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David Ormsby Gore

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GREAT BRITAIN: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

A lecture delivered
at the Naval War College
on 15 November 1963

by

Sir David Ormsby Gore

I understand that you are coming to the end of a series of studies of the internal and external situations of individual nations of various alignments and their role in what is described in your syllabus as the power struggle now being waged by the United States and the USSR. From Britain's point of view this is essentially a struggle between, on the one hand, certain alliances in which Britain and the United States are both partners and, on the other hand, the Communist Bloc. After I have discussed Britain's internal political and economic situations, I will discuss Britain's contribution to the world struggle in the context of these alliances. This may be something of an oversimplification of the kind of world in which we really live, but if I try to cover every aspect of Britain's policy in the present day in my opening lecture, it would be extremely long and I think it is really very much better if I try and work within this context and then perhaps some of the other points which will immediately occur to many people in the audience can be taken up during the question and answer period.

The North Atlantic Alliance is, of course, the most significant and powerful of these alliances to which I have referred, and I will therefore say something toward the end of my lecture on the prospects for greater European, and also greater Atlantic, unity in the future.

Internal Political Situation. But first of all, let me say a word about our internal political developments and trends. We have, as you know, a new Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, and he formed a new administration just one month ago, largely along the lines of his predecessor, Mr. Harold MacMillan. Next year, this government will have to face a general election for a new Parliament. For both the United States and Britain, therefore, 1964 will be an election year. Secretary Rusk was pointing out to me the other day that, during the course of the next eighteen months or

so, forty nations in the Free World are going to have elections. This is a problem which we have to face in our democratic societies, which is rather different from the problems facing the Communist Bloc. Of course, an election year in your case will take place because of the fixed four-year cycle written into your Constitution; in our case, because a general election, for all 630 seats in our House of Commons, must take place by law at least every five years, and this period will expire on October 9th of next year. Our Prime Ministers, of course, have the right of choosing any date for such a general election within this period; that is to say, they can have an election one year after taking office if they so wish. The first election I fought was in 1950 and we fought another election in the Autumn of 1951, because the Labour government at that time had such a small majority (I think it was five and the House 625) that it became very difficult, indeed, to govern.

The most general but by no means absolutely guaranteed prediction of our political pundits is that the election will take place next May or June. The theory is that the summer holiday months are unsuitable for an election and that thereafter no government would wish to be forced into an election at the last possible moment before the end of the five-year term in October when conditions may become unexpectedly unfavorable to their reelection. Obviously, you have more flexibility, more maneuverability, if you choose your date sometime before the final expiring of the constitutional period. I do not know how strong an argument this is because it seems to me the United States gets on pretty well, although it has a fixed date for an election. With this prospect in view it is natural that overseas observers should go to some trouble to find out what the main opposition party is thinking, and what they are likely to do if they come to power at the next general election.

Fortunately, I think, for our allies there is no fundamental division between any of the parties who could conceivably come to power, about the basic premise of our foreign and defense policies. The Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Parties are all agreed on seeking to bring about peaceful settlement of international differences, particularly East-West differences, and also search for some sort of secure and just world order which will enable nations with differing social systems to live, deal, and compete with each other without the continual threat and risk of war. But all these three parties also recognize that so long as the communist powers obstruct attempts to achieve these ends in

the United Nations and elsewhere, and pursue their present harassing, and in some respects aggressive, policies, it will be necessary for the free nations to combine in various security arrangements. The most important of these, the North Atlantic Alliance, was first launched in partnership with the United States by a British Labour government. They were in power at the time that the North Atlantic Treaty was signed, and this alliance has been steadily developed by three successive Conservative governments since that day. It will be supported by any government which could conceivably succeed them.

Perhaps I should just say a word about the present lineup of the parties in the House of Commons. At this moment the Conservative Party have a majority of about 100 seats; let us say they have roughly 360 seats, the Labour Party have 260 seats, and the Liberal Party have 5 or 6 seats. The Liberal Party, from the point of view of the votes in the country, is rather underrepresented. They normally poll about 9% or 10% of the electorate but under our system of voting and dividing up the areas it can be that a small party of that kind will find itself with fewer seats in the House of Commons than their total voting strength would allow. If you look at the existing Gallup polls, (I don't know how much faith any of you have in them. I think we all have to have some, but perhaps not blind, faith in them) the Labour Party are leading at the present time with perhaps an 8% to 10% lead over the Conservative Party in the country. Again the Liberal Party seems to be likely to poll about 10% of the votes.

I have been talking about these three parties. Of course, there are other small splinter parties including a perfectly legal Communist Party which has its own newspaper, and puts up candidates for local elections and the general election. At the last general election, the Communist Party polled 30,000 votes out of a total electorate of about 23 million, and they continue to be seemingly active, but have not had a Member of Parliament in the House of Commons since the period of 1945-1950. During that period they had two Members of Parliament; but they have never succeeded in electing a Member since that day.

All the leading parties are agreed on the fundamental concepts of our defense policy in support of this alliance, including the use of existing nuclear weapons possessed by Britain and the United States to deter, preferably, or resist aggression. They are agreed upon making available Britain and British territories overseas for this deterrence, and on the closest possible collaboration between

Britain and the United States in the formulation and execution of joint military plans. I hardly need to remind this audience that Britain provides the only European base for United States Polaris submarines, as well as air bases and other facilities for your Strategic Air Command. The Labour Party have expressed doubts whether Britain can afford the immense costs of maintaining and developing its own nuclear weapons after the present weapons become obsolete. But they do not oppose the maintenance of the British nuclear potential which is now in existence, which was also initiated by a Labour government; nor the use of Britain as a base for American nuclear weapons. The Labour Party have, after considerable debate, rejected unilateral disarmaments. They have supported, as have the other parties, the nuclear test ban treaty. The Conservative Party's support for the British nuclear deterrent, and incidentally the Labour government's reasons for first creating it, are that it makes Britain a less attractive target for the aggressor, and therefore enables us to resist nuclear blackmail; that it increases the weight of British counsels in the discussion of nuclear and other questions such as disarmament; and that it is a continuation of the close co-operation and mutual assistance between Britain and the United States, which was built up in wartime and which originally led to the joint development of the first atomic bomb. Indeed, the decision during the war to concentrate all the development work on an atomic weapon in the United States was, as you know, taken jointly by the British government and the United States government at that time for the very good and simple reason that Britain during those days was under direct bombardment, and it seemed wise therefore that the project should go forward on the much more secure territory of the United States. But it was a joint venture in wartime, and that kind of co-operation sometimes is less satisfactory than others, but on the whole there is a theme running through our atomic co-operation right from the wartime days up to the present.

In general, then, there is a consensus amongst all who are likely to occupy the seat of power in any future British government on those questions of foreign and defense policies which are of prime importance to our allies. And this, indeed, is not surprising, as the choice of policy open to any British government, of whatever party, is fairly strictly limited. This limitation is imposed by certain almost constant factors. These include the geographical position of the country, its natural resources in human and material terms, our need for a very high level of trade to support our standard of living, the pattern of such trade, and, of course, the tradition and history of our people.

Internal Economic Situation. Next I would like to turn to our internal economic situation. I'm glad to be able to report that your ally is showing many signs of robust economic health and growth this year. Both industrial production and exports are now at record levels in our history and look like continuing to move steadily upwards for some time in the future. Since 1950, investment in industry has doubled and our industrial production has risen by some 40%. As a result, unemployment has been kept down to an average of some 1½% of the working population over these years and the present level is about 2%.

Exports, which as you know are absolutely vital to us, far more so than they are to you, are also continuing to rise. Since 1950 they have gone up by more than 70% and this year they are 8% higher than they were a year ago. There has been some recent increase in our exports to North America; they were not doing too well in the first half of the year, but they have been picking up since then. But the most interesting and promising development is the success of our exports in surmounting the tariff barriers to the Common Market in Europe. Despite our exclusion from membership, and therefore our exclusion from the trading privileges that membership involves, over the last five years our exports to the Common Market countries have doubled and are still continuing to rise. I think it is a fair indication of the competitiveness of British industry at the present time. That is because, of course, in the Common Market they have to compete against German, French, and Italian industry, over a tariff barrier which is more formidable for us than it is for the countries that are actually in the Common Market.

European Unity. I will not attempt in these opening remarks to go into detail of the past history of our decision to apply for membership in the Common Market, or the decision of President de Gaulle to use his right of veto to exclude us. I would, however, like to emphasize that the British government's decision to try and enter the European Common Market was a great historic landmark and our exclusion was a blow to Western unity, regretted not only by my own government, but by the other five European members of the community, and I think by the United States. The resilience of Britain's economy and diplomacy in the face of this blow has surprised many. There seems, however, no immediate prospects of any withdrawal of the veto by President de Gaulle and therefore no early prospect of a resumption of the negotiations. In a sense, we can regard the negotiations as suspended rather than terminated, but they cannot be resumed until it is

absolutely clear that there is a will among all the members of the Common Market, including France, to make them succeed. We cannot have another long negotiation and then failure again. We have had two long negotiations now. We first of all tried to promote an industrial free trade area which would have excluded agricultural goods from its operation. The negotiations of that particular project went on for over a year and at the end of that time the French decided that they did not wish to continue with the negotiations. Two years later the British government decided to try to seek reentry into the Common Market itself. We had another eighteen months of very intensive negotiations and at the end of that period, as you know, we were excluded chiefly because of the wishes of President de Gaulle. I don't think you can put British industry in this kind of uncertainty again, unless you have a very reasonable prospect of being able to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

In the meantime, we are doing our best to avoid permanent economic damage, either to ourselves or to the Common Market countries, by trying to insure that our own economic policy develops in such a way as to make our future entry comparatively painless. Above all, we are anxious to prevent these economic divisions and differences from having an adverse political effect on the unity and strength of Western Europe, and therefore on the unity and strength of the North Atlantic Alliance as a whole. It is, I think, self-evident that if countries pursue opposed economic policies, this almost inevitably leads to differences on the political plane, and at the end of the road even to differences on defense and other matters of general interest to the two blocs of countries. So we are seeking to keep our economic policies in line with those of the Common Market to prevent these two from gradually drifting further apart, so that in the beginning of any further negotiations in the future we would not find the problems even more difficult than they were last time.

Britain's ties with Europe correspond, of course, to the facts of geographic propinquity; strategic necessity; and economic, political, social, and cultural involvement, over many centuries. From a long-term point of view, it is difficult to see how any sincerely pursued movement for European unification can ignore these realities without defeating its own ends and ultimately becoming a movement for European divisions. We therefore must prepare for the day when we shall in some way become associated closely with the European political and economic community.

Atlantic Unity. At the same time the inescapable facts of interdependence are impelling us toward still wider Transatlantic unity between the nations of Europe, including Britain, and those of North America, including, of course, Canada. What are these inescapable facts? First, that these nations can neither deter aggression nor defend these two continents except by collective action. Second, that they are dedicated to the social systems and types of government to which the communist powers are committed by their doctrine to overthrow and undermine. Third, that they include the leading industrial powers (very roughly, these contain between 80% or 90% of the manufacturing capacity of the Free World) and that they have similar capabilities and responsibilities for providing much needed aid and capital to the underdeveloped world outside. Finally, there is the fact that science and technology have created a greater interdependence than has ever existed before between all the nations of the Free World, and especially between the industrial nations to which I have referred.

No Conflict Between Atlantic and European Unity. In our view, there is no reason for any conflict between the two trends toward Atlantic and European unity; providing, first, that all the members are prepared to accept the obligations to consult and co-operate, and, if necessary, sacrifice, which any collective effort involves; and providing, secondly, that no member attempts to use the working of the collective process to dominate and frustrate the policies of its allies. In fact, Britain and the United States regard the two unifying movements as complementary, not contradictory. One very important reason for this is that the emergence of a united Europe will give greater balance to the Atlantic partnership by making it a partnership between units of more comparable political, economic and military power. I expect you all know the figures. But if the United Kingdom and certain other Western European countries did enter the Common Market and we built up the political institutions which would be required in a unified Europe, you would have the creation of a unit which would have a population larger than that of the United States, a population larger than that of the Soviet Union, a gross national product which would probably be over two-thirds that of the United States, and a gross national product which would exceed that of the Soviet Union. This is Western Europe, including Britain, by itself.

Far from wishing to dominate Europe or the alliance, Britain and the United States want a united Europe because this will enable Europe to play a more influential and effective role in the policy-making, the management, and the planning of the alliance and particularly in the wielding of nuclear power.

The Alliance's Worldwide Implications. Now, let us take a look at the worldwide implications of the Atlantic Alliance and see how this affects the relationship of Britain and other members to it. This is an aspect of special concern to Britain with its worldwide interest and responsibilities, the scopes of which are comparable with the United States and the United States alone. Our responsibilities do still extend to every ocean and to every continent in the world.

The nature of the communist challenge to the alliance is such that it is not enough for members of NATO to confine their concern to the area of the treaty itself. There are a number of reasons for this, but the most compelling is that our opponents will not themselves permit any such limitation. The directions from which the Soviet Union brings its pressure to bear are worldwide and cooperation between members of the alliance must be correspondingly worldwide. The danger that the communists might risk a major attack against us on the central front in Europe is to my mind limited because of the unquestioning determination of the nations to defend that particular, very sensitive, very vital area. The communists, therefore, have been continually endeavoring from the beginning of the alliance to penetrate, undermine, and dominate economically and politically, all military areas of key importance to members of the alliance, either on the flank or elsewhere in the world. To this end, they endeavor to exploit anti-Westernism, anti-Colonialism, anti-Americanism, and residual isolationism around the world. These forces have, of course, an independent strength of their own, whether the East-West struggle existed or not. But the communists' hope is to use them as a means not only of dividing the Atlantic countries from the non-aligned nations, but of creating dissensions between the Atlantic powers themselves.

Through a policy of decolonization, which as you know has brought self-rule and independence to over 600 million people since the last war, Great Britain finds herself intimately involved in these particular problems in Asia, Africa, and even in South America. I have in mind the West Indies and British Guiana.

That is why we, like other members of the North Atlantic Alliance, continually have to keep trying to harmonize policies, not only for the Atlantic area but in every ocean and on every continent. This is necessary not only where a communist threat is immediately involved, but where there is a possibility of divisions arising between the allies on other issues which could at the end of a chain reaction substantially advance communist

purposes. I am not suggesting that France, for example, must always dance to an American or a British tune, or vice versa, but I do mean that there are occasions when we must all dance to a North Atlantic tune. Except in the barest legalistic sense, the members of NATO cannot be allies and partners in Europe, and neutrals or opponents in other parts of the world, and there has been some evidence of this kind of development in recent months.

This was the lesson we all learned (and it was a painful experience) at the time of Suez. I am not now discussing the merits of the case, but what was perfectly apparent was that a divided Western world, on an issue of this kind, did nobody any good. That lesson is not entirely irrelevant today when there is so much talk about disagreement within the alliance on a wide range of issues. It is worth recording in today's context the words of the committee of 'Three Wise Men' who reported to the NATO council in 1957. The three wise men, if I remember rightly, were Mr. Lester Pearson, now Prime Minister of Canada; Dr. H.M. Lange, the very distinguished Foreign Minister of Norway; and Dr. Gaetano Martino of Italy, who, I think, is at the moment President of the Council of Europe.

This is what they said: 'An alliance in which the members ignore each other's interest, or engage in political or economic conflict, or harbor suspicions of each other, cannot be effective either for deterrence or for defense.' They went on to point out that the security was far more than a military matter. NATO shouldn't solely concern itself with military affairs, and they said this: 'The strengthening of political consultation and economic co-operation, the development of resources, progress in education and understanding—all these can be as important, or even more important, for the protection of the security of a nation, or an alliance, as the building of a battleship or the equipping of an army.'

Special Relationships Outside the Alliance. This involves respect and consideration for the special relationships which members of the alliance may have in areas outside the alliance. France, for example, has such a relationship with, and special responsibilities to, former colonies in Africa, in terms of trade, investment, historical associations. These are comparable to our own special relationship to members of the Commonwealth. Both these relationships legitimately deserve the consideration of all members of the alliance, because we believe they contribute to stability and to harmony in what is, let's face it, a pretty

restless world. The German Federal Republic does not have comparable overseas responsibilities, but it does have a special relationship with the Soviet occupied part of Germany, which is, of course, of vital concern to the whole alliance. Britain, in addition to its Commonwealth ties, also has special responsibilities arising from its membership of other alliances covering threatened areas in the Middle East and in the Far East. There is the CENTO alliance, of which we are full members (the U.S. is a member of the military committee, but it is not a full member of that alliance); and, of course, both of us are full members of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.

No one is in a better position to appreciate the kind of burden that this involves for us than the United States because, in its effort to contain the aggressive expansionism of the Soviet Union and Communist China and their satellites, the United States has assumed security commitments with some forty other nations. In the fulfillment of these commitments it finds itself more closely associated with Britain than with other powers. This is not because of ties of common heritage or historical association, important as these may be in other respects, but because of the indisputable fact that our material interests do meet and overlap all over the world in the field of politics, in the field of defense, in the field of commerce and finance.

The Scope of Britain's Contribution. Because of the world-wide nature of our involvement it would be unfair to attempt to assess the value of the contributions being made by either Britain or the United States merely by adding up what is done on our own territories or within the Atlantic area.

I was strongly reminded of this the other day when I was reading an article in a recent issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*, which was charging that Britain was not bearing its fair share in the sense of Europe. I will not attempt this morning to correct some of the detailed inaccuracies in an article which, for example, described the British Army of the Rhine, one of the best-trained and best-equipped armies we have ever placed on the continent of Europe, as consisting of the equivalent of two rather feeble divisions. That is not the case, as I will explain later. The basic fallacy of the article, however, is that it completely ignores the large forces which we maintain outside continental Europe, either on our own soil ready to go to any point on the surface of the globe, or spread around the world in fulfillment of other treaty commitments, supporting the eastern flank of NATO in the Middle

East, or deployed still further east in defending the security of the members of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, or protecting supply routes of strategic importance from bases in Malta, Cyprus, Aden, Gibraltar, Singapore, and elsewhere. The article went on to compare the incomparable and came out with the triumphant statistic that the Germans, who, of course, have their forces stationed on their own soil, and do not have such overseas commitments, are contributing to the alliance three times as many divisions as the British and French combined. Our contribution is, in fact, three divisions in Europe and a tactical Air Force, all of them in Germany. This compares with six divisions contributed by the United States, and I hardly need remind this audience that your population in this country is roughly four times that of Britain, and your gross national product is seven times ours.

The alleged deficiencies of the British are said to be due to the unwillingness of the British to impose conscription in peacetime, or to endanger the balance in their international payments. I would like to deal with both these points. First, the decision not to continue with conscription was made a number of years ago. In 1957 we adopted a five-year defense plan involving what was described at the time as the biggest change in military policy ever made in normal peacetime. Our thinking then was, and still is, that we must be ready for two types of war: world war (however remote and much to be deplored) and local war. It was clear that in a global war fought with nuclear weapons we would not have time to mobilize a vast citizen Army of conscripts. It was also thought that in our case the needs for local or brushfire war could not be met by the existing type of semiconsript Army. This was partly because dealing with the sort of numbers we had, a very large proportion of our professional army was tied down in training conscripts, who remained for only a comparatively short period in the armed forces and were required to serve very often in very distant places such as Singapore or Aden. Therefore, the effective work that was done by these conscripts, as compared to the amount of resources that had to be put into training them, was thought by us to be excessive. Our need on both counts (global war and local war) was for a well-trained and purely professional Army, and, in addition to this, an ever-ready strategic reserve which could be quickly deployed by air and sea to trouble spots around the world. These professional forces are backed by reserve forces which have recently been put on a basis enabling them to be called up at very short notice. In particular, specialists or technical personnel are very quickly available; this is where we

usually find that there are some gaps in our established forces. We now have legislation which enables specialists and technical personnel to be recalled very rapidly to the colors and sent to fill gaps in our professional forces which have developed by uneven recruiting and other reasons.

The Balance of Payments Problem. Turning now to the balance of payments problem; the immensely complex question of how allied nations can maintain a balance in their international payments and finance military expenditure overseas is raised and disposed of in a sentence or two in the article to which I referred. This problem, it is argued, cannot provide an excuse for Britain's alleged reluctance to keep troops in Europe because the United States has its balance of payments problems, too. I think that this particular problem does require rather more detailed and deep study.

It is, of course, always difficult for both Britain and the United States to maintain a balance between expenditures overseas and their receipts from overseas. The reason is the same for both countries. Both of us export more than we import and could accumulate a comfortable surplus if we kept our troops within our own frontiers, reduced aid to underdeveloped areas, restricted overseas investment, and did not have the responsibility of providing the two international currencies in which practically all the Free World's trade is conducted. The cost of these items to both of us is similar in terms of our respective gross national product. Thus, we devote about 1.2% of our gross national product to overseas aid and investment, while the United States devotes about .9% of its gross national product for these purposes. In the case of overseas military expenditure, we find that the burden is very similar, expressed again in terms of a percentage of our gross national product. But in certain respects this whole problem is even more significant in Britain's case because of certain essential differences between the nature of our two economies. We are first and foremost a trading nation, dependent on earning foreign exchange through exports in a way that the United States, with its own vast internal resources of food and raw materials, is not. We have almost no natural resources and must import one third to one half of the food we eat. Our people exist by a process of importing raw materials, exercising our skill upon them, and exporting the resulting manufactured goods in order to obtain the foreign exchange to buy our food plus more raw materials to keep our economy going. Our exports of goods account for some 16% of our gross national product—yours for

some 4% of your gross national product. If you add to exports of goods, income earned from abroad, for example, from such services as shipping, the disparity is even greater; the final total would amount to some 27% of our GNP and to only 5.2% of the United States GNP. We are obliged, therefore, to keep a careful watch on the actual direct cost in foreign exchange in our overseas military expenditure, and also upon the loss in foreign exchange resulting from the diversion of man power, of steel, and of raw materials from our export industries to our armaments industries.

Despite this position, our expenditure for defense has been running at a rate of more than 7% a year for the last decade and compares favorably with that of the other North Atlantic nations, with the exception of the much richer United States which devotes about 10% or just under of its GNP to defense. For us this involves a burden of taxation as great as, if not greater, per capita than that of any other country in the world. Unfortunately, we cannot completely ignore the facts of financial life and the basic characteristics of our British economy. It is not going to help our allies if Britain goes broke or is continually beset by balance of payments crises as it has been for many years since the war, and since a war which increased our indebtedness to the rest of the world by no less than three billion dollars.

Summing up before we proceed to what I hope will be a frank session of cross-examination, let me attempt an inventory of the contribution of Britain to the alliance, including those items which I have mentioned, with one or two additions.

First, a stable political society, in which all the parties who are likely to assume power are committed to support the foreign and defense policies of the North Atlantic Alliance. These policies incidentally include steadily increasing allocations to foreign aid which we have doubled in the last five years.

Second, a sound and expanding economy backed by one of the most highly skilled and best-equipped labor forces in the world, working under conditions of stable prices and full employment. These are assisted, moreover, by a corps of technicians and scientists who appear to be so highly regarded internationally that we have great difficulty keeping them at home. I think, also, that we seem to be getting our fair share of the Nobel prizes.

Third, a central position in international trade through which Britain acts as a banker, manufacturer, and trader for a large part of the Free World, and provides for its use a currency in which some one half of all its international trade is conducted.

Fourth, some valuable military bases, not only in Britain itself, but at strategically situated points throughout the world, some of them vital for the effective deployment of the United States forces and the protection of their lines of communication.

Fifth, all-professional armed forces which are the most numerous we have ever maintained during peacetime in our history. These are, as I expect you know, being reorganized under the expanded Ministry of Defence along lines very similar to those adopted here in the United States.

Gentlemen, you will note that I have succeeded in delivering a rather lengthy lecture without making any reference to our common heritage except to dismiss it, or to Anglo-American relations as such. Let me add, therefore, in one sentence or two, that when two peoples have to work together in the various enterprises I have mentioned, it does make a difference and it does help every working arrangement if, in fact, we do speak something like the same language, and have the same scale of human values to which Admiral Austin referred. That has been the experience of all branches of our armed services and of our foreign service, and I do not think it is necessary to elaborate on it here except to say that I am sure that not only we, but the world, would be poorer if these close personal ties were ever allowed to deteriorate.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

THE RIGHT HONORABLE SIR DAVID ORMSBY GORE, K.C.M.G.

William David Ormsby Gore, the son and heir of Lord Harlech, was born May 20, 1918. His father, the 4th Baron, was for 28 years a Member of Parliament and at one time Secretary of State for the Colonies; on his mother's side he is a grandson of the 4th Marquess of Salisbury and is descended from the Cecil family.

He was educated at Eton and New College, Oxford, where he studied history. On leaving Oxford in the Summer of 1939, he joined the Territorial Army, and during the Second World War he served with the Berkshire Yeomanry as an Air Observation Pilot, later as Adjutant, and, from 1944-1946, on the General Staff at the War Office, with the rank of Major.

After the war his father announced that he had made over to his heir the ownership of his lands. Sir David became managing director of the Brogyntyu Estate Company, and he himself farms 400 acres in Shropshire. He has retained his interest in agriculture and is a governor of the Royal Agricultural Society of England.

Sir David was brought up in an intensely political atmosphere, and has been a keen student of politics since he was at Oxford, where he was a member of the Canning and Stratford Clubs. In October 1948, he was adopted as prospective Conservative candidate for Oswestry, a largely agricultural constituency; he was elected in the General Election of 1950 and reelected in 1951, 1955 and 1959.

In 1955, on a Smith-Mundt Grant, he visited the United States and lectured to International Affairs groups in many cities and at various universities, including Harvard, New Mexico, Pomona and Southern Methodist. He has appeared on television and on radio both in the United Kingdom and in the United States.

Sir David has been a member of the Executive Committee of the National Trust and of the British Council.

He was invested K.C.M.G. (Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George) by H.M. The Queen immediately prior to sailing for his post in Washington.

Sir David took up his post as British Ambassador to the United States in October 1961, after nearly five years as a member of the Government. He had served as Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from November 1956 until January 1957, when he was promoted Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and created a Privy Councillor. From 1950 until 1961 Sir David was Conservative Member of Parliament for Oswestry. In November 1951, he was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to the then Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, a position he held until 1954. He was an alternate British delegate at the United Nations General Assembly in Paris in 1951-52, and in New York in 1954.

As Minister of State, Sir David led the British delegation to the United Nations whenever the Foreign Secretary was absent, and attended the meetings of the Economic and Social Council. He also led the British delegation during the protracted negotiations at Geneva on disarmament and on the cessation of nuclear tests. He took special responsibility for European affairs, and almost his first task was to be British spokesman at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, where he delivered the 'Grand Design' speech, advocating the bringing together of all European organizations.