

fight the Japanese—and to prevent civil war after the defeat of Japan. Roosevelt assigned a personal emissary to China, Maj. Gen. Patrick Hurley. Hurley met with the CCP in Yen'an, but later learned that OSS officers were working out a secret deal with the CCP, behind his back (and therefore behind Roosevelt's back), to provide weapons to the CCP without first establishing an agreement with the Chinese government.

Hurley reported this to Roosevelt, who ordered an investigation. Both Hurley and Gen. Abert Wedemeyer, Commander of U.S. forces in China, recognized this as essentially a British-run operation. Wedemeyer cabled the War Department in December 1944: "We Americans interpret U.S. policy as requiring a strong unified China and a China fighting effectively against Japanese. There is considerable evidence that British policy is not in consonance with U.S. policy. British Ambassador personally suggested to me that a strong unified China would be dangerous to the world and certainly would jeopardize the white man's position immediately in Far East and ultimately throughout the world."⁶

The British therefore supported all sides, by various means, among the warlord, communist, and government forces in China, during and after World War II. In the words of Carton de Wiart, the official liaison between Lord Mountbatten and Chiang Kai-shek, in a cable to London: "I am not really worried about civil war, which is after all usual here."⁷ The actual target of this British policy was revealed in an article in the London *Daily Mail* in October 1945, which complained that "anti-British psychology has not been discouraged by our American ally. U.S. propagandists have been working from Lanchow, gateway to Tibet, to the Gobi Desert of Mongolia. . . . A great plan to dam the Yangtze, known as the 'Yangtze Valley Authority,' will be one of the greatest engineering contracts of modern times. . . . Their geologists have plodded the old caravan trails to the fringes of Tibet and the wild western tribal countries."⁸ In other words, the British identified the "threat," over fifty years ago, of China establishing itself as a truly independent nation-state through such great projects as the Yangtze dam (now near completion as the Three Gorges Dam) and the reconstruction of the old Silk Road (now the center of China's development policy under the name of the Eurasian Land-Bridge).⁹ And, as today, the British were particularly energized to prevent U.S. collaboration with China on such great projects.

General Hurley flushed out the British plans for Southeast Asia, devised without informing the United States: "The British, French and Dutch in the Far East are bound together by a

6. Ibid.

7. Lanxin Xiang, *Recasting the Imperial Far East; Britain and America in China, 1945-1950* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995).

8. Ibid.

9. "The Eurasian Land-Bridge: The 'New Silk Road'—Locomotive for Worldwide Economic Development," *EIR Special Report*, January 1997.

vital common interest, namely, repossession of their colonial empires. . . . You may therefore expect Britain, France and the Netherlands to disregard the Atlantic Charter and all promises made to other nations by which they obtained support in the earlier stages of the war. . . . In the foregoing you have an outline of the reason why the Council of the Three Empires recently formed at Kandy (SEAC Headquarters) has been built up without the consent or approval of the U.S."¹⁰

10. Op. cit., Thorne.

The clash between Roosevelt and Churchill

The following eyewitness account of the struggle between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Sir Winston Churchill, during negotiations for the Atlantic Charter at the naval base of Argentia in Newfoundland in March 1941, is taken from the book As He Saw It, by Elliott Roosevelt (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946). Elliott Roosevelt, FDR's son, was his aide at all but one of the Big Three conferences during World War II. A continuous theme throughout the book, is the clash between the two leaders on the issue of Britain's colonies, as FDR fought for his vision of a postwar world without empire. The following are two short excerpts.

It must be remembered that at this time Churchill was the war leader, Father only the president of a state which had indicated its sympathies in a tangible fashion. Thus, Churchill still arrogated the conversational lead, still dominated the after-dinner hours. But the difference was beginning to be felt.

And it was evidenced first, sharply, over Empire.

Father started it.

"Of course," he remarked, with a sly sort of assurance, "of course, after the war, one of the preconditions of any lasting peace will have to be the greatest possible freedom of trade."

He paused. The P.M.'s head was lowered; he was watching Father steadily, from under one eyebrow.

"No artificial barriers," Father pursued. "As few favored economic agreements as possible. Opportunities for expansion. Markets open for healthy competition." His eye wandered innocently around the room.

Churchill shifted in his armchair. "The British Empire trade agreements" he began heavily, "are—"

Father broke in. "Yes. Those Empire trade agreements

Roosevelt stood his ground at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, forcing British agreement to the Trusteeship principle. Historian William Roger Louis declared: “The British post-war colonial vision died at Yalta.”¹¹ Nonetheless, when FDR sent Hurley to Moscow and London the following month to get Soviet and British agreement to his strong-China

11. William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay, 1941-1945—The U.S. and the Decolonization of the British Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

policy, Churchill told him to his face, “Hong Kong will be eliminated from the British Empire only over my dead body,” and called the strong-China policy a “great American illusion.”¹²

The specifics of the Trusteeship policy, however, were left to the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco, which began on April 25, 1945. Roosevelt, in prep-

12. Op. cit., Xiang.

are a case in point. It’s because of them that the people of India and Africa, of all the colonial Near East and Far East, are still as backward as they are.”

Churchill’s neck reddened and he crouched forward. “Mr. President, England does not propose for a moment to lose its favored position among the British Dominions. The trade that has made England great shall continue, and under conditions prescribed by England’s ministers.”

“You see,” said Father slowly, “it is along in here somewhere that there is likely to be some disagreement between you, Winston, and me.

“I am firmly of the belief that if we are to arrive at a stable peace it must involve the development of backward countries. Backward peoples. How can this be done? It can’t be done, obviously, by eighteenth-century methods. Now—”

“Who’s talking eighteenth-century methods?”

“Whichever of your ministers recommends a policy which takes wealth in raw materials out of a colonial country, but which returns nothing to the people of that country in consideration. *Twentieth-century* methods involve bringing industry to these colonies. *Twentieth-century* methods include increasing the wealth of a people by increasing their standard of living, by educating them, by bringing them sanitation—by making sure that they get a return for the raw wealth of their community.”

Around the room, all of us were leaning forward attentively. Hopkins was grinning. Commander Thompson, Churchill’s aide, was looking glum and alarmed. The P.M. himself was beginning to look apoplectic.

“You mentioned India,” he growled.

“Yes. I can’t believe that we can fight a war against fascist slavery, and at the same time not work to free people all over the world from a backward colonial policy.”

“What about the Philippines?”

“I’m glad you mentioned them. They get their independence, you know, in 1946. And they’ve gotten modern sanitation, modern education; their rate of illiteracy has gone steadily down. . . .”

“There can be no tampering with the Empire’s eco-

nomie agreements.”

“They’re artificial. . . .”

“They’re the foundation of our greatness.”

“The peace,” said Father firmly, “cannot include any continued despotism. The structure of the peace demands and will get equality of peoples. Equality of peoples involves the utmost freedom of competitive trade. Will anyone suggest that Germany’s attempt to dominate trade in central Europe was not a major contributing factor to war?”

It was an argument that could have no resolution between these two men. . . .

The conversation resumed the following evening:

Gradually, very gradually, and very quietly, the mantle of leadership was slipping from British shoulders to American. We saw it when, late in the evening, there came one flash of the argument that had held us hushed the night before. In a sense, it was to be the valedictory of Churchill’s outspoken Toryism, as far as Father was concerned. Churchill had got up to walk about the room. Talking, gesticulating, at length he paused in front of Father, was silent for a moment, looking at him, and then brandished a stubby forefinger under Father’s nose.

“Mr. President,” he cried, “I believe you are trying to do away with the British Empire. Every idea you entertain about the structure of the postwar world demonstrates it. But in spite of that”—and his forefinger waved—“in spite of that, we know that you constitute our only hope. And”—his voice sank dramatically—“you know that we know it. You know that we know that without America, the Empire won’t stand.”

Churchill admitted, in that moment, that he knew the peace could only be won according to precepts which the United States of America would lay down. And in saying what he did, he was acknowledging that British colonial policy would be a dead duck, and British attempts to dominate world trade would be a dead duck, and British ambitions to play off the U.S.S.R. against the U.S.A. would be a dead duck.

Or would have been, if Father had lived.