in charge of Iraq and thus it was difficult for those on the ground to

[788] Iraq Planning Unit, "Planning for the UK's role in Iraq after Saddam", 5th March 2003, TII.
[789] Sir Nicholas Macpherson, witness statement, 15th January 2010, TII.
[790] Macpherson, 15th January 2010, TII.
[791] Johnson to Howard, 6th July 2004, TII.
[792] Johnson to Howard, 6th July 2004, TII.

manage multiple lines of reporting and accountability.[793] The new FS, David Miliband, identified this lesson in 2008: "We need better integration, particularly between MoD, DfID and FCO...we need to think more radically about joining up at all levels."[794] However, two years later the lesson had still not been implemented. The House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) identified "Cross-departmental collaboration is variable, analytical resources are underutilised, and different departments understand and discuss strategy in different and incompatible ways. Departmental collaboration therefore falls short."[795]

7.1.3 Learning from the intervention

On writing his memoirs on the run-up to the Iraq War, the British Ambassador to the US, Christopher Meyer, reflected "Hindsight usually follows failure" and for the first time the FCO seemed to embrace the idea of lesson-learning.[796] The 2003-2004 annual departmental report for Parliament included a small "lessons learned" section on the impact of Telic on visas in the region.[797] The FAC supported this lesson identification: "We particularly welcome the new 'lessons learned' sections and recommend that they be

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[793] Sir Freddie Viggers, witness notes, 8th December 2009, TII.
[794] To add further to the loss of individual lessons in the FCO there were three FSs during the Iraq War; Jack Straw (June 2001-May 2006), Margaret Beckett (May 2006-June 2007), David Miliband June 2007-May 2010). David Miliband, "Speech at the FCO Leadership Conference", 4th March 2008, *ukingermany.fco.gov.uk/en/news/?view=Speech&id=4616832*, accessed 27/12/2011.
[795] House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee (PASC), *Who does UK National Strategy?* (London: TSO, 2010), 19.
[796] Christopher Meyer, *DC Confidential* (London: Orion, 2005), 278.
[797] FCO, *Report 2003-2004*, 131. The term "lessons learned" is not used in the FCO in the same way as this thesis. Instead, this could be more accurately described as "lessons identified".

developed and made more specific in future reports."[798] As a result, the 2004-2005 annual report included a specific "lessons learned" section on Iraq, identifying staff successes and the need to improve project management, staff recruiting and training.[799]

The partly FCO manned and owned Stabilisation Unit (SU) went further and produced a lesson identification report, albeit that it was published too late to inform policy during Telic. This report utilised Iraq as a case study to provide policy-makers and practitioners with an accessible summary of how to operate in complex stabilisation environments.[800] It methodically identified lessons at strategic, operational and tactical levels, marshalling evidence and suggesting methods for implementation.

The FAC also began to embrace the idea of lesson-learning and produced a series of seven reports on the foreign policy aspects of the war against terror, including lessons identified from Iraq. It additionally published one-off reports, including *The Decision to go to War in Iraq* and *Global Security: The Middle East*, which identified an array of lessons as a result of discussions with officials from the UK, US, UN, France and NATO.[801] Furthermore, there was a new concern for monitoring FCO progress which forced some

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[798] FAC, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2003-04* (London: TSO, 2004), 14.
[799] FCO, *Departmental Report 1 April 2004 – 31 March 2005* (London: TSO, 2005), 212.
[800] Stabilisation Unit (SU), "Responding to Stabilisation Challenges in Hostile and Insecure Environments: Lessons Identified by the UK's Stabilisation Unit", 2010, *www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/attachments/article/520/Top%20Lessons%20from%20Stabilisation%20and%20Conflict.pdf*, accessed 10/08/2012.
[801] FAC, *The Decision to go to War in Iraq* (London: TSO, 2003); FAC, *Global Security: The Middle East* (London: TSO, 2007).

consideration of lesson implementation by the FS in his FAC report response.[802]

However, despite the new agenda, FCO lesson identification was limited. The annual reports were for public consumption, reducing complex problems to sound bites, and were accused of being "PR jobs".[803] The FAC suffered from a lack of access to information and accused the government of failing to satisfactorily answer questions.[804] Those witnesses who were called before the committee were the most senior officials, mainly promoted by the government and towing the ministerial line, often leaving FAC conclusions as little more than a summary of events. The few lessons which were identified were also not given priority within the FCO for implementation. A former Middle East diplomat, Carne Ross, stated "what Parliament or this Committee said about our policy was, at best, insignificant...Inside the FCO, the recommendations of the FAC are given little attention."[805]

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[802] See for example FCO, *Second Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee Foreign Policy Aspects of the War Against Terrorism Session 2003-2004: Response of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs* (London: TSO, 2004).

[803] The key lesson identified from Iraq in 2004 was "in such an environment every single member of staff must be prepared to make 100% commitment." FCO, *Report 2004-2005*, 212; Simon Rogers, "Named and shamed: the worst government annual reports", 27th October 2011, *www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/oct/27/department-resource-accounts-reports*, accessed 14/08/2012.

[804] FAC, *Foreign Policy Aspects Of the War Against Terror: Sixth Report of the Session 2004-2005* (London: TSO, 2005), 41.

[805] FAC "Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: The FCO'S Strategic Priorities", oral evidence, 8th November 2006, *www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmfaff/167/6110801.htm*, date accessed 20/06/2012.

7.1.4 An analysis of learning from history

Telic revealed that learning from history was occurring across all spheres within the FCO but with few references to Granby and none to Vantage. Instead, Suez and appeasement remained ever present and, similar to the Falklands during the Gulf War, the last major intervention in Afghanistan was frequently referenced. In the individual sphere, the PM's own conviction and experiences of Kosovo and Afghanistan overtook warnings of Suez, whilst John Prescott used history as rationale to reinforce his existing beliefs.

In the institutional sphere identified lessons continued to be important for the approach to the UN, whilst the burden of managing Britain's imperial legacy remained prescient in the FCO's strategic approach. However, lesson implementation continued to be ad hoc. Some identified lessons had been forgotten over time, particularly the No10-FCO relationship. Lessons identified from more recent events, including Afghanistan, were implemented but implementation during the operation was slow, leaving diplomats in theatre to improvise in the individual sphere whilst waiting for the sluggish institutional sphere to catch-up. Moreover, as postings in Iraq lasted a maximum of one year – as opposed to the usual two or three years – there was a higher turnover of staff than in normal posts and the frequent changes of personnel translated to a lack of consistent learning.

Lessons identified in the generational sphere also began to be important. FCO past experience in Iraq, from the 1920s through to the Gulf War, informed its understanding of the country and warnings of invasion. Attempts were made to harness individual and generational learning for institutional purposes through the recalling of former Ambassadors for policy discussions, which was a new method of lesson distribution.

Since 1991, there had been some shift in FCO culture towards learning from history as demonstrated by the FCO annual reports and the meetings held with past Ambassadors. However, this was very limited and did not compare to the reports identifying lessons produced by other departments, including the SU and MoD. The FAC also revealed a lesson identification agenda but the FCO failed to demonstrate an emphasis upon lesson implementation. Mark Etherington, the former CPA Governorate Coordinator, argued that the root cause of the FCO's inability to learn was cultural. He told TII that the FCO was likely to perpetuate mistakes because of a disinclination for self-criticism and an avoidance of questioning key assumptions by taking comfort in meaningless statistics; spend, speed and numbers of people deployed:

> "The argument is often made that the UK has learned from its mistakes in Iraq and moved forward. There is limited evidence of this...We still lack the ability – and inclination – dispassionately to consider our errors, identify and act upon the requisite lessons and move on. This has constrained debate, education and our national performance. Lacking this rigour, we tend to turn self-referentially inward; and risk viewing criticism as a threat, unquestioning assent as loyalty and measuring that loyalty in Departmental rather than national terms. The inherent dangers of this are clear. One fears that a measure of arrogance, complacency and hubris has long prevented us learning."[806]

[806] Mark Etherington, personal statement, 12th August 2010, TII.

7.2 The MoD

Telic was challenging from the outset for the MoD. The failure to secure a UN resolution changed the operation from one with UN approval to joining a "coalition of the willing" with 39 other countries, none of which were Arab. Turkey's refusal to allow Britain to enter Iraq from within its borders shifted the British operation from one based in the relatively stable areas of northern Iraq to the less peaceful zone of the south, resulting in troops having to be transported a further 3,000 miles. In addition, the MoD was already stretched. Troops were also employed at the time in Sierra Leone, Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Afghanistan and around 19,000 personnel were required for Operation Fresco; to provide a replacement fire-fighting service during a union strike.[807] This led to the MoD joke that Telic was an acronym for "Tell Everyone Leave Is Cancelled".

Telic was also the largest military operation since Granby, with a similar number of personnel deployed in approximately half the time.[808] In all, 46,000 personnel, 19 warships, 14 Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels, 15,000 vehicles, 115 fixed-wing aircraft and 100 helicopters were deployed.[809]

7.2.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

At the beginning of planning, there was little evidence of implementing lessons from Granby and very few of the senior UK commanders from Telic had Middle East experience, with even less having served in the Gulf War.[810] Notes on a PM briefing reveal that

[807] PJHQ, "Record of COS briefing to the PM", 15th January 2003, TII.
[808] NAO, *Ministry of Defence Operation Telic – United Kingdom Military Operations in Iraq* (London: TSO, 2003), 2.
[809] NAO, *Telic*, 1.
[810] Three exceptions were Air Component Commander, Air Vice Marshal Glenn Torpy, Deputy to the Head of Office for Reconstruction and

some lessons identified in previous operations were discussed with regards to Iraq, but the specifics are unknown.[811] However, the local operational experience of the RN and RAF since Granby (working with the US as part of Operation Resinate to patrol an Iraqi no-fly zone and the Armilla patrol, to enforce UN sanctions) was considered "of particular value".[812]

Recent exercises were also drawn upon for identified lessons, particularly Exercise Saif Sareea II in Oman in 2001, which informed the implementation of a range of modifications to the Challenger 2 main battle tank and the successful establishment of a Joint Forces Logistics Command Headquarters.[813] At the end of 2002, the British had participated in the US-run Exercise Internal Look in Qatar, which rehearsed the set-up and running of a headquarters for a major coalition campaign, an important element of preparation for a possible attack on Iraq. Other exercises which proved of benefit included those with British and American Marines in autumn 2002, 1 (UK) Armoured Division in Kuwait in April 2002 and NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps. Each provided soldiers with important HIC training and allowed lessons to be identified and implemented.[814]

Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), Major General Tim Cross and Commander of 16 Air Assault Brigade Brigadier "Jacko" Page. MoD, "Brief biographical details of the senior UK commanders involved in Operation Telic", n.d., *webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk*, accessed 24/03/2014.

[811] PJHQ, 15th January 2003, TII.

[812] MoD, "Operations in Iraq: Lessons for the Future" (2003), *www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/DoctrineOperationsandDiplomacyPublications/OperationsInIraq/OperationsInIraqLessonsForTheFuture.htm*, accessed 03/04/2012, 53.

[813] NAO, *Telic*, 13-14; Lieutenant General Chris Brown, "Operation Telic Lessons Compendium", n.d., *www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F0282A90-99E5-415E-B3BC-97EAD7D7873A/0/operation_telic_lessons_compendium.pdf*, accessed 12/06/2012, TEL.N.19.

[814] MoD, "Lessons", 54.

For planning the post-war nation building phase, Musketeer, Fortitude, Vantage and Granby offered few relevant lessons. Instead, the British drew upon lessons identified from humanitarian interventions and the Chief of the Defence Staff considered Bosnia as a "worst case" for the length of an aftermath operation.[815] However, aftermath planning before deployment was immature and lacked clear military objectives, whilst for the CPA there were no objectives at all.[816] The Senior British Military Representative in Iraq within the CPA, Sir Freddie Viggers, identified this lesson "we suffered from lack of clarity about Ends, Ways and Means. The plan emerged piecemeal and was prone to dislocation by breaking news and by events." Furthermore, "Everything was a priority - security, the rebuild, creating the political architecture, capture Saddam, stop the sabotage and smuggling, sustain flows of vital supplies to nations, get the economy going, remove the weapons (tons, of all types)", and all of which was to be completed whilst the CPA remained perpetually understaffed "by quality and quantity".[817]

The UK-US discussions on contingency planning for the war phase against Iraq began in early June 2002, with British officers having been embedded in CENTCOM since September 2001.[818] The lesson of the necessity of working with the Americans was re-identified in 2003 when the MoD noted "It is probable that any future UK medium - or large-scale war - fighting operation will be fought in a US-led or backed coalition. Working with the US in a coalition brings political, diplomatic and military advantages, including the aggregation of capabilities, flexible war-fighting options and the

[815] PJHQ, 15th January 2003, TII.
[816] Ricketts to Webb, "Iraq: Contingency Planning", 3rd May 2002, TII.
[817] Viggers, witness statement, 8th December 2009, TII.
[818] Straw to Blair, 8th July 2002, TII; DC, *Lessons of Iraq: Third Report of the Session 2003-2004* (London: TSO, 2004), 5.

sharing of intelligence and risk."[819] However, in contrast to Granby, the MoD had a considerable lack of impact or influence upon US plans. The DC identified "We are not, however able to define the areas in which the British made a specific contribution to what was essentially an American campaign plan" and "[b]eing a junior partner in a coalition constrained the British Government in its ability to plan independently for after the conflict."[820]

Other previously identified lessons also seemed to be initially implemented, although not explicitly attributed to a past lesson. In particular, the operation was planned to commence in cooler months and there was suitable time set aside for all troops to acclimatise.[821] However, the identified lesson was soon unlearned; when one Division replaced another in the height of summer heat casualties rapidly increased. From 15th July to 9th September 2003 over 800 personnel were treated for heat-related issues, 200 were returned to the UK and one soldier tragically died.[822]

The concern, identified in 1991, of not appearing imperial had also got lost over time. The issue was not discussed in planning documents and there was an assumption that forces would be viewed as "liberators".[823] Furthermore, there continued to be a shortage of linguists who could communicate with the population, as well as a failure to follow the lead identified by General de la Billière in Granby, to provide troops with basic cultural training.[824]

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[819] MoD, "Lessons", 36.
[820] DC, *Lessons*, 5, 19.
[821] Powell to Blair, "Iraq", 19th July 2002, TII; The Desert Rats, for example, came from training on the northern German plains at -4°F (-20°C). Major General Graham Binns "The Iraqis saw us as occupiers, not liberators", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 10th March 2013, 19.
[822] DC, *Lessons*, 44.
[823] Binns, "Occupiers not liberators".
[824] DC, *Lessons*, 8; Brown, "Compendium", TEL.0.59; TEL.0.61.

Not until 2007 did the MoD implement the lesson and produce *Iraq: Cultural Appreciation Booklet* providing information on Iraqi history, culture, religion and language for those in theatre.[825]

7.2.2 Learning from history during the intervention

Lessons identified from past operations immediately proved worthwhile and were implemented in the preparation of equipment for Iraqi conditions. In particular, lessons identified from Afghanistan on how to maintain rifles in dusty conditions were implemented.[826] However, in a repeat of the events of 1961, approximately £14 million worth of ammunition had to be written-off because it was stored unprotected in high temperatures. Radars, communication and information systems (CIS), unmanned air vehicles and airfield navigation aids were all less reliable in the hot and dusty conditions and in some cases the air conditioning attempting to keep equipment cool caused condensation which effected sensitive electrical equipment.[827] There were also reports that the temperatures in the back of the Warrior vehicle were potentially fatal.[828] The journalist John Humphreys identified "sitting in the back of a Warrior is like travelling in an oven on tank tracks. It gets to 140 degrees in summer. You can cook a leg of lamb at that temperature".[829]

Difficulties with equipment logistics also persisted, despite the re-identification of these lessons. Personnel arrived in theatre before

[825] MoD, "Iraq: Cultural Appreciation Booklet", (2007) *www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/16869/iraq_cultural_appreciation_booklet.pdf*, accessed 30/03/2014.
[826] MoD, "Lessons", 28.
[827] MoD, "Lessons", 44-45.
[828] DC, *UK Operations in Iraq: Thirteenth Report of the Session 2005-2006* (London: TSO, 2006), 18.
[829] Cited in Richard North, *Ministry of Defeat* (London: Continuum, 2009), 159.

much of the desert clothing.[830] There was a shortage of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical protection suits and detection equipment and, as there had been in Granby, there were shortages of ammunition, with some soldiers only having five rounds each.[831]

Once supplies were dispatched, further delays occurred due to ongoing equipment identification and tracking failures.[832] The NAO reported that poor asset identification and tracking had been identified from WWII, 1961 and 1991, as well as more recent operations including Operation Resolute and Lodestar in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1995-1998), Operation Besemer in Macedonia (2001) and Exercise Saif Sareea II in Oman (2001) but the lesson had not been implemented.[833] The NAO also identified that the difficulties were so extreme that frontline units would often send teams back down the supply chain to find their required items. In one example, 1 (UK) Armoured Division sent a team back from Kuwait to the Defence Stores and Distribution Agency depot at Bicester in Oxfordshire to locate required items.[834]

The failings quickly re-earned the British the same nickname that they had held 13 years before - "the Borrowers" - and Major General Graham Binns recalled the difficulties with some humour: "We were grateful for several boxes of chefs' whites and ceremonial dress, but would have preferred more body armour and desert camouflage uniform. The Marine Corps was very generous with its

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[830] MoD, "Operations in Iraq: First Reflections" (2003) *www.mod.uk/defenceinternet/aboutdefence/corporatepublications/doctrineoperationsanddiplomacypublications/operationsiniraq/operationiniraqfirstreflections.htm*, accessed 03/04/2012, 25.
[831] Andrew Gilligan, "We must face the truth: Britain was humiliated", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 10th March 2013, 21.
[832] MoD, "Lessons", 40.
[833] NAO, *Telic*, 36.
[834] NAO, *Telic*, 20.

supplies – not always knowingly."[835] The DC identified in their report: "We are in no doubt that one of the key lessons to emerge from Operation Telic concerns operational logistic support and, specifically, the requirement for a robust system to track equipment and stocks both into and within theatre – a requirement which was identified in the 1991 Gulf War."[836]

There were also initial challenges to the command structure leading to lessons being identified and implemented during the operation. The three UK Contingent Commanders were under the tactical control of the US but, similarly to Granby, operational command of UK forces remained with the Chief of Joint Operations (CJO), Lieutenant General Sir John Reith, through PJHQ. This did not mirror US command structures, resulting in some confusion and complexity. However, the lesson was quickly identified and doctrine updated by the end of 2003.[837] The DC also identified the same lesson and recommended a more adaptable command structure to ensure working in greater parallel with the US in the future.[838]

To add further complication there were challenges in CIS as the infrastructure struggled to support all of the requirements of Telic, resulting in forces using various systems connected by a plethora of gateways and interfaces. This caused considerable problems in integration and not all British systems were compatible with the US systems or able to handle the volume of information traffic. At the

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[835] Stephen Tyler, "British troops' Black Bag of Kit", (2010) *www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/EquipmentAndLogistics/BritishTroopsBlackBagOfKit.htm*, accessed 22/06/2012; cited in Philip Sherwell, "Iraq War: major new questions for Blair", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 10th March 2013, 2.
[836] DC, *Lessons*, 16.
[837] MoD, "Lessons", 9.
[838] DC, *Lessons*, 7.

tactical level, this lesson was quickly identified and implemented when the ageing short-range radio for small infantry teams was replaced in 2004.[839]

In continuing to implement the previously identified lesson of media management, the method of "embedding" journalists – learned from Granby – was expanded in Telic. Around 700 journalists were embedded within coalition forces, including 153 within British units. The MoD considered this process to be highly successful as 90% of the reporting during the combat phase from embedded journalists was classed as positive or neutral.[840] Embedding also provided the additional benefit of countering propaganda from the Iraqi Information Ministry which had become particularly important as, by 2003, journalists were reporting from both sides of the conflict.

However, the initial establishment of media operations had been slow. There was a shortage of trained media personnel and once centres were up-and-running there was a continual battle for officers to be briefed in order to answer questions from journalists who were monitoring 24 hour media coverage. Once the combat phase was over, media management became even more demanding as experienced media personnel returned to the UK, including many embedded journalists.[841] For those journalists who remained in theatre the difficult security situation hampered any positive reporting. The MoD identified the lesson: "Planning for similar operations in future should take into account, from the outset, media demands during the transition to the post-conflict phase."[842] Additionally, in June 2003, the MoD participated in a RUSI seminar

[839] MoD, "Reflections", 24-25; MoD "Lessons", 10.
[840] MoD, "Lessons", 59.
[841] MoD, "Lessons", 59-60.
[842] MoD, "Lessons", 60.

with journalists, broadcasters and academics to identify lessons on how the media campaign could be handled better in the future.[843]

Despite some examples of lesson identification and implementation during the campaign, there were criticisms that the MoD was slow to identify strategic lessons. Since 1991 the learning process had developed with strategic identified lessons originating primarily from the Directorate of Operational Capability (DOC), operational lessons from PJHQ and tactical lessons from Front Line Commanders. Each were managed on bespoke databases and, in addition, Land, Sea and Air each had a separate database. This provided an undemocratic and compartmentalised approach to lesson learning resulting in incoherence which was compounded by three changes in IT systems and locations during the first few years of Telic.[844]

Having identified this lesson, in 2006, the DOC implemented the lesson through the introduction of the Defence-wide Lessons Management (DwLM) system. DwLM incorporated a new lessons database – Defence Lessons Management System (DLIMS) – which was universal in allowing input into the lesson identification process by all ranks and across all environments.[845] The system then ensured that each identified lesson was assigned a method of implementation and a gatekeeper to oversee the process. Lessons remained "open" until the gatekeeper provided a written statement detailing its implementation after which it was digitally retained in the Defence Lessons Library (DLL), remaining accessible for

[843] MoD, "Reflections", 16.
[844] MoD, "Defence-wide Lessons Management", received under FOI; Brown, "Compendium", chapter 9.
[845] Private information.

reference.[846] Consequently, the new process considered lesson identification, implementation and retention.

However, by making the process more democratic, it became increasingly time consuming for the lesson learning teams to process identified lessons. As a result, DOC was forced to stop capturing any new strategic or operational lessons in Iraq between 2007 and 2009.[847] The MoD was also not institutionally able to quickly and efficiently manage the process of implementation and many identified lessons took 4-5 years to be implemented. Although the Operational Training and Advisory Group (OPTAG) – who conducted pre-deployment training – visited the theatre regularly to identify lessons for training for the next wave of troops, lessons were not being identified and implemented quickly.[848] In particular, whilst the US COIN doctrine developed quickly to adapt to changing circumstances, the UK reaction in Basra was slow and lacked dynamism; updated doctrine on stabilisation and COIN, *JDP 3-40*, was not published until the end of 2009, too late for Telic.[849] This was in part because the MoD drew upon its history in Northern Ireland and Malaya (amongst others) to form the belief that it was exemplar in COIN campaigns.[850] The lesson identified was "our institutional thinking appears somewhat leaden".[851]

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[846] Private information.
[847] Major General Mungo Melvin, "Learning and Exploiting the Lessons of War", *The British Army*, (2011), 85.
[848] Brigadier Robert Aitkin, "The Aitkin Report: An investigation into Cases of Deliberate Abuse and Unlawful Killing in Iraq in 2003 and 2004", (2008), *mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/7AC894D3-1430-4AD1-911F-8210C3342CC5/0/aitken_rep.pdf*, accessed 20/05/2012, 22.
[849] Brown, "Compendium", TEL.602; Mark Etherington, "I waited for instructions, but was told: no one will help", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 10th March 2013, 21.
[850] Mumford, *Counter-Insurgency Myth*.
[851] Brown, "Compendium", TEL.602.

The slow turnaround created an inability to examine wider trends and patterns which could have been used to inform the direction of the campaign.[852] Additionally, many of the identified lessons were eventually implemented through the updating of training and doctrine which resulted in overwhelming amounts of information for personnel to digest. The Canon of Army Doctrine reading, for example, was intimidating and became considered "at best as guidance, at worst as optional background reading" and was often quickly forgotten.[853] In 2011 the Army identified "The British write some of the best doctrine in the world; it is unfortunate their officers do not read it."[854]

7.2.3 Learning from the intervention

The extensive and routine lesson identification reports and processes, which had been in place in 1991, remained in 2003 and had been further expanded. Internally, specific "lessons learned" reports continued to be submitted through the chain of command.[855] Telic had a specific Lessons Learned team assigned to identify lessons and retain those identified by others. They also produced two summary reports for public presentation.[856] In addition, DOC produced three volumes of reports identifying lessons and the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff commissioned four special reviews to identify lessons on logistics, consignment tracking, combat identification and Nuclear, Biological and Chemical

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[852] Brown, "Compendium", chapter 9.
[853] British Army, "Army Inspectorate Review into the Implementation of Policy, Training and Conduct of Detainee Handling", (2010) *www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/reports/2010/british_iraq_detainee_handling.pdf*, accessed 07/06/2012, 20; Brown, "Compendium", TEL.901.
[854] Cited in MoD, "Army Doctrine Primer" (2011) *www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/MicroSite/DCDC/OurPublications/JDWP/AdpArmyDoctrinePrimer.htm*, accessed 26/05/2012, i.
[855] MoD "Lessons", 3.
[856] MoD "Lessons"; MoD "Reflections".

Warfare.[857] The MoD also continued to identify lessons from serious incidents through Boards of Inquiry (BOI) and further internal inquiries, including the Aitkin report on the deliberate abuse and unlawful killing of Iraqis.[858]

Externally, as in 1991, the NAO and DC identified lessons for the MoD. The NAO conducted a full investigation on the operation and the DC ran an inquiry – visiting units, organisations, the CPA and interviewing witnesses – to produce *Lessons of Iraq*.[859] The MoD also had a number of external inquiries for issues related to torture and abuse, which each included the terms of reference to learn lessons for the future.[860]

Lesson distribution and identification from others had also extended since Granby. The Defence Medical Services (DMS) reports from Iraq revealed that lessons identified from the NHS had been implemented.[861] Cross-service distribution greatly improved with the set-up of DwLM, although certain identified lessons remained closed to other environments for security purposes or to avoid embarrassment.[862] Cross-Whitehall distribution also began to emerge, albeit with mixed success. Lesson distribution worked particularly well with the intergovernmental body of the SU, which had its own Lessons Team, and by the end of Telic it was fully

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[857] NAO, *Telic*, 4.
[858] Aitkin, "Aitkin Report".
[859] NAO, *Telic*; DC, *Lessons.*
[860] Sir William Gage, *The Baha Mousa Public Inquiry Report* (London: TSO, 2011), 1; Sir Thayne Forbes, *The Report of the Al Sweady Inquiry* (London: TSO, 2014), 5; *www.gov.uk/government/groups/iraq-historic-allegations-team-ihat*, accessed 5/7/2015.
[861] Defence Medical Services (DMS), "Director General Medical Operational Capability Report", 20th February 2006, TII, 5-19.
[862] MoD, "Lessons Management", F-4.

integrated into DLIMS.[863] Across the rest of Whitehall there was an inconsistent approach. The MoD IT system was incompatible with the FCO's, making lesson distribution more difficult, compounded by cultural differences in the classification of information; whilst the FCO system did not accept documents above "confidential" many MoD documents were assigned the higher classification of "secret".[864] There was also mutual lesson distribution with coalition allies and NATO.[865] The Lessons Team at the MoD's Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) had the IT capacity installed to distribute classified identified lessons with ABCA nations (Australia, Britain, Canada, America) resulting in greater connectivity with those countries than across Whitehall.[866]

7.2.4 An analysis of learning from history

Post-1991, new lessons teams had been created to focus upon the learning process. New methods of identifying lessons – including developing relationships with academics – had developed and the DwLM formalised the process further by renewing the emphasis upon the implementation of lessons, albeit slowly. Externally, the NAO and DC complemented the process by providing objective, external lesson identification and monitoring lesson implementation throughout the campaign.

Additionally, the MoD had developed lesson distribution and retention. Distribution occurred across individuals and services (through the DLL), the public and DC (through published reports) as well as Whitehall and coalition nations (through reports and conferences). The new DLL also ensured that lessons were retained,

[863] MoD, "Lessons Management", F-4.
[864] Private information.
[865] Brown, "Compendium", chapter 9.
[866] Private information.

beyond the updating of unread doctrine, to inform the planning of operations in the future. Consequently, for the first time, the MoD demonstrated a learning process which encompassed all four stages of the learning process, with the NAO determining the MoD lessons process to be "comprehensive".[867]

However, there remained a number of challenges. Many of the BOIs were marred by accusations of a cover-up,[868] an internally-commissioned lesson report was suppressed to avoid distribution[869] and, without embedded Lessons Teams in theatre, post-event investigations relied upon an audit trail.[870]

Telic also revealed that few identified lessons from Vantage or Granby had been implemented or retained long-term. Throughout the planning, emphasis remained upon lessons identified from the most recent operations and exercises, demonstrating reliance upon the individual over the generational sphere. Other generational identified lessons, including the importance of avoiding appearing imperial, had been unlearned. Whilst some lesson implementation was demonstrated in the institutional sphere, in the changes to equipment, this was haphazard and many items continued to be unsuitable. Furthermore, many lessons which had previously been identified in the institutional sphere were either forgotten, re-identified or quickly unlearned, such as the importance of clear military objectives, the necessity of working with the US and heat discipline.

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[867] NAO, *Telic*, 4.
[868] Jack Fairweather, *A War of Choice* (London: Vintage, 2011), 187-188.
[869] Brown, "Compendium".
[870] Brown, "Compendium", TEL0.77; Johnson to Howard, 6th July 2004, TII.

Furthermore, the MoD was often slow to identify and implement lessons. There were exceptions, including the command structure and CIS, but these were outweighed by failing to examine strategic lessons until late; too late to inform Telic. This was, in part, due to the overwhelming number of identified lessons that emerged from the operation and through a greatly expanded, more democratic, lesson process.

The democratic process caused further difficulties. The academics Robert T. Foley, Stuart Griffin and Helen McCartney advised that soldiers often felt uncomfortable submitting identified lessons which reflected badly on themselves, their unit or their commanders, especially in a culture of hierarchical obedience and intolerance for dissent.[871] When lessons were submitted an increasingly subjective and haphazard lesson process developed. A DMS report stated:

> "Reports are made, but there is no agreed taxonomy which inhibits objective assessment of the issues raised, no method for the systematic collation, analysis, publication or addressing of the issues raised. Issues therefore are addressed on a case-by-case basis, there is no organisational memory and issues are addressed de novo at some future time."[872]

An investigation into abuse and unlawful killings in Iraq similarly concluded that the lessons process was flawed by its subjectivism.[873]

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[871] Robert T. Foley, Stuart Griffin and Helen McCartney, "Transformation in Contact: Learning the Lessons of Modern War", *International Affairs*, (2011) 87/2, 267.
[872] DMS, "Capability Report", 5-18.
[873] Aitkin, "Aitkin Report", 22.

7.3 The IC

The IC had been instrumental in the lead-up to war by providing an assessment of the threat of WMD which was used as rationale for Britain to pre-emptively attack Iraq. The assessment of the threat was not only presented to the government but, in 2002, the JIC took the unprecedented decision to jointly publish with the government an intelligence assessment of Iraq's WMD programme.[874] The subsequent inquiry into the intelligence on WMD, conducted by Lord Butler, concluded it was unprecedented in three ways; firstly, the JIC had never produced a public document before; secondly, no government case for international action had previously drawn on a JIC publication; thirdly, the authority of the IC had never before been used in such a public way.[875] In so doing, the usually secretive work of the IC was exposed for the first time and when questions over the wording of the assessment, known as the "September dossier", began to be scrutinised, it quickly placed the IC under new public criticism and pressure to reflect upon lessons to be learned.

7.3.1 Learning from history in planning the intervention

The IC had monitored Iraq since the end of Granby and particularly its WMD programme. After the Gulf War the Cabinet had agreed to commit resources to counter-proliferation with a special CIG focused upon the topic. The result was regular JIC reporting on Iraq's WMD programme; the Butler report quoted 22 separate JIC assessments produced between 17th April 1991 and 9th September 2002.[876] In addition, the DIS worked closely with the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the IAEA in Iraq throughout the 1990s

[874] PM's Office, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government* (London: TSO, 2002).
[875] Lord Robin Butler, *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* (London: TSO, 2004), 76.
[876] Butler, *Review*, 42-74.

to provide briefings for their personnel, process their information and give advice.[877]

However, the lessons that the IC identified from the Gulf War had a negative impact upon their assessment of Iraq's WMD programme during this time. Post-Granby, it was revealed that the IC had greatly underestimated Saddam's WMD activities and the lesson identified was to not be deceived in the same way again. Its implementation resulted in over-compensation and the Butler report stated: "We detected a tendency for assessments to be coloured by over-reaction to previous errors. As a result, there was a risk of over-cautious or worst case estimates, shorn of their caveats, becoming the 'prevailing wisdom'."[878]

When 9/11 happened the JIC was quick to assess that Iraq was not involved. This assessment remained even after the fall of the regime and, echoing many of the sentiments expressed during Granby, provided insightful and accurate prediction of the risks and costs involved for an operation in Iraq.[879] Even one month before Telic began, the JIC warned of the many difficulties of running a post-Saddam Iraq and identified that UN authorisation would be "crucial".[880] Two months later the JIC again highlighted risks and prophetically judged that "Iraqi jubilation at Saddam's fall will dissipate quickly" and "The Iraqi population will blame the coalition if progress is slow". [881]

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[877] Butler, *Review*, 90.
[878] Butler, *Review*, 103.
[879] McKane to Manning, "Iraq Stocktake", 18th September 2001, TII; CIG, "A Review of Intelligence on Possible Links Between Al Qaida and Saddam's Regime", 13th July 2004, TII; Dearlove to Manning, "Iraq", 3rd December 2001, TII.
[880] JIC, "Southern Iraq: What's in Store?"', 19th February 2003, TII.
[881] JIC, "Iraq: The Initial Landscape Post-Saddam", 16th April 2003, TII.

As soon as the government's position was clear, two intelligence groups were established within the central intelligence machine, implementing lessons identified from Afghanistan. The "inner group", chaired by the PM's Foreign Policy Advisor included the usual intelligence organisations but the "wider group", chaired by the Overseas Development Secretariat, included the intelligence agencies and representatives of DfID, the Metropolitan Police and the Treasury.[882]

Working with the US had also become an entrenched lesson in the IC and its implementation formed part of a broader intelligence relationship. The SIS Chief, "C", went to Washington in July 2002 for talks and to share with the CIA a report that Iraq had tried to purchase uranium oxide from Niger. A leaked National Security Agency (NSA) memo to GCHQ also revealed the ongoing relationship between the two Sigint agencies, whilst the CIA even offered comment on drafts of the September dossier.[883] The IC also remained reliant – as they had been in Granby – on the US for intelligence sources and warnings.[884] In the run-up to Telic, the UK utilised US technical intelligence and during the campaign the Americans provided pilotless drones to collect Imint and Sigint – a resource which the British lacked.[885]

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[882] Manning to Blair, "Iraq", 12th September 2002, TII.
[883] Rycroft to Manning, "Iraq: Prime Minister's meeting, 23rd July", *nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB328/II-Doc14.pdf,* accessed 10/06/2012; Woodward, *Plan*, 202; Aldrich, *GCHQ*, 518; ISC, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments* (London: TSO, 2003), 24.
[884] ISC, *Iraqi Weapons*, annex B, 51.
[885] ISC, *Iraqi Weapons*, annex B, 51; Aldrich, *GCHQ*, 526.

Such reliance upon US intelligence collection made some MPs nervous. The FCO Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Chris Mullin, drew upon identified lessons from history of the doctoring of intelligence by the US to twice warn the PM against overly trusting the Americans. He advised Tony Blair and Robin Cook to remember the "yellow rain" incident of the 1970s and, on another occasion, the Gulf of Tonkin incident.[886]

Inside Iraq, the availability of Humint had not progressed since 1991. The PM, in the foreword to the September dossier, stated "Gathering intelligence inside Iraq is not easy. Saddam's is one of the most secretive and dictatorial regimes in the world."[887] However, as identified in Granby, part of the reason for the lack of Humint was that the UK and US had become over reliant on the intelligence gathered from UN weapons inspectors and had not replaced the resource once they left Iraq in 1998. Instead, defectors and exiles – who had their own agenda – were interrogated for Humint.[888] This included one defector, codenamed "Curveball", to whom the British did not have direct access but whose testimony convinced the IC that Iraq was using mobile laboratories to produce biological agents. In the end, the British only had five main Humint sources and, to make matters worse, each was ineffectively validated. The SIS later had to withdraw reports because sources were discredited.[889]

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[886] Americans used intelligence to convince allies that Communists were spraying a chemical weapon, yellow rain, on northern Laos to justify US chemical weapon expansion. In the Gulf of Tonkin US intelligence reported an attack on a US warship by Vietnamese to justify bombing North Vietnam. Mullin, *Foothills*, 269; 339.
[887] PM's Office, *Iraq's Weapons*, 3.
[888] FAC, *Decision*, 9.
[889] Butler, *Review*, 99-102; 152.

As a result, little further understanding of Saddam Hussein, or his intentions, had developed since 1991. Instead, it was assumed that as Saddam's policy had been to seek WMD before Granby, that this policy would remain the same. As before, these assumptions were attempted to be validated through the monitoring of Iraq's overseas procurement activity.[890]

7.3.2 Learning from history during the intervention

Once the operation began, no further Humint became available. The DIS soon identified that there was no specific Field Humint capability or doctrine in place to inform pre-deployment training, nor was there an effective feedback loop to ensure information from prisoner interviews was used to inform operations.[891] Furthermore, the lessons identified from Granby regarding language requirements had not been implemented and there remained an insufficient number of linguists within the intelligence function. The first DOC report on lessons identified from Telic concluded; "The defence requirement for linguists needs to be articulated and appropriate priority given to ensuring that this requirement is met for future operations" and "Humint is an invaluable resource and [redacted] that should be accorded appropriate priority and resourcing."[892] To implement this lesson, in 2005, the DIS developed its language capability and the Defence School of Languages was enhanced to improve Iraqi linguistic capabilities. The DIS also began working with GCHQ to share an understanding of the different Iraqi dialects.[893]

[890] Butler, *Review*, 151.
[891] Brown, "Compendium", TEL2.A.04; TEL2.A.05; TEL2.A.06.
[892] Brown, "Compendium", TEL.0.210; TEL.0.211.
[893] ISC, *Annual Report 2005-2006* (London: TSO, 2006), 9.

Conversely, Sigint collection had improved slightly since Granby, particularly as the Iraqi leadership used an old system of communication which had been manufactured by a British company, but the lessons identified around the distillation of intelligence were not successfully implemented.[894] The scale of operations, technology and global communications meant that the amount of raw intelligence which was collected was overwhelming. The MoD quickly re-identified this lesson: "In an operation of this scale and complexity a vast amount of information has to be processed and interpreted...a need to service the requirements of rapid, decisive and multi-layered campaigns, has the potential to test severely even the most sophisticated intelligence organisations."[895]

For intelligence which was assessed, there continued to be a challenge in dissemination. There was inadequate connectivity between coalition partners due to a lack of reliable communications and ongoing classification incompatibilities.[896] For example, all of the information on the US digital intelligence network – Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) – was classified "NOFORN" (no foreigners).[897] Therefore, when Sigint collected by the British was given to the US for analysis the reports produced were also classified "NOFORN", forbidding the IC to access its own intelligence. Having identified this lesson, Tony Blair complained to George Bush who signed a directive to remove the "NOFORN" restriction applying to Britain or Australia in certain circumstances, including joint operations. However, as SIPRNET contained years of intelligence and information, the Pentagon had to create a separate

[894] For more on this see Aldrich, *GCHQ*, 524.
[895] MoD, "Reflections", 15.
[896] MoD, "Reflections", 15.
[897] At times "NOFORN" classifications left British pilots flying American planes unable to access pilot and maintenance manuals.

SIPRNET for British and Australian access, thus the lesson took a considerable time to implement.[898]

There was also a failure to effectively distribute intelligence across the IC. The DIS, PJHQ and theatre intelligence structures required greater fusion.[899] The Butler report identified the lesson of "unduly strict 'compartmentalisation' of intelligence" of agencies and noted that the September dossier had not been shared with WMD experts in the DIS.[900] The report also identified that the DIS needed further integration into the wider IC.[901] Furthermore, the UK had not developed a suitable national BDA process, despite identifying its requirement 12 years previously, nor was there an adequate process used within the coalition.[902]

7.3.3 Learning from the intervention

The public exposure of the IC led to new, public, methods of scrutiny and lesson identification. Firstly, the FAC were quick to examine the lead-up to war after the invasion, investigating whether the government had presented "accurate and complete information to Parliament" and publishing a report in July 2003.[903] This included the role of the September dossier and, as a result, a number of lessons were also identified for the IC.

However, the IC did not help facilitate the external lesson identification process. The FAC complained of a lack of access to intelligence material, as well as individuals for interview. The

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[898] Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 318-319.
[899] Brown, "Compendium", TEL2.A.07.
[900] Butler, *Review*, 153.
[901] Butler, *Review*, 158.
[902] Brown, "Compendium", TEL.0.227; TEL.0.217.
[903] FAC, *Decision*, 7.

committee wrote to the Cabinet Office Intelligence Coordinator, the Chairman of the JIC, the Chief of Defence Intelligence, the Head of SIS and the Director of GCHQ without receiving a single reply.[904] The committee declared "We regard the Government's refusal to grant us access to evidence essential to our inquiries as a failure of accountability to Parliament".[905] Tony Blair justified the lack of cooperation by affirming that full cooperation would be given to another inquiry, run by the ISC.[906] This did not appease the FAC who noted that the ISC was appointed by, and reported directly to, the PM.[907] In addition, the JIC still withheld eight relevant JIC papers from the ISC inquiry.[908]

The ISC had similar objectives to the FAC; to "examine whether the available intelligence, which informed the decision to invade Iraq, was adequate and properly assessed and whether it was accurately reflected in Government publications."[909] The report contained the identification of some lessons for the IC, including recommending a process for individuals to record formal concerns on draft JIC documents.[910]

The IC failed to respond to the committee's questions and recommendations until five months later.[911] When the response arrived, the ISC was unhappy with the outcome: "The Committee is not satisfied with the Government's Response. It emphasised only

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[904] FAC, *Decision*, 8.
[905] FAC, *Decision*, 49.
[906] Tony Blair, Hansard (Commons), DMVI, c147, 4th June 2003.
[907] FAC, *Decision*, 8.
[908] ISC, *Annual Report 2003-2004* (London: TSO, 2004), 25.
[909] ISC, *Iraqi Weapons*, 5.
[910] ISC, *Iraqi Weapons*, 44.
[911] PM's Office, *Government Response to the Intelligence and Security Committee Report on Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments* (London: TSO, 2004).

four key conclusions whilst either rejecting or failing to address fully many of our other conclusions and recommendations." [912]

While the ISC was conducting its inquiry, a series of events led to the death of Dr David Kelly on 17th July 2003, a MoD biological weapons expert who had been revealed as the source for a claim that the September dossier had been "sexed up".[913] An inquiry, under Lord Hutton was set-up to examine the circumstances, including issues surrounding the September dossier, but provided more of a narrative of events than a focus upon identifying lessons.[914]

In February 2004, a fourth inquiry, headed by Lord Butler, was established.[915] The inquiry was given a broad remit to review intelligence coverage of WMD as well as the accuracy of intelligence on Iraqi WMD and its use by the government. Unlike the FAC and ISC, the Butler inquiry was provided access to all JIC assessments and members of the IC for interview. The result was a plethora of identified lessons.[916] When the report was presented to Parliament, the PM announced four lessons were to be implemented immediately, including that an SIS officer was to be appointed to

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[912] ISC, *Annual Report 2003-2004*, 25.
[913] Andrew Gilligan, "Full transcript of Gilligan's 'sexed up' broadcast", 29th May 2003, *www.theguardian.com/media/2003/jul/09/Iraqandthemedia.bbc*, accessed 24/05/2014.
[914] Lord Brian Hutton, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly C.M.G.* (London: TSO, 2004), 1.
[915] This was in response to pressure to conduct a similar inquiry to the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, "Report on the US Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq" (2004), *web.mit.edu/simsong/www/iraqreport2-textunder.pdf*, accessed 26/07/2012.
[916] Butler, *Review*, 156-160.

oversee the implementation of all Butler lessons.[917] On 15th November 2004, Jack Straw announced that a wider lesson implementation programme had commenced and that Sir David Omand, the Security and Intelligence Coordinator, would establish a special implementation oversight committee; the Butler Implementation Group (BIG).[918]

The BIG tasked study teams to provide implementation plans and present the results the following year.[919] These were reported to ministers and the government subsequently published its own report which revealed a number of lessons had been implemented.[920] These included new procedures and resources to oversee SIS validation of Humint, greater cross-government intelligence coordination through the creation of a new IT system, the expansion of the Assessment Staff and a new Professional Head of Intelligence Analysis (PHIA).[921] Furthermore, according to Cabinet Secretary Gus O'Donnell and National Security Advisor Peter Ricketts, Butler recommendations were given "significant weight" in the intelligence sections of the 2010 *Strategic Defence and Security Review*.[922]

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[917] Tony Blair, Hansard (Commons), DMXXIV, c195, 20th July 2004.
[918] Jack Straw, Hansard (Commons), DMXXVI, c54WS, 15th November 2004.
[919] ISC, *Annual Report 2004-2005* (London: TSO, 2005), 25.
[920] Cabinet Office, *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction: Implementation of Its Conclusions* (London: TSO, 2005).
[921] Cabinet Office, *Implementation*, 4; 7; 9.
[922] Gus O'Donnell and Peter Ricketts, written evidence, 28th January 2011, TII, 6; Cabinet Office, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review* (London: TSO, 2010). For analysis of the review based on lessons from past strategic reviews see Wyn Rees, "A Strategic Defence Review: Lessons from the Past", *The Political Quarterly*, (2010) 81/3, 424-427.

Nonetheless, whilst the government report demonstrated that a number of lessons from the Butler inquiry had been implemented, other identified lessons were ignored. The 216 page Butler report only resulted in an 11 page implementation report, which did not address Butler's recommendations one-by-one as was the usual government response format.[923] Furthermore, the ISC was requested to monitor the ongoing progress of lesson implementation and included a "Butler implementation" section in its own annual report until 2007. It identified a number of implementation failures, including concerns over the slow arrival of the new IT system and the merging of the positions of the JIC Chairman and the Security and Intelligence Coordinator.[924]

Other lessons implemented from the Butler review quickly became unlearned. The role of the PHIA was held until August 2007, when the holder retired, and the post remained vacant until March 2009 when the government subsumed it again into the JIC Chairmanship.[925] In 2008, the ISC reported that one of the most successful areas of implementation was the set-up of a team to challenge intelligence assessments. This was described as "working well" and as providing a good foundation for embedding the concept of challenge within the wider assessment staff.[926] However, the Challenge Team initially reported to the PHIA, which then merged with the JIC Chair, thus asking the team to challenge the assessments of their superior who had overseen their initial production.

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[923] None of the identified lessons on policy, links between al-Qaeda and the Iraqi regime, the 45 minute claim or mobile biological weapons labs were acknowledged.
[924] ISC, *Annual Report 2003-2004*, 34; 7.
[925] ISC, *Annual Report 2007-2008* (London: TSO, 2008), 36.
[926] ISC, *Annual Report 2007-2008*, 39-40.

The Butler report also recommended that "lessons-learned processes" be continued by the JIC.[927] Although this did not occur regularly, two examples have emerged; on 13th July 2004, a CIG Assessment reflected upon the accuracy of past intelligence by reviewing the possible links between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein; and the Challenge Team were tasked with reviewing past papers to see if judgments were correct and to identify lessons for the future.[928]

7.3.4 An analysis of learning from history

The IC demonstrated little learning from past interventions in any of the spheres of learning during Telic with two exceptions. Firstly, lessons identified from Granby had led to overestimation in the institutional sphere which had also transcended into the generational sphere. Secondly, in the institutional sphere, lessons identified from Afghanistan were implemented in the central intelligence machinery. Otherwise, many identified lessons were forgotten, including the importance of Humint, sufficient language capabilities and methods to deal with the challenges of distillation, dissemination and classification of intelligence.

However, the new publicity of intelligence, since the acknowledgement of the existence of the agencies and due to the September dossier, placed the IC under such scrutiny that for the first time it was forced to reflect upon lesson identification and implementation for the future. The commitment to lesson-learning from the FAC and ISC was negligible but the set-up of the BIG demonstrated that Butler was taken seriously and many lessons were initially implemented, albeit that several were promptly

[927] Butler, *Review*, 146.
[928] CIG, "A Review", TII; O'Donnell and Ricketts, 28th January 2011, annex B, TII, 17.

unlearned. Therefore, the shift in culture to embracing the lessons identified by Butler was temporary and limited with little evidence of many lessons implemented long-term. Furthermore, outside of the DIS, the process of lesson identification has not continued ongoing.

7.4 Conclusion

Throughout Telic, the lessons identified from Vantage were ignored. Granby was also largely overlooked, with the exception of learning from the underestimation of WMD by the IC. Instead, all three institutions primarily examined lessons identified from the most recent operation in Afghanistan. The MoD also considered exercises from the previous few years as well as taking reassurance in past COIN campaigns. Only the FCO and Robin Cook went further back in time to revisit the lessons identified in the previous tutelage of Iraq, appeasement, Suez and post-imperialism.

Learning in the individual sphere was limited in the IC, relied upon in the MoD and the overlapping generational sphere was attempted to be harnessed in the FCO through the use of former Ambassadors. As before, the driving force of the PM's own identified lessons proved crucial to British decisions but the problem was that these lessons related to beliefs and morality rather than strategy. After leaving office, Blair stressed that he had identified many lessons from Iraq; that evolutionary change was preferable to intervention, that intervention should not be through an "Iraq model" but through "muscular, soft diplomacy combined with the judicious use of force" and that he had not understood the complexities of the country despite FCO and IC warnings.[929] However, the importance of No10 decision-making revealed that learning in the FCO, MoD and IC

[929] Lionel Barber, "Tony Blair: An Exclusive Interview", 29th June 2012, *www.ft.com/cms/s/2/b2ec4fd6-c0af-11e1-9372-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1zBS1cMnD*, accessed 30/06/2012.

could be marginalised if the PM was not open to considering lessons identified from history within the decision-making process.

In the institutional sphere, precedent remained important in the FCO, and "prevailing wisdom" emerged in the IC – both of which also transcended into the generational sphere. For the MoD, generational learning was noticeably absent with many lessons forgotten or having to be re-identified.

The length of the war meant a prolonged interest in ensuring lessons were implemented and it allowed each overseas security body the opportunity to refine and improve its learning process. Lesson identification continued to be the most prominent in the MoD, with a new democratic input and greater collaboration with the external bodies of the NAO, DC and academics. The IC also implemented lessons identified externally but revealed little evidence of any internal identification. In contrast, the FCO did not implement the lessons identified by the FAC and offered minimal self-reflection or lesson implementation. The MoD and the IC both revealed a commitment to lesson implementation in new ways; the IC through BIG and the MoD through its incorporation into DwLM. There was also increased distribution amongst both organisations, through the publication of reports and the circulation of identified lessons to other bodies. However, only the MoD demonstrated a fourth stage of the process (retention) through the DLL.

Overall, Iraq highlighted a vast number of lessons for the future. Processing these lessons soon became a challenge for the MoD, was left to an external body by the IC and was largely ignored by the FCO. Consequently, the ongoing Iraq Inquiry – with an even wider remit – has a difficult job, but one which may help to compensate for the lack of lesson-learning in certain areas. However, it is yet to

be seen whether its findings will still be valid so many years after withdrawal, and whether they will be implemented, distributed and retained across all three spheres of learning to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

Chapter 8: Conclusion – Does learning from history occur in British overseas security?

> "Rulers, Statesmen, Nations are wont [sic] to be emphatically commended to the teaching which experience offers in history. But what experience and history teach us is this – that peoples and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it."
> (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, 1837)[930]

Since 2003, the legacy of Iraq and its "lessons" have been frequently referenced in political rhetoric on overseas security policy, especially as the experience revealed that interventions could produce ongoing threats rather than pacifying or resolving crises. When Britain withdrew, in 2009, it left a weak government in place. The 2010 Iraqi elections saw the country without an agreed administration for 249 days and, in 2011, violent civilian deaths totalled 4,087 as US troops completed their withdrawal.[931] In 2012, attacks on Shia Muslim areas of the country sparked fears of new sectarian violence and by the end of the year Sunni Muslims began mass rallies to protest against marginalisation that had begun with the coalition policy of de-Ba'athification. By July 2013, the violence had returned to the levels of 2008 as the sectarian insurgency intensified and, by January 2014, opposition fighters had infiltrated the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi.

Throughout this time a new insurgent group was emerging. In 2006, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) created an umbrella organisation, Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), which was soon weakened by coalition

[930] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover, 1956 [1899]), 6.
[931] Straw, *Last Man*, 412.

COIN operations. However, post-withdrawal, in 2010, ISI gained a new leader (known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi) who began to rebuild the group's capabilities. In April 2013, ISI announced a formal merger with forces in Syria to create the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), before shifting its attention back to Iraq. By June 2014, ISIL had seized Iraq's second city, Mosul, and was advancing towards Baghdad, taking other key cities and towns along the way. It declared the creation of a caliphate and changed its name to Islamic State (IS). The fight against this new threat has been described by the current FS, Philip Hammond, as one of three top priorities for British overseas security.[932]

Consequently, far from increasing British national security, Telic encouraged the rise of extremism within Iraq. In addition, by 2005, the JIC had assessed that the conflict had exacerbated the threat to Britain of international terrorism and increased cooperation between terrorist networks.[933] The displacement of an estimated four million people as a consequence of the war – the largest human displacement in the Middle East since 1948 – only increased the threat further.[934] In addition, North Korea and Iran, the two other "axis of evil" nations, took the opportunity to enhance their own WMD capabilities while the West was distracted in Iraq and Afghanistan.[935]

The sense of operation failure had a profound impact on Britain and consequently policy-makers have been keen to stress that there will be "no more Iraq's" and that the lessons from Iraq have been

[932] FAC, "Foreign Policy Developments", witness inquiry, 21st July 2015, *parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/d0ba5a83-2746-403d-8fbe-b6a3db272e74*, accessed 22/07/2015.
[933] JIC, "International Terrorism: Impact of Iraq", 13th April 2005, TII.
[934] Lord Michael J. Williams, witness statement, 9th January 2011, TII.
[935] Williams, witness statement, 9th January 2011, TII.

learned. During the Arab Spring, which began at the end of 2010, the government claimed that the lessons identified from Iraq informed its policy decision to avoid direct intervention. Instead, support was offered through an Arab Partnership Initiative and assistance to the Arab League.[936] Focus was shifted away from military approaches towards diplomatic and economic endeavours and away from Western-led initiatives to working with international organisations, Middle Eastern states and organisations in the region.[937] FCO Minister Alistair Burt advised "We learnt in Iraq the central importance of people. Imposing new political orders on other people will breed instability...our response to the Arab Spring and our change in approach in Afghanistan have surely shown that we successfully learnt the lessons from the recent past."[938]

The Arab Spring sparked turmoil across the Middle East region. In 2011, a growing crisis in Libya again raised the possibility of a British intervention, but the PM, David Cameron, was keen to stress that if Britain was to commit to military involvement the circumstances would have to be different. Instead, Libya would need to be led by a local opposition movement who would wage war against the dictator, Colonel Gaddafi, with British support. Any opposition and British operation would secure regional legitimacy through the backing of the Arab League and the inclusion of Arab nations in a military coalition. Furthermore, legal legitimacy and international support would be gained through the UN and the British operation would be conducted from the air; no boots would be put on the ground. After the campaign, codenamed Operation Ellamy, Cameron reflected on learning from the lessons identified from Iraq: "We were doing this in a different way; there was no

[936] Burt, "Foreign and Security Policy".
[937] Burt, "Foreign and Security Policy".
[938] Burt, "Foreign and Security Policy".

occupying army, no invading force...the Libyans did it themselves. This wasn't done to them, they did it and so they are rapidly mending it."[939]

Protests also began in Syria in 2011 against President Bashar al-Assad's regime. These soon grew into a civil war, deteriorating throughout 2012 and 2013 and causing a refugee crisis, with increasing evidence that Assad was using chemical weapons against his opposition. On 21st August 2013, a chemical attack killed hundreds of civilians causing widespread condemnation and David Cameron again began to consider British intervention. Parliament was recalled for a vote – a precedent set by the Iraq War – and, echoing the events prior to Telic, a JIC assessment on Assad's use of chemical weapons was published. The PM recognised "the scepticism and concerns that many people in the country will have after Iraq" on intervention and the use of intelligence as justification. Efforts were therefore made to reassure the nation: "I am deeply mindful of the lessons of previous conflicts and, in particular, of the deep concerns of the country that were caused by what went wrong with the Iraq conflict in 2003."[940] Great efforts were also made to demonstrate that lessons had been learned in how to present intelligence to a wide audience and to avoid accusations of political spin.[941]

Consequently, the lessons identified from the history of British overseas security continue to be contemporary and significant issues used to justify and debate policy today. Furthermore, with

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[939] MoD, "Cameron – Britain should be proud of role in Libya", 2nd September 2011, *www.gov.uk/government/news/cameron-britain-should-be-proud-of-role-in-libya*, accessed 19/07/2015.
[940] David Cameron, Hansard (Commons), c1440, 29th August 2013; David Cameron, Hansard (Commons), c1427, 29th August 2013.
[941] For more on this see Aldrich et al, *Spying*, 418-419.

TII soon to publish its findings – thus bringing lesson-learning back to the forefront of political debate – understanding and improving the learning process is significant. As part of an endeavour to assist in this process, this research has sought to consider what learning from history means, ascertain whether the FCO, MoD and IC have demonstrated learning from history over time and analysed how their approaches compare and contrast. This has been established in order to provide some recommendations for the future – to learn from learning – to ensure that identified lessons can successfully be implemented now and remain learned in the future.

8.1 The meaning of "learning from history"

This research has established that learning from history is "the acquisition of knowledge of the past in order to inform policy decision-making in the future" (see 3.2.1) and that learning is a process with several stages to get from "the acquisition of knowledge" to "informing policy decision-making". The first stage of the process must be lesson identification whereby knowledge is acquired and interpreted as relevant. The source for the acquisition of knowledge can be external – the FAC, DC, inquiries, coalition partners and allies, academics, think-tanks, the media – or internal – research and development, self-reflection, internal inquiries. The selection of sources begins the subjectivity of learning which is then furthered through the interpretation of the knowledge which has been acquired. Here the learner views knowledge through their own biases and experiences to attach different values and understandings, as emerged in the internal FCO debate over the lessons identified from Vantage. Consequently, different learners can identify different lessons from the same knowledge source or historical event. Similarly, different learners can identify lessons from any number of past events which they consider to be more or less relevant for their current circumstances. As E. H. Carr stated,

lessons identified from history "consciously or unconsciously reflects our own positions in time, and forms part of our answer to the broader question of what we take of the society in which we live."[942] Throughout the research this was most broadly observed through the use of analogical reasoning which produced highly subjective, and often uncritically assessed, identified lessons. The most common analogy was "appeasement" or "Munich", with other dictators subsequently analogised to Hitler or Mussolini across generations of politicians.[943] Both Eden and Macmillan used this analogy in their analysis of Colonel Nasser of Egypt and the handling of the Suez crisis.[944] The analogy was also used by Margaret Thatcher on two separate occasions; once in relation to General Leopoldo Galtieri of Argentina during Corporate and once in relation to Saddam Hussein.[945] It was further echoed by Tony Blair in relation to Slobodan Milosevic over Kosovo as well as Saddam Hussein.[946] Similarly "Suez" had become as regularly used an analogy within British policy-making circles as "Vietnam" had become within such circles in the US. This reinforces Jervis' research (see 2.2) that the most frequently used analogies are those surrounding the most dramatic events.

To overcome such subjectivity, and to create coherent overseas security policies, identified lessons must be formally agreed. However, they must also be regularly updated to ensure contemporary relevance. For Henry Kissinger, the lessons from

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[942] E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Penguin, 1987), 8.
[943] See, for example, Khong, *Analogies*.
[944] Eden, *Full Circle*, 431; Macmillan annotation on Beeley to Home, 25th February 1963, TNA PREM11/4173.
[945] Thatcher, *Downing Street*, 186; 817.
[946] Tony Blair, "Speech to the Romanian Parliament", 4th May 1999, *webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090609072723/number10.gov.uk/page1312*, accessed 12/11/2014; Woodward, *Plan*, 337.

history should be interpreted by each generation: "History teaches by analogy, shedding light on the likely consequences of comparable situations. But each generation must determine for itself which circumstances are in fact comparable."[947] In this regard, context is key as history provides suggestions but must be examined critically to avoid responding to the events of today with the logic of yesterday.

To ensure that identified lessons are widely understood, they must also be distributed across all relevant learners, internally – through, for example, reports and education – and externally – through conferences and publications, as exemplified by the MoD after Granby. Distribution, therefore, is an additional stage in the learning process. At this stage identified lessons are reproduced, lessons become more likely to be used and lesson resilience is increased as the learner becomes the teacher. The process then begins again with a new learner, thus reducing the risk of the loss of identified lessons through the loss of personnel.

To increase resilience further, lessons must be retained; a further stage of the learning process. In some cases these lessons must be retained ready to "inform policy-making in the future" because they are not yet relevant. In other cases lessons have been implemented but need to be retained to ensure that they are not unlearned over time, as was the case of acclimatisation during Telic. Retention can be through formal methods – such as the DLL or changes to institutional structure as seen by the IC after Suez – or more informal methods – including individual memory, language and tradition.

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[947] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 27.

However, a lesson cannot be claimed to be "learned" until it has been implemented – another stage of the learning process. It is at this stage that the identified lesson is used to inform policy decision-making. There is, therefore, a crucial difference between an identified lesson and a learned lesson; a distinction that is recognised in the MoD process but has not always been taken into account by the FCO or IC. The misnomer of "lessons learned" in FCO annual reports reveals a lack of understanding of the learning process and may also lead to an oversight by assuming that identified lessons have been implemented. To succeed in "learning from history" in the long-term the FCO, MoD and IC need to ensure that methods are in place to facilitate all four stages of the learning process.

8.2 FCO, MoD and IC learning from the history of British interventions in the Middle East since 1956

This research has demonstrated that learning from history has occurred in all three overseas security bodies since 1956; in different ways, through different methods and to different extents. Across all three bodies, learning from history has developed over time as has the emphasis placed upon the importance of lesson-learning. A number of lessons have also been demonstrated as learned since 1956; managing the media and international, domestic and parliamentary opinion, working with the UN, protecting the economy and the imperative of American support. Thus in some instances it can be considered that politician claims of lesson-learning are justified.

8.2.1 Short and long-term learning

Just as some identified lessons were implemented and remained learned, others were regularly forgotten, unlearned, re-identified or unsuccessfully implemented. In comparison to the learned lessons –

which were strategic in nature – these were often operational; in the FCO, forgetting to secure overflying rights was a common theme; in the MoD, issues of logistics and tracking continued across operations; in the IC, classification issues reoccurred. In fact, outside of the broad strategic identified lessons, which became entrenched as best practice, there was little long-term implementation and past cases of intervention in the Middle East quickly become forgotten. Across all case studies, the relevance of regional experience had little impact in the planning or implementing of an operation. Instead, the majority of identified lessons referenced for implementation came from short-term learning from the last major conflict; Suez for Jordan, the Falklands for the Gulf, Afghanistan for Iraq. Proximity of time proved more important than proximity of geography or similarity of operation or enemy.

The FCO provided the one significant exception for longer-term lesson identification and implementation where the weight of negative experiences in British history haunted the approach to all subsequent military interventions. Karl Marx wrote "Men make their own history, but not just as they please. They do not choose the circumstances for themselves, but have to work upon circumstances as they find them, have to fashion the material handed down by the past."[948] For the FCO, those circumstances were a history which focused upon the diplomatic disasters of imperialism, appeasement and Suez, which remained at the forefront of many decisions. In the IC, longer-term lesson identification only occurred when the same threat persisted – Arab nationalism or Saddam Hussein – but the focus of the identified lessons was the reassessment of intelligence

[948] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1926 [1852]), 23.

based upon new sources rather than the process of conducting intelligence collection and assessment itself.

8.2.2 Learning at different stages of an operation

In the FCO, the majority of learning from history occurred during planning. There was also some lesson identification and implementation during the operation but mainly at the early stages. In contrast, whilst the MoD often had the most time to draw upon identified lessons in planning, especially contingency planning, the majority of reflection upon history occurred after the operation and on that specific operation alone. The MoD was also not quick to learn above the tactical level during the operation itself, with operational and strategic lessons taking time to identify and implement. In the IC, learning was the most limited and was primarily delivered in the form of assessments and reassessments before and during the operation. As a result, it is not surprising that the FCO had a longer-term view, but only of key strategic identified lessons, whilst the MoD only reflected upon the lessons identified from the past operation and the IC identified and implemented very little. For learning from history to be successful it must occur at the planning stage – reflections from past, relevant operations – during the operation – to quickly identify and successfully implement lessons whilst the operation is ongoing – and after the operation – to ensure that lessons are learned for the future or at least identified and retained for the planning of the next intervention.

8.3 Comparing the approaches of the FCO, MoD and IC to learning from history

In examining the three overseas security bodies, it is clear that they are not consistent in their approach to learning from history. Instead, they are influenced by structure and culture to place

different emphases on the learning process, methods and spheres of learning.

8.3.1 The spheres of learning

In the FCO, the focus of learning has been in the individual sphere. An appreciation and sensitivity towards history, often borne from a concern and understanding of local environments developed through diplomatic postings, has proved beneficial. However, an overreliance upon the individual sphere has also resulted in an inconsistent approach across the institution and created challenges where there have been changes in personnel. As Richard Clarke, a senior civil servant, similarly noted of the Treasury in 1959 "the 'accumulated experience' of the Department is almost literally reduced to what is in the memories of people on the job".[949] Consequently, with retirement, revolving postings and a lack of methods for lesson distribution and retention, identified lessons are being lost.

The lack of longevity of personnel in posts, combined with the lack of lessons identified and implemented in the institutional sphere, is particularly significant when dealing with the Middle East where many policy-makers stay in power for decades – if not their entire lives – thus retaining lessons in overseas security for longer than the FCO through the method of individual memory. Similarly, when British troops returned to Helmand Province in Afghanistan many of the inhabitants thought that they had come to avenge the defeats of their predecessors in the 19th century – defeats of which most British soldiers would not have been aware.[950] Consequently, the importance of ensuring the establishment of an institutional, cross-

[949] Clarke to Brook, 30th July 1959, TNA T199/664.
[950] N.a., "Interview – Patrick Salmon", 9th August 2015, *www.e-ir.info/2015/08/09/interview-patrick-salmon/*, accessed 13/08/2015.

generational memory is even more significant for retaining lessons relating to this region.

The emphasis on the individual sphere of learning also leads FCO policy to be more disposed to being driven by the agendas of strong, senior individuals. In particular, the case studies have revealed that lessons identified by the PM and FS have often trumped those of the diplomats, whilst the PM's Private Secretaries and Cabinet Secretaries have also played a significant role. In worst cases, limited lesson identification, implementation, distribution and retention in the institutional sphere has created the environment in which the FCO has been more susceptible to the influence of No10, most clearly demonstrated in the run-up to the Iraq War.

The FCO was, however, the only body to demonstrate facilitation of learning in the generational sphere. Whilst some of the identified lessons to have survived across generations were the result of the aforementioned "circumstances of history", the use of past Ambassadors in the run-up to Iraq revealed a new emphasis. In this way, individually identified lessons were passed into the generational sphere for the first time. As the historian Jacob Burckhardt said, history should "make us, not shrewder (for next time), but wiser (for ever)."[951] In harnessing the generational sphere in this manner the FCO began to take into account this maxim.

In contrast, the MoD has focused upon learning in the institutional sphere, through formal methods, with a wide understanding of the importance of the learning process. Indeed, reports were more optimistically termed "lessons learned" or "lessons reports" in

[951] Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We*, 14.

contrast to the IC and FCO reference to similar reports – with more negative connotations – as "post-mortems". The MoD also took advantage of regular strategic reviews to place greater emphasis on relevant lesson-learning which provided a bureaucratic imperative to take lesson identification and implementation seriously, even during peacetime. In this sense, lesson identification provided data and rationale for decisions, making them more appealing and persuasive to politicians. Circularly, once identified lessons were entrenched within strategic reviews there was a greater political commitment to their implementation.

However, focusing on learning in the institutional sphere alone also had its limitations. The emphasis is at odds with the wider MoD culture whereby individuals are trained and rewarded for doing the same thing well – rather than questioning its principles – and where loyalty is highly regarded. As Basil Liddell Hart mused "'loyalty', analysed, is too often a polite word for what would be more accurately described as 'a conspiracy for mutual inefficiency'"[952] but the problem is compounded when loyalty is measured in terms other than to British overseas security, such as departmental or regimental loyalty. Consequently, creative and critical thinking – a prerequisite for learning according to Karl Popper – can be stifled. Popper declared "The process of learning, of the growth of subjective knowledge, is always fundamentally the same. It is *imaginative criticism*."[953] In fact, the report by Charles Haddon-Cave into issues surrounding the 2006 loss of an RAF Nimrod in Afghanistan identified 12 cultural challenges within the MoD to

[952] Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We*, 40.
[953] Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 148.

being able to learn lessons.[954] Furthermore, the habitual nature of lesson identification within the MoD risks removing the careful reflection upon lessons and the genuine desire to learn; when learning becomes part of a process fundamentally fixed and inflexible the robotic and formulaic nature of the process can impact the nature of the lessons identified. Additionally, the formality of process can lead to a misguided assumption that once a lesson is identified and inputted into DLIMS it will be passed along the conveyor belt to the next stage of learning and responsibility for overseeing its implementation is absolved.

In the IC, little learning occurred in any sphere. The learning which was evidenced in the case studies was limited to the institutional sphere, although this may also be influenced by the limited access to records. The most significant lesson implementation occurred through the reorganisation of structure post-Suez, Corporate and Butler. Otherwise, lesson identification was primarily driven by reassessments, often at the request of an external actor. This lack of learning in the institutional sphere is also partly due to the culture of the IC; whilst the FCO lives with the weight of history, the IC focuses on horizon scanning for the future and dealing with the crisis of the moment. There is, therefore, very little opportunity for reflection on the past. Furthermore, the nature of the IC as a service provider to "customers" – almost as a consultancy whereby the customer drives the agenda – means that lesson identification is also primarily driven by customer requests.

[954] The report was subtitled "a failure of leadership, culture and priorities" and dedicated to those who lost their lives "in the hope and expectation that lessons will be learned from their sacrifice". Charles Haddon-Cave, *The Nimrod Review* (London: TSO, 2009), 447-452.

Across all three bodies, the democratic input into the lesson identification process varied. The FCO was driven by the PM and FS but input was also made by Ambassadors, the most senior diplomats. The IC was mainly driven by external influences – customers and inquiries – with little opportunity for initiative and input by officers or analysts. The MoD, over time, developed the most democratic lesson identification process, allowing input across services and ranks. A more democratic process serves to reinforce that learning from history is culturally important and a cross-institution capability and responsibility, albeit leading to new challenges of managing the subjectivity and quantity of data.[955]

8.3.2 The learning process

The FCO, MoD and IC also differed in the extent of learning at each stage of the learning process. FCO learning was primarily at the lesson identification stage of the process, from internal sources, using internal methods including the use of despatches. Attempts by the FAC to offer external lesson identification were largely ineffective as the FCO did not seek to acquire knowledge from this external body. The types of lessons identified were also usually strategic rather than operational or tactical and there was no routine learning process as there was within the MoD. Any lesson implementation was ad hoc and lessons were only retained in individual memory and through the informalities of best practice. Despite the existence of in-house historians, no official histories have been written in the FCO of any of the case studies examined for this research and consequently they do not offer a method of

[955] From a Brigade tour in Afghanistan around 1,000 lessons would be identified, which would be distilled to approximately 300. In three months the Land Lessons staff can consider around 40 lessons. Consequently many lessons remain unseen over a long period of time. Private information.

retention for the future. There are also no formal methods of lesson distribution in place.

The MoD demonstrated the most comprehensive and substantial lesson-learning process, which developed and proliferated over time to cover all four stages of learning with specific lessons teams and systems. The MoD had long written reports identifying lessons but the case studies demonstrated that implementation also began in earnest, firstly driven by defence reviews after Suez and by a zealous minister after Kuwait. By Granby, a number of methods had been developed to distribute lessons internally, as well as to the public and suppliers. These were further formalised during Iraq through DLIMS which provided a new method to ensure all identified lessons were implemented and retained.

Additional lessons were identified internally, including through exercises and war games, but there was also an increase in identification of lessons externally, from the media, DC, NAO and Committee of Public Accounts. Unlike the FCO, the MoD tended to be open to lessons identified by these bodies and the DC developed its agenda to monitor lesson implementation. Consequently, the failure for the MoD was not learning lessons *from* operations but learning lessons *across* operations; treating operations as an individual entity whereby identified lessons were not transfered and were only implemented in one specific case. The result was that future capability improved infrequently and previously identified lessons were regularly re-identified.

In the IC, any substantial lesson identification was conducted externally. Although the IC did not implement the lessons identified by the FAC and (to some extent) the ISC, larger reviews – those conducted by Lord Franks and Lord Butler – led to lessons being

implemented. In fact, the IC demonstrated a greater understanding of the implementation stage than the FCO through the BIG and ongoing monitoring by the ISC, albeit that many implemented lessons were quickly unlearned. Similarly to the FCO, lessons were primarily retained through "best practise" norms and standards, with the Butler report acting as a reference guide. However, they were also retained through significant changes in the institutional structure of the central intelligence machine, which proved to be a successful way to ensure lessons were learned long-term. As philosopher George Santayana declared: "Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."[956]

8.4 Improving learning from history for the future

Despite best intentions and efforts, learning from history cannot and will not always occur. It is not easy and this research has revealed that although learning from history does occur in the FCO, MoD and IC, there are many ongoing barriers to learning which need to be overcome, circumnavigated or diminished as far as possible in order to avoid repeating past mistakes and to build upon successes.

[956] George Santayana, *The Life of Reason Volume I* (London: Constable, 1922), 284.

8.4.1 Barriers to learning

A number of barriers to learning have already been detailed,[957] however, four key barriers emerged during the research across all three overseas security bodies; the limit of resource, the issue of time, the awareness of policy-makers in building their own careers and legacies, and that other states also learn.

The learning process requires finance and resources. In particular, across all three overseas security bodies, the implementation stage of learning can be extremely costly. In an age of budget cuts and austerity measures, investment in history and learning is likely to be a low priority. This was exemplified in 2009 when the FS, David Miliband, accounted that keeping open the FCO library cost £246 per book. Consequently, it was closed, dispersing the records of over 500 years of Britain's history.[958] However, as a result of budget cuts, Whitehall is also experiencing pressure to reform and lesson-learning initiatives can offer low cost alternatives to dealing with disasters or expensive policy reviews and inquiries. An ongoing learning process can help to prevent costly mistakes in terms of blood and treasure and investing in the process should form part of the strategic decision-making of spending reviews within each body.

Learning from history is also time consuming and the workload pressure and bottomless in-trays' of busy bureaucrats, politicians and service personnel leaves learning from history perpetually at

[957] The political scientist and psychologist Lloyd Etheredge identified nine barriers to learning in the US government. Lloyd Etheredge, *Can Governments Learn?* (New York: Pergamon, 1985), 95-117.

[958] Peter Oborne, "After years of shameful neglect, William Hague has restored the Foreign Office to its proper dignity", 7th September 2011*, blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/peteroborne/100103645/after-years-of-shameful-neglect-william-hague-has-restored-the-foreign-office-to-its-proper-dignity/*, accessed 02/01/2015.

the end of the "to-do" list. Historians Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich assert "Beset by accelerating change, current senior leaders seem to have neither the time nor the inclination to look to the past for help".[959] This challenge has long been known. The political scientists Ernest May and Richard Neustadt advised in the 1980s of the difficulties in getting policy-makers to read history: "They're too busy. Can't read what they get now. They'll glance at papers in the limousine, thumb them while someone is talking, or just wing it. If you do get their attention, you can't keep it. They will have a plane to catch or go to a press conference."[960] Baron Wright of Richmond reflected upon John Major: "he was faced on his first day as Foreign Secretary with diaries that contained eight calls in one day from foreign ambassadors, foreign ministers, whatever it was. He was appalled at the fact we either gave him too little briefing, because there simply was no time, or that we gave him too much and there was no time to read it."[961]

Even in the learning environment of MoD Staff Colleges learning is against the clock, with voluminous reading lists and many topics to cover in a short space of time, allowing little opportunity for reflection. This restricts learning ongoing but also significantly impacts learning during planning. When crises occur, decisions have to be made quickly. Consequently, for example, despite the large number of lessons now digitally available in the MoD, there is no time to consult the DLL when a brief is required for a minister within

[959] Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich (eds.) *Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.
[960] Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time,* 4.
[961] FCO, "Decision Making in Foreign Policy", (2013), *issuu.com/fcohistorians/docs/learning_from_history_seminar*, accessed 10/03/2015, 18.

a few hours.[962] It is, therefore, important to identify opportunities where time to learn from history can be maximised; during training, lunchtime briefings, diarising and prioritising a regular time slot.

In addition to the difficulty of allowing time to learn from history, sometimes time must pass after an operation to allow the political environment to be more open to learning from the past. Admitting failure or accepting criticism is always difficult and ministers and civil servants can be extremely sensitive about identifying lessons from past performances. After the 1979 Iranian revolution the British Ambassador in Tehran, Sir Anthony Parsons, returned to London and ran a series of lunchtime meetings to ascertain how the FCO had failed to predict the recent events. The diplomatic correspondent John Dickie noted "To have a senior ambassador stand up in front of everyone...and admit he made a mistake requires a large measure of courage".[963] This was an "exception to the normal ostrich posture in the Foreign Office over learning lessons from mistakes".[964]

This challenge has become increasingly difficult as manoeuvrings for career promotion rely on success, rather than admitting failure, and as leaders become more aware of creating their own legacy. Winston Churchill not only read and wrote history but was also instrumental in creating his own historical legacy.[965] Anthony Eden also repeatedly appealed to history for vindication, convinced that in the course of time history would reveal his actions in Suez to have

[962] Private information.
[963] Dickie, *Inside*, 237.
[964] Dickie, *Inside*, 236.
[965] David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (London: Penguin, 2005).

been correct.[966] Over time, the use of spin doctors and increased media training has resulted in the careful management of documents through destruction or withholding from public release.[967] Thus if history is politically influenced, so are the lessons which are drawn. However, this challenge is related to culture and thus can be overcome with time and commitment.

Finally, another barrier which was revealed by the research to learning from history in British overseas security is the learning of other states. At times identified lessons have been unable to be implemented because they have been at odds with lessons learned by countries whose assistance or support is required, particularly with Middle Eastern countries granting overflying rights. However, such learning has also, at times, been beneficial. The US, for example, has learned over time that the British are trustworthy allies and to be considered a reliable, consistent and capable ally remains one of the key objectives of British overseas security.[968] Establishing this objective should go some way to help with this barrier to learning on an ongoing basis.

8.4.2 Recommendations

In order to improve learning from history, practical measures need to be taken by each of the three overseas security bodies. Firstly, this research recommends that an internal analysis of the current

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[966] Record of a conversation between the Secretary of State and Eden, 30th May 1958, TNA FO800/728/12.

[967] For a recent example see the agreement between the Cabinet Office and TII not to publish the full correspondence between PM Tony Blair and President George W. Bush. Rowena Mason, "Chilcot inquiry accused of whitewash over letters between Blair and Bush", 29th May 2014, *www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/may/29/chilcot-inquiry-accused-of-whitewash-over-blair-and-bush-letters?CMP=twt_gu*, accessed 30/05/2014.

[968] FAC, "Foreign Policy Developments", 21st July 2015.

process for learning from history is conducted with an admittance of all failings. To achieve this, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis can be utilised against each stage of the learning process (identification, implementation, distribution and retention), the intervention process (planning, during and after) and the three different spheres of learning (individual, institutional and generational). As part of the analysis, it is recommended to consider that internal lesson identification is a prerequisite but external identification would also be beneficial; routinely and in response to particular crises. As inquiries are an expensive means of external lesson identification, the House of Commons Select Committees offer a possible option, should Parliament agree to include it as part of their remit. In addition, the media, think-tanks and academics have a role to play, through investigative journalism, the writing of critical histories and engagement with policy-makers. In 2002, several scholars founded a *History and Policy* website to create a network of historians to provide a resource for policy-makers and journalists.[969] The ambition was to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of history for policy-making, with a belief that history could provide relevant lessons for the present. Such forums provide an important link which could be used to greater advantage.[970]

At the lesson identification stage, care must be taken to ensure that lessons are identified at the tactical, operational and strategic levels, in both the immediate and in the longer-term, whilst reviewing patterns across interventions. By formalising these lessons, coherence and accountability between individuals and

[969] *www.historyandpolicy.org*

[970] There has been a recent upsurge in Whitehall on developing closer links with academia. See, for example, Sir Jeremy Heywood, "Open Policy Making", 22nd July 2014, *openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/2014/07/22/sir-jeremy-heywood-on-opm/*, accessed 13/08/2015.

within the institution is increased and such formalities can help lessons to be more persuasive when in policy negotiations with No10. It is also recommended that, at this stage, lessons are clearly termed "lessons identified" and are not incorrectly – and misleadingly – labelled "lessons learned".

The case studies revealed that an oversight body for lesson implementation worked well to ensure that identified lessons were implemented, at least in the short-term, and something similar to the BIG is recommended to ensure that lessons from TII are implemented. Ongoing, oversight can be conducted through the House of Commons Select Committees – as the DC does currently – but there is also an opportunity for a cross-Whitehall lesson implementation group. Such a group would have the responsibility of ensuring lessons are implemented, distributed and retained but would also be able to consider ways for cross-ministerial efficiencies in terms of time and money.

The stages of lesson distribution and lesson retention will require the most consideration, as they are the weakest across all three overseas security bodies. In distribution, more efficient methods of communicating lessons are required, across a variety of media, to ensure that lessons are received in all spheres of learning. Here, more research into communication distribution from the field of education and the private sector of marketing and advertising is recommended in order to understand and deliver a multi-platform message in targeted and relevant ways to different learners.

In retention, some of the loss of corporate memory due to changes in personnel, from retirement and the revolving door of posting rotations within Whitehall, can be solved through better briefings, hand-over notes and retaining contacts. However, other methods of

retention could be better exploited; changes in structure, language, habit, establishing best practices, education, training and storing formally recorded lessons digitally with well functioning search engine capabilities all need to be maximised.

If not as part of the permanent staff, as in the MoD, as a minimum it is recommended that a lesson team is established whilst an operation is ongoing – to identify, record and facilitate implementation of lessons as quickly as possible and to avoid having to establish an audit trail after the operation. This research also recommends that after any major event – including military interventions – and annually in any event, the FCO, MoD and IC each conduct a full lessons review and produce a report which clearly identifies lessons and suggests methods of implementation. This report can subsequently be passed to the internal or external implementation team for follow-up, distributed as appropriate and retained for the future. This review should be titled "A review of lessons from [insert event name]" and the lexicon of "post-mortems" should be discouraged. Using such a morbid and negative title places negativity on the process from the outset and does not encourage cultural embracing of lesson-learning where reviews are treated as a live and active part of policy decision-making.

In conducting the planning stage of an operation, it is recommended that a historian, or member of the lessons team, is included. As time is often limited during this phase, inclusion of such personnel will allow historical expertise to be included in discussion, or relevant past experiences to be quickly researched for inclusion within the decision-making process. Similarly, it would be of ongoing benefit to include a historian liaison in the FCO Policy Planning Department, Research Department and in contingency planning in the MoD.

In considering learning in the individual sphere, the problem of reductive learning – reducing complex situations to simple sound bites – will be more challenging. At times when politicians are working under extreme pressure an analogy handily reduces a complex and nuanced historical event to a quick overview.[971] Consequently, often learning from a historical event becomes filtered down to one point which is retained; hence the lesson of "Munich" has become akin to meaning that all foreign acts of aggression must be met immediately with military force. It is recommended that education about learning from history be utilised to encourage deeper critique and the questioning of others who use history in a reductive form. This should be encouraged internally and within the media as well as the general public to assist in penetrating rhetoric and probing analogical reasoning.

In the institutional sphere, cultural issues must be combated. These include the requirement for a professional institutional image, which may be threatened by admitting past difficulties, or a belief that criticism of superiors is a form of dissent. An active encouragement of learning from history and a collaborative approach will help to promote learning as a unified strength rather than a disloyal weakness and more research on operant learning (see 2.1.3.2) in institutions may also prove beneficial.

In the generational sphere, generations can be better encouraged to interact through conferences, regular meetings and mentoring schemes. In addition, the lessons identified by individuals within a generation can be retained through the recording of such lessons as

[971] For more on this see Yaacov Vertzberger, "Foreign Policy Decisionmakers As Practical-Intuitive Historians: Applied History and Its Shortcomings", *International Studies Quarterly*, (1986) 30/2, 223-247.

part of any exit interview from posts and from office. When resources are tight, focusing upon methods of learning which centre upon the where all three spheres of learning overlap, including the holding of conferences, will provide the most efficient results.

There are also specific areas upon which each body can focus. In the FCO it is recommended that formal lesson identification is conducted, the FAC lessons are implemented and the learning process forms part of the discussion within the upcoming round of budget cuts, which will force strategic decisions about spending. In the MoD, the Haddon-Cave lessons need to be implemented and monitored, learning must be reinvigorated to become an active process where individuals take ownership of lesson implementation and personnel are encouraged to be self-critical and advocate for new ideas. In addition, it is recommended that military colleges teach critical thinking and understanding as well as process proficiency and doctrine obedience. In the IC, it is recommended that lessons are identified from collection and assessment as well as lessons from the intelligence itself. In the 1970s, the US Intelligence Community Staff commissioned the Product Review Division to conduct reviews on the way it conducted its business.[972] It resulted in a number of lessons being identified and implemented and a similar process may prove beneficial in Britain.

It is also recommended that all three overseas bodies study each other's learning processes in more detail, as well as learning in other countries, before establishing their own revised and improved processes. As Polybius stated: "There are two roads to the reformation for man – one through the misfortunes of their own,

[972] John Hollister Hedley, "Learning from Intelligence Failures", *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, (2005) 18/3, 441.

the other through the misfortunes of others; the former is the most unmistakeable, the latter the less painful...we should always look out for the latter, for thereby we can, without hurt to ourselves, gain a clearer view of the best course to pursue."[973] In order to take account of each body's cultural uniqueness, once new processes are agreed, simulation exercises of running a learning process from a previous operation would be beneficial to ascertain any particular challenges which may need resolving before learning from the next operation occurs.

Finally, it is recommended that across all bodies there is a removal – or at least reduction – of the division of labour between history and lesson-learning. The in-house historians, official historians and historical branch historians, all offer an invaluable resource for any lesson-learning process and should be further incorporated into policy-making. This is the responsibility of both policy-makers and historians to create a new link and encourage histories to be written with a critical eye and in-depth analysis so that they are relevant for the future.

8.5 Changes to learning from history since the Iraq War

Since the end of the Iraq War there have been some changes in the FCO, MoD and IC which have echoed some of the recommendations made by this research. The arrival of a new government, and particularly a new FS – William Hague – in May 2010, led to a number of changes in the FCO in respect of learning from history. Hague, a part-time historian, regards learning from history as significant and set a new tone to the culture of the FCO by quickly moving the in-house historians from a basement in a satellite

[973] Cited in Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We*, 16.

building to a newly refurbished office in the main FCO building. He declared:

> "Just as one draws on economists and people with specialist knowledge of a particular country, so we should be drawing on the insights provided by our historians. The historians are an obvious resource and they were not appreciated by the last administration. They were languishing in a basement and now the light is shining on their books. It is intended to be a signal to the whole Foreign Office to use them, and to remember the importance of understanding history."[974]

Hague also reopened the FCO library, which had previously embodied 60,000 books, pamphlets, reports and documents of British and world history.[975] He told the FCO in 2011 "We are putting greater emphasis on cultivating and retaining knowledge throughout the institution; bringing the work of FCO Historians back into the consideration and formulation of policy along with the academic rigour that our Research Analysts bring, including regular seminars to learn from history."[976] These seminars primarily occur internally, as part of an optional lunchtime learning series, but more events have begun to be organised which bring together academics and policy-makers.

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[974] Cited in Neil Tweedie, "We must draw on our historians", 1st August 2012, *www.telegraph.co.uk/history/9441669/We-must-draw-on-our-historians.html*, accessed 01/08/2012.

[975] William Hague, "The best diplomatic service in the world: strengthening the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as an Institution", 8th September 2011, *www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-best-diplomatic-service-in-the-world-strengthening-the-foreign-and-commonwealth-office-as-an-institution*, accessed 02/11/2013.

[976] The FCO has around 45 Research Analysts who develop considerable knowledge about the history and culture of specific geographical areas. Hague, "Best diplomatic service".

To further encourage learning from history in the generational sphere, Hague developed a new approach to FCO alumni. He noted, when he arrived into his new position, that when Ambassadors retired from the FCO their accumulated knowledge was being unnecessarily lost: "To my mind, people who have worked for so long on behalf of Her Majesty's Government and in whom the FCO has invested so much should feel that they belong to the institution even after they leave it, and should be regarded as part of the collective memory and intellectual firepower of the organisation."[977] To try to distribute lessons across generations the FS set-up a "Locarno Group" of former members of the FCO to consider foreign policy on a global basis. In addition, ex-Ambassadors are invited to participate in regional forums, providing an additional source of knowledge, with the Middle East group meeting every two to three months.[978]

Although such meetings provide an ad hoc and less formal method of retaining and distributing lessons, changes in technology mean that they could become increasingly important. As electronic records (e-records) have replaced paper records, information on policy decision-making has become easier to delete and is no longer stored in neat files. Instead, e-records are split into e-files within individual folders and many staff do not keep drafts of documents, only final versions.[979] This means that the investigation of policy-making to identify lessons and to establish whether lessons from history were considered, is likely to become increasingly

[977] Hague, "Best diplomatic service".
[978] Interview with Sir Alan Munro, 16th July 2014.
[979] Carryl Allardice, FCO Head of the Knowledge and Information Management Team, FCO Records Policy and Practice Forum, 17th May 2013.

challenging, and lead to more reliance on individual and generational memory.

In addition, the new government's annual reports have revealed that some lesson-learning processes have been established. In particular, the FCO crisis centre conducts exercises after every crisis; albeit that they are titled "lessons learnt exercises".[980] There is also a less formal process to identify and implement lessons after security breaches, including after the 2014 attack in Kabul and the attack on the US Consulate in Benghazi.[981] The set-up of a new Diplomatic Academy has been heralded as a way in which to encourage learning in the generational sphere and may prove to offer an opportune method for lesson distribution.[982] Moreover, the FCO has co-sponsored some doctoral research and experimented with short secondments for early-career researchers.

The FCO board have also recently recognised the institution's weakness in lesson-learning. An internal audit in 2013 identified the "need to document formally lessons learned, and track the benefits, from completed major projects."[983] The 2013-14 annual report stated "We are taking steps to respond to the audit's recommendations."[984] However, there was no detail as to how this

[980] FCO, "Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15", (2015), *www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444067/Amended_FCO_Annual_Report_2015_web__1_.pdf*, accessed 23/07/2015, 20.
[981] FCO "Annual Report 2014-15", 56; FCO "Annual Report and Accounts 2013-14", (2014), *www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/325896/FCO_Annual_Report_2013-14.pdf*, accessed 23/07/2015, 73.
[982] FCO "Annual Report 2013-14", 5-6.
[983] FCO "Annual Report 2013-14", 70.
[984] FCO "Annual Report 2013-14", 70.

was to be achieved, nor was there any reference to a link with history.

In the MoD, there has begun to be some association between the historical branches and the lesson-learning teams in the DCDC and at Joint Forces Command (JFC). Members of the lesson-learning team attend events by the historical branches and, for example, the RAF Historical Society when the focus has been upon lessons.[985] The lessons team have also reviewed the Defence Organisational Lessons Strategy and worked with the historical branches to consider patterns of lessons since the Gulf War.[986] However, the relationship remains ad hoc, disparate and in its infancy. The Army Historical Branch, in particular, spends most of its time dealing with legal issues and the separation of services means that no joint histories are written to provide an overarching MoD historical perspective.

Nonetheless, the MoD has recognised the need to study wider patterns of learning across operations. The US military's Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis Division have examined lessons reports from over a decade of operations to ensure that strategic themes were learned and the British military has been placed under pressure to conduct something similar.[987] The Defence Wide Lessons Board (DwLB) – a management structure set-up as part of DwLM – has begun this process by recently collating and analysing

[985] Private information.
[986] Private information.
[987] Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis, "Decade of War Volume I", 15th June 2012, available at *cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search/searchterm/(JCOA)*, accessed 19/07/2015.

historical lessons into a broad group of strategic lessons, but more can be done.[988]

In the IC, an annual assessment of accuracy was instigated as a way of identifying lessons across the year, following Butler recommendations, but soon fell by the wayside leaving no ongoing lesson-learning process in place. However, the set-up of the National Security Council (NSC), which held its inaugural meeting on 12th May 2010, has reinvigorated the relationship between the IC and policy-makers. The NSC, chaired by the PM and attended by key ministers, the Chair of the JIC and the heads of the three intelligence agencies along with the Chief of the Defence Staff, meets weekly and each meeting commences with an overview of the latest JIC intelligence.[989] Such regular face-to-face discussion and accountability to policy-makers may force more self-reflection on lessons, albeit less formally than through lessons reports.

All three overseas security bodies have also been forced to have some self-reflexivity as a result of the ongoing Iraq Inquiry under Sir John Chilcot. Set-up in 2009, the terms of reference for the inquiry were to consider the planning, enacting and aftermath of the operation in Iraq – from summer 2001 to July 2009 – to establish as accurately as possible what happened and to identify lessons for the future.[990] The inquiry has taken evidence over a long period of time with public and private hearings and has been granted access to vast amounts of documentation across all three overseas security bodies. Consequently, although focused on Iraq, the inquiry has also acted as a wider catalyst for learning from history as the FCO,

[988] Private information.
[989] For more on the NSC-JIC relationship see Aldrich et al, *Spying*, 409-413.
[990] TII, "About the Inquiry", available at *www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/about.aspx*, accessed 20/07/2015.

MoD and IC have been subject to ongoing critique since 2009. Furthermore, when finally published, the report is likely to identify lessons for all three institutions.

Additionally, in 2009 the government decided to review the programme of official histories produced through the Cabinet Office and a review was conducted by the retired civil servant Sir Joseph Pilling. Whilst he concluded that the official histories should continue, he made a number of recommendations for their improvement. In particular, Pilling noted that the purpose of the programme remained unclear and that a new statement of purpose should be developed. For him the concept of accountability was central and "it follows inevitably that it will be possible to learn lessons from histories written with the purpose of accountability in mind. Those with current responsibility in public life ought to be keenest to learn lessons but the lessons will be there to be learned and applied, whether by journalists, scholars of private individuals."[991] He also made a number of significant recommendations which are yet to be implemented. In particular, he recommended that subjects for official histories be selected every two years (rather than every eight to ten) to ensure relevance, the profile of the programme be raised and more effort made by civil servants to take advantage of the scheme.[992]

At the same time, another review was conducted into the publishing arrangements of the official history programme by the literary agent

[991] Sir Joseph Pilling, "The Review of the Government's Official History Programme", April 2009, *www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62233/future-plans-government.pdf*, accessed 20/07/2015, para 12.
[992] Pilling, "Review", para 29; 39; 42-44.

Bill Hamilton.[993] Hamilton also emphasised that the programme was not well utilised and that the histories needed to be communicated in other media as well as print: "If a central purpose of the Histories is that they should provide lessons learned to practitioners within Whitehall and beyond, the written volume on its own is unlikely to deliver this requirement."[994] For him, the value of the histories lay as much in the depth of knowledge accumulated by the historian as the book itself and thus, the historian should provide consultation services and produce short, digestible briefs for busy policy-makers with reference to the relevant parts of the larger text.[995]

The FOI Act has also had a significant impact upon learning from history since Iraq. In an era of increased media access and open government, PM Tony Blair introduced FOI in 2000, something which he later regretted: "You idiot. You naive, foolish, irresponsible nincompoop. There is no description of stupidity, no matter how vivid, that is adequate. I quake at the imbecility of it."[996] The Act provided public access to information held by public authorities by obliging those authorities to publish certain information and entitling the public to request information.[997] In some senses, this opened accountability of government and should have forced more reflection upon lesson-learning because it allowed for the increased scrutiny of the workings of Whitehall. As Tony Blair stated, "For

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[993] Bill Hamilton "Review of the publishing arrangements under the Government's Official History Programme", n.d., *www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62233/future-plans-government.pdf*, accessed 20/07/2015.
[994] Hamilton, "Review", para 13.1; 13.2.
[995] Hamilton, "Review", para 13.3; 13.4.
[996] Tony Blair cited in Martin Rosenbaum, "Why Blair thinks he was an idiot", 1st September 2010, *www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/opensecrets/2010/09/why_tony_blair_thinks_he_was_a.html*, accessed 20/07/2015.
[997] *Freedom of Information Act 2000*.

political leaders, it's like saying to someone who is hitting you over the head with a stick, 'Hey, try this instead', and handing them a mallet."

However, in many ways, FOI has had the opposite effect for lesson-learning. To avoid voluminous information having to be sanitised for public release, much formal reporting has been reduced, thus losing valuable documentation from which to identify lessons and write histories. In the FCO, Ambassador valedictories and annual reviews have long been abolished, leaving diplomats to enter a new post with less briefing material and significantly increasing the likelihood of lessons being lost in transition. General reporting has also been reduced with informal, face-to-face, briefings often preferred to the laborious process of recording, sanitising and sorting documentation which diplomats do not have time to read and the FCO does not have the time to process. Consequently, the lessons of recent experience are expunged or go unreported and each new Head of Department arrives to a tabula rasa.[998] The debate about the correct lessons to be identified from Vantage, for example, that erupted in response to two despatches is now less likely to be replicated.

On 17th July 2015, the government recognised this challenge and announced a new Commission to review the role of FOI. The terms of reference acknowledges the increasing tensions within Whitehall on this issue:

> "The Commission will review the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act') to consider whether there is an appropriate public interest balance between transparency, accountability

[998] Interview with Sir Alan Munro, 16th July 2014.

> and the need for sensitive information to have robust protection, and whether the operation of the Act adequately recognises the need for a 'safe space' for policy development and implementation and frank advice. The Commission may also consider the balance between the need to maintain public access to information, and the burden of the Act on public authorities, and whether change is needed to moderate that while maintaining public access to information."[999]

The outcome of this Commission may have an impact on lesson-learning but establishing a balance between openness and recordkeeping is likely to prove difficult.

Consequently, there have been changes, updates and improvements to learning from history since the end of the Iraq War, a number of which overlap with the recommendations of this project. However, this research offers proposals which reinforce, complement or improve the recent developments and also provides new suggestions which are yet to be explored and which would further contribute to improving learning from history.

8.6 Conclusion

Learning from history does occur in British overseas security policy and the FCO, MoD and IC do learn from interventions in the Middle East, but more needs to be done. History has current application and is relevant; events occur in a historical context and create the historical context for the future. The difficulty is that historical lessons can be subjective, meaning different things to different people because lessons are interpreted as part of their

[999] Lord George Bridges, "Freedom of information: new Commission", 17th July 2015, *www.gov.uk/government/speeches/freedom-of-information-new-commission*, accessed 23/07/2015.

identification. It is also for this reason that there are often big differences between learning in the FCO, MoD and IC, and learning in No10 or by ministers. Consequently, in many cases, accusations that the British government does not learn lessons from history are unfairly directed at civil servants when they are most appropriately directed at politicians.

This is not to state that learning within the FCO, MoD and IC is perfect; it isn't, and this research has endeavoured to make a number of recommendations to improve the learning process for the future. However, learning within these bodies becomes irrelevant if the lessons cannot effectively and persuasively be communicated to the ultimate decision-makers. A better relationship between the overseas security bodies and No10 has begun to develop through the establishment of the NSC, but this should be further entrenched to avoid any risk of returning to the detachment between the two that existed before Suez and Iraq.

It is also not to be assumed that effective lesson-learning and communication of lessons will always significantly impact the outcome of future policy. Policy creation is a complex process influenced by many factors including beliefs, political positions, domestic politics, bargaining-power and persuasion. Ministers are not a blank page and policy-making is a contested process. In addition, it is not to claim that learning lessons will provide a predicted outcome; there will always be unintended consequences, especially in the multifaceted environment of military interventions. However, as the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the FCO, Paul Gore-Booth, noted in 1965 and prophetically for 2003:

> "the lesson to be learned from Suez was a simple one. It was this: if Ministers consulted their officials and then rejected

> their advice this was perfectly proper and might on many occasions give them the right answer. If, however, a government undertook operations by a process of deliberately refraining from taking official advice, or keeping officials informed, then the result in due course would be disastrous".[1000]

Within the FCO, MoD and IC, identifying lessons from history will not be easy, but ensuring lessons are learned and stay learned will be even more challenging. History does not, as many historians are quick to point out, offer "school solutions" but it does provide a database of how to conduct, or not conduct, interventions which can be contextualised to the requirements of today.[1001] Certainly the past should be treated, as L. P. Hartley declared, as "a foreign country: they do things differently there",[1002] but even Basil Liddell Hart conceded "History can show us what to avoid, even if it does not teach us what to do – by showing the most common mistakes that mankind is apt to make and to repeat."[1003] In fact, whilst many historians would dispute Marx's famous quote that history repeats itself, there are any number of regularities which lead one to align to the often cited Mark Twain maxim that history does not repeat itself, but it sure does rhyme. History can lend judgment and encourage the asking of sensible questions when policy is being created.[1004] It is relatively cheap and offers exceptional value in

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[1000] Gore-Booth to Mason, 13th July 1965, TNA FO370/2807.
[1001] See, for example, Michael Howard "Military History and the History of War" in Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich (eds.) *Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13.
[1002] L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (London: Penguin, 2004 [1953]), 5.
[1003] Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We*, 15.
[1004] A recent report by the Institute for Government identified nine different ways in which history was of value for policy-making. Catherine Haddon, Joe Devanny, Charles Forsdick and Andrew Thompson, "What is

comparison to the risks of ignoring lessons from the past. During the Falklands review, when Lord Franks asked Margaret Thatcher whether one could learn from history, she declared "I think you are very foolish if you do not."[1005] In fact learning from history must form an essential part of British overseas security both now and in the future.

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[1005] Cited in FCO, "Decision Making", 27.

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