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'They treat us with scant respect': prejudice and pride in British Military Liaison with the Soviet Union in the Second World War

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ABSTRACT

Britain stationed a military mission in the USSR from 1941-45. This article examines the British conduct of the Mission at a crucial stage of the war, from November 1942 to November 1943. Prompted by a report from the head of the Mission, the Chiefs of Staff decided in February 1943 to institute a 'new deal', to try to end what was seen as 'one-way traffic' in the relationship. A new head, General Martel, was appointed, to make higher-level contacts. The attempt to try and make the relationship equal, reciprocal and symmetrical was short-lived as other military concerns moved the 'bargaining' approach of the 'new deal' back towards an acceptance of asymmetry. While the Soviet contribution on the battlefield was a weighty element in the balance, this article demonstrates that in the diplomacy of alliance military liaison, such rational calculations were accompanied by irrational factors like concern for personal or national prestige, cultural differences concerning 'manners', the pressures of life as a foreigner in Stalin's Soviet Union, and inter-service rivalries in Whitehall that set the representatives in Moscow often at cross-purposes.

KEYWORDS

Military Liaison; Second World War; Anglo-Soviet Alliance; Military Missions

In October 1943, the head of 30 Mission, the British Military Mission in Moscow, Lieutenant-General Giffard LeQ. Martel, reported, 'present military relations with the Russians are very cordial, but they treat us with scant respect.' His conclusion therefore was that the situation of his mission, and of liaison with the Soviet ally, was 'bad'.[1] The assumptions underlying Martel's view that quality of the alliance rested upon 'respect' opens up a novel line of enquiry into an under-analysed aspect of Second World War diplomacy.[2]

The victorious alliance of the Second World War has, rightly, attracted much attention over the years. Significant studies continue to appear. Much of their focus has been on the political and personal relations of the leaders at the very top. The alliance was also a matter of relationships at many levels below Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin, and to fully understand how the leaders at the top interacted, it is important to understand the running of the alliance they were piloting. One of the features of an alliance like this one, is the major role played by personnel who are not diplomats or statesmen by training or inclination. Issues of great political significance, and much of the day-to-day interaction, were in the hands of military figures, whose training and

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national security orientation naturally made them wary of cooperation with any foreign state. Their doctrines, ethos and approach to methods of alliance diplomacy, and the bureaucratic context in which they operated, was different in significant ways to the professional diplomatists and politicians who are the usual focus for the study of the alliance.

Britain stationed a military mission in the USSR from 1941 to 45 but while its operations have not been entirely overlooked by historians, analyses have been restricted in scope. Although much of the scholarship treats it as an army operation, run by the Directorate of Military Intelligence in the War Office, it was, in fact, from the outset a multi-service mission. The original Mission directive gave it a range of purposes: not just to gather and share intelligence, but also to facilitate cooperation, act as operational liaison for joint activities and coordinate on diverse matters including supplies, equipment usage, political issues, armistice and occupation duties.[3] The first historical discussion of the mission was Joan Beaumont's short article in the RUSI journal.[4] She saw the mission as a failure, and the reason was principally the lack of interest in such cooperation on the Soviet side. She did acknowledge some issues with the personalities of the British personnel involved. She drew attention to a debate within the British services as to what tactics were best – bargaining and demanding reciprocity in return for British aid, or giving the Soviets what they asked in the hopes of making them more friendly. Beaumont placed the Mission in the context of overall alliance cooperation, but subsequent attention to it has largely been restricted to the intelligence issue.[5] Interestingly, in doing so, Bradley F. Smith was more positive about the Mission. He found that, while not perfect, and subject to many dips and fluctuations, cooperation in Moscow was by no means fruitless. Moreover, the Soviets had not been responsible for all of the problems. Fault also lay, in his view, with inconsistencies of direction from Whitehall, which could never come up with a single consistent doctrine and apply it. He found British attitudes dominated not so much by anti-Communist ideology as by patronising neo-imperialist attitudes. He tended to place the blame therefore on Whitehall rather than the men in post.[6] In contrast to Smith, Alaric Searle has seen anti-Communism in Whitehall to have crucially shaped assessment of Soviet forces and cooperation with them.[7] This historiography raises two questions: the influences on each other of personnel in Whitehall and those posted in the USSR, and the role of ideological biases.

Following Smith's extensive survey, subsequent studies remained largely focused on the intelligence aspect, though disagreeing on whether the exchange of information between the Mission and the liaison body set up by the Soviets in Moscow, the Otdel (Red Army Bureau of External Affairs), was fruitful or not.[8] However, the scholarly debate did raise the issue of whether officers in Whitehall regarded the issue in isolation, or whether, when they viewed cooperation with the Soviets, they set it alongside other aspects of the war, such as the Soviet contribution on the battlefield.[9] Whether the Anglo-Soviet cooperative relationship needed to be symmetrical, was in fact a crucial question which underpinned the entire British approach to the alliance. What has tended to escape historical attention is the influence in Whitehall and in the Mission of the day-to-day experiences of service in the USSR. This indeed is the missing element, which when taken into account moves the debate away from the issue of ideology to one encompassing emotion and, as Martel's comment demonstrated, 'prestige' and 'respect'.

Martel, who was appointed head of the Military Mission in March, 1943, defined liaison relations in the USSR under two headings – 'domestic' and 'military'. The 'military' category involved contacts with the Red Army and Navy, exchanges of information, particularly on enemy order of battle, and provision of military equipment. He sub-divided this into two 'Boxes,' Box A, material concerning the enemy, and Box B, information about the USSR's own efforts. The 'domestic' sphere encompassed all aspects of living and serving in the USSR, and largely involved relations with the civil parts of the Soviet Government over issues like visas, restrictions to travel movements, accommodation and the application of Soviet laws.[10] While there were frustrations concerning Box B, particularly Soviet reluctance to allow visits to the fighting front, the 'domestic' category tended to produce the greatest amount of tension. Disgust at the treatment of British

personnel stationed in the USSR was often the driver for initiatives to make the relationship more symmetrical, particularly as those in Whitehall knew that the Soviet Military Mission and Trade Delegation in Britain received far better treatment. The central issues were whether the military and domestic aspects of the relationship could or should be linked, and whether linkage could be done without detriment to the overriding goal of aiding the Soviets in combat. The 'domestic' issues, bringing into sharp relief the nature of the Soviet regime, and igniting emotional reactions to mistreatment of British service personnel, were a crucial element in the balance set against the Soviet role in the war. The shifting balance between the two is rarely factored in to understanding of British alliance policy.

To more fully establish the part that these factors played in shaping British military attitudes and policy, this article will focus on an attempt to change the nature of liaison – a 'new deal' – following an extensive report from the head of the Mission in Moscow, Martel's predecessor, Rear-Admiral Geoffrey Miles. Neither the report or 'new deal' has before been subject to historical analysis.[11] The time period, the twelve months from November 1942 to November 1943, was a significant period generally in allied relations, when Anglo-American forces were at last advancing, but when the range and depth of alliance cooperation was still very uncertain. At the same time, the crucial battles being fought meant that this was one of the periods of the war when all partners in the alliance needed cooperation, particularly in intelligence and had solid reasons of self-interest for being forthcoming. This was a level of need that fluctuated throughout the war, largely diminishing (with some exceptions) during 1944: though the emotional reactions of officers stationed in Moscow tended not to view this in such a rational manner, as we will see. At this point, in 1943 and against this backdrop of a tense and difficult period of the war, an extensive internal British multi-service examination of the conduct of military relations with the USSR took place. Analysis of it clarifies the bigger picture, and the comparatively minor, personality or prejudice-based issues that can shape cooperation between military establishments in alliance relationships.

It is also important to take into account, though most scholars of the Anglo-Soviet liaison have not, the relationship between the services themselves. The liaison with the USSR was a multi-services enterprise. It was not, however, one on which inter-service consensus was notable. Indeed the issues and emotions raised by cooperation with the Soviets tended to bring service rivalries and long-standing antipathies into higher relief. The development of liaison with the Soviets, as evidenced in particular by what happened to the Martel mission, can only be understood when this issue is fully integrated into the story. Those who treat the liaison as an Army/War Office matter and have limited their research to the War Office records miss much of this element – only Bradley Smith in his study of intelligence exchange, has really gone beyond those records and treated the other services as separate actors.

There had been an element of inter-service tension in the Mission from the start. The Admiralty sensed, even before the convoys began running, that its interests and tactics in the USSR would differ from those of the Army and there had been talk within the Naval Intelligence Department (NID) of having a separate mission.[12] This was fuelled by a personal enmity by the then Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI), Admiral John Godfrey, towards Lieutenant-General Noel Mason-MacFarlane, the head of the Mission, and the Navy scored a bit of a coup after MacFarlane was withdrawn in May 1942.[13] It had been envisaged that Miles himself would also go as part of a downgrading of the Mission. The First Sea Lord decided to retain Miles in post after all, leaving the other services, who had downgraded their representation, having to accept a sailor as head of Mission due to his senior rank. The Admiralty's sense that Navy relations with the Soviets were on a different level (accompanied by a degree of self-satisfaction that the Soviets respected the RN's fighting record, unlike that of the British Army) persisted, and the War Office was aware of it. One element of the impetus for the new deal, which involved upgrading the Mission again, was to counter this and put the Army back in the driving seat. The Navy

continued watchful, however, to protect its own interests, fearful that they would be sacrificed in pursuit of gains for the Army.[14]

The RAF and Air Ministry had their own perspective on matters. The nature of RAF liaison with the Soviets was different to that of the Navy (largely operational liaison) and the Army (largely the Army's quest for intelligence). RAF concerns were partly operational, as air force units, unlike army ones, did operate offensively in the USSR during the war – and the most plausible proposals for additional operations concerned the RAF.[15] The RAF was involved in active negotiations over two operational proposals towards the end of 1942, the despatch of ten RAF squadrons to the Caucasus (Operation Velvet), and Operation Grenadine, a proposal to base torpedo-bombers in North Russia for convoy protection. Both ultimately ended the same way, with the Soviets at first keen, only then to complain about the numbers of support personnel the RAF wanted to send to the USSR. The accumulated frustration generated by the negotiations was reflected in the trajectory of RAF views on information exchange and bargaining. Much of their liaison with the Soviets was connected to supply issues: of aircraft (often resented by the RAF), and of technology (which it was feared would fall into German hands). Like the Navy, the RAF thought of cooperation with the Soviets at least partly in operational terms, and at times airmen allowed the Soviets credit for their achievements on the battlefield. [16] This was tempered, though, by the feeling that in air matters the Red Army Air Force (VVS) made poor use of what they were given.

Connected to equipment supply was technical training. RAF personnel came to the USSR with the aircraft to help with acquainting the VVS with their usage. RAF dissatisfaction with their allies was worsened by the treatment of these airmen, whose services did not seem to be properly appreciated. The RAF's low opinion of Soviet air power was undoubtedly enhanced by the fact that the VVS was entirely subservient to its parent body, the Red Army, and had none of the independent ambitions nor strategic concepts that were part of the RAF's self-identity. This also meant that contacts were mainly through the Army's liaison contact, so that the RAF, to its resentment, tended to suffer from the Red Army's lack of respect for the British Army as a fighting force. They felt, probably rightly, that the RAF had a better reputation with the Soviets, but being subsumed under Army auspices (on both sides) this meant that no dividends (or respect from the Soviets) came from it. These differences in attitudes in the services would become significant when changes in policy and in personnel were mooted at the end of 1942.

30 Mission in 1942

Miles had taken over as Head of the Mission in May 1942. Unlike his predecessor, MacFarlane, he had no background in intelligence, but had seen combat as captain of HMS *Nelson*. On MacFarlane's departure, the army part of the mission was placed under the command of a Colonel, Kenneth Exham, rather than a General, and the RAF section under a Group-Captain, Walter Cheshire, rather than an Air Vice-Marshal. The Mission's main business was now principally connected to the running of the convoys. This was mostly handled by officers in North Russia, but now came under Miles's supervision, and his interactions with the authorities in Moscow were largely related to these operational issues. On the army side, regular, if not always particularly fruitful, meetings took place to discuss information on the enemy order of battle and weapons systems.

Exham noted a number of times that personal relations with the Soviets were good, though he did complain of inadequate and infrequent contacts with Soviet officers – all had to be arranged through Otdel, and usually the only officers seen were those in that department. No information could be obtained from them about Soviet operations, plans, dispositions, reserves: they cooperated fully on intelligence on the enemy, he noted, but disliked disclosing anything on themselves.[17] They had 'made a fetish of secrecy and are not likely to change their habits

(and have surprised both us and the Germans by the efficiency of their armies, which is one result of this secrecy).' Exham thought that the situation would change when the British Army was engaged on major operations on the continent. Exham reported that many in Moscow 'are still suspicious of our intentions and this is going to take a lot of breaking down … The feeling is the British talk a lot but don't do much and prestige of our army is not high. People haven't been actively unpleasant but it's clear what they think. But we have a mass of friends here and they'll come out and cheer when the Army really goes in and shows what it can do.'[18]

Miles prioritised the aspect of his directive that emphasised the maintenance of allied cooperation. He was aided in this by the fact that the Soviet Naval staff were much more open in their contacts with him than the Red Army, up to the level of the Chief of the Naval Staff. Miles placed the cultivation of good relations and breaking down of suspicion ahead of 'the problematical acquisition of intelligence.' Exham concurred: by examining the press and through odd contacts, they were developing a picture of Soviet forces, 'but we are on very dangerous ground here and must, at all costs, avoid being caught out "snooping".'[19]

While in London on leave in October, 1942, Miles addressed the Joint Planning Staff (JPS). His remarks showed little negativity or pessimism. He did point out the 'extreme reticence' of the Soviets in giving information about their own forces, but he volunteered that things were getting better in exchange of material regarding not only German, but also Japanese orders of battle. Contrary to claims by some that Miles was pessimistic about Soviet prospects, and simply reflected back to Whitehall its own anti-Soviet negativity, Miles told the meeting that he believed Stalingrad would be held to the last.[20]

Autumn saw two contradictory developments in the experience of 30 Mission. Postponement of the convoys on the grounds that shipping was needed for Operation Torch, was met by a marked cooling of Soviet cooperative spirit by their liaison officers. This was reflected in the exchange of order-of-battle intelligence, and in the actions of civilian authorities in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk. These officials started to apply Soviet regulations concerning movements of personnel, censorship of mails, and stern punishment of acts committed by personnel on shore, such as drunkenness or brawling. The authorities in Moscow dragged their feet in handling visa applications, which meant that staff due for return to Britain had to be kept on, as their replacements could not come without their visa. All these issues had an effect on Miles, who ran his Mission as he had his ship, showing, as is evident from the mission war diary, great concern for the welfare of his men.[21]

However, the mood lifted perceptibly with the beginning of Torch and with the British victory at Alamein in November. Exham commented it was a pleasant change to be able to stick his chest out: 'I personally feel 6 inches taller and my Russian contacts have equally diminished in stature.'[22] Stalin made a very positive reference to his allies in his speech on 6 November commemorating the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. Exham's order of battle contacts were immediately more forthcoming. 'I have every hope,' he noted, that 'within the limits of the Slav temperament, they will try to maintain a regular contact.' Ethnocentric explanations for Soviet conduct were ubiquitous. Use of terms like 'these people' in internal correspondence was far more frequent than references to Marxist ideology, reflecting a common sense among officers and officials of the Russians as a group best understood as ethnically distinct from Europeans. The passion for secrecy was one of the more common themes of this stereotype.[23]

The Miles report

The initial impetus for a radical overhaul came from the Mission itself. Miles and Cheshire sent in reports at the end of the year presenting an overview of the experience of the Mission from its inception. The army section's view had been delivered less formally by Exham on a recent visit to London, and his presence again in London in January was to be influential. The body of

Miles's report itemises successes as well as failures. It does not deliver overly angry recriminations against the Soviets. However, its conclusions give the firm impression that the mission was struggling, that it was failing to achieve its prime goals and that a significant change in tactics should be initiated. In view of Miles's generally balanced and calm attitude, as seen in his remarks to the JPS and his strictures about keeping calm for the sake of overall cooperation, the tone of his conclusion is somewhat surprising. It is evident, though, that Miles was feeling weary of the cumulative issues involving personnel in North Russia (referred to as 'vexatious formalities'), and personally wished to return to active command. This was a feeling shared by Exham, who like Miles, had been in the USSR since the Mission started. It was also the case that the period of promising cooperation on German order of battle reported in early November had come to an end by mid-December, accompanied by sour remarks by General Nikolai Dubinin, who headed Otdel, about the slowing down of progress in North Africa. This downturn, coming so quickly after things seemed to be so much better, and with British forces advancing (albeit slowly), clearly soured the mood in the Mission and greatly influenced the underlying tone of its reports.[24]

Looking back over the previous eighteen months, Miles wrote that he believed that the Soviet general staff had been pleased to welcome the mission, as a symbol of allied unity, but were not prepared to collaborate except where it was to their advantage to do so (the implication being that the British cooperated even when it was not to their advantage). He drew a distinction, though, between the experiences of the Army and the Navy (the RAF mission's experience being shaped by whether they were dealing with the naval or the army air branches). While the Army's contact with the Soviet general staff was wholly through one department – Otdel – which operated as a barrier to keep the foreigners at a distance from the General Staff - Navy contacts were easier. Miles put this down to personalities in the Navy Otdel, but also to the operational liaison they were drawn into in connection with the running of the convoys.

These differences aside, Miles put forward a number of explanations for the general Soviet reserve towards collaboration. There was the deep suspicion of foreigners, which had pervaded Russian history for centuries and which had been actively encouraged by the communist regime since 1917, allied to the inherent secretiveness of all Russians. This meant that there were structural and cultural barricades against the free, informal and mutual exchange of ideas and information. Otdel was set up to limit and control contacts, and ensure that no such informal ones took place. Miles also detected an inferiority complex about Russian facilities and materiel, which was disguised by boastful talk about the superiority of all things Soviet over anything produced under capitalism. There was generally inefficient staff organisation, aggravated by a shortage of personnel. Miles said of the liaison machinery in Moscow that it did not run on ball-bearings, rather it was like 'the wheel of a watermill which has to be started up with creaks and groans on each occasion of being required.'[25] MacFarlane and Exham could only ever meet a major-general whose position was equivalent to the British Director of Military Intelligence. On the Army side, he felt the attitude was aggravated by the Soviet General Staff's poor opinion of the British Army as a result of the fall of Singapore, Hong Kong and Tobruk. Events external to the Mission, not only the defeats suffered by the British Army but also political issues, like the cancellation of convoys, or, conversely, high-profile large-scale bombing raids, seemed to have a direct influence on the demeanour and openness of his Soviet opposite numbers.

Homing in on the issue of personal behaviour, Miles commented on what he called the 'lack of breeding' as a result of the elimination of the educated classes in the last war, the revolution and the purges. The important effect of personal demeanour – what British officers in Moscow and Whitehall often referred to under the blanket term 'manners' – is reflected in Miles's comment that 'the Mission's dealings are chiefly with men of peasant stock disguised as officers. They are gauche, ill-mannered to the point of rudeness at times and uncultured'. While Miles had generally shown amused tolerance for this lack of 'manners', it had clearly got to him by this point.

However, Miles noted there had been good exchange of information about the enemy and said the Soviets usually responded when asked for it. This judgment went completely ignored by the report's recipients, for it was to be repeatedly stated from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Alan Brooke, down, that the Soviets had given nothing.[26] Miles himself had made the clear distinction that the lack of information referred only to information about the Soviet war effort. This was the basis for his concluding comment that the Mission had given more than it had received. The Soviets, he regretted, 'clearly do not feel reciprocally in terms of giving us the benefit of their experience.'[27] It might be noted here that in fact the Soviets did. Dubinin remarked at one point that once the British wanted to discuss matters directly related to actual joint operations and strategy, they would be willing to meet once a day and discuss such matters freely. They clearly could see no point in discussing such matters in the abstract, but were prepared to do so if the British reciprocated by action. Dubinin's comment that allied operations were now very 'one-sided', with the Red Army doing all the fighting, make an interesting counter-point to the British fixation on 'one-way traffic' in the flow of information.[28]

Miles had been quite consistent in arguing against threats to withhold things, such as the convoys. But he now insisted that progress over visas and arranging visits to the Soviet fighting front, should be linked to action like curtailing the activities and reducing the personnel of the Soviet Mission in London, which would be effective, and far from damaging. The main point of his conclusion, and indeed of the paper itself, was that there had been a mistaken strategy applied to handling the Soviets, and it had originated in Whitehall.

In his conclusion, Miles recommended three corrective approaches to the problems he had identified: 'straightforward, honest dealing', avoidance of using 'snooping' to get information on the Soviet effort, and a 'firm' attitude rather than the weak policy of submission regarding restrictions on personnel, visas and a range of other issues. In effect, he was arguing for a nuanced approach that did not press the Soviets for information they would not give, but *did* take a strong stance on the vexations that bulked so large to personnel in Moscow, Murmansk, and Arkhangelsk. Thus he was separating 'domestic' and 'military' relations, and recommending a reciprocity approach to deal with the domestic problems of visas and the like. Unfortunately, his use of trigger words like 'firmness' and 'bargaining', and the cumulative effect of the derogatory language about Russian manners in the account as a whole, drowned out the record of successes and good cooperation to which his report also testified, and obscured that distinction between the two spheres of activity.

Bradley Smith has pointed out that the frequency of pessimistic and negative reports from those serving in the USSR does not fit very well with the actual evidence of cooperation that can be found in the records.[29] Reports of personnel on the ground were often more negative than they needed to be. This was a result of the personal feelings of frustration from life as a uniformed foreigner in the USSR, on top of existing ideological and ethnic prejudices (that is to say, the 'domestic' issues had an emotional impact on views of the 'military' side). Miles had not been prone to this syndrome before, but it is evident in this report.

Group Captain Cheshire's report put forward similar arguments for change. Like Miles, he focused on the 'domestic' issues, and criticised Whitehall's handling of them. Using emotive language, he itemised British acts of 'appeasement' and what he described as 'self-abasement'. Russians, he claimed, were sufficiently 'Oriental' to appreciate a system of bargaining, so he therefore recommended firmness and an insistence on strict reciprocity in the exchange of information and the extension of facilities to the Soviet Military Mission in London.[30]

Personal emotional dynamics cannot be discounted in assessing language, arguments and implications in the testimonies of Miles, Exham and Cheshire. At stake for all three was getting away from a frustrating political posting in USSR and back to more active involvement in the war.[31] The themes they deployed to achieve this happened to coincide with already-expressed frustrations in the service departments and inter-service committees in an ongoing debate over information liaison between the three big allies.

The fact is that Miles and Cheshire's reports do not actually paint a picture of failed cooperation, such as one might expect if one just read the discussions they prompted in Whitehall. So we need to explain why they were read that way – why the slogan 'one-way traffic' became an axiom in service departments. Partly it reflected the overall intention of the writers, who wanted to promote the idea of a change in policy with regards to the day-to-day 'domestic' vexations of living in the Soviet state. Partly it reflected some emotions that were running high in the service departments in Whitehall at the time. Miles's complaint about Whitehall policy played into broader institutional disputes. This led to his report being given serious attention at a high level.

The new deal

When the Mission had been set up there was no obvious place in the departmental structure of the service ministries from which it should be managed, with its multiplicity of roles. Foreign liaison departments did exist, but they dealt mainly with supply issues. Military, air and naval attachés, with their information-gathering role, had tended to report to the intelligence departments, and 30 Mission by default fell into their remit as well. By contrast, liaison with the Soviet Mission in London was not handled by the intelligence departments, but by a multi-service Russian Liaison Group headed by Brigadier Roy Firebrace. It was thus a natural bureaucratic step for Miles and Cheshire's reports to be passed over to the Joint Intelligence sub-committee (JIC) of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COS) to be assessed and to formulate recommendations, since both reports dealt with the Mission as a whole, not just one service's part of it. They clearly addressed issues of high policy, if not necessarily only intelligence. Naturally, though, the chief JIC focus was on intelligence exchange and particularly on getting more information from the Soviets about their own operations, forces, and technology.

The committee met to consider the reports on 19 January 1943. It was chaired as usual by the Foreign Office (FO) representative, Bill Cavendish-Bentinck, and comprised the three Directors of Intelligence (together with an SOE representative and Brigadier Menzies of SIS). Kenneth Exham also attended the meeting. The main message drawn from the reports was that British officers had received 'shabby treatment' at the hands of their Soviet counterparts. The paper the JIC drew up for the COS stated that the Americans, and the foreign press in Moscow, got better treatment than the Mission, which was 'placed in a most humiliating position and rapidly losing face with all concerned.'[32] It was noted that Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, the ambassador at Moscow, was going to take this matter up directly with Stalin, but the JIC proposed action should this not improve the situation. While the problem was defined as the general treatment of the mission, these proposals were all actually concerned with gaining more reciprocity in information exchange. The Director of Military Intelligence, Major-General Francis Davidson, blamed the 'official policy of submission and weakness and no bargaining.'[33] The JIC took up Miles's recommendation of bargaining – but saw it as a means not only to get better treatment for personnel in the USSR, but also to ensure that information was gained from the Soviet side. The JIC proposed that a 'charter' be drawn up establishing principles of information exchange, on the basis of bargaining. Exham and Firebrace were given the task of drafting this, together with Captain Clanchy of the NID, who had lately been naval attaché in Moscow.[34] Moreover, the JIC proposed that the heads of the Army and RAF sections be general officers once again. They should be given letters of introduction to Stalin himself, not only to invest them with status and authority in dealing with the Otdel, but hopefully also get them frequent contacts beyond that body.[35]

Miles quickly expressed his concern that the JIC would be too heavy-handed in its response, telling the DNI, Commodore Edmund Rushbrooke, 'I hope something comes out of … [the new tactic] but it is more than a question of just bargaining.' The need was to 'stand up to these people' (over issues like the visas and the mails – both matters for which he blamed the civil

authorities in Moscow, and the British Foreign Office that dealt with them). Thus, he said, the next time they were offensive or made 'ridiculous accusations' against people, they should say 'sorry but there won't be any no room for Soviet passengers or mail or caviare for Maiski in the next Liberator [flight to London].'[36] Miles's reservation got through to the JIC, for it was noted at a subsequent meeting that there was a danger that intelligence exchange be seen out of true proportion to the question of the 'humiliating treatment' of the Mission.[37] The Chiefs of Staff, however, in welcoming the JIC's proposals, focused on the assertion that all the traffic in the alliance had been 'one-way,' quite disregarding the fact that the Soviets were fully engaging the enemy, and any British intelligence or supplies directly contributed to that, as well as the fact, as Exham had earlier reported, that plenty of order of battle intelligence had been received, plus samples of captured German weapons.[38]

However, the issue of the supply of technical information to the USSR, while a major area of liaison, was only partly an intelligence matter, and fell into the purview of other parts of the government beyond the military. After Churchill's meetings with Stalin in August 1942, it had been agreed to exchange freely any information on weapons developments, scientific advances or other such matters that could help in prosecuting the war. Working out the details with the Soviets and (especially) with the Americans was complex, but the general feeling in civilian departments in Whitehall was that it was in the interests both of improving relations with the USSR and of progressing towards victory that such exchange should be put into practice as soon as possible. The Ministry of Production therefore proposed that a technical mission be sent to Moscow, to enter into discussions with regards to operationalising this arrangement.[39] The proposed head of the mission, Sir Henry Tizard of the Royal Society, insisted that he should be allowed to pass information freely to the Soviets, and not bargain item for item.[40]

The Air Ministry at first was prepared to accept this, with Charles Medhurst, the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff for Planning (ACAS(P)) taking an asymmetrical view of the relationship: 'this is a case where our natural exasperation at typical Russian secretiveness may override common sense … The Russians are at the moment a valuable asset.' He noted, 'we stand to gain nothing at all if we try and bully the Russians.'[41] The Admiralty view, however, was that 'there should be a genuine interchange of information and not simply a one-way traffic as hitherto.'[42] In the mood prompted by the Miles and Cheshire reports, this was the view accepted by the COS committee, which ruled on 12 February that 'this submissive attitude cannot continue indefinitely' in a restatement of the 'symmetry' position.[43]

This position was argued to the War Cabinet by Secretary for War Sir James Grigg. He said the COS could not tolerate the continuance of the present position in which we gave a great deal of information and got nothing in return. He wanted Tizard to be briefed on the history of 30 Mission along these lines and be told that if the Soviets were not forthcoming he should make it clear he could give no further information without something in return. The Cabinet rejected such a mechanically symmetrical approach, preferring to give discretion to Tizard.[44]

As it happened the Tizard mission was postponed when its prospective head became ill.[45] What the Tizard issue underlines, however, is that this question of bargaining and exchange was not limited to military intelligence and order-of-battle liaison, but involved multiple aspects and a broader principle of what the alliance meant in practice and what its limits might be. It had exposed the differences in approach to the tactics and conduct (and guiding principles) of cooperation with the Soviets within Whitehall, and had made the services more determined to apply their approach wherever they had jurisdiction.

The FO had lined up with Tizard on the question of bargaining, and most of the service departments' negative feeling on the overarching issue was directed against the FO. The Mission's frustration with the 'vexatious formalities' crystallised as anger at the conduct of the diplomats. One of the strongest influences in shaping the phrasing of Miles and Cheshire's reports was their frustration at their own diplomats' appeasing approach (as they saw it) to their opposite numbers, NKVD and Narkomindel (Commissariat for Foreign Affairs) officials. These

were the people who the servicemen in the USSR regarded as the source of the 'domestic' problems over visas and other issues.

It is telling that when Miles heard of the thrust of the COS's new deal, he was clearly unimpressed. To him, by focusing on bargaining for the supply of more information by the Soviets, they had missed what was really the problem. Miles ruefully noted, 'I am sure that until the big noises at home take a firm stand with these people we will not see any improvement .... I shall be very glad to see the last of these people, or rather their officials. They really do try one's patience and I am finding it more and more difficult to keep a balanced outlook in my dealings with them. So I suppose the time has come when I ought to go.'[46] When his wish was granted, he was sceptical that the new Head, now named as the armoured warfare exponent, Lieutenant-General Martel, even with a personal introduction to Stalin, would actually see much of the Soviet General Staff themselves: 'I hope Martel will be alright. He has big ideas and expects to hobnob with Soviet fighting Generals. He says he will go home if he is not allowed to. Well this attitude and his letter to Joe may work, but I doubt if he gets regular meetings!'[47]

The NID was inclined to agree with Miles that the main issue had been missed, demonstrating once again the different nature of the Navy's views of liaison. Clanchy agreed with Miles that the real issue was not intelligence, a minor matter, but the operations and efficiency of British personnel in North Russia. The main question, he wrote, 'of our being treated as a second class power is being avoided.' To the Navy, personal treatment (and respect) had always been significant: earlier Rushbrooke had shrugged off the lack of intelligence the Soviets supplied, only to add 'but at times one rather wishes that they would be a little more gracious and say "thank you"'[48] The Navy also feared that Martel would attempt to bargain naval secrets for visits by himself to the Soviet front.[49]

Martel's mission

The problems that Martel would face from inside his command were not immediately apparent when he went out to the USSR. The auguries for him, indeed appeared good, as Stalin himself had said to Clark Kerr that the Mission would be treated as allies.[50] Martel had a reputation as a maverick and Brooke was probably glad to find him a job overseas, but to many he appeared a suitable appointment.[51] Armed with a letter from Churchill, he was able to have a meeting with Stalin, one of the prime aims of the 'new deal'. It was felt that this, his rank as a Lieutenant-General, and his well-known expertise in armoured warfare, would get him regular contacts at a more senior level than the Otdel.[52] This was made clear in Brooke's message to Clark Kerr, in which he hoped that the ambassador's launching of Martel into the 'highest circles' would lead to some reciprocity by the Soviets (by which we must assume Brooke did not mean *he* had to have closer contacts with the head of the Soviet Mission) and 'more easier and efficient relations with them.'[53] Martel saw this aim more bluntly. He wrote to his friend Basil Liddell Hart that he was going out to 'find out what the hell was going on.'[54] He saw his mission primarily as getting Soviet generals to give more information on their side of the war – on their tactics, their equipment, their plans and their dispositions. Martel had taken on board the talk in Whitehall that the way to get such materials was toughness, which the Soviets were supposed to respect. A later comment reveals how he interpreted this: he said that he went out intending to 'be frightfully offensive to the first Russian Marshal I met.'[55] His directive however, said differently. A note was added to it stating that the Soviets strongly disliked any attempt to acquire or obtain intelligence about their forces unless they volunteered it: 'you should therefore, for the present, not seek to obtain such intelligence except in so far as it may be ordered in connection with planning joint operations' or in discussions on tactics or equipment.[56]

The moment was certainly propitious. The Red Army's post-Stalingrad offensive had stalled. There was high expectation in the USSR that the western Allies would invade France in the

summer, and the drawn-out battle for Tunisia resulted in triumph in early May. 250,000 Axis soldiers were taken prisoner – numbers that impressed even the Soviets, accustomed to war on a grand scale. After a lively chat with Stalin, Martel met Marshal Aleksandr Vassilievskii, the Chief of the General Staff, and got his visit to the Front.[57] According to his own account, he spoke aggressively to his host there, who had been deliberately obscuring the half of a map showing Red Army dispositions – and the result, Martel claimed, was a triumph for toughness, as he uncovered and proceeded to give Martel a full briefing.[58] Exham's final letters before leaving celebrated the new levels of contacts and cooperation.[59]

The honeymoon did not last. Martel was ill-suited to day-to-day liaison through the institutional barricade of Otdel, where rudeness had, it turned out, little effect. The lack of the second front, and more importantly, the preparations for the coming titanic struggle for the Kursk salient, meant that high-level contacts did not continue. There was little chance of senior generals regularly 'hobnobbing' with Martel. Quite apart from the fact that they were very busy (Stalin worked his *Stavka* very hard), there was an established procedure for liaising with foreign soldiers which they were unlikely to wish to breach. Martel's expectation, encouraged by the CIGS, that his mission was to be in regular contact with the Soviet General Staff meant that he regarded the default to the regular channel of communication through Otdel as a cooling of relations, whereas the Soviets regarded it simply as the normal process of liaison, through the formal designated body for it. This explains the paradox that Martel increasingly in his reports ranted about the breakdown of relations, when in fact the liaison was proceeding along regular channels (though ones he regarded as below the dignity of a Lieutenant-General).[60] His inability to 'hob-nob' with Vassilievskii and his comrades coloured his whole outlook on his mission and on the state of relations.

The headship of the Mission demanded patience, leadership and a sense of proportion where one's own prestige was concerned. Although a perceptive thinker on armoured warfare, Martel was not notable for these qualities. His rapid shift into a siege mentality prompted by the lack of continued contacts with Soviet marshals was intensified by the underlying inter-service tensions regarding cooperation with the USSR. He was faced, admittedly, with an impossible position in the Mission – though his own obsession with his status and personal dignity did not help.

Both Navy and Air Force had supported the policy of appointing higher-ranking officers. The point, though, was for each to get better contacts with their Soviet counterparts – not to create a unitary mission dominated by the Army Head. They both feared that the returns from any bargaining would accrue to the benefit of the Army, if it was executed by a soldier. The RAF had felt that it was their turn to provide the Head.[61] When Brooke insisted on the egotistical Martel, they made a bid to create a *de facto* independent Air Force Mission, nominally under Martel's headship but in RAF matters entirely autonomous. The hope was to finally get out from under the Army's shadow when dealing with the Soviets, and to make contact with high ranking officers in the VVS.

The Air Ministry appointed in place of Cheshire an Air Marshal, Sir John Tremaine Babington, who would be equal in substantive rank to Martel.[62] They asserted that RAF representation was none of the general's business, particularly as Martel had 'shown himself … to be extremely ill-informed on air matters…'. [63] The RAF intended that by dint of his elevated rank, Babington would forge his own personal links with top Soviet air force officers, similar to Martel's own objective but in no way connected to it.[64]

As soon as he heard of the appointment, Martel responded with pique at what he saw as a direct threat to his command and imputation of inadequacy in his leadership.[65] The issue festered through the summer, against the unavailing efforts of the ambassador to mediate. Babington immediately called into question Martel's own positive picture of his early achievements, and was sharply critical of Martel's optimistic view of Soviet prospects. He described Martel's attitude to him when he arrived as 'some sort of mild hysteria'. He held back from making contact at Otdel

level, expecting to meet Stalin and the General Staff as Martel had done – but the Soviets did not respond, regarding Babington as a subordinate officer in the Mission.[66]

The Navy's representative, Rear-Admiral Douglas Fisher, who been in the USSR much longer than the other two, having commanded in North Russia before taking over the Navy mission from Miles, proposed that he should be replaced by a more *junior* officer – the 'new deal' was unravelling fast at the Mission end of things. Fisher testified to the personal tensions inherent in having so many 'staff officer peacocks' (Clark Kerr's phrase), living together (literally – they shared a flat) in the hothouse atmosphere of Moscow. [67] The Admiralty refused his request, keen on maintaining their own high-level contacts with the Soviet admiralty, independent of Martel. They claimed to have future active operations in the north in mind.[68]

Although Martel portrayed Babington's attempts to forge his own contacts as the reason why his own good contacts dried up, his answer was to advocate more toughness, and a direct linkage of the military and domestic areas of relations.[69] He became increasingly bitter and angry at any British authorities that he felt were undermining him by not endorsing his line. The FO was central in his sights, the embassy was not spared, despite Clark Kerr's best efforts and support during the Babington episode, but Martel also blamed Brooke and Grigg.

The area Martel designated 'domestic relations', remained fraught with problems, and this became Martel's prime focus, just as it had been foremost in Miles's mind when he had written his report. The Soviet authorities in North Russia again ceased processing visa requests, which meant that personnel due for relief after a year's tour of duty in the inhospitable conditions of Arkhangelsk and Murmansk could not leave. Moreover, there were twenty-four merchant ships stuck there, awaiting the possibility of leaving in convoy. When misdemeanours were committed by seamen on shore, such as brawls with officials or trivial matters like smoking in a forbidden zone, the Soviet courts administered what were seen in British eyes to be harsh sentences. Tensions grew as British officers refused to hand over merchant seamen to Soviet justice. Martel, and Rear-Admiral Ernest Archer, the SBNO in Murmansk, were convinced that local civilian authorities were to blame, directed of course from Moscow. Admiral Arseni Golovko, the C-in-C of the Northern Fleet, appeared to sympathise, having himself had problems with the civil officials.[70]

The Prime Minister's response was supportive of Martel: he suggested that all the men in North Russia make ostentatious preparations to withdraw. The Soviets, he felt would soon realise that if they all departed then there was no chance of any more convoys and they would back down.[71] The COS considered this, and while it chimed in with their personal feelings – they would have loved to have been rid of what they saw as a burden shouldered for the benefit of an ungrateful ally – they turned the idea down. They pointed out to Churchill that the naval personnel would all be needed to support offensive operations they planned soon against German warships in the far North, and that the army personnel in Arkhangelsk, though not needed for this, were vital for logistical support for those trapped merchantmen.[72] The decision was therefore to appeal to Foreign Commissar Vyacheslav Molotov's better nature, while also dangling the possibility of these offensive operations. Molotov, however, was unmoved.[73] Churchill made a direct intervention with Stalin once the demarche to Molotov had floundered, and in turn got a stern rebuff, in one of the rudest messages Stalin sent him. Churchill's response was to return it to the Soviet ambassador as if unread.[74] The FO concluded that the Soviets thought there were too many British personnel in the USSR uninvolved in direct military operations. Concurring, Claud Waldock, head of the military branch in the Admiralty, sneeringly remarked that to Russian 'piggy little minds' all such foreigners were spies.[75]

The end of the new deal

Since his direct contacts with top level Red Army generals were now infrequent, this all induced Martel to state categorically that Anglo-Soviet relations were now bad.[76] Martel had gone to the

USSR with high expectations that he could get significant intelligence about the Red Army, and he may well have had a personal stake in this, as success could have been his pathway back to a major active command. General Leslie Hollis of the COS committee briefed Churchill, however, that Martel's own reporting 'does not quite bear out the statement … that domestic and military relations with the Russians are bad.'[77] MI3c, the section of Military Intelligence covering the USSR, and not known for a positive view of the Soviets, noted that while there was continued obstruction on domestic relations, military relations were good, there had been regular meetings with Dubinin, and a fair amount of intelligence on battle experience, Soviet organisation and German order of battle had been forthcoming. MI3c concluded that there had *not* been a decline in relations over the last three months as Martel claimed. It is interesting, that at the start of the year, Miles's negative gloss was accepted and the actually quite positive record of cooperation was overlooked, because of the bad treatment of British personnel: now, later in the year, such claims by the head of mission were subject to more critique back in Whitehall – and by departments not notable for giving the Soviets the benefit of the doubt.[78]

Admiral Miles had regarded the over-riding purpose of the Mission to be the continuance of the practice of cooperation and helping the Soviet war effort where possible.[79] Churchill himself had said the purpose of the mission was to make relations better.[80] The problem was that Martel was so convinced he could get previously-inaccessible, high-level information concerning the Soviets own operations, and that this was the *sole purpose* of his mission, that he created a zero-sum game for himself in which failure was inevitable. He overlooked, or was never aware of, the multiple purposes of the Mission. Martel's blunt repetition of this viewpoint led the military authorities in Whitehall to react by reverting to an asymmetrical, non-reciprocal view of the relationship.

The Director of Military Operations noted he and the CIGS agreed that while it was annoying not to get more intelligence from the Soviets, it was 'really a minor matter so long as they keep the war going so well.'[81] Brooke was aware of the broader strategic and political context – notably that the success of Operation Overlord depended on the Red Army continuing to engage the bulk of German forces.[82] He cannot also have been unaffected by Martel's critical tone, which bordered on the personal. He lectured Martel that cooperation came before his personal dignity or reciprocal exchange – effectively an admission that the hard bargaining, 'reciprocity or nothing' approach and the quest for symmetry had, once again, been abandoned: 'I fully appreciate the difficulties of your domestic relations with Russians,' he added, 'You should continue your persuasive policy to improve military relations but bear in mind that your task of improving relations in general is of more importance than the acquisition of improved information, especially at a time when the Russians are fighting so hard and successfully.'[83] Martel regarded Brooke's intervention as a betrayal.[84] Furthermore it was one of the despised diplomats, in the person of Anthony Eden, who then patched up relations while in Moscow for the Foreign Ministers Conference in October, and, in the improved atmosphere of that meeting, gained agreements that mitigated most of the residual domestic issues – by the give-and-take of diplomacy rather than the bartering language of the bargain.[85] Eden came back firmly of the view that Martel was 'something of a calamity', and remarked that he would never have been appointed had not Brooke been exasperated with the Soviets.[86] Brooke's exasperation was now with Martel, and while the planning for Overlord undoubtedly had some effect on the greater readiness now to give the Soviets credit for their fighting effort, the personal element should not be overlooked in explaining Brooke's change of mind. Martel himself was quietly replaced in March 1944.

It would be unfair, though, to regard Martel as exactly a 'calamity'. Foreign Office officials, and indeed those in the War Office too, disliked his intemperate language about what he saw as their shortcomings in his official reports. He certainly did seem short of personal resources and calmness when faced with setbacks to his mission and was unable to see beyond his view that retaliation for all forms of slighting or disrespect from the Soviets was the only acceptable

response. He was also prone to measure the state of relations in terms of the ways he thought he had personally been treated – dignity and prestige was all. Martel's post-war writings expressed strident anti-Communist attitudes, but these were not a noticeable feature of his complaints while Mission head.[87] The inter-service issues that were also interwoven into the very nature of the Mission meant that a rare kind of general, with more of the temperament of an Eisenhower, was required. On the other hand, the Soviets did not seem to have regarded Martel badly. The cooling of their contacts with him was not accompanied by any official complaints against him and seems just to have been part of the rhythm of their bureaucratic processes, wherein any moves towards closeness with foreigners were almost always followed by a retreat. In addition, of course, as Miles and Cheshire had noted, the personal treatment of Mission personnel was shaped by the broader political climate. Martel seems to have been quite oblivious to that, and one of the reasons for Eden's caustic comment about him was that the atmosphere was improving greatly after October 1943 and Martel's gripes were quite out of step with how things were going. Yet the Soviets may well have appreciated Martel's credentials as a fighting soldier, rather than an intelligence officer like MacFarlane, and they seemed to regret his departure. His successor, Brocas Burrows, was to be compared unfavourably to Martel by Molotov. Burrows was accused of being patronising, and whatever Martel's other faults, he always showed considerable respect for Soviet military prowess and the success of his early discussions with them was largely down to the way he talked to them as fellow soldiers. Leaving aside Martel's poor political sense, his reporting of the Red Army's performance was quite perceptive. This is thrown into sharp relief when his reports are compared to the one written by Babington, which drips with patronising attitudes towards Russians and towards the Soviet Union.[88]

Conclusions

Martel, though, had only part of the skills-set required to succeed in this desperately difficult job. His experience shows that the progress of cooperation, liaison and exchange between the British mission in Moscow and their Soviet hosts was subject to many complex, though not always linked, influences.[89] Many attitudes and axioms about the USSR and about Russians were common to all three services, but on significant aspects of British military policy towards the USSR that there could be considerable difference of opinion, indeed suspicion and rivalry between the different services. There is an extensive documentary record of this in the British national archives, though the material is spread diffusely through many record classes. It includes a considerable amount of personal and semi-official correspondence, which sometimes reveals the emotional context of policy-making. Less rational aspects of perception and behaviour and the roles of personality and ego in the actual experience of Anglo-Soviet liaison can thus be analysed, including, significantly, the *institutional* manifestations of such factors.

The nature of the relationship precluded attempts to define it in a symmetrical way. Entrenched prejudice against the Soviet system and the use of disparaging ethnic stereotypes of Russians, however, led the British military to worry continually over how to measure the quantity and quality of Soviet 'cooperation' and led to a preoccupation with balance and reciprocity that was markedly lacking in the relationship with the Americans. Official documents contain frequent references to the fact that the Soviets were contributing by fighting the bulk of the German forces. However, the Soviet tendency to emphasise this fact themselves and to cast aspersions on British efforts, inevitably wounded military pride in Whitehall, fuelling perceptions that the Soviets were both arrogant and insensitive to Britain's contributions to the war. Added to this was Britain's self-image, at the start of the relationship, as the experienced, senior partner in the art of modern warfare and its expectation that deference and respect should be shown when British cooperation and expertise

were offered. These feelings, taken together, meant a continual urge to measure the relationship and to find balance in an essentially unbalanced and asymmetrical one. This often involved trying to enact linkage – joining different aspects of the cooperation together to produce such balance: including the most elusive goal, altering the attitude of Soviet internal agencies towards foreigners in their midst by linking the two spheres of 'domestic' and 'military' relations. This led to frequent and instinctive reversions to the question of whether to try to bargain by making the provision of one item conditional on an equal return from the Soviets, either in the same area or in something agreed to be equivalent. The basic problem undermining this strategy was that the Soviets could play the same game with higher cards by demanding that the most important area of symmetry should be equality of fighting effort. Stalin, Molotov and the generals who liaised with the British in the Otdel repeatedly promised greater levels of cooperation and acknowledgement of 'linkage' once there was such equality, in the form of a Second Front in western Europe (though whether these promises were kept is another matter).

To fully understand the British contribution to the liaison relationship it is necessary to factor in all the actors and institutions and their attitudes, perceptions and mindsets – not just their views of the Soviets, but also of each other. The ultimate outcome is certainly complex, and sometimes apparently lacking a consistent pattern. The British participants at the time were themselves wrestling with this complexity and attempting to boil it down to a workable doctrine or formula. A notable characteristic of the British military approach to alliance with the Soviets was this compulsion to set it on a regularised, measurable basis. There was a strong urge to keep a score, for the alliance to be measurably 'equal'. This instinct kept surfacing, only to come up against the realities of the alliance situation and the fact that actually the British did not really want reciprocity or symmetry, no matter how attractive they found the idea in theory, or how much they returned to sloganistic formulae like 'hard bargaining' and 'strict reciprocity'. They did not actually want to share with the Soviets the kind of information about their own operations and forces that they wanted from them, nor did they strive to ensure equality in the burden of actual combat. At times, middle-ranking officers, like Medhurst or Clanchy, recognised this, and in their internal, semi-personal comments let slip that what the British really wanted from the Soviets when they complained that they should behave more as 'allies' is that the Soviets should demonstrate better 'manners' and show British officers 'respect'. Lack of such formalities was greatly over-signified by the British military, leading Smith to find British attitudes to be dripping with imperialist overtones. This is not to say, that there was no blame attached to the Soviet manner of conducting cooperation, which placed it in a watertight box so that it took place in certain forums, such as Otdel or meetings with Stalin, but had no impact whatsoever on the established practices and doctrines of institutions like NKVD when it came to attitudes to foreigners or the application of Soviet laws.

The overarching commitment, even for the sceptical Brooke, was to maintain the alliance and to recognise that helping the Soviet war effort was an end in itself, independent of any specific returns. With that in mind, one might add that for all the negative emotions that the process induced, most especially in the personnel posted to the USSR, but also in the bureaucratic political maelstrom in Whitehall, cooperation did roll on, and kept producing successful outcomes, intelligence and operational, whatever the negative feelings of those involved. The quality of cooperation is difficult to reduce to a judgement on a binary scale of success/failure, unless much of the activity is filtered out and a very narrow definition of cooperation is applied, such as counting how many order-of-battle meetings resulted in exchange of information. But each aspect of liaison connected to and influenced the others, so that to isolate one aspect in this way produces false results or at least over-simplified ones. Ambiguities and conflicting emotions were inherent in the multiplicity of issues raised by services liaison with an ally (of any kind, not just the autocratic Soviet Union). It required, perhaps, more focused and day-to-day management from the very top, and given the numerous threads the Big Three leaders all had to keep tabs on, perhaps it is not surprising that this was not present.

Notes

1. Martel to CIGS Brooke, 9 Oct. 1943 MIL102 [The National Archives, Kew, London] F[oreign O[ffice Records] 181/980/10.
2. 30 Military Mission's existence is acknowledged in a number of accounts of Anglo-Soviet relations, but it does not tend to feature as a particularly important element. See Martin Kitchen, *British Policy Towards the Soviet Union, 1939–1945* (London: Macmillan, 1986) 58-63, 170-2, 271-2, Richard J. Aldrich *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence* (London: John Murray, 2001), 29-34, 36-8. Gabriel Gorodetsky discusses the early days of the Mission in *Stafford Cripps' Mission to Moscow 1940-42* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
3. Directive to General MacFarlane, 24 June 1941 CAB[inet papers] 121/645.
4. Joan E. Beaumont, 'A Question of Diplomacy: Military Missions to the USSR 1941-45', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies*, 118 (1973), 75-8; Beaumont, *Comrades in Arms. British Aid to Russia 1941-45* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1980).
5. Aldrich, *Hidden Hand*, 29.
6. Bradley F. Smith, *Sharing Secrets with Stalin. How the Allies Traded Intelligence* (Lawrence: Kansas University Press, 1996), 98, 205.
7. Alaric Searle, 'Uneasy Intelligence Collaboration, Genuine Ill-Will, with an admixture of Ideology: the British Military Mission to the Soviet Union, 1941-45', in D. Stoker (ed), *Military Advising and Assistance: From Mercenaries to Privatization, 1815-2007* (London: Routledge, 2008), 61-80.
8. Ryan E. Bock, 'Anglo-Soviet Intelligence Cooperation, 1941-45: Normative Insights from the Dyadic Democratic Peace Literature', *Intelligence and National Security*, 30 (2015), 890-912.
9. Jonathan N. Brown & Alex Farrington, 'Democracy and the depth of intelligence sharing: why regime type hardly matters', *Intelligence and National Security*, 32 (2017), 69-70.
10. Martel Report 4, 12 Sept. 1943 CAB121/645.
11. The new approach is briefly discussed in Kitchen, *British Policy*, 146-7, though linked to the Tizard mission (see below), rather than the report by Miles.
12. Note of Admiralty views, 29 Aug. 1943 AIR [Ministry papers] 20/5401.
13. Rushbrooke minute, 3 Feb. 1943 ADM[miralty papers] 1/12671.
14. Clanchy to Fisher 7 June 1943 ADM223/249.
15. A fighter wing had fought on the Murmansk front in October 1941, and subsequently Spitfire and Lancaster units would operate from Soviet airfields in the north in missions against the German battleship *Tirpitz*, see Hubert Griffith, *R.A.F. in Russia* (London: Hammond, 1943), John Golley, *Hurricanes Over Murmansk* (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1987). RAF personnel were also deployed at various Soviet locations training VSS pilots and mechanics; see, for instance, Operation Shallow, AIR46/21.
16. Sinclair to Lyttleton, 5 Feb. 1943 AIR19/371.
17. Exham to Davidson (DMI), 17 July and 18 Aug. 1942 W[ar]O[ffice papers] 178/92.
18. Kirkman to Exham (Deputy DMI), 4 Aug., Exham to Kirkman, 28 Sept. 1942 WO178/92.
19. Miles to DNI, 26 Nov. 1942 ADM223/248; Exham to Kirkman, 24 Nov. 1942 WO178/92; Martin H. Folly, 'From Sevastopol to Sukhumi – and back again: British naval liaison in action with the Red Navy in the Black Sea, 1941-1945', *War in History* (online, June 2020), 11-12.
20. JP(42)161st meeting, 1 Oct. 1942 CAB119/39; Searle, 'Uneasy Intelligence Collaboration', 67-8.
21. DDOP(2) note, 9 Nov. 1942 AIR2/5481; Clark Kerr to FO, 21 Dec. 1943 FO371/36970/N7293.
22. Exham to Major-General Fladgate (Director of Signals, WO) 21 Nov., Exham to Kirkman, 24 Nov. 1943 WO178/92; Martin H. Folly, "British attempts to forge a political partnership with the Kremlin, 1942-1943", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 53 (2018), 193.
23. Exham to Kirkman, 24 Nov. 1942 WO178/92; Martin H. Folly, *Churchill, Whitehall and the Soviet Union* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 44-5.
24. Miles to Rushbrooke, 4 January 1943 ADM223/249; Turner diary 21 Dec. 1942, 5 Jan. 1943 I[mperial] W[ar] M[useum].
25. Miles report to COS Committee (untitled), 31 Dec. 1942 ADM223/252.
26. COS to Sargent, 22 Feb 1943 WO193/651.
27. Miles report, 31 Dec. 1943 ADM223/252.
28. Miles to DMI, telegrams MIL7999, MIL8001 6 Jan. 1943 FO371/36969/N261.
29. Smith, *Sharing Secrets*, 63-6, 104, 106.
30. Cheshire, 'Report on Work of the Air Section, 30 Military Mission', 2 Jan. 1943 CAB163/2.
31. Sinclair minute, 9 Jan., AMP note, 30 Jan. 1943 AIR2/5481.
32. JIC(43)4th mtg (O) 19 Jan. 1943 CAB81/91; JIC(43)25 2 Feb. 1943 CAB81/113. On 30 March Miles told the JIC that he thought the Americans were actually treated worse than the British, JIC(43)16th mtg (O) 30 March 1943 CAB81/91.
33. Davidson note, 21 Jan.1943 WO32/15548.

34. The COS pulled back from pushing for a formal arrangement, fearing they would have to keep to it even if the Soviets did not, Price to Lawford, 25 Feb., FO to Moscow, 16 March 1943 CAB163/2; JIC(43)72 23 Feb 1943 CAB81/113. The 'charter' was referenced in Babington's directive, but the idea of putting it to the Soviets had been quietly abandoned, Cavendish-Bentinck minute, 25 June 1943 FO371/36969/N3557.
35. JIC(43)4th mtg (O) 19 Jan 1943 CAB81/91, Capel Dunn to Hollis, 4 Feb. CAB163/2. The JIC copy of Miles's report in CAB163/2 has 'firmness' lined in the margin.
36. Miles to Rushbrooke, 6 Feb. ADM223/249. Ivan Maiski was Soviet ambassador at London.
37. JIC(43)9th mtg 23 Feb. 1943 CAB81/91.
38. COS(43)37th mtg 12 Feb. 1943 CAB79/25; COS to Sargent, 22 Feb. 1943 WO193/651.
39. Lyttleton (Minister of Production) to Alexander, 3 Feb. 1943 ADM1/13368.
40. Allied Supplies Executive meeting, 30 Dec. 1942 FO371/36927/N24.
41. Medhurst note, 10 Feb. 1943 AIR20/7961; Sinclair note on Cripps letter, 19 Jan. 1943 AIR19/371.
42. Alexander to Lyttleton, 8 Feb., Eden to Lyttleton, 12 Feb. 1943 ADM1/13368.
43. COS(43) 37th mtg 12 February 1943, JP(43)25 2 Feb. 1943 CAB79/25. COS(43)47(F) 13 Feb. 1943 AIR20/7961. The phrase 'new deal' was used by Cavendish-Bentinck to describe the approach, to Davidson, 20 March 1943 WO32/15548.
44. WM(43)32nd mtg 18 Feb. 1943 CAB65/33; COS(43)44th mtg 19 Feb. CAB79/25.
45. Lyttleton to Alexander, 15 April 1943 ADM1/13368.
46. Miles letter to Clanchy (DNI), 19 Feb. 1943 ADM223/249.
47. Miles to Clark Kerr, 27 March 1943 FO800/301. Miles left Moscow on 22 March, and no Soviet General Staff representative came to see him off (they did later apologise for this) – though the Red Navy gave him a liquid send-off, ADM199/1102. Martel met Stalin on 12 April WO178/27.
48. Clanchy to Miles, 25 Feb. 1943, Rushbrooke to Miles, 6 Dec. 1942 ADM223/249.
49. Fisher to Rushbrooke, 23 June 1943 ADM223/249.
50. Clark Kerr to FO, 25 Feb. 1943 FO371/36927/N1149; Exham to Davidson, 19 Apr. 1943 WO178/92; Warner to Clark Kerr, 16 March 1943 FO800/301.
51. A J Smithers, *Rude Mechanicals: An Account of Tank Maturity During the Second World War* (London: Grafton, 1987), 175; Alanbrooke diary 4, 5 March 1943, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives [LHCMA].
52. Martel met the Soviet General Staff on 21 April, Exham to Leith, 23 April 1943 WO178/92.
53. Brooke to Clark Kerr, 25 March 1943 FO800/301.
54. Martel to Liddell Hart, 1 April 1943 Liddell Hart Papers, LHCMA LH1/492.
55. Martel lecture at NATO Staff College, 'Reflections on Strategy', 19 Jan. 1953 Martel Papers GQM 5/2 IWM.
56. COS(43)99 26 March 1943 CAB80/39, COS(43)77th mtg 27 March 1943 CAB79/26. In his JIC briefing he was told that it was desirable to get as much military intelligence back from the USSR as possible in return for what he supplied, though it was added that it would be bad tactics to give the Soviets the impression that his main object was to seek intelligence, JIC(43)14th mtg CAB81/91.
57. Martel to CIGS MIL8926, 21 Apr 1943 CAB121/645.
58. Martel's contemporary report was less dramatic: Martel told the commander of a Guards Army at Izyum he could not study his technique without knowing the disposition of his troops. The general then opened up and gave details. Over drinks, Martel was told everything they wanted to know about past and present operations, but no Russian was prepared to say a word about future operations, report of visit to South-West Front, 11-19 May 1943 CAB163/2.
59. Exham to Firebrace, 10 May 1943 WO178/92.
60. Martel letter to Vassilievskii, 29 Dec. 1943 FO181/980/10.
61. Medhurst to VCNS, 2 Feb. 1943 ADM1/12671.
62. COS(43)110th mtg (O) 24 May 1943, Clark Kerr to FO 488, 9 June 1943 CAB121/645.
63. Note to Permanent Under-secretary, Air Ministry, 25 June 1943 AIR2/5481, Directive to Air Marshal Babington, 13 June, Evill note to Portal (Chief of Air Staff), 25 June 1943 AIR20/5401.
64. ACAS to Cheshire, 15 May 1943 AIR20/8060; Clark Kerr letter to Warner, 22 July 1943 FO371/36970/N4598; Evill note to CAS, 23 July 1943 AIR20/5401.
65. Cheshire to ACAS(I), 20 May 1943 AIR20/8060. Martel complained to Douglas Evill, Vice-Chief of the Air Staff, of RAF 'isolationist' views (meaning not working with other services): Cheshire, he said, had done his best, so the problem was in Whitehall. Portal noted that Brooke agreed 'that evidently "Q" had got a wrong idea of his position vis-à-vis the 2 other services', note 25 June 1943, Martel letter to Evill, 15 June 1943 AIR20/5401.
66. Babington to Evill, 25 June, 16 July 1943 AIR20/5401.
67. Fisher to Rushbrooke, 3 July, Maund to Clanchy, 15 Aug. 1943 ADM223/249.
68. Rushbrooke to Fisher, 8 Aug. 1943 ADM223/249; COS(43)214th (O) 13 Sept. 1943 CAB121/645; Waldock to Fisher, 21 Sept. 1943 ADM1/13383
69. Martel Report 4, 2 Sept. 1943 CAB121/465. Martel put a great deal of emphasis on the disruption of the Mission's 'team spirit' by the RAF's approach.

70. Martel to COS, 24 May, to CIGS, 9 July 1943 CAB121/465; Martel Report 3, 19 July 1943 WO206/133; NID brief 'Difficulties of Naval Personnel in North Russia' 28 Sept. 1943 ADM223/253.
71. Churchill minute to Ismay, COS(43)214 25 July 1943, Martel to COS, 18 and 23 July 1943 CAB121/645.
72. WO note for COS mtg of 26 July 1943, WO193/668, COS to Churchill, 2 Aug. 1943 CAB121/465.
73. Price note, 1 Aug. 1943, FO to Clark Kerr, 8 Aug. 1943 1057, 1058, Martel to COS, 28 Aug. MIL9798, Churchill to Eden, 5 Sept. 1943 Eden to Churchill, 8 Sept. 1943 CAB121/465.
74. Martin Folly, Geoffrey Roberts and Oleg Rzheshevsky, *Churchill and Stalin. Comrades-in-Arms During the Second World War* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2019), 47.
75. Waldock to VCNS on FO draft telegram, 7 July 1943 COS(43)187 CAB121/465.
76. Martel to COS, 26 Sept. 1943 CAB121/645.
77. Hollis note to Churchill, 1 Oct. 1943 CAB121/645.
78. Firebrace to DMI, 28 Sept., Talbot-Rise memo, 11 Oct., Thornton minute, 7 Nov. 1943 WO208/1838.
79. Miles to DNI, 26 Nov. 1942 ADM223/248; Naval Mission Diary, 28 Jan. and 14 Feb. 1942 ADM199/1102.
80. Churchill draft telegram to Cripps, 3 Oct. 1941 FO371/29491/N5679.
81. DMO to DMI, 28 Sept. 1943 WO208/1838.
82. COS(42)345(O) 30 Oct. 1942 CAB80/65; JIC(43)504(O) 13 Dec. 1943 CAB81/119.
83. Brooke to Martel, 29 Sept. 1943 WO178/27.
84. Martel to DMI 9 October 1943 MIL100 WO208/1838, Martel to Brooke 9 Oct 1943 MIL102 FO181/980/10, Brooke to Martel 22 Oct 1943 CAB121/645.
85. Martel to WO, 5 Nov., 30 Mission to Admiralty, 7 Nov. 1943 WO193/668. Martel noted that after discussion with Ismay, Eden and Clark Kerr, it was decided to wait and see whether 'goodwill' would now materialise and produce improvement in military relations before taking reprisals against the Soviet Mission in London. Balfour note of Martel's 12 Points, 27 Nov. 1943: Martel's response is a note on 6 Dec. and a paper 'Relations with the Russians', continuing to sneer at the 'goodwill' policy FO181/980/10.
86. Eden minute, 20 Nov., Eden minute, 24 Dec. 1943 FO371/36970/N6997, N7241.
87. See G. Le Q. *Martel*, *An Outspoken Soldier*: *His Views and Memoirs* (London: Sifton Praed, 1949) and *The Russian Outlook* (London: Michael Joseph, 1947).
88. Clark Kerr account of conversation with Molotov, 23 June 1944 FO800/302; Babington paper 'The Riddle of Soviet Success', 12 Aug. 1943 AIR20/2675; Searle, 'Uneasy Intelligence Collaboration', 69.
89. Beaumont, 'A Question of Diplomacy', 77.

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Martin H. Folly lectures in history at Brunel University London. His most recent book is Churchill and Stalin. Comrades-in-Arms During the Second World War, co-written with Geoffrey Roberts and Oleg Rzheshevsky. Earlier works include Churchill, Whitehall and the Soviet Union, 1940–45, The United States in World War II, The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of the Second World War and two historical dictionaries of United States Foreign Policy. He has published articles on the negotiation of the North Atlantic Treaty and essays on President Harry S. Truman, British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin and on Averell Harriman and Lord Inverchapel, ambassadors in London and Washington DC during the 1940s. He has presented papers on aspects of allied cooperation during World War II at international conferences in Gdansk, Poland and Moscow and Arkhangelsk, Russia, as part of his continuing project on the workings of wartime allied cooperation.