Losing an Empire, Finding a Role

Also by David Sanders

Patterns of Political Instability

*Lawmaking and Co-operation in International
Politics: The Idealist Case Re-examined*

Losing an Empire, Finding a Role

*An Introduction to British Foreign Policy since
1945*

David Sanders

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Preface

This book grew out of a series of lectures that I first gave at the University of Essex during the academic session 1985–6. The lectures posed two main questions. What have Britain's major foreign policies been during the postwar period? And why were those policies pursued? What surprised me as I prepared the lectures was the extent to which existing studies of British foreign policy – excellent though many of them are – failed to address either question directly. While recognising the difficulty of answering either question definitively, this book does seek to answer them both. For presentational purposes, I make two assumptions: that 'foreign policy' refers to all aspects (political, military and economic) of a given country's external relations; and that the reader is intelligent but is largely uninformed of the details of Britain's postwar foreign policy.

In writing the book I benefited enormously from the advice offered by colleagues at Essex and elsewhere. I am particularly grateful to Tony King and Geoffrey Edwards for their detailed comments on the draft manuscript. Hugh Ward and Rob Stones provided invaluable advice on the treatment of economic issues. Gillian Twyman and John Sanders were immensely helpful as non-specialist readers, checking the text for ambiguity and lack of clarity. I should also express my indebtedness to two people I have not met, Bernard Porter and C. J. Bartlett, whose various works were a constant source of information and entertainment while I was writing the book. Finally, thanks to Carole Welge, Carol Snape, Geraldine Shanks and Helen Fitzgerald for their speed and accuracy in producing the final typescript. The responsibility for all errors and misinterpretations is, of course, entirely mine.

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Essex

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