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Sir Alan Campbell

Interviewed by Jane Barder 19/1/96

Typed by Jeremy Wiltshire 10/6/96

An interview between Sir Alan Campbell and Jane Barder, at his flat in London. Retired in 1979, from diplomatic service. His last post was ambassador to Italy. He was appointed CMG in 1964, KCMG in 1976, and GCMG in 1979. He was born in 1919, educated at Sherborne School, and Caius College, Cambridge. He spent the war years in the Devonshire Regiment and joined the Foreign Service in 1946.

J: What made you join the Foreign office?

A: I joined the Service immediately after the war, I had in mind to join the Service if I could get in, before the war but of course I wasn't old enough, I was just twenty one in 1940 so I wasn't old enough to take the exams. I had read modern languages at Cambridge and I always had in mind to try for the Diplomatic Service if I could get in. By the time I came to take the exam, it was the Post-War one, which was very different from the Pre-war exam, and involved mainly an interview and various tests and things but by that time one had spent five or six years at war, and an academic exam would no longer have been practical because one had been away from one's books for so long, and one would have made a hash of any academic exam. But I had always wanted to go into the Service really. Partly for family reasons, my grandfather, my mothers' father was in the Old China Consular Service and partly because I seemed to be pointed in that direction by my family and the school and so forth.

J: So your first overseas posting was also in 1946?

A: That was a bit unusual. I had been serving on the staff in Berlin immediately after the war in 1946. I took the various exams when I was still in the army. When I was demobilised in June 1946, after a very brief leave the Foreign Office sent me off to Singapore ...

J: Lord Killearn's Special Mission, what was that?

A: Well Killearn, before he was made a peer was Sir Miles Lampson. Sir Miles was a member of the Foreign Office, who ...

J: Egypt.

A: Exactly, Egypt during the war. That's when he made a name. He was a great figure, an enormous man, six foot five or six, a very burly man who spent the war in Egypt in effect trying to keep the Egyptians on our side, or at least preventing them from hampering our war effort, in the middle east. He'd been the ambassador in Cairo. After the war when the Government changed, when the Labour Party won the Post war election, they wanted to change the style in Egypt for obvious reasons. I think they didn't want any longer to have someone with the sort of reputation that Killearn had for imposing our will. They wanted to appoint a new ambassador to Egypt and they offered Killearn the job of being the Co-ordinator of policy in South East Asia based on Singapore and his twin job was on the economic side to try and ensure the supply of rice and so forth from various parts of South East Asia so that the region wouldn't become a starvation area, which it threatened to become. Secondly he was to use his good offices to try and resolve the political differences in Indo-China and Indonesia.

J: And you went with him?

A: No I didn't. He was already there when I arrived. He'd only been there a few months but he was already there and I was set out to be the most junior member of his staff ... of course I hadn't the faintest idea of what to do then because I was totally new. I hadn't even served in the Foreign Office itself. So it was he who was my first boss, who rather held me by the hand and showed me what a telegram was and that sort of thing!

J: But I suppose if you had spent the war years in the army you would be used to new situations?

A: Well yes, I suppose that is true, I think my generation grew up in the war really, that was our University in a way. I certainly feel I was very immature when I was actually at the University before the war, I was then only twenty or so whereas by the end of the war I was twenty seven.

J: How long did you spend in Singapore?

A: Just a couple of years or so, I suppose it was. The most important thing that happened to me in Singapore was that that was where I met my fiancée who then became my wife. We were married in the cathedral in Singapore in 1947.

J: She was Australian I know, what was she doing there?

A: Her presence was the result of a piece of private initiative on the part of Lord Killearn who when he arrived in Singapore had what he regarded as an inadequate staff so he sent telegrams to all his friends over South East Asia and the Far East saying if you have any likely people who can type or anything like that you better send them along and I'll employ them. Of course people came surging in from everywhere including some friends of friends of his who were friends of my wife's parents in Sydney. The Admiral in Sydney told my wife's father that here was a telegram from his friend Lord Killearn and why didn't Miss Taylor, as she then was apply for this good opportunity. My wife had been deciphering in the naval headquarters in Sydney during the war so she was a Cypher Officer and she came to Singapore as a temporary Cypher Officer in response to this demand.

J: In those days she would have had to have given up the job on marrying you even if she had not wanted to ...

A: I suppose that is true, yes ... it didn't arise really. She had to give up her job on marriage. Anyway we were married in Singapore, we then had a honeymoon in Hong Kong and went back to Singapore where we just had time for the birth of our first child before we came back to England in late 1948.

J: For your first time in the Foreign Office?

A: Yes, that's right.

J: What did you do in the Foreign Office then?

A: The head of the Personnel Department who was then a man called Sir Roderick Barclay ... He took me into his own department and I served there for a year or two and then I became the Private Secretary to William Strang who was the Permanent Under-Secretary. He wanted a new and relatively young Private Secretary. I was a Senior Second Secretary and I suppose I was made First secretary when I was appointed to his office. So I was a very junior first secretary.

J: Was Ernest Bevin still Foreign Secretary at that stage?

A: Yes.

J: So you must have seen a lot of the relationship between those two men?

A: Yes, that was indeed fascinating, and very different from the Personnel Department which wasn't at the centre of things in the way that perhaps it is now, I don't know. But in those days the Permanent Under Secretary and the Private Office of the Secretary of State were very much the core of the office, the very heart of the Office. I learnt an enormous amount in a very short time.

J: How did they get on?

A: Oh frightfully well really. Bevin was of course a charming, delightful man. Mind you he was ill by the time I knew him, he was dying I suppose. It was only about six months or so, certainly under a year after I'd joined William Strang that he left the Foreign Office and then died. He got on very well with William. They understood each other and respected each other very much.

J: Ernest Bevin was greatly respected by the Foreign Office, his reputation has grown ..?

A: Oh yes. People who say that that's all phoney and that the Foreign Office were just pretending that they admired him. I think were quite wrong. I think that there was genuine admiration certainly on the part of William Strang. I think that they very much admired his personal qualities and they admired his record during the war. Someone like

William Strang would have seen quite close to what a burden there was on Cabinet Ministers during the war. Ernie Bevin was one of the pillars of the government at the time. He was a remarkable man and certainly as far as the Foreign Office is concerned he won their loyalty at once.

J: Yes well that's good to know that you confirmed that. So then you went to Rome for the first time?

A: Yes, and by then I was a young married man with two young children. We lived in Chelsea in a flat rather smaller than this one, a similar sort of flat at the end of Royal Hospital Road and from there we went to Rome which was a great chance, I mean a great piece of luck really, because Rome has always been a rather special place to go to. I suppose that the Foreign Office were rewarding me for a couple of years hard work as William Strang's private secretary ... (tape pauses)

Well then of course we had the excitement of getting all the necessary purchases together to go to Rome, we bought a car, we equipped ourselves with what we hoped were suitable clothes, this kind of thing. We got what seemed at the time to be a very good outfit allowance of some kind and it was all very exciting of course. We eventually drove there, my wife and I in our new motor car. We drove all the way. Very hot it was, August, 1952. We arrived at Ferragosta which is a great holiday in Italy, nothing was open at all. We had a marvellous journey out. The children then joined us, their nanny and the children flew out to Rome and we moved into the house which I took over from my predecessor, Norman Reddaway. I was the First Secretary in the Chancery in Rome.

J: Did you speak Italian?

A: Well we learnt it in a rudimentary way. If you've had the rudiments of a classical education Italian is not at all a difficult language you know. My wife is a very good linguist. She picked up Italian much more rapidly and efficiently than I did, partly because she had to use it from the start. I on the other hand in those days, didn't use it all that much officially, because in those days in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs they all spoke excellent English or French and one was rather spoilt compared with the position now, when they think it's normal to do business in Italian in Rome, especially by the time

I got there as ambassador. If I hadn't spoken Italian I should have been totally lost I think, whereas when I was there as a young man, I don't think this was so.

J: Who was your ambassador then?

A: My first ambassador was Victor Mallett. He died some years ago now and was then already within about a year of his retirement. A very nice man ...who had been ambassador in Stockholm and in Madrid before coming to Rome as his last post. After we'd been there a bit more than a year, he was replaced by Ashley Clarke. Ashley Clarke was ambassador there for a long time; he was there for nine years.

J: What about particular issues, bi-lateral relations?

A: Well when I was there in the Chancery what we were mainly dealing with was the upshot of the war, particularly Trieste. Trieste was not by any means solved, it was a very hot potato and a very difficult issue between us and the Italians because we were thought by the Italians to be leaning too far towards the Yugoslav position over Trieste and because the British Commander in Trieste was considered anti-Italian, you see Trieste was under military occupation.

J: It had some sort of free port status?

A: Yes, that's right. It had. The question was whether it should be reestablished again as a free port, or whether it should be divided in some way between Italy and Yugoslavia, what the status of it should be and so on. Also what should happen to the hinter land which was mainly Yugoslav but traditionally had been Venetian. It was all a highly complicated thing, but we spent a great deal of time on that. What were the other things? Well the Italian political situation was extremely complicated. We spent a lot of time trying to explain it to the Foreign Office. It was still really very much a postwar period you know. The political situation in Italy was by no means tranquil because there was a very large Communist party ...

J: Still fears of a ...

A: Yes, yes. The fear was that the Communists might actually win through democratic

means a majority in the Parliament in Italy and would have therefore formed a Government and you would have had a Communist Government in Italy. It never actually happened, but it might have.

J: But weren't the Americans there in large numbers?

A: Yes, the Americans were there, we thought at the time perhaps a little heavy footed in a way. Nevertheless they were very energetic in their policies. They were very generous to the Italians in their economic aid. Mrs Clare Booth Luce, who was appointed American ambassador at the time was very active in sustaining the then Christian democrat government and opposing any possibility of an accommodation with the Communists. It was an interesting time . After about a year there in the Chancery as First Secretary I succeeded the then head of Chancery who was John Russell as Head of Chancery and I was there as Head of Chancery when Ashley Clarke arrived in 1953, and then I stayed on until mid-1955 when I went off to Peking.

J: Yes, a very big leap. How did that come about?

A: Well I was due for a transfer after about three years in a place like Rome. The Foreign Office wouldn't want to leave me there too long, because it would seem unfair on others who would like to go to such a nice place. I wanted to go while I was still young to a fairly far away place and I had family connections with China, through my maternal grandfather. My father was in business in China before the 1914 war. In fact my parents were married in China. I asked the personnel department whether there was a suitable vacancy and what about Peking and they rather to my surprise said "Yes, certainly, we'll send you to Peking," so they did. I then went as Head of Chancery to Peking. In a way of course, a less important Chancery than Rome, I mean in those days it was a much smaller post, but because the staff were smaller one had to combine many more functions. I was not only the Head of Chancery, I was the Commercial Secretary and as far as there was one, Information Officer ... certainly Acting Consul. So I had quite a variety of jobs in a way.

J: You probably realise there is no such thing as Head of Chancery any more. Perhaps for the benefit of listeners you could explain what Head of Chancery was?

A: Well as you know it was really a very old fashioned name for a perfectly understandable function which was really exactly what the army would call a chief of staff. The Head Of Chancery was not the number two in a mission, or at least usually not, not certainly in a big mission, but he was the man to whom the Head of Mission looked, to see that the mission was running in an efficient manner.

J: Co-ordinating, the pivot?

A: Exactly, the pivot of the whole thing. Of course it still has to go on, even though they've abolished the name. I presume that in all but name it still exists.

J: Well it's now the Deputy Head of Mission. It's called D.H.M. In some cases it has been transferred up.

A: Well I think in some places it will work and other places it won't. I was interested to see when I was in Paris the other day on private business that in fact it's made no difference there at all, not only does the old system go on but they still call it the Head of Chancery!

J: Oh really! Perhaps they can get away with it in Paris.

A: Well maybe, I don't know. But I think in an old fashioned well established mission like Paris you've got to have a Head of Chancery. I don't see how you can get on without one.

J: One would have thought so. What were our relations with China then, not similar to Italy I suppose?

A: We were the bad boys at the time. We were regarded by the Chinese as the 'running dogs of the Americans'. We had a very small mission under a very brilliant Chargé D'Affaires called Con O'Neill who died a few years ago. He had a very distinguished career, mainly to do with getting into the European Community and negotiating under Heath the entry into the European Community. At that time he was aged in his forties still I should think and he was the Chargé because the Chinese didn't recognise us anymore

than we recognised them. This was because you see the Chinese took the view that as long as we didn't recognise Taiwan as a part of China then they were not prepared to receive us as a full embassy. We and the Dutch were in exactly the same position. We both had Chargés in Peking, and they had Chargés in London and The Hague. It didn't really make that much difference to tell you the truth, but we of course, as a result, were junior in the diplomatic corps to a lot of much less important embassies.

J: What other Western European countries recognised China at all really?

A: Well practically none. There were no French, no Americans, there were no Spanish or Italians. None of the Western powers except ourselves and the Dutch other than the neutrals recognised China. The Scandinavians were all there; the Swedes, the Norwegians, the Danes and of course we had a lot to do with all those. No other old Commonwealth countries but we had the Indians and Pakistanis who were then separate of course. There was no division in Pakistan.

J: So there wasn't a Bangladesh?

A: No there wasn't. There was Ceylon too, now of course Sri Lanka. Amongst the Europeans who were not communist and not western there were the Yugoslavs. The Chinese were very keen on the Yugoslavs and then they later turned against them, and I think they actually expelled them in the end. It was a curious relationship. But anyway when we were there they were very pro-Yugoslav and also very pro-Egyptian. They were trying to assume the leadership in South East Asia at the time, Chaou En Lai was then the foreign minister, and Prime Minister. Mao Tse Tung was still the great leader, still much revered in China.

J: Did you ever meet him?

A: Oh yes. Curiously enough, one met all these people. When I say one met them, one was present in a large banquet, it wasn't exactly a banquet, it was a sort of large reception. Indeed in a very informal way you would get introduced to these great men and you'd have some rather stilted conversation with them. But I mean you did meet them all right, certainly.

J: So they didn't hide themselves away?

A: No, not in those days, this is the 1950's of course. We were there only a couple of years. We came away in 1957, I suppose. We were there during the Suez affair, when we had an enormous demonstration against us by the Chinese. It was fortunately very carefully controlled at that stage ...

J: ...Orchestrated?

A: Yes, but it was nevertheless somewhat alarming. I mean we had thousands and thousands of people parading past the embassy shouting and making faces at us and so on. All our Chinese translation staff were ordered to take part in all this, which was rather absurd really because we knew these people very well, they were friends of ours. They were told that they should shout more aggressive slogans than anybody else, you know. It was all in a way rather a charade, but of course an ugly charade.

J: Yes, but not meeting the length it did later on?

A: No.

J: So did you say you left in 1957?

A: Yes '57, yes.

J: And then went back to ..?

A: We came home to the Foreign Office. Both going there and coming back again, we had those, what no longer exists unfortunately in the service, those marvellous "sea" journeys. Of course you're familiar with these too, in your day.

J: No, they'd gone even by our time. Well wait, yes we did, we went to New York by "sea".

A: Still that was comparatively short. You see we went from Genoa to Ceylon and then my wife and the young children went on to Australia to visit her parents there. I went on by myself to Peking via Singapore and Hong Kong and then up by rail from Hong Kong right up to Peking. Quite a journey really. On the way back the whole family came together, we came down by rail to Hong Kong and then from Hong Kong we took a ship that came all the way to Southampton.

J: So you took them all with you in China?

A: Yes, we had the children with us all the time, mind you they were still quite young you see. Five and seven, that sort of thing.

J: Oh, yes they would have been, yes.

A: They were at school in Peking. We were lucky in that way. We didn't have any nanny in China. No English nanny I mean, we had numerous Chinese servants and the children went to the local Chinese convent school.

J: With Chinese children?

A: No. The children there were mainly Indians. They were mainly diplomats, expatriates. The reason it was allowed by the Chinese to be kept open was I think because that they wanted to curry favour with the Indians and the Burmese and others who had children. I don't see what other schooling they could have had really in those days. Anyway, on the way home, we came back by sea, but we came only as far as Naples. We had a little holiday in Italy on the way back. We eventually got home towards the end of the year. Then we took a furnished flat for a bit in London while we were looking for somewhere more permanent to live. Then we established ourselves again in Chelsea, while I was working in the Foreign Office for the next few years.

J: Which department was that then, in the Foreign Office?

A: Well, when I first came home from Peking, I spent a year at the I.D.C, the Imperial Defence College, now the Royal College of Defence Studies. That was regarded as rather

a good thing to do. It was a sort of sabbatical year and very nice too. It gave one a certain amount of pleasure and I enjoyed it very much. In those days I was a bit too young to get full value from it because I was still a First Secretary and I was still in my thirties. I was only about thirty six or thirty seven and I was far the youngest of the Students of the R.C.D.S. Most of the others, in fact all of the others were brigadiers who were all about six or seven years older than I was. The result was that by the time I got really senior all these other people had retired. It wasn't really that much use from that point of view.

J: From a professional point of view?

A: From the point of view of making professional contacts, yes, with the military, and with other civil servants, I was too young, I think. I enjoyed it very much. I wasn't too young to get the benefit of the course, but too young from the point of view of later contacts.

J: So what after that?

A: After that they sent me to the News Department, I was then sent as number two in the News Department which I did for a couple of years. [*The job of the F.O. News Department is to handle relations with the media. There is a News Department press conference every week day at 12, and throughout the day and night the Department replies to requests for the F.O.'s views on any newsworthy event in the foreign field. The head of the News Department is often described by the press as the 'F.O. spokesman'.]*

That was then, where have we got to? About 1958 was it I suppose? I was the number two in the News Department until 1960. At the very end of 1960 I was promoted Counsellor and sent to New York.

J: Did you have any particularly newsworthy issues to deal with?

A: Oh goodness yes, it was a terribly busy job, always is, because you live by the day to day news you know. It was the aftermath of Suez of course. We were working up towards the famous failed summit, the U2 summit, in Paris in 1960. Gary Powers and all that. So that during all that when I went over to Paris with the rest of the delegation, one

saw quite a lot of Macmillan at that time. Selwyn Lloyd was Foreign Secretary during most of the time that I was in the News Department nearly all the time. I was just trying to think who succeeded Selwyn. Oh it was Alec Douglas Home. Yes, I think so. When Selwyn Lloyd went to the Treasury as Chancellor of the Exchequer at the end of about 1960, Alec Home became Foreign Secretary.

I think I'm right in saying that. Anyway I certainly went over for the summit meeting in Paris. Selwyn Lloyd come to think of it, was still Foreign Secretary then because I remember him in Paris. You see as a member of the News Department in those days, the number two of the News Department and very often Acting Head of it, you saw the Foreign Secretary really quite a lot, because you were constantly having to get the latest line on whatever it was.

J: And what sort of man was he to work with?

A: Well I got to like him very much. At first he didn't take to the Foreign Office very well and I'm not sure how well regarded he was. In his early days as Foreign Secretary he wasn't up to someone like Anthony Eden for example. He hadn't got the brains or the style or the experience and so on. But he was a clever man. He was a barrister by profession. He became in my opinion a really quite good Foreign Secretary in many ways, not a great Foreign Secretary but certainly quite a good Foreign Secretary. But of course, he was very much overshadowed by Macmillan.

J: Yes, how did they get on?

A: Well they got on all right because he was just Macmillan's toady. I mean Macmillan told him what to do, effectively.

J: Was Macmillan, like apparently other Prime Ministers, increasingly interested in foreign affairs?

A: Yes, I think that's true. I think he was. I think that all Prime Ministers get rather hooked on foreign affairs, sometimes for the good and sometimes not. He certainly, yes, he really in effect was more or less his own Foreign Secretary.

J: What about the PUS? Did he have any input into ...

A: Oh, very much so yes, certainly.

J: Who was that then?

A: Well, when I was in the News Department, the PUS during most of the time, if not all of it was Hoyer-Millar, Lord of Inchyra when he retired. He was a very important figure. I think he was much relied on by Selwyn Lloyd and Macmillan. Hoyer-Millar was not at all grand in his manner, but nevertheless he conveyed a considerable gravitas in a way, partly because he was rather large. He was also grand in his social connections. He had a large house in Eaton Square. He also had an estate in Scotland and if he was not available for a meeting with a Minister he would be, I don't know what, shooting with the Duke of Rutland or someone.

J: Macmillan probably liked that as well?

A: Oh yes, absolutely yes. It suited him very well. But anyway, Hoyer-Millar wasn't in any way grand in his attitude towards people. He was very good at dealing with people. As a matter of fact I think he was very good at pulling the Office together after the debacle of Suez.

J: Yes, that must have been tremendously bad for morale?

A: I think it must have been. I was in China of course at that time, but I think so yes. I mean the fact is it was a thorough failure. The Foreign Office wasn't really to blame. The Foreign Office is not immediately to blame if something bad happens in foreign affairs, but nevertheless they felt it was a humiliation.

J: But they'd been kept in the dark had they not?

A: Well yes they had, but still that was not necessarily to their credit. They were kept in the dark because they weren't trusted. Why weren't they trusted? Why weren't they

trustworthy? It was a humiliation. Hoyer-Millar really pulled them together afterwards. Well, you know, you've got to make the best of it. Our job is to serve the Government as best we can with the best advice we can. If they don't take it that's too bad. We've still got to make the best of it, and he was a very steady influence.

J: That's interesting. He became Permanent Under Secretary after Suez then?

A: Yes. You see during Suez the Permanent Under Secretary was Kirkpatrick. Ivone Kirkpatrick was PUS and I suppose he retired in 1957 perhaps, anyway sometime after Suez had taken place. And then there was the great question of who would be the PUS. There were many contenders of whom the most notable I suppose were Gladwyn Jebb, who was then Ambassador in Paris and Roger Makins who had been Ambassador in Washington. But then in the end I suppose it was Macmillan who must have decided on neither ... Would it have been Macmillan or would it have been ..? I can't remember now. Strictly speaking the appointment was made by the Foreign Secretary but he invariably makes it with the approval of the Prime Minister and I certainly know the Prime Minister was Macmillan. I suppose by that time Selwyn Lloyd was Foreign Secretary, I can't remember. Anyway, Hoyer-Millar was the man who was appointed in 1957, and he was the one who was there, as I say, during the time that I was in the News Department. And he was a very good PUS. I would say that his general advice was usually followed, it was usually pretty sound. He was much respected by Ministers and also within the office, as I was saying earlier.

J: And what would Hoyer-Millar's main interests have been? Europe, Cold War, relations with the States?

A: His background, his more recent background at any rate, had been service in the United States which he knew well. He'd been the number two in Washington earlier in his career. He'd been the Ambassador to NATO and he'd been Ambassador to Germany. That had been his most recent past and he was a very experienced diplomat. I suppose he must have got into the service in the mid 1920's and served in various posts since then, most notably in the United States, I would say.

J: But apart from the aberration of Suez at that time the main focus of the office

would have been on that relationship with the States?

A: Well I suppose so. I think that the whole diplomatic scene was dominated effectively by the Cold War.

J: Yes, the U.S. alliance.

A: I mean what concerned Macmillan really was while remaining loyal to the alliance, the NATO alliance and the alliance with America, at the same time somehow or other to handle the Russians in such a way that they didn't actually resort to war. Macmillan certainly was, at the time of the missile crisis later on, obviously scared stiff that the Russians, through a mixture of miscalculation and irresponsibility would in fact spark off a war, which in his opinion and probably rightly, would have been terrible for all of us.

J: Disastrous.

A: That was really his main preoccupation. But it was of course this Cold War situation that did dominate nearly the whole of my career.

J: I suppose it would have done at the UN ...1961-65.

A: Yes indeed. Yes.

J: Well you would have had a lot of responsibility for Security Council matters apart from the other duties of a Head of Chancery.

A: Well yes. I mean it was the most interesting part as far as I was concerned. I don't say it was the most interesting part of the mission to the UN's job. There were other many interesting parts but the Security Council was where the drama took place undoubtedly. That's where during the Cuban Missile Crisis for example, we all felt that we were part of the scene. Well indeed we were. I remember that in 1962, the Autumn of 1962, that sort of time, I was sitting in the Security Council in the second row as I normally did behind Pat Dean (my ambassador) and we were next door to Adlai Stevenson who because of the

alphabet (the United States and the United Kingdom were sitting next door to one another in the Security Council) and because of the angle of the cameras I was always being photographed as if I was giving advice to Adlai Stevenson, which of course I wasn't at all, but the great American public must have thought that I was there as an adviser to Adlai.

(SIDE ONE OF TAPE ENDS)

SIDE TWO

A: Yes of course I was talking then about the Cuban missile crisis which was 1962. I went to New York at the very beginning of 1961, which was when the Kennedy regime had just started and Adlai Stevenson had just been appointed to be the ambassador to the U.N. in New York. Of course he was a considerable figure and a very, very nice man, a charming man who as a matter of fact in one way or another I did get to know quite well, but I wasn't one of his advisers as the television viewers might have thought. However, it was one crisis after another in the Security Council. I arrived in the middle of the Congo crisis. It was a very busy time indeed. I was the ambassador's main advisor on the Security Council and the First Committee which was the political committee. I really can't remember all the various questions we had to deal with, but virtually anything of any importance nowadays does get to the U.N in one form or another, as you know.

J: I suppose you would have had to deal with the death of Dag Hammarskjöld. Did that occur during your time?

A: Yes, absolutely.

J: Was there a crisis appointment of the new Secretary General?

A: Yes indeed I had a great deal to do with all the negotiations which resulted in U Thant's appointment. I suppose that nobody had anything against U Thant. The Russians I think quite correctly judged that he would certainly not obstruct them in any way. So as far as they were concerned he was their man. He wasn't actively pro-Communist of course, they didn't think that. But at least, they didn't think he was going to be an obstructer, as they regarded Hammarskjöld as being obstructive of their policy. Their policy was in fact to prevent the UN from doing anything that was in any way harmful to

the Russians.

J: It was at the time too, when third world countries were beginning to enter the United Nations?

A: Yes, as you say, all the new countries were coming on the scene. They were all getting their independence and all coming to New York. In their first fling in New York they were very attracted by the anti-imperialist line that the Russians were peddling at that time. It was only a bit later on I think that we managed to persuade quite a number of them that this was really a very naive way of looking at Russian policy. Many of them grasped the truth about Russian policy in due course, but in those early days, 1961-62 we had a terrible battering at the United Nations.

J: And you couldn't take any votes for granted in the assembly?

A: Oh no. In the assembly certainly not. In the Security Council at that stage we could still hold most of what we wanted. It was very hard work, particularly with some of the neutrals, some of the less robust allies for that matter. But in those days it was only a council of, what were we eleven or nine? Nine I think, much more manageable than the present council you see. Although the present situation of course, is entirely transformed because the Russians and the Chinese have policies which are not so easily predictable as they were then. You could certainly know then exactly what the Russian policy would be. It would be the immediate opposite of our own.

J: And it was still Nationalist China?

A: Oh no. No, no ... No, you're quite right. It was of course still Nationalist China wasn't it?

J: So it was just one veto against us, if they were going to use a veto, it was just the Russians?

A: Yes, it was just the Russians. Yes, the Chinese didn't ... er, I was just trying to remember what role the Chinese did then play in the Security Council. I think they were

on our side. Yes I think they were. But they must have been the Nationalists. Yes I think so. I've really rather forgotten I'm afraid, it was so many years ago. Certainly no, we didn't have to cope at that stage, with the Communist Chinese on the Security Council. I mean our view was then, consistently of course with our having recognised China that the Chinese seat at the United Nations ought to be occupied by the representatives of the Communist Government. That was the logical position. But anyway, no, it hadn't happened yet in my time, that's quite right.

J: And was the Middle East looming large?

A: Oh constantly, I would think that three or four times a year we would have some sort of Middle East debate in the Security Council.

J: But Resolution 242 was after you ..?

A: Yes. 242 was after my time. This was Caradon's greatest achievement but it was some time after I left, of course. I was there when Caradon arrived as ambassador to the United Nations after Pat Dean. This was after the 1964 election.

J: Yes, that's right. That was a political appointment as I remember. How did people feel about that? How did you think it worked out to have a politician? It's generally been the case when there has been a Labour Government that there's been a politician as ambassador.

A: Yes. I think in the case of Hugh Caradon that this was based on a misunderstanding by the Government on what a representative at the United Nations actually does, or is, and partly a misunderstanding on the part of Hugh Foot himself. He thought that he was being appointed as a politician, a member of the Government, minister of state, peer and so on, to have an independent role, as you might send a governor somewhere or other with instructions to do something or other, with a policy from the Government. He was amazed when he got to New York and found that as a matter of fact he was in receipt of instructions from the Foreign Office, just like his predecessors had been.

J: Oh really.

A: There was no difference at all. He could if he wanted to, appeal to the Prime Minister or Foreign Secretary about some particular thing that he thought was wrong, but after all the Prime Minister or Foreign Secretary would then consult the Foreign Office and find why they had sent these particular instructions. As often as not they would then confirm them. Of course Caradon found this very distasteful.

J: Were there any particular issues on which he challenged his instructions?

A: Maybe on Rhodesia but as a whole, no. Mind you I was only there for one year with Caradon. On the whole he behaved himself very sensibly. He was a very able man. He understood the situation perfectly well, once he got there. But when he was thinking of it in advance I think he thought he would have much more of a free hand than he actually did. He didn't have a free hand at all. For an obvious reason when you come to think of it, no Foreign Secretary could possibly allow his representative in New York to actually make foreign policy himself. How could he?

J: And on such a world scale.

A: Well exactly, announcing it in the Security Council in front of the whole world. The same applied to Adlai Stevenson. Stevenson was very annoyed to find that he was in constant receipt of instructions from the State Department and in fact he had his own president looking at the television to make sure he carried them out. But no, I think myself it's an illusion to think that a politician at the UN had any different role from an ambassador. He is in fact an ambassador. The only thing is that of course, if he is a politician of standing like Adlai Stevenson, or indeed subsequent American representatives in New York, then of course you can argue that what he says has greater weight because of his own personal standing. I don't think that the British Government has ever appointed anybody of that sort of standing to New York. You see Caradon and later Ivor Richard were both successful ambassadors to the UN but neither was a politician of standing in the Labour Party. There's sometimes been talk about whether somebody with the standing of let us say, David Owen or for example even Ted Heath might be appointed to New York, but this has never happened. I don't really think it's a feasible thing. I don't think it would work particularly well and I don't think the person

concerned would find it a satisfactory job.

J: The other politicians you would have known during those years in New York were the annual visit from the Foreign Secretary.

A: Yes, they used to come every year.

J: So who did you have?

A: Well, Alec Douglas Home used to come. That was during my first year, 1961-1962. I suppose he came every year.

J: George Brown would have come in your last year?

A: No, no because in my last year, which was 1965 ...

J: ... Michael Stewart?

A: No. George Brown had not yet become Foreign Secretary. Well did Stewart or George Thomson come in his place? I can't quite remember. You see it would have been 1964 that we're talking about. I wonder who could have come then. Could it have been Gordon Walker? Gordon Walker was appointed Foreign Secretary, then he lost his seat and was replaced by Michael Stewart. *[Following a request by Professor John Young (who first reviewed this tape) Sir Alan made the following comments on Stewart: Michael Stewart was in my view an adequate Foreign Secretary without being outstanding. He had a very good brain and was also shrewd and sensible. Perhaps he was over modest and unassuming. I suppose he might be judged to lack the stature which his job really demands. But he was very good in the House of Commons.]*

But the one who came most during my time and who made a good impression always was Alec Douglas Home.

J: Because that's rather a terrifying speech for a Foreign Secretary.

A: Yes it is. He always did it very well. He made a very good impression on all of us I

think.

J: Was he well liked in the Foreign Office?

A: Oh very much, yes. He was a charming man. His memorial service is next Monday, in fact. He was very well liked in the Foreign Office and I think was a very good Foreign Secretary . He was one of these people who pretends to be rather less clever than he really is, you know. I think that he hadn't been a brilliant man ever, certainly not academically, but he was always very shrewd. He grasped the point quicker than most people.

J: Did he take advice well?

A: Oh yes. Yes I think he was good with people and good at spotting the people who were giving him good advice. He was very reliant on his advisers, very confident on taking their advice and backing them up if things went wrong and all that sort of thing. He was a very good master really I think, Alec.

J: So you were there in New York for four years and then back to London again?

A: Yes, then back to London. Then I took over the Western Department, Western European Department.

J: So you must have been concerned with the initial negotiations to join the EEC?

A: Well not directly. You see the Western European Department in those days dealt (as it still does in fact) with the bilateral relations between us and all the, in those days the six countries of the European Community. I mean I dealt with France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux (countries) and that's all. In my day I didn't even deal with Spain, Portugal, Greece, Yugoslavia, Scandinavia. I didn't deal with any of those, only with the Western European countries. So in a way it was rather a limited job. I found myself rather on the edge of things, because of course the main question arising then was could we get into the European Community and if so on what terms? How were we going to deal with the probable De Gaulle veto, which had already taken place once and was likely to take place again? What alternative was there to going on trying? Those were the questions which

indeed I had to deal with indirectly, but not directly because they were dealt with by the department which I forget what it was then called but it was the special department for dealing with the E.E.C.

J: Was this the one that Con O'Neill was ...

A: He was the supervisor, the Under-secretary. Yes that's right. My Undersecretary, my boss as it were at that time was Sammy Hood, Lord Hood, Viscount Hood. He and I worked very closely together, for a few years. But then as a matter of fact I didn't stay in the Western Department very long. When I was first appointed there, I was told, "Oh well, this'll probably be a three year appointment or so, after which we hope that you will be offered a mission abroad, because you're getting on in years."

I was then in my late forties, I suppose. So I made my personal plans on the basis of about three years in London. When I'd been about two years in London I inquired of the Chief Clerk whether this was still so. He said, "Oh good heavens, no. Of course not. No no I'm afraid we'll want you to stay where you are for another couple of years or so, I suppose, perhaps a bit longer." I said "Oh good heavens, how frightful. I'll have to change all my personal plans." He said, "If it's very seriously inconvenient for you to stay on, do you want to go abroad just for about two years or so?" I said (I mean not really thinking very much), "Well no, I don't want to go abroad just for the sake of going abroad, but naturally, if you offered me Paris I'd go there like a shot." He said, "Really, would you? Oh well, I'll think about that."

So anyway, he did think about that and as the upshot after only about two years in London I was sent to Paris. I took the place of Peter Ramsbotham as the Counsellor and Head of Chancery in Paris, which of course in a way was a sideways move, I mean compared with the head of the department in London. But equally of course the chance of serving in Paris, particularly at that time, was irresistible.

J: Who was the ambassador there?

A: Well first of all for one year, it was Pat Reilly, then it was Christopher Soames. I was there for Christopher Soames's first year which was great fun in itself. Then I went off to Ethiopia after that.

J: So you didn't see the entry into Europe?

A: No, unfortunately I didn't. What happened was, while I was still in Paris, De Gaulle resigned. This was in 1969, by which time Soames was well established there and really it was effectively Pompidou. It was when Pompidou took over that they started in a tentative way the negotiations to enter the Community which eventually worked. But no, when I was still in Paris in 1967, 1968. This was during the student riots and commotion and so forth. It was quite a busy time, a very interesting time. But no, we didn't really make any progress, at least on the surface, towards our entering into the European Community.

J: Then Ethiopia came out of the blue for you again. Did you succeed John Russell again in Ethiopia?

A: No not quite, no I succeeded Tom Bromley. John Russell had been there before Tom Bromley. Well it came out of the blue in a way but I had understood from the Foreign Office that one of the places that would come up would be Addis Ababa and what would I think about that? I said that I thought that that would be a marvellous place and I'd love to do it.

J: Its reputation then was very different from the reputation it has now. I mean it's now a challenging post, but then it was all so glamorous, wasn't it?

A: Yes, because it was one of the old embassies you see. Yes exactly, then you were accredited to the emperor. The emperor after all, had been emperor since before I was born, or at least not quite emperor, but anyway in charge of Ethiopian affairs. So to be accredited to such an historic figure was rather a compliment. He regarded me as a sort of honorary grandson. In fact the old boy was always very kind to me. By that time Ethiopia wasn't really very important to tell you the truth. I don't think it loomed very large as a British interest. Furthermore from Ethiopia's point of view I think once we had given up power in Kenya and in the Sudan and in British Somaliland, we were no longer of direct importance to the emperor. He recognised that, that he had to rely on the Americans.

J: Or playing off the Americans against the Russians?

A: Well he'd always done that very skilfully really. In the old days we and the French came into it as well but it was really the Russians and the Americans. I think he thought he was cleverer than he was you know, he was perhaps adopting what by then was a rather old fashioned policy, of taking a slice of aid from this person and that person and thinking you were balancing everything by let us say, having the German advisors on the Police force and the British advisors on, I don't know what, medicine, let us say, with the Russians building an oil refinery somewhere. He thought that this sort of balanced things out. I'm not sure that it actually did. I think the result of it was that he had a hotchpotch of different enterprises established without any coherence or thinking behind it.

J: What was your brief as it were, from the office when you went to Ethiopia? What was meant to be British interest in Ethiopia?

A: A very good question. I'm damned if I remember.

J: Perhaps they didn't have one!

A: Perhaps we didn't have one! No I'm sure we did. Well I was certainly instructed to do my best to persuade the Ethiopians at least if they couldn't actively help us, at least not to obstruct us in whatever was going on in the United Nations, because the Ethiopians then had quite an important influence in Africa. Partly because O.A.U was there and the E.C.A was there and then the emperor was there, you see. So that one way or the other they did have quite an influence in Africa.

J: He was very much a father figure for Africa.

A: They didn't always listen to father, but they did sometimes. He was regarded by the British as at least someone that you could talk to about the questions coming up at the UN and seek to persuade, indeed sometimes one did persuade either him or one of his ministers.

J: Do you remember any particular issue on which you persuaded him?

A: Well he tried but without success to help over Amin at one stage but he didn't in fact do anything effective I'm afraid. This was at the time when Amin was expelling or

threatening to expel all the Asians, which of course brought a great wave of immigrants into this country which at the time very much alarmed the British Government. They were seeking at least to moderate the policy that Amin was then following. But I don't think that Haile Selassie really played a significant part in that.

J: Would you have imagined that within two years of your departure he would have been toppled? He was very old.

A: Well he was eighty-ish, wasn't he? Well I mean it was always a possibility, but I didn't foresee that. What I did foresee was that when he died, and of course in the nature of things he probably would have died within five years or so, even though he was very well looked after, what I did foresee was that at that stage there would certainly be a first class political crisis. Exactly what form that crisis would take I don't think I could ever really determine. I thought that the key thing would certainly be the army. Of course I didn't know any more than he did exactly what was going on inside the army. I think it must have been a great shock to him that it wasn't the officers, but the sergeants who were taking the lead, in a highly nationalist putsch, which ultimately and perhaps always had been very left wing. I think it was unexpected by everybody, certainly including himself.

J: There were no groups that people in your embassy could have had contact with?

A: Well we had pretty wide contacts actually, in the embassy particularly, through the fact that we used to run the school, the Wingate school, which educated a lot of what then became the leaders of Ethiopia. We were very much in touch with all of these sort of people. There was always a lot of seditious talk about in Addis Ababa, most of which came to our ears sooner or later. It didn't really amount to plotting or revolutionary activity, really, at least not in those days, I think.

J: There was no way that anybody could have talked to the emperor about who might succeed him?

A: No I certainly never talked to him about that.

J: It's not a very tactful subject is it?

A: No I don't think I would have it possible, unless he raised it with me, which he might have later on, if I'd stayed on, because by then I knew him quite well. No, the only people I would have talked to about that would have been Ras Asrate Kassa and Endalkatchew Makonnen. They were both nobles of the emperor's family, very sophisticated and western educated sort of people, or at least partly western educated. I certainly talked to them really quite freely, or they talked to me quite freely about all these possibilities. The real trouble was that the emperor was not prepared to make any change because he was too old and he didn't think he could control that change. I suppose he couldn't have actually. If he had taken the plunge either when I was there or even a few years earlier by appointing a new, liberalising Prime Minister and given him a certain amount of power, I suppose he might have averted the trouble, but he might not.

I think that, I forget which historian it is that points out that when you start trying to moderate or liberalise a regime of that kind, that is really when you get the danger.

J: That's the danger point, yes. One has seen it in other ...

A: Persia.

J: Well yes, there are a lot of parallels aren't there, to that?

A: Yes.

J: But you were sorry to leave, obviously at that time? I think everybody is sorry to leave Ethiopia. Then back to London again?

A: Yes, we were terribly sorry to leave. Yes, back to London. Well I think actually it was probably high time that I did leave Ethiopia from a career point of view because of course, since we retire at the age of sixty, I was about fifty two or fifty three, you see, by then. So I didn't have all that much time left in the service. I came back initially to be an Under-secretary looking after African affairs. Then after a couple of years I was promoted to be a deputy Under-secretary looking after Africa and the Middle East. Then I transferred to European affairs and I became what is now called the Political Director. I was one of the first Political Directors of Foreign Affairs.

J: You were actually given that title, you actually had that title did you?

A: Well, the Europeans all called me Political Director. Within the Foreign Office I was still a deputy under-secretary. I mean the job was exactly as it is now, which is to try to co-ordinate so far as possible with colleagues from the other countries of the E.E.C policy on foreign issues.

J: That's quite heretical in some people's minds isn't it?

A: Well it's always been part of the political co-operation of the E.E.C from the very beginning. Although separate from the treaty, it was started in about 1962, something like that. I can't really remember when it started. In my day as deputy under-secretary and political director there were ... were there nine members of the European Community? I can't remember now.

J: Nine or ten. No, nine. Before Spain, Portugal and Greece.

A: Before Spain, Portugal or Greece. It was nine. We used to meet, really quite frequently, the political directors. We would discuss whatever was going on in the world and see whether we could formulate a policy which was acceptable to all of us. We would then of course, naturally get the approval of our Government to that policy. We would then act more or less in concert wherever it might be N.A.T.O or the UN or in foreign capitals or whenever it was.

J: What effect did this have on ambassadors in various countries?

A: Well, I think it meant that the ambassadors were obliged, let us say to connect with each other. I suppose that Brian (Barder) might have had experience of this. Supposing it had been an African question coming up in the United Nations, the British Ambassador in Ethiopia will perhaps receive a telegram from the Foreign Office saying political directors have agreed that on such and such a question our line should be as follows. Then it would describe our line: "Please consult your other colleagues and make sure that they also represent in this sense to the Ethiopian Government."

J: Yes quite. I mean they had their regular monthly meetings, the E.E.C meetings

throughout the world, but I was really wondering about the ambassadors in the European Community.

A: Yes, I had experience of that when I was in Rome, of course. Well, it does have an effect. Not necessarily a sort of straight forward effect on the ambassador's role. Nowadays of course the ambassador's role in a country like Italy is so much dominated by E.E.C affairs that about half my staff were involved in one or other aspect of European questions. So was I myself. In one sense you were not fully in charge of let us say, your country's relations with Italy because it did not include the whole of both our interests in the E.E.C but in another sense you were very much involved because both of you are part of this great machine.

J: Yes. What about commercial relations though. I mean you can still be commercial competitors can't you? So how does that fit in with?

A: I'm not sure that it does really. One of the things I remember getting involved in when I was in Italy at the end of my career was the question of unfair subsidies to particular industries by a Government. It might be by our Government or by the Italian Government. I remember something or other involving the Italians allegedly giving subsidies to makers of steel baths or something or other which was apparently an excessive amount of subsidy which in some way harmed the steel bath makers in Wales, or Wigan let us say. There was quite a lot of that sort of thing, usually highly complicated and usually not something that was within the power of a Government. Often it would turn out that there wasn't a subsidy at all. The fact was that these bath makers in Lucca, let us say, were more efficient than the ones in Wigan, or the other way round. I never found that a very rewarding part of one's job. No, you're quite right. The commercial work was a question of competing. I don't know that that was really affected by the membership of the E.E.C. I mean we were happily competing against the French let's say, or the Italians or whoever it may be, to get contracts in third world countries, for example.

J: I was thinking about that kind of thing, aid projects which are enormous in third world countries.

A: Yes. I don't think that was really affected by the E.E.C aspect of things. The E.E.C

were enormously important, in fact vitally important when it was a question of collective negotiation with, for example, the United States, or over GATT issues, you know, that sort of thing. That is really a very important aspect. As for the political co-ordination, of course I'm totally out of date now and that has moved on. I know that there is now of course a great debate whether or to what extent you could have a foreign policy which was determined to some extent by voting in the council, the E.E.C council. I've never thought that that was really a very realistic thing but I suppose there is no particular thing against it providing all the leading powers would have to reserve the right of veto.

J: Yes, well. It certainly would seem to.

A: No government could have a situation where, by a vote in a body where you could be outvoted, you could be committed to sending an expedition to, let us say, Afghanistan. You couldn't possibly, could you?

J: Well you can in the Security Council, I suppose.

A: Well not quite.

J: Well of course you can't be committed to sending them.

A: You can't quite, no. You can commit yourself to a policy, yes, but not actually to the sending of the troops, really can you?

J: No. No.

A: I don't know really. I mean these are very difficult questions aren't they? But you're quite right to make that parallel. The security council has powers which are internationally recognised of a very far reaching kind. But of course it naturally has to exercise those powers with great prudence.

J: Yes, it has powers but no finance.

A: Well that's true too.

J: Whereas the European Union ..?

A: Well I don't think the finances of the European Union would extend to that sort of thing would it? You see, that would be under political co-operation rather than under the treaty, under the E.E.C treaty. Political co-operation is something that's grown up. I mean apart from Maastricht, which of course, in a sense regularised the situation. I'm afraid that all that is rather muzzy in my mind, because all that was long after my time.

J: Do you think if you were a young man starting again you might consider going into the European, erm, I'm not quite sure what they call it, but European diplomatic corps, that provides the European delegates in countries?

A: Yes I might, I think. I suppose that in the case of ourselves and France and Italy we are the European countries who have such a long tradition of a service of a national kind, that although there are occasions when you may become for a time an international civil servant and you do your best to be a non-national civil servant, joining your own national service is still very attractive. But I think actually to join an international civil service wouldn't be quite so attractive. I notice that quite a large number of young men and young women are attracted by it, but whether they would get the same quality of people applying for such a service as we still get applying to the Foreign Office, I don't know. We still do get, as I understand it, first rate people.

J: Yes I hope so. A lot of first rate women. Women have a much more accepted role in the diplomatic service nowadays. I mean in your day women had to resign on marriage.

A: Oh absolutely, yes. In fact they were not in anyway helped, in fact they were hindered if they wanted to have a separate career of any kind.

J: You mean wives?

A: Yes.

J: Well I was thinking of women diplomats as well.

A: Oh quite so, yes. These are two separate things.

J: I think women do particularly well in getting into the diplomatic service.

A: I believe they do, yes. There are some very bright ones, some very good ones. Unfortunately comparatively few have got to the very top, as yet. But of course, that's partly a question of time and partly I suppose that if you get someone with all the qualities required, is she going to marry and if so who? If she were to marry a judge, how is that compatible with a diplomatic career?

J: We mustn't argue about this. I see the press gossip is that Pauline Neville-Jones, one of your successors is said to be going to resign.

A: I was very sorry to see that. I mean I don't understand it. I don't know whether the story is true, anyway. But if the story is true, that she refused to go to Bonn, I'm really very sorry because I think she would have done very well in Bonn. I think it's such an important post that it would be a splendid thing to have her there. As to Paris, I'm not sure. I mean I quite understand why she might have aspired to Paris, but frankly I think she was wrong. I think that Bonn would have suited her much better.

J: We've talked very much about Europe, partly because of the places you've had. Do you think that the Office has paid in the past enough attention to, well Africa in particular where you had experience?

A: I don't know really. I mean of course, the whole scene has changed so much since I first joined the Foreign Office, if only because there used to be separate services as you know, the Colonial service, the Commonwealth service and so on. Indeed, when I first joined the Foreign Office the ICS was still in existence. So it is so difficult to judge now in the new situation where you have an overseas service covering all the countries all over the world.

J: How did people like you feel when the C.R.O was merged with the Foreign Office?

A: Well I think our initial reaction was that what had happened unless we very careful was that many of their rather second rate people would get promotion which would otherwise have gone to our, as we thought, first rate people. That was perhaps a rather narrow reaction and wasn't totally justified because they had some very good people too.

But it was true that because of the enormous expansion of the Commonwealth their service during the period between about 1948-1960 had been a very rapidly expanding one in which the opportunity for promotion was much greater than in our old service, or indeed in Brian's old service, the Colonial Service. So we thought that was rather lucky for them in a way and initially it led to a rather inflated service, I suspect.

J: There were some rather overstuffed missions, I think, in some commonwealth countries.

A: Greatly, greatly, yes.

J: But I wondered did you have experience of finding that your missions were affected because of understaffing or various cuts that there had been over the years?

A: I did find the beginning of that in Rome, I must say in the late seventies. I thought actually at that time the Foreign Office were having to cut the whole time, or at least, they were very parsimonious in their staffing arrangements, but the whole thing was slightly illogical I always thought. For example the number of Service Attachés in my time in Rome was exactly the same as it had been when I was there as a young first secretary in 1952. Exactly the same, if not slightly larger with more clerks and people. Whereas the rest of the staff were very greatly reduced in size. So all that was slightly illogical I always thought. Since then they've had many other cuts I'm afraid.

J: Yes they have, yes.

A: I do think we've gone really rather too far in cutting down on the staff.

J: And opening up new missions?

A: Well you can't not open them.

J: Well you started with off with a Labour Foreign Secretary and I suppose you finished with a Labour Foreign Secretary as well, David Owen, whose reputation isn't quite as glossy as ..?

A: No it isn't.

Side two of tape ends here, but Sir Alan later added by letter:

I never worked closely with David Owen. By the time he became Secretary of State I was in Rome ... My impression was that Owen was an able if somewhat arrogant young man.