

BDOHP Biographical Details and Interview Index

Roger John CARRICK (born 13 October 1937)

KCMG 1995; CMG 1983; LVO 1972.

Career (with, on right, relevant pages in interview)

Entry to FO, 1956	pp 2-3
Served in Royal Navy, 1956-58	p 3
School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 1961	p 4
Sofia, 1962	pp 4-9
FO desk officer, Jordan; then Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies, 1965	pp 9-10
Paris, 1967	pp 10-14
Singapore, 1971	pp 14-19
FCO, Personnel Operations Department 1973 (deputy head, 1976)	pp 12-25
Visiting Fellow, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1977	p 25
Counsellor, Washington, 1978	pp 25-32
Head, Overseas Estate Department, FCO, 1982	pp 46-50
Consul-General, Chicago, 1985	pp 33-38
Assistant Under-Secretary of State (Economic), FCO, 1988	-
Ambassador to Jakarta, Indonesia, 1990	pp 38-42
High Commissioner to Australia, 1994	pp 42-46
Retired, 1997	pp 50-51

Interview with Sir Roger Carrick on 8 January 2004 by Virginia Crowe.

Copyright: Sir Roger Carrick

VC You were recruited in 1956. What made you join the Foreign Service?

RC I rather wanted to escape suburban London where I was brought up in what was once a village, and to see something of the world. I had found all that rather constraining. I recall a boring exercise of ploughing through career advice, bits of paper here and there, but also the challenge of getting into the Foreign Office, which some of my friends said I would never do.

VC And what did you do? Take exams or was it interviews?

RC Exams first; a fairly serious exam held in a great hall in London. It wasn't Finsbury Circus but somewhere like that. It wasn't terribly hard, but it was a fairly gruelling and long exam as I dimly recall it. And then interviews.

VC Was it recruitment to Branch B?

RC It was. One started doing the Civil Service executive level exam. The Foreign Office took those they wanted from that. The written exam was the Civil Service Executive Level exam and Branch B was the Foreign Office's equivalent of that level.

VC And you went, immediately after sort of registering your presence in the Foreign Office, to do your National Service?

RC Yes, I worked for eleven days in the Foreign Office in Levant Department in the run-up to the Suez crisis. My main memory is of splendid Arabists in the Foreign Office wearing elegant suits and leaning about languidly trying their damndest not to panic. But there was an air of panic in the air because the Foreign Office worried itself silly over what was happening and tried to stop it. I actually saw the famous Round Robin signed by senior men in the Foreign Office and the Treasury: the only real Foreign Office and Treasury co-operation I remember seeing closely in 40-odd years. I watched one of the great men in the Foreign Office sign it. So there was an air of tremendous concern. That's my chief memory

of those eleven days. My other memory is that I was paid £11 for those eleven days, at a salary of £365 a year.

VC And so it was a rather different Foreign Office that you came back to after National Service, and a rather different Roger Carrick?

RC Yes, National Service was a bargain from my point of view. I went into the Royal Navy. One was pre-selected for the Navy. That was a plus because the Navy didn't have the grind and lottery of the other Services, and I learned Russian very well, or was taught it very well. I learned it reasonably and that was a real plus. So I came back with a language. I remember somebody in the Foreign Office saying you have a hard language and that is impressive, but weren't you commissioned? People who passed the interpreter exam had been commissioned, but after the Treasury had been at the Navy they were no longer commissioned. One was merely given the splendid rank of Leading Coder (Special) if one passed the exam, which I managed to do. So, yes, I was a maturer chap and went into a Department where they put some Branch B entrants at B5 level, as I think it was called in those days. The Department was Establishment and Organisation, which barely exists in any form nowadays. There one learned a little about the craft of diplomacy, and met some fine people, including the Head of Department, Laurie Pumphrey.

VC But you had a bench-mark if you like, you had some experience by which to judge the atmosphere, and what the Foreign Office was like when you came back into it. Can you say a bit about how it struck you then?

RC There was a change. It did not feel radical, perhaps in part because I suppose my bench-mark was superficial. There was a slight feeling of more modernity. The Suez thing was all over of course. New people were around. There wasn't that air of serious worry about a crisis, and morale was pretty good in 1958, I thought.

VC But was there a great divide between, if you like, B grades and...

RC ... and the A grades. That is a very good question. There was a divide, yes. It's much, much less nowadays and indeed has formally disappeared. But there was a real divide and I

quickly acquired the ambition to pass the Limited Competition as it was called: known then as 'the hard way' to get into Branch A. It involved a really tough written exam and a series of interviews, committee exercises and all those things that started in a country house all those years ago and were modernised only slightly in Burlington House. I eventually did that, failed the first time by a couple of marks and then I relaxed and took it again. To relax was the answer because I sailed through. I thought there was no point in worrying about it. To relax allowed, as I judged it, obviously subjectively, the necessary sense of humour to come through, which people were looking for. Years later in Personnel Department I was also looking for it. I did that Competition in my first posting. After E and O Department the Foreign Office sent me to London University for an academic year to learn Bulgarian properly. London University decided that since I had Russian, Bulgarian being different but with some similarities, different grammar, similar orthography and so on, that I should do their degree course in a year. That was hard work. Bulgarian language and literature and Slavic philology and so on. But it was immense fun, it really was. I did some broadcasting from the BBC every now and then to Bulgaria in Bulgarian. I also had oral lessons, so I worked quite hard and it was stimulating. Then we went off to Sofia.

VC Sofia at that time must have been quite grim?

RC Yes, it was. It was the height, or depth, of the Cold War, depending on how you looked at it. We were a Legation, not an Embassy. There were only four Legations in the world then. We were a Legation because we didn't matter very much, and bilateral relations were not good. But I reckoned I had the best job in the Legation. I spoke the language properly and was the only one who did. Bulgarian is not a terribly useful language but it was a ticket to a marvellous job in a small Chancery and one did almost everything. But yes, it was grim; and grimmest of course for the Bulgarians, who hadn't made a correct or useful strategic decision for about 808 years when we arrived, and it showed. It was a pretty miserable, pretty awful place with a dreadful government. The worst form of Soviet slave Communist government with whom we had enormous difficulties from time to time. In those days Sofia was a hardship post, so for one year one was given one and a half year's service, or one and a third. And that was justified.

VC What sort of things were you dealing with there? You said it was a Legation, it wasn't

high up in the pecking order of posts, and yet cold war experiences, cold war atmosphere must have dominated your life?

RC Yes it did. I was in Chancery. There was a Head of Chancery who was a First Secretary. I was the Chancery. I was also the Cultural Attaché and Information Officer, so one did nearly everything, in my case concentrating on whenever there was a need for the language. So I did quite a bit of interpreting for the Minister in charge of the Legation. We were promoted to Embassy while we were there. (That is quite a nice, but another little story.) It was my first post so I had no Embassy bench-mark, but I knew what was going on in Belgrade (which to us looked like Paris up the road), and I had some sense that we were doing pretty well everything that we could. There was a lot of work on the cultural side trying to keep a window open on the West. Often the Bulgarians would paint that window black or break it. They did smash up our Legation once, fairly comprehensively. That was nasty. The Bulgarian Government would do all they could to stop us informing the Bulgarian people about Britain and the West in the ways we could address them, which were fairly limited by the Bulgarian government. So there was work with the Universities: we had a certain occasional licence to allow us to go in and talk to the lecturers. There was also some contact with the cultural fraternity who were very 'cabined cribbed and confined' by the Bulgarian government.

There was a dreadful story of the Shakespeare Quartercentenary. There was in Bulgaria an absolutely brilliant Shakespearean scholar, called Professor Minkov, who was much admired by Shakespearean scholars in the Western world. That year, 1964, there was a colloquium in Stratford of the great scholars. Professor Minkov was invited, and asked to present a paper. That was a tremendous honour for him, he felt, but the Bulgarian government refused to let him go. To leave Bulgaria, even for a short time, everybody had to have an exit visa. The normal deal for people whom the Government were prepared to let out was that they should leave behind a hostage, e.g. wife, daughter or mother. There were plenty of candidates for a hostage, but they wouldn't let Minkov go. By this time we were an Embassy and the Ambassador took me with him to see the Foreign Minister, a man called Ivan Bashev. It was an extraordinary interview. The Ambassador was Sir William Harpham, a great gentleman diplomat, reputedly the first Grammar school boy ever to make Ambassador. I don't know if that was true. Bill Harpham was a fine man and a real gentleman. He sat there with elegance

and calm, and in a restrained way laid out the arguments over and over again. The communist Foreign Minister kept on saying that the Cabinet had decided not to allow Professor Minkov out. Against the Ambassador's elegant arguments which I would translate, Ivan Bashev kept repeating some mantra like that. Minkov never got out. It really was an absolute disgrace. It was also, on any objective view, against the Bulgarian national interest. He would have done them a power of good in that particular sphere.

The Ambassador instructed me, as his Cultural Attaché, to get the Old Vic to Bulgaria that Quartercentenary year. Of course, I tried hard but failed. The Old Vic, the precursor of the National Theatre in a way, did go abroad that year. They went to Moscow.... but Bulgaria? Good Heavens, they wouldn't dream of it. So the Ambassador instructed me instead to put on a Shakespearean show in his ballroom at the residence in Sofia. The house was designed by Lutyens. It is a sort of mini Palace with 39 rooms, including a huge elegant ballroom. I spent a difficult evening reading my Shakespeare again, and concluding that with the limited resources of people we had we couldn't possibly put on a whole play. We had 15 UK-based staff, 5 of whom were Chancery Guards, as we used to call the security officers, and 3 of whom were Diplomatic Wireless Service officers, using Morse up in the attic to communicate our book cypher telegrams: their instincts, interests and skills were a long way from the Thespian, so I decided we couldn't do a play. Instead, we did 5 extracts and 5 speeches - monologues. The *pièce de résistance* was the last extract, 5 scenes of Macbeth strung together with a couple of couplets. The performance was an enormous success. We found that the administration officer, a former Army officer on his second career, apparently had done almost nothing in his 20 years in the Army but amateur dramatics. He was absolutely brilliant as Macbeth. The Head of Chancery's wife, Margaret Heath, now Lady Heath, was a really top class Lady Macbeth. I shall never forget her performance at the dress rehearsal: it could have been straight off the best of West-end productions, it was quite superb. We put on the performance for 5 or 6 nights, and the greatest joy was seeing Professor Minkov and his wife and daughter in the front row on one of the nights...

VC Enjoying it...

RC Loving it, and tears running down his daughter's face. She was a student of English literature by then and when we got to the 'Friends, Romans, Countrymen', or what ever it

was, she wept. In a very tiny way, we got just a little of our own back on the Bulgarian government.

VC That's a wonderful example, Roger, of how a small and apparently not very important post can actually do a lot of good through cultural affairs. It is often overlooked, I think.

RC Yes, we negotiated a new cultural agreement while we were there; it was associated with the upgrade to Embassy and the purely artificial pretence that we now had better relations. We did use that to get stuck in rather more to the cultural world. There was no British Council man there. I worked to the British Council on that front.

VC Tell us a bit about change to the Embassy. You said that was a significant story.

RC It was a fun story really. None of us had ever done it before and didn't know what was involved, and here is this Communist Republic who insisted that for the credentials ceremony the Ambassador and his staff, as many as had it, should wear diplomatic uniform - frills, furbelows, ostrich feathers and gold braid. They also insisted at first, that the Ambassador should be conveyed, in January, when the weather in Bulgaria is indistinguishable from that in Siberia, in a four-horse open carriage from the residence to the national square, the Square of the National Parliament, it was called. That turned out to be impossible because the carriage didn't work, and I think the horses weren't keen. The alternative was an open car, a Russian built Zil, I think it was. Maroon it was, huge and open. The Ambassador's wife, a lovely Swiss lady, said the Ambassador must, but must, wear his cloak. The diplomatic cloak in those days was a big, long heavy dark blue cloak that covered everything. The Ambassador said 'No, I shouldn't do that because the whole point of wearing this uniform is to show off that we have something important in Britain. They want me to wear it: then they have to see all the glitter'. So there was a stand-off between the Ambassador and his wife, and they negotiated slowly and carefully towards a compromise. They went through things like long-johns. Bill Harpham wouldn't wear those because diplomatic uniform trousers were very tight and they would look creased and awful with long-johns. The compromise, eventually, was wonderful. Those were the days of the airmail edition of The Times, which was printed on a very thin, high quality, crinkly sort of paper. We used it for everything from cleaning windows to putting under the carpets, sprinkling talcum powder on so you could see

when the Bulgarian secret service had been in our flats while we were away. There were lots of airmail editions of The Times around. The compromise was that this should be wrapped around the Ambassador, associated with his underwear: several layers of it would provide wonderful insulation. This was the compromise. He duly dressed himself up in The Times and then put his uniform on top.

We went to the ceremony. It was an extraordinary ceremony. It was like something out of Gilbert and Sullivan, Balkan style. Huge band, a guard of honour of hundreds all dressed up in No 1 winter uniform. Everybody arrived, the Ambassador with the Chief of Protocol last, in the huge open-topped limousine. He walked up and down and inspected the guards, and exchanged a few words at the top of his voice in Bulgarian with the guards who all replied. It took me weeks to rehearse him to say "Zdravey, Voynitsi!", but he did it well. After various ceremonies, we were conducted by the President and the Prime Minister into the President's palace. The Prime Minister of Bulgaria and the President, and the Head of Chancery, the Ambassador and his interpreter were conducted into a small salon where there was a round table and Bulgarian champagne. We sat at the table and we drank many, many toasts in a rather artificial way to anything we could think of; and had conversations which were polite and just occasionally barbed, as suited the occasion. But the feature of it was the multiplicity of the toasts; they went on and on and on. One had to lean forward onto the rather low coffee table to pick up the glass. The Ambassador was very tall, and kept leaning forward and leaning back, toasting and sipping. Eventually, I became aware that, as a result of this frequent movement, something rather crinkly and white was appearing above his elegant diplomatic uniform collar. Eventually, you could read, and so could the President and Prime Minister read, the top half of the words "The Times". It was quite wonderful. The Ambassador was unaware of it. We stood up to leave and I tried desperately to get near him but I was very junior indeed and I wasn't allowed to approach near enough to the Ambassador. So I couldn't advise him that what he had to do there and then was to suppress a British newspaper. We went outside. The band had disappeared to the nearby restaurant because their instruments had frozen solid. They had blown down them and they had frozen, so they had rushed to the only restaurant nearby for hot water. They eventually straggled back and started to play our national anthem - in which I had actually rehearsed them weeks before on the piano. The anthem was utterly unrecognisable so nobody stood to attention until I hissed around 'God Save the Queen'. It was an absolute hoot. Diplomatically and

politically it really was Durrellesque.

More seriously, I think the big difference was actually having a very good Ambassador. That did allow us to get stuck in and do more good. The sequel to the Credentials Parade was after the Ambassador inspected the troops all over again and said his farewells. Wives were not invited to the Parade, although the Ambassador's wife Isabelle and my wife Hilary did get there and took some wonderful photographs. We returned to the residence and Isabelle, small, diminutive and lovely, (he was tall and elegant), stood on the piano stool to deal with his Times and put it firmly down. It was a lovely moment.

VC It is a wonderful story and it is full of resonances, really, about the importance of diplomatic form for countries that don't have any other way of expressing links.

RC Yes, that was interesting. Why would such a dull Bulgarian Republic and their Guard do that in their ceremonial uniforms and thus hark back to their time as a monarchy? (The former Prince Simeon is now the Prime Minister, which is a wonderful turn round of history). Countries who require diplomatic uniform to be worn at such ceremonies are an interesting study in themselves. Some of them are monarchies, like Thailand. Some of them were strange Republics of a sort, like communist Bulgaria. The other example I remember is a proud Republic who absolutely insisted, when Christopher Soames presented credentials as Ambassador in Paris, that diplomatic uniforms should be worn. He didn't have one, so he wore the uniform of a Privy Counsellor, which was fine.

VC Who would know the difference?

RC Quite. Senior staff were dressed in diplomatic uniform. That was a requirement of the Elysée Palace. That proud French republic.

VC You went on from Sofia to be the desk officer for Jordan and then you went on to a course at TCAS. I don't know what TCAS is.

RC That's because it no longer exists. It is called the Civil Service College now, it was then the Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies, but it is the same thing. It was a very good

and tough course on economics, econometrics, statistics and economic analysis. There was some tough reading before one started the course, including some mathematical studies which were way beyond me. My wife knew the headmaster of a nearby Grammar school who was a mathematician. We showed him the reading: he said 'I don't understand that'. I remember at the end of a week on the course asking a colleague, who had an Oxford degree in PPE, for his view. He said, 'well, they left me on day one'. I thought at one stage the course would be too tough for the likes of me, but what I learned kept coming back in my subsequent career, while I was doing economic work in Paris almost immediately afterwards, and in Washington years later. Some of the techniques and theories and so on came back.

VC Well it is useful to have that comment because it is...

RC It was a very tough course.

VC And there was a contrast obviously between what you were doing in Sofia and what you did in your next posting in Paris. It couldn't be more different.

RC No, it couldn't. That is part of the joy of the Diplomatic Service, don't you think? Our critics say we are like butterflies flitting from job to job, post to post and the contrast is such that we are only superficial. My answer is that we are versatile. Yes, Paris was different. I had two jobs there. I was what was known then as Second, later First, Secretary (Economic). I was promoted during my time there because it was a formality then in Branch A. At a certain age in those days you moved almost automatically from Second Secretary to First Secretary. That happened to me during my time in Paris. I had two jobs there. One was the Economic Secretary in the Embassy at a time when we were trying to join the then Common Market. The other was the UK delegate to COCOM which stands for Co-ordinating Committee, and is the Western organisation that ran the strategic embargo against the Soviet Union, the Soviet satrap states - the COMECON states - and China. And so I had multilateral as well as bilateral diplomacy.

VC I imagine the life-style was extremely different?

RC Utterly different. Yes. It was interesting, that post. It was 1967. Paris was expensive

and our single junior staff, the single ladies and the men, were pretty broke. The accommodation they had, or could afford with rent allowances, in Paris, was distinctly less good than any of us had had in Sofia. It was quite extraordinary. Paris was enormous fun. You could buy anything you could afford. In Sofia you couldn't buy anything you wanted. You could buy all the fillet steak you wanted, but you couldn't buy any onions and you could buy fish only if you went to the Black sea coast. Maybe that's a slight exaggeration but there were really serious shortages. We used to import supplies every three months on a lorry from Osterman Petersen in Copenhagen. Of course the contrast with Paris was complete on that front, but there was a sense in Paris of the junior staff living hand to mouth, of being broke in this expensive place. Morale wasn't as high as it was in the difficult post of Sofia.

VC That's very interesting, in terms of hardship posts, because of the compensations and because of the working together as a team in hardship...

RC Yes, to bring out the best in people...

VC ...but I was thinking that Paris hasn't always been a happy post because of the contra reasons, you are rather far from the centre of power, perhaps you are not as important as you are in a smaller post, I don't know if you would like to comment on that?

RC I think that's an accurate diagnosis. That's certainly true. Also, there were teams in Paris and some of the teams wouldn't talk to other teams, which was always a great pity. There was some sort of terrible divide at the door in a corridor, one side of which was unclassified, the other side wasn't. But there were other reasons why morale was a bit low for part of the time in Paris. Fairly soon after I went there, the great British Ambassador, Sir Patrick Reilly was, not to put too fine a point on it, sacked by George Brown for the reverse of anything you would call reasonable, an appalling scandal really, quite appalling. And we were all absolutely horrified. We hated Sir Patrick going, all of us, but we respected him even more.

VC Why did it happen?

RC Well, I don't know all the reasons, but George Brown took against him right from the beginning, and against his wife, a splendid lady. I was actually sitting at her table at a large

dinner in the Residence. George Brown was also at the table. During one of those pauses in an Embassy dinner, even one with many tables, he was very insulting indeed to the Ambassadors in a loud, less than fully sober voice. She was dreadfully upset about that. It really was quite dreadful. I was only a Second or First Secretary, so I don't know the full ins and outs of it by any means, but certainly there was a personality clash. Whether there was any wish at that stage on the part of the Government to appoint a political appointee I just don't know, but of course Christopher Soames was appointed from the opposition front bench as a Tory grandee to Paris. That changed the Embassy. Some of us at least were a little resentful of anybody replacing Pat Reilly at the beginning, but of course in a professional service that didn't last very long. So it did change, it became, as Christopher intended, a much more political than a diplomatic embassy, and an exciting embassy too.

VC You were there at a very exciting time. What were the chief things that were going on?

RC Well, there was the 'would we or would we not be allowed by de Gaulle into the Common Market'; and I was there for the 'Grand Non' from de Gaulle. I shan't forget the scene outside the Elysée Palace when Harold Wilson and George Brown came down the steps to an absolute sea of microphones and journalists, which was most unusual in those days. People weren't used to hundreds of microphones and screaming journalists. So they stood on the steps and Wilson motioned to George to say something, and George said 'Pas de comment'. Those of us round the edge were delighted with the humour of this. It was wonderful, but it did silence the journalists. So that was that. Later, there was the Soames affair. There was all the business with de Gaulle and there was the death of de Gaulle. So I was there for his 'Grand Non', and for his funeral.

Then of course there were the May 1968 events, which was just an extraordinarily thrilling time to be a diplomat in Paris. The atmosphere in Paris had got heavier and heavier, you could cut it with a knife. For weeks before everything blew up, the extraordinary alliance between the students in the Sorbonne and the unionists in the Renault factory just up the road, was, politically, I would guess, unprecedented in France and absolutely extraordinary. The government really had their backs up against the wall and were very uneasy but couldn't quite work out how to deal with this. Night after night they sent out the CRS, the Compagnie Républicaine de Sécurité, the 'heavy mob' of armed police, to try to prevent violence. That

made some things worse: there was violence; trees were ripped up on the Left Bank and people were killed. That policy just didn't work. There was an extraordinary day when de Gaulle disappeared. Nobody knew where de Gaulle was. Paris was heavy with atmosphere. It had already been through a lot, there was no petrol, we were all driving around with no shoe on our accelerator foot, to try to conserve petrol. We were walking. Hilary was stuck in a traffic jam around the Arc de Triomphe once when she was going to pick up our son from the crèche. She just left the car and walked. About seven hours later we went to collect the car. It was still there, in the middle of the Etolie, the doors unlocked and the keys in the ignition. Paris was just crazy. It was in psychosis in a way, and de Gaulle had disappeared that day. It later turned out he had gone to consult with his Generals somewhere near the Belgian border. We were later told by a very good French authority that there was a period of an hour or two when, had the Communists, who were of course behind the Renault unionists and the students, realised it, they could actually have taken over France. That was an extraordinary feeling. It was difficult to believe – and that probably explains why the communists didn't realise they had this tremendous opportunity. Those were indeed exciting days.

VC You were talking about that you feel the lead up to the disturbances, could you, working in the economic department, feel the lead up to the 'Grand Non'? Were you working on the....

RC Yes, yes. I was to some extent, but I was so tied up with a COCOM review at the same time I only did a bit, but, yes, you could feel a 'Non' coming. It never looked to be a likely 'yes', because while we believed we could judge objectively where French interests lay - that the right French approach was for the enlargement of Europe to include Britain; and while we could describe why we believed that, de Gaulle's perception was not thus. There had been extremely difficult negotiations in Brussels, and Sir Christopher Soames smartly wrote to the then Permanent Secretary, Sir Denis Greenhill, saying the only way we are going to break this log-jam is in Paris: the Prime Minister of Great Britain will have to come to Paris. "Paris is worth....." Sir Christopher argued well, in a very political way, that that was what should happen, and that there should be a 'summit' in Paris. Evidently his arguments were persuasive. Ted Heath came over, and Pompidou, the Prime Minister, wrote to him when some months later.... sorry I am jumping. Go back first to the Labour Government and Harold Wilson. Our analysis, or my analysis for what it is worth, was that de Gaulle had the

view that if he let Britain in, the Common Agricultural Policy would be very disagreeably changed, the people he regarded as the backbone of France and the backbone of his own Gaullists, the small farmers, would be destroyed - and he would be held to blame. That would hurt him a lot. He also, I think, genuinely believed that our entry and its consequences were not in France's interest, the economic interest, as he saw it. There were lots of other elements to de Gaulle's perception. There was his view of 'les Anglo-Saxons'. He didn't trust us for all sorts of reasons - the War, Churchill and the Americans and all of that. Going back to where I had wrongly leapt forward, later, Ted Heath was persuaded by Christopher Soames to come to Paris. We had a weekend I think when Ted Heath did nothing but negotiate with Pompidou. That broke a lot of the deadlock in Brussels and months later, when we did join, Pompidou wrote to Ted Heath a very decent letter, formal, 'My dear Prime Minister', but very clear in his judgement that that meeting had made the world of difference. So one was involved on the periphery of that. I am sorry to have muddled those two.

VC And then you had another test of your versatility after Paris, off to Singapore.

RC Yes, that was interesting. Personnel Department had told me that I was going to go back to the Foreign Office. I groaned and thought that each time I had been led to expect to go abroad again I was sent back to the Foreign Office. An Under-Secretary was over in Paris and was staying with us for some reason to do with COCOM. Hilary answered his question, which was something about being 'glad to be going back to London?', and said 'absolutely not..... didn't join the Foreign Service to serve at home'. Hilary of course was in the Foreign Service when we met and married and so she had to resign in 1962 when we were married because that was the rule. There was no complaint, no fuss, she just resigned. That was the end of her career and an enormous sacrifice. That rule lasted another twelve years. It wasn't until 1973 or 74 that ladies who married within the Service were allowed to continue in the Service. I always think that, rather like the Church of England, the Diplomatic Service gets two for the price of one. Hilary always has her own view. She answered the question robustly. The Under-Secretary very kindly had a word with Personnel Department, I guessed. Personnel Department changed their mind, as years later I learned it was expedient and sensible to do from time to time on the personnel front, and we were sent to Singapore in early 1972, at the time when we had to negotiate the details of the withdrawal of British troops from East of Suez, which was fascinating. Singapore changed. When we arrived

Britain owned one tenth of the Island and when we left we didn't own any of it. That of course was Harold Wilson's policy. Lee Kuan Yew felt let down. He had been at a Cabinet meeting in London. He believed that he had been promised by the Secretary of State for Defence that there would be no withdrawal and he believed that Britain had let him down badly, that Britain could no longer be trusted. So we had a difficult relationship. Lee argued strongly that the pulling out of British troops from Singapore, where they were based, would create a political vacuum into which would be sucked communist rebels from the north, and Heaven knows what from the south. He believed, at least he argued, this strongly. I have met him on and off since then, and I think he did actually believe it. I wonder whether he would now accept that he was mistaken: probably not. It was very much his apparent view then, and he used it to negotiate as well, while the Labour Government was still in power. By the time we were sent to Singapore, Ted Heath had been Prime Minister for some time. Lee had negotiated a tremendous package of aid from Harold Wilson. It seems odd in the 21st Century to think of Britain giving aid to Singapore but we did, and Lee negotiated with Harold Wilson, I think I am right in saying, on the Istana golf course, a socking great extra package. I was the Head of Chancery in Singapore and part of the Chancery was an aid section: a First Secretary, a Second Secretary and a couple of others, because there were huge amounts of aid to disburse. Well, I think in Britain's defence one might say that our aid contributed to Singapore's great economic success later by helping really in a fundamental economic supportive way, and that was in the UK interest. At all events, Lee Kuan Yew's view was that we were taking all these people, troops and assets, away and would cruelly hurt the Singaporean economy.

The business of negotiating away, in a decent way, one tenth of the Island was quite something. There were all these fixed assets and the instructions from London were 'fixed assets should go to Singapore, anything moveable we will take home to spread round the army, navy and air force.' All three services were in Singapore: the overall Far East Command; the Army as the Far East Land Force, the Navy's Far East Fleet, and the Air Force as FEAF, Far East Air Force. Far East Command had, I think it was, an Air Chief Marshal in charge as C-in-C, Sir Brian Burnett; huge logistic operations support; a major naval base at Sembawang; and I don't know how many Army and Air Force and other bases around the Island - barracks, parade grounds, depots, offices, training and recreational facilities: as I said, one tenth of the Island was ours. The huge Far East Command headquarters at Phoenix

Park was where the High Commission was also located. We built a new High Commission elsewhere. Negotiating that and its detail was quite something and I had a bit to do with it. We designed a nice little plan that, as I recall, was not put to London for permission to go ahead. Instead of the Singaporeans having all the British Army and Air Force family accommodation - the houses - we arranged with the Singaporeans that while they would have title and ownership of them all of course, as fixed assets, the High Commission would take some of the houses, those that were suitable, and for a pepper-corn rent, a payment of a single dollar a house, we would be allowed to use them for diplomatic purposes so long as we required them for that. I was thrilled about that; I thought it a great move: we cut our rental bill radically at a stroke. I didn't realise at the time quite how clever it was: because we didn't have ownership, the Treasury couldn't press us to sell the houses, so many of them are still in use by the Diplomatic Service today.

I learned a great deal about the art of negotiating from the process of negotiating with very clever Singapore Chinese. Another aspect was negotiating with our own military, who claimed that all sorts of things that were nailed, bolted, screwed down and concreted in were removable assets. The military didn't want to leave Singapore at all, and fought tooth and nail. I shall never forget the wonderful man who was the Chief of Staff at Far East Command. He was a Major-General called Pat Howard Dobson, a very decent fellow, but I shall never forget him speaking at a mess dinner one night and saying how dreadful this whole business was. There was a much prized piece of land called HMS Terror. It was a shore based naval station, (stone frigates the Navy calls them), and beautiful. At the end of his long after-dinner speech, Pat Howard Dobson said, "When they dig me up they will find engraved upon my heart the words 'HMS Terror.'" That exemplified the atmosphere. But Singapore changed enormously. The economy that was so poor, adjusted, switched, got going in new ways, and I do think we had a bit to do with that. Singapore life changed from the spare time luxury the Services had enjoyed to something much more sensible and efficient.

VC And the aspect of, if you like, Embassy life and staff: how was morale during this very interesting time when perhaps people professionally promoting British interests might have had questions about the policy? And also the question of how it was administering the aid staff, a different.....

RC I think there is an easy answer to that. Firstly the business of whether our own people questioned the policy or were upset about it was all over by the time we reached Singapore. There had been a Commonwealth conference in Singapore at which Ted Heath and Alec Douglas Home led for Britain, and that was quite a success. I think that had dealt with all the main policy questions. There was a new British Government. The withdrawal policy was the subject of quite a lot of argument during the election. The policy was modified- from total withdrawal to the provision, at withdrawal, of a new, small military force. I think that is a fair description: the ANZUK Force, from Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

Just briefly on that Force, then I'll answer your question about morale. The ANZUK Force was invented by diplomats and politicians to deal with Lee Kuan Yew's political vacuum problem. It consisted of a brigade, the most visible 'token'. It was more than a token; it was a brigade with a British battalion, a New Zealand battalion and so on. Three diplomats, Australian, New Zealand and British, sat round a table and designed the ANZUK Force. It started with a two-star, an Australian Rear-Admiral, and then a Brigadier. It was checked properly with the military people, who really understood it. We even had an ANZUKIGS, an Australian, New Zealand and UK Intelligence Group (Singapore), to keep Lee Kuan Yew happy. We had to deal with the political problem that Lee Kuan Yew had presented. He had enlarged it of course, in a clever political way, but it was a political problem and we dealt with it by inventing a force. We had the Royal Highland Fusiliers as the first British battalion on the ground. Naval and air assets were also allocated. That was a smart move, not mine, but earlier: the already existing Five Power Defence Arrangements (based on the Anglo-Malaysia Defence Agreement which was part of the decolonisation of Malaysia) were built on to provide the base for some serious air assets - for example, Mirage aircraft and so on from the Australians in Butterworth up in Malaysia. They were part of the ANZUK arrangements as well.

The ANZUK Force did some good work during its designedly limited life, and held some good training exercises. Its remit was something like 'promote stability in the area'. I think it did that. We did have to have a Status of Forces Agreement, but that too did good, also in the sense of your morale question, because the policy had changed and if there were people who didn't agree with the policy then the ANZUK Force was a help to them, as it was indeed a

real help to Lee Kuan Yew. We had tough negotiations also with the Singapore Government and indeed went to Lee Kuan Yew on a number of occasions about which part of the Island the ANZUK Force would occupy and whether it would be one of the former jewels in the former Imperial crown, lovely places, or whether the Singaporeans would get those. That was another passionate negotiation with our colleagues in uniform in the British Ministry of Defence. We worked it out in the end.

The other part of the answer to the morale question, and the particular reason why it is easy to answer, is that morale was high because we had an absolutely marvellous High Commissioner now called Sir Sam Falle. Sam Falle he was then. Sam Falle is a great character, a tremendous character. Books ought to be written about Sam Falle, but he has written a book called 'A Lucky Life'. The subtitle is 'In War, Revolution, Peace and Diplomacy'. It's a very good read. Sam is a brilliant Arabist and a brilliant linguist, the best linguist of his generation in the Foreign Office by a yard. But he is also a lovely man whose touch on the helm of the High Commission was as light and gentle as you could possibly imagine. A decent, straightforward man. He was always so cheerful, and helpful, and an optimist, that in a High Commission like that morale really did stem from the top. Another reason for high morale is that we had to move out of Phoenix Park, where the Command headquarters had been and where our High Commission building also was. So we had to build a new building, and that was quite fun, too. It was designed by an excellent British government architect called Ken Campbell. He designed a brilliant new building, brilliant in that it was functional, beautiful and architecturally innovative. Architects came from all over the world to see his 'floating roof.' It was a very fine building, excellent to work in. We moved into it and the move was a joy because the Royal Highland Fusiliers did it for us. They quite enjoyed it.

There was one little story there. Ours was the first High Commission or Embassy building, diplomatic building abroad, not to have bars at the windows but instead bullet-proof glass. A great innovation. A great invention by Pilkington of the UK. On the wall of my Head of Chancery office I had a critical path diagram of how and when this building was to be constructed, finished and occupied. The diagram included dates for the arrival of the glass, and for its installation. The glass arrived exactly on the right day. The Administration Officer took a big jummy to the packing cases and opened them carefully just below where

the glass was to be installed. He found this super-duper new bullet-proof glass in millions of pieces. Absolutely shattered. So we had to put ordinary glass in. The Royal Highland Fusiliers solved the consequential security problem: they mounted guard on our High Commission, and they loved the night duty. I never understood why, until as Head of Chancery I went there one night to check up and have a beer with them: I found they were all standing on the roof with night vision binoculars looking into the dimly lit, but curtain free, windows of the back part of an hotel some little distance across the way. Behind the windows all sorts of torrid, tropical things were going on and the soldiers much enjoyed the view. We did solve the glass problem. Pilkington's and the Whitehall people concerned eventually agreed that once the glass is set upright in its special frames, it will withstand a high velocity rifle bullet, but if you send it by sea in packing cases lying flat and it undulates with the waves, it shatters. That was a funny little twist. The High Commission building is of real quality. This was in the days before the Foreign Office ran its own diplomatic estate, and the work was done by the Department of the Environment or Ministry of Works, or whatever it was called in those days. It was done extremely well. The architect was very good indeed, and a lovely building resulted. That helped morale too.

VC Pride. So your next posting was one at home when you were in Personnel Operations Department and you were able to put into practice some of the things you learnt in the Service. You have a view of the Service and its development such as perhaps few people have and perhaps you could talk a bit about that?

RC It was a love-hate posting in POD. I loved it when one could produce the right answers in human terms; and I hated it when we couldn't, or personal tragedies occurred and things went wrong. I was in the Department for four years, quite a long time. I did two jobs, one was Assistant in charge of Branch A of the Service, and then I became deputy head of the Department. The reason I became deputy head of the Department was simply that we failed to produce anybody else. The candidates were....

VC Much too modest...

RC Not at all. It did actually happen like that. We produced a chap we thought was a good candidate to be deputy head and therefore my boss, but very senior people in the Foreign

Office interviewed him and said, no, he's a wonderful chap but he is not right for this job. We were a bit stuck on timing and then somebody said, 'You had better do it yourself, Carrick, since you failed to produce a good candidate.' That is how it happened. I did form different views over the four years of how the Service was then changing and should change. There was 'executivisation', that was the word to describe, 'let's take Branch A jobs and have them done by selected, able executive stream officers.' That was a way of dealing with a number of pressures from the executive stream, and from numbers, costs, and so on. It helped to begin the process of making a single Service and removing the sense of division there had been when I joined. A process which was important and a good thing to do and has, I think, paid off pretty handsome dividends, but there has been a cost too. My own personal view is that over the years this process went on, we overdid it. The cost pressures were probably too much. We downgraded and cut too many jobs and posts around the world, and today I see excessive pressures on the Service. Of course many retired officers will have criticisms of the Service simply because it simply isn't like it was in their day, and so you have to discount for the grumpy old man factor. But I think that change probably did go a bit too far. In those days it was exciting and good and a decent thing to be involved with, and to encourage. We were very careful with the selection of people going to these regraded posts. That was I suppose because it was the beginning and we had to be careful.

The business of transferring from one Branch to another had changed. I did the Limited Competition years before, which took something like 1 or 1.3 people a year. That no longer existed in anything like the same form by the time I had left Personnel, or even when I joined it. We had something called SPS, the Special Promotion Scheme, which was really the service selecting people it wanted to 'bring on' and to put into Branch A jobs. A good number of good people made the transition that way. So gradually there was more of a genuine sense of merging. The earlier divide between the Branches was illustrated for me when I was the desk officer for Jordan. As a fairly newly promoted Branch A officer I asked an administrative question of my boss, to which his answer was, 'You are a member of the senior branch of the Foreign Office, you don't have to ask me that, you just do what you think is right.' That was designed to be helpful to me, of course, and it was. But in another way it defined the division. That, I think, has all gone now. Overall, that is a distinct plus. Personnel work in those days was very different from now. I understand that the Personnel Division now is closed for 2 or 3 months while it reorganises itself and comes up in a leaner

form. The Service always seems to be coming up with a leaner form and I am not sure that the removal of all the fat and even some of the lean makes for a balanced diet.

There were some really difficult times in Personnel Operations Department, because people went through some really difficult personal tragedies. I remember saying to the then Head of Personnel Services Department, the splendid John Whitehead, that I was worried about the divorce rate in the Service. He said, 'Well, let's look at it objectively, we will do some research.' His chaps did some research to compare rates of divorce: the number of divorces happening in the Foreign Service compared with the number in the Home Civil Service and in the population as a whole in Britain. He found, to my total astonishment that they were all exactly the same. I thought I really should stop worrying, but I think it was the sheer numbers of colleagues involved in difficulties that came to my desk and room and made one think the problem was worse than objectively it was. But I was surprised. Having been in the Navy I had concluded that the Navy strengthened good marriages and broke many weaker ones. I thought the same thing was happening in the Diplomatic Service. And that sensible Whitehead approach proved that it wasn't so.

VC But it was a time, wasn't it, when the feminist movement was having its effect on Service wives.

RC Yes it was. It was just beginning. It had its effect on some lady members of the Service who were single still, although by then the 'resign on marriage' rule had gone. I remember a few able single lady members of the Service being cross with what they saw as the policy of Personnel Operations Department oriented towards the male (or married) officers. I recall having some difficult discussions. Indeed I recall one lady who left the Service, to my intense regret, a fine lady, who was already senior, who had a laser-like intellect, and who undoubtedly would have gone close to the top. It was sad. She concluded that she had better leave because the Service was going to be unfair always. I thought she was wrong. My analysis in that case was not intellectual, just based on experience. I think she weighted the elements in her intellectual equations inaccurately. But that was her view, and she was not alone. Also in my time in Personnel the wife who wouldn't be a 'twofer' was appearing, if rarely. And DS officers were still in those days writing properly confidential reports on people, and writing about their wives.

VC Which no longer happens.

RC No, I believe it no longer happens. We did actually revise the confidential report form in the early 70s. I'm sure it is done every few years but too many people were getting 'Box ones' as it were. We revised it along with Personnel Policy Department. Patrick Moberly, then Head of PPD, played an important part in that. I thought it was an intelligently revised form: we were trying to modernise and to respond, but we were I suppose a little reluctant to change too much, and a bit worried about the effect of career ladies marrying Diplomatic Service officers and wanting to continue their careers. I feared this would lead us in a wrong direction because we would find that those wives would not entertain at home, and that we could therefore no longer sustain or justify large representational houses and apartments all over the world. We live in such relative 'luxury' that the Treasury resent it; but if we cut down too much, the pursuit of UK interests would surely suffer. The Treasury would have a good reason for saying we needed more economical accommodation. Indeed, that happened through not only the Treasury but the CPRS and other reviews, together with the awful idea that one Foreign Secretary advanced, that British diplomats abroad should represent the country in the sense that they should be representative of the population of the British Isles. I think that would be antipathetic to Britain's interests because our job abroad is not to be a little Britain abroad: a bit of a Bromley man, a bit of a Birmingham black man and bit of a Chinatown yellow man, and so on. Our job is to use the best resources we can recruit to pursue and perform Britain's business abroad: the Government's business abroad, the commercial business of the British economy, and in the wider sense the business of British political interests abroad. We need people able to do that. I don't care if they are yellow, pink, one-legged or from any particular part of the UK. (To be one-legged might even be an advantage they could use for Britain!) That is what representation means to me, and I do (the grumpy old man factor coming in) regret this business of being seen to be 'representative' of modern Britain. Rather, we must represent modern Britain in the sense of delivering its interests. But these thoughts were nascent when I was in Personnel Operations Department (1974-78). I think they were only nascent in part because those were early days, in part because we were behind the game a little, and in part because we were extraordinarily busy with long days dealing with problems of the day. Nowadays I gather that DS officers 'manage' their own careers, bid for posts on a computer, and may or may not succeed in their

bids. Since I retired I have heard of something called the MRS afflicting members of the Diplomatic Service, MRS standing for multiple rejection syndrome: that's a worry. In Personnel Department we used to work hard to 'manage' the careers of the weaker people. Maybe that is inefficient, maybe the Treasury would say that is a waste of time and the operational cost is too high. We thought it was right and I still think it is right to help bring on those people, not let them suffer from multiple rejection syndrome and see that they are put up for jobs they can do well, because that is 'inclusion', and so on. That I gather has all changed. It remains to be seen. It might be more efficient now: people in the computer age might feel happier tapping the keys and seeing what Boards decide.

VC But nobody is ever going to do that for the top jobs, for the ambassadors' jobs. Did you have any influence on those in your time?

RC Yes, that's a good question. Yes indeed, the system was collegiate in Personnel Department. There was not a strong hierarchical sense at all. It was genuinely collegiate and that was good for the Service. In the same sense there was a democratic element about it, but there was also the Board structure. The Number One Board in those days was chaired by the Permanent Under-Secretary, was attended by a minister and consisted largely of Deputy Under-Secretaries. It was led in a considerable way by the Chief Clerk. The secretary to that board was Head of Personnel Operations Department and the secretary to the Number Two Board was the deputy head of POD and so on: there was a structure. That said, the process was collegiate. Perhaps the most interesting story from that time, and there were many interesting stories, demonstrated a rare occurrence in the Diplomatic Service. It concerned a political appointment. I was deputy head of the department. The head of department happened to be off sick for a couple of days. So I found myself sitting at the Number One Board as the Secretary, with the Permanent Under-Secretary in the chair, a minister present, and all the deputy under-secretaries and the private secretary to the Foreign Secretary. The subject was the Ambassador in Washington. The government had decided that Peter Ramsbotham should be sent elsewhere, another...

VC Politically motivated, was it?

RC And personally.

VC I see, it was a personality clash.

RC As I recall it, Harold Wilson and David Owen just didn't get on with Peter Ramsbotham, and Peter Ramsbotham, bless him, went off to be Governor of Bermuda. I might say that when his wife died some years later, all Washington insisted on a memorial service in the cathedral, and the cathedral was utterly full. Peter Ramsbotham is a great man. The proposal before the Number One Board was that Peter Jay should be Ambassador in Washington. Peter Jay is exactly my age. We had been in the Navy at the same time (for National Service). He was at that time economics editor at The Times and he was a very bright economic analyst. He was a friend of David Owen, and son-in-law of the Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan. The first thing that happened when the Board reached this item on the Agenda was that one of the deputy under-secretaries stood up at the meeting, which I imagine had never been done before, and made a speech in favour of Peter Ramsbotham, and about how sad and wrong it was that he should be going. It was wonderful. Then a debate ensued and at times became quite heated. One member of the Service, a great deputy under-secretary, a former Ambassador, stood up and walked out. His face was the colour of an angry turkey-cock. He was wise to have walked out, as he might otherwise have had a heart attack. The meeting carried on expounding varying degrees of reluctance from strong to really strong. The minister spoke at length. The PUS chaired with much skill and finesse. Finally the great men, having had their say, went along with the Foreign Secretary's intention. So the recommendation went forward – to the Foreign Secretary who then put it to the Prime Minister who then put it to The Queen. As I recall the story, and clearly I wasn't in Number 10, I was in the Foreign Office, but as I recall the story, the recommendation went to the Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan who had recently been Foreign Secretary, and who, on succeeding Harold Wilson as Prime Minister, had promoted David Owen from Minister of State to be Foreign Secretary, a surprising and controversial appointment and promotion, a bit like John Major's to the same job you might say. It was a surprising appointment for a very young David Owen. Again as I recall the story, imbibing it rather than knowing it objectively perhaps, this was the first Jim Callaghan had heard of this appointment. I have a good deal of time for Jim Callaghan. He took the view that David Owen's recent appointment having been his, it having been controversial and he, Jim, having been criticised for appointing someone quite so young to the Foreign Office, couldn't possibly oppose the first serious

recommendation from his new Foreign Secretary. So he had better not oppose it. There was a political adviser in Number 10 at that time, now in the House of Lords, called Tom MacNally who had been a political adviser in the Foreign Office and who is very sharp and good and one of our best Labour peers I think, oh no, I am sorry, he is now Lib-Dem, one of those who moved across like David Owen. Anyway, he was in Number 10 at the time as adviser to Jim and my sense, again imbibed and half remembered, was that Tom said to the Prime Minister something like 'Prime Minister, you are going to be crucified by the press if you approve this appointment. It will be seen as some form of nepotism. He is your son-in-law for Heaven's sake, you have to stop it. You have to say no.' Jim's solution, as I recall it was to just waft the paper through with a sort of Pontius Pilate washing of hands act. So the appointment went to the Queen, which is pretty much a formality. And that was that. Somewhere in the Foreign Office there are my manuscript notes of that No 1 Board meeting, but I doubt if I will ever be allowed see them.

VC Very interesting story and all the more interesting in that you went to Washington and you served under Peter Jay. Any comment on the effectiveness of an appointed non-professional ambassador?

RC Well, it all depends on who he is and what his experience is. I thought that in a political way Christopher Soames was an effective ambassador, in many ways. He was a bit controversial, but by Jove if you want two for the price of one Mary Churchill and he were a terrific team. I happened to have worked for two political appointees, the other Peter Jay. They all learn, but think of Lord Caradon in the United Nations: very effective indeed. Think of Ivor Richard, Lord Richard at the United Nations: wonderfully effective. Peter Jay was young, 42 perhaps, on his appointment. He is a very intelligent man, and a very good economic analyst. He took the Foreign Office on in some ways, and he wouldn't just accept nominations to his staff at the level of First Secretary and above. I was on sabbatical in Berkeley in California at the time I was proposed to him as a Counsellor, and he insisted on interviewing everybody for First Secretary and above. He was visiting Berkeley and interviewed me. Once we realised we had been contemporaries in the Navy, it seemed fairly easy, not too serious. I was also interviewed in London for that job, which was the only time I was ever interviewed for a job in the Diplomatic Service, once I had joined. But that was fine. Peter Jay was a controversial Ambassador within the Embassy. The Chancery, of

which I was part, took a very different view about the Carter regime than he did. There were personality conflicts too. In my particular job (I was the JIC representative), I found him very good indeed.

VC JIC, Joint Intelligence Committee?

RC Yes. I found Peter Jay very good to deal with. Once a week we would usually have an hour and a half together going over the intelligence assessments of the time. We Brits were discussing, agreeing, debating and sometimes disagreeing with the Americans, and we would go through the more important parts of all that, so that he was briefed. Peter was intellectually impressive and it was a challenge, a demanding session once a week. I came away usually fairly fatigued, but it was most enjoyable too and it would often sharpen my analysis. That side of things was very good. I happen to believe that Peter Jay misjudged the Carter regime, but that is a controversial subject. As I say, Peter was a controversial Ambassador. He thought it was right that we should no longer in the Embassy have a huge resource, a huge historic library of Anglo-American and transatlantic tomes on diplomacy, and diplomatic history, and political history. So he broke all that up, which I thought was sad, and gave it to various institutions. But Peter was supportive commercially, for example.

I was standing with Peter Jay in the Rotunda at the Embassy in Washington at the time of the election that Jim Callaghan and Labour lost. Peter had just come from doing a television interview and I had just come from doing a radio interview about the business of elections in the UK. Shortly after we arrived, a key result was announced. I forget which constituency it was but many psephologists of the day believed that it would indicate the overall outcome. It came through. Labour had lost it. Peter turned to me and said 'well, that's the end of the only diplomatic mission I shall ever have'. He then thought for a bit and said, 'I'm going to sail back.' He is a sailor and had a half share in a 40-something foot yacht which was then up in New England. He said he wanted to sail back in a race from Marblehead, or wherever it was, to Cork, and asked if I would I like to come with him as navigator. I'm a keen sailor and I said 'I would love to, but I have a disadvantage, I am not very good at astral navigation', which in those days, before the days of GPS, was necessary. He said 'Never mind, I'll teach you that'. Presumably he had been taught in the Navy, he had followed a different path in the Navy from mine. And that was typical, and very good of him. However, duty prevented me

from joining him - or more precisely it was decided by others that I shouldn't be allowed to take the time off to go.

Peter Jay's two years in Washington, and that's all it was, were pretty mixed, I think. I believed that he had a very good book in him. He only ever kept one book on his desk: his father's. That was a fine volume on economic thought and I thought Peter had another one in him. He has never produced it: he has written reams, but never...

VC And so Roger, we have been talking about Peter Jay. Tell me about the substance of the job that you did.

RC There is not too much one can say about the JIC side but it did involve a lot of work with the analytical side of the intelligence community, not the operations side, the analytical sides of the intelligence communities on both sides of the Atlantic: that was fascinating. It was also quite important because the work underlay a lot of policy decisions, both in London and in Washington. Intelligence assessment was often the subject of some trans-Atlantic debate, and part of my job was to try to resolve the debates. But I also learned much about a good deal of the world because the debates were on subjects of intelligence analysis and interest about which I otherwise would not necessarily have known. So it wasn't by any means just a bilateral job: because the substance of it was world-wide. It included the Iran hostage crisis because the US were of course directly, and passionately, involved. That meant long hours, lots of exchanges of telegrams, thoughts, arguments and assessments, including from Tony Parsons who was then British Ambassador in Tehran and who did some splendid work. I remember at one stage Tony Parsons's telegrams, which were copied to the Washington Embassy, subject to some procedures, being shared with the Americans. Those were read, as I remember it, in the White House and elsewhere, avidly. And believed implicitly. The American Ambassador's telegrams were not. That was barmy because the American Ambassador was saying pretty well the same thing. Because his telegrams came from Tony, they were believed. A nice little quirk. But the Iran hostage crisis was really quite a torrid sort of time, in part because we Brits, our colleagues in the British Embassy in Tehran, were hiding, housing, protecting, sheltering American diplomats who otherwise would have been among the 41 hostages. And nobody knew it. The Canadians were doing the same sort of thing and quite soon the Canadian action became known. They closed their Embassy, I think,

while managing to arrange things so that nobody suffered. Fine: the Canadians were then being fêted all over Washington. The US press and media were full of how wonderful the Canadians were. We had rather more American diplomats in the basements of British diplomatic houses hiding than the Canadians had, but for professional reasons we were keen that the whole exercise should be kept quiet. That was a nice little twist. But it was also an example of the closeness of UK - American relations, of the value put on that closeness by the Americans in times of stress, and of the value we gained consequentially in a diplomatic sense in other areas.

VC Well, I was going to say, first of all two questions. The first one is we really do bring something to the party on Anglo - American relations, but what you say really underlines the value which is put on particular advantage in the intelligence field. Was that we brought to the party repaid, for instance over the Falklands?

RC A good question. It's a classic example of what we bring to the party: the intelligence assessment as well as what the public normally perceive as the intelligence contribution, the raw intelligence on the operational side, which as I said, was not my responsibility. But the assessment, the debate and the discussion based on shared knowledge under UKUSA arrangements, which include the UK & the US, and the Australians, and some fine people in the Australian intelligence assessment business. There was a so-called Commonwealth liaison arrangement with the CIA. Those of us serving in Washington from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK, used to sit around a table with the Americans once a week to discuss the hot topics and to try to agree on our assessment of them. While I was there, the New Zealanders were removed from that co-operation because of the row over nuclear ships, or ships with nuclear power, being refused entry to New Zealand ports. We Brits tried hard to prevent their removal, in vain. That Commonwealth liaison group is generally unsung and was quite important. However, in a purely bilateral sense, to go to your Falklands question, I think the answer is probably 'yes, but'. The 'but' is that there is much more substance to Anglo-American relations than just, although it is tremendously important, the intelligence side of things. There's all the military co-operation which means operationally we can work together rather better than you might believe from reading the pages of the press, and there is policy, and research co-operation, there's all sorts of joint work. But certainly the intelligence angle is the most focussed on at many times and it did

become of extreme importance to us at the time of the Falklands. We the British had garnered and assessed enough intelligence to persuade our Assessments Staff, based in the Cabinet office, that the Argentines were going to invade. We reached this conclusion when the Americans had not. That was most important.

When the UK assessment came to me in the Embassy in Washington, I legged it along the corridor to the Ambassador's office. The Ambassador by now was Nico Henderson who became an absolute star in America over the Falklands. I said in effect 'Nico you have to read this now'. Nico read it, instantly saw the historic importance of the moment and said to me 'we have to take this to Al Haig now' - something like that. My first reaction was to think, 'my God, I'd need to get clearance from London through the system for this: we can't do that yet, Nico'. But I had the sense to bite my lip and say 'I'll go and produce a piece of paper we can take down, I'll do it now'. I did produce a piece of paper based on the London assessment and written for US eyes. Heaven knows, I broke the usual procedures. Al Haig looked at it and said in effect that he did not believe it. He picked up the phone and checked with his intelligence people, whom, he said, did not believe it: the Argentines were just exercising or some such. I'm sure I am grossly condensing, but Nico persuaded Al Haig in short order that we both jolly well did have to take this assessment and conclusion seriously. That was crucial because it was important for the Americans, and Al Haig in particular, to understand that we were right, and that it was possible for the US intelligence machine to be wrong. There were other important moments during the Falklands conflict that had to do with intelligence. Washington was by no means all with us at the beginning. Washington was divided. Washington was always divided among its agencies who would often like nothing better, it seemed to me, than warring among the agencies and battling for turf. It was ever thus, and still is. However, that moment was a most important start to the business of trying to secure co-operation from the Americans across a broad front, whether it be on the intelligence front or the logistics supply front or the diplomatic front or whatever it was. And yes, there was some sense of repayment.

A number of moments during that 72 days' campaign were historic, of key importance and I think you could see some of them in Nico's writings and some of them in Al Haig's book. I think it is Al's Chapter Five, in which I believe one can discern between the lines some sort of corroboration for what I am going to suggest was another important moment. That was when

Al was doing his shuttle diplomacy between Galtieri, stopping off in Washington, and Margaret Thatcher and the 'War Cabinet' in London. One of these moments arose when Al came back from Buenos Aires. He was tired, pretty exhausted. He put to Nico that the British now had to do x, whatever it was – pursue a particular policy, and Nico said, 'No chance, Al' (my words, not Nico's: his would have been more elegant but equally effective if not more so). Al said 'but look, if you don't do this, if Margaret Thatcher doesn't agree to do this, it might easily bring the Galtieri government down'. As quick as a flash Nico said to him, 'Al, we are not in the business of preserving the Galtieri government' (with a slight emphasis, perhaps, on 'Galtieri'). I think that was a turning point (this is a personal view now) in Al Haig's understanding, understanding that this conflict was a matter of the first world versus somebody who had no right to consider themselves in the first world under that particular government in Argentina. The first world members, we and the Americans, had to stand together on this. Al Haig had done his very best, he really had. There were all sorts of by-plays, Peru, and all sorts of stuff going on, but I do believe that that was the moment when Al Haig realised he and the USA had to back Britain fully - from then on.

Meanwhile, we had been working in various agencies in Washington to secure co-operation. There was a dispute in nearly every agency: the Pentagon was divided, there were those many senior officers who had made their careers in the western hemisphere; the State Department was divided, there was Jeanne Kirkpatrick up the road in New York as US Ambassador to the UN, whom Tony Parsons handled brilliantly. Jeanne's first book, her doctoral thesis, had been on Argentina, and she loved the country. There were people all over Washington who thought we were a bit naive and one heard or sensed the question: 'what do you think you guys are doing? Are you trying to be a colonial power again?' I shall never forget the headlines in the Washington Post and the New York Times and other press when our fleet set sail: there were references to Gilbert and Sullivan in those headlines. For them, ours was sort of a joke fleet: 'now I'm the ruler of the Queen's Navee'. So it was a difficult matter to persuade the US agencies and Departments to back us in various ways. One example is that we badly needed American agreement to let us buy supplies of petrol, oil and lubricants (POL) shipped from Norfolk, Virginia across the Atlantic to Ascension Island. Otherwise our fleet, which had set off, wouldn't be able to refuel, wouldn't be able to get to the Falklands and there would be a disaster. Our military attaché of the day, General Tony Boam, did a wonderful job on that at the Pentagon, and others of us were working at it, so

that is just one example. Of course, the Thatcher-Reagan relationship was crucial.

I cannot resist telling you one story of the State Department. There was a certain Bureau in the State Department called the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. The fellow in charge of it, one night about 2 o'clock in the morning, was an Admiral on loan to the State Department. I had been sitting arguing with him for hours. Eventually, he agreed that what the State Department needed to do, in the US interest as well as in ours, was now to share some more of their rather special intelligence and assessments that we needed. It's a rude thing to say of him, but he finally twigged, came to the realisation (or I finally got through to him) that his duty lay in co-operating in the way I had asked. We then had to get down to business - how we were going to sort out a, b, and c and in which order. He was good at that, very good. He said to me, in a wonderfully American assault on the beauty of the English tongue, 'Gee, Roj, I guess we are now in an ongoing prioritisation situation'. I have never forgotten that one. A wonderful moment at 2 a.m., in the depths of the State Department. I managed to keep something of a straight face. We did get on with the work. They were tense times indeed. I did almost nothing but the Falklands work at my level with various US agencies and the Ambassador for the whole campaign. In my office overlooking Massachusetts Avenue, one wall was covered with a very large scale map of the Falklands. Another wall was covered with a smaller scale map of the region from Georgia and the Sandwich Islands right across to Buenos Aires, Chile and so on. Both maps were desperately important during that time. I think I knew every landing point, every name on the Falkland Islands because there it was on the wall.

Among the historic moments was one, early on, when Peter Carrington resigned. I was very sad to see Lord Carrington go. I thought it was a great national loss for a whole number of reasons, including that he was a very good Foreign Secretary indeed, arguably one of the best the country had ever had. This was partly because he seemed to make his judgements largely by feel, and his feel was very nearly always right. That's not to deny his intellectual or analytical ability one whit. My regret was also partly because we had been about to mount what I think might well have been called the Carrington Initiative – in the Middle East, where it might have done some real good; and partly because he is such a lovely man. I happened to be in the Ambassador's office talking Falklands when Peter Carrington rang Nico one Washington evening to say, 'I am thinking of resigning.' Nico motioned me to stay, so I

heard one end of this conversation as Nico did his level and eloquent best to persuade Peter not to resign, as others did too. See Margaret Thatcher's book. Many others did but I'm sure Lord Carrington's judgement, in UK political terms, was right; it did unite the party; it did stop the House of Commons baying for blood - and so on.

Francis Pym became Foreign Secretary. He was in Washington for talks during the Falklands: we were having a session in the library of the residence with Nico and Francis Pym, an Under-Secretary from the Foreign Office and one or two others. I was called out to the telephone. It was a classified call from somebody very senior in London who said the 'War Cabinet' had just met and the proposition before them was that the rules of engagement for our forces in the South Atlantic should be changed. This was, of course, all about attacking the Belgrano, the Argentine cruiser. The Cabinet had all agreed to the proposed change but the Prime Minister had decided she must have the Foreign Secretary's vote, so could I put and explain the proposition to him. I went and did that and Francis Pym attended very carefully to what I had been told to say to him. Without hesitation, he then said that clearly the rules of engagement must be changed as proposed. I went back and reported that to London. Because I had been in the Navy and knew just a little about submarine communications, I had some sense that there was a key time element in all this. It wasn't more than a few hours later that we heard that the Belgrano had been sunk. Two codicils to that. One: I shall never forget an Argentine Admiral, months after the end of the Falklands saying in effect that the controversy in the UK about the Belgrano was silly: if he had been in the British position of course he would have sunk the Belgrano, absolutely no question. The other codicil was also months later. I was in my next job in the Foreign Office doing something entirely different, when the telephone rang. It was somebody to do with the Franks Committee asking if I could tell him what happened over this business when I was in Washington. I had pretty well put it out of my head. I was doing lots of other things. I thought, 'over the telephone! This is important stuff.' I said, 'well, give me time, let me think about it overnight.' He said, 'no, we'll have it now.' So I racked my brain and brought back as much of the detail as I could remember, and then perspired for six weeks wondering what trouble I was in. After six weeks this chap did have the grace to ring me and say 'oh, by the way, you should know that your account of that exchange accords exactly with that of the Foreign Secretary'. So I was intensely relieved.

VC I want to take you on the American scene a little further, if I may. You had another posting in between but you went back to America as Consul-General in Chicago. That's a very different take on the American scene and a very interesting job when you have been in capitals to get to a major provincial capital and do an entirely different job. I'd love you to talk about how that felt and what issues you were dealing with there that were different from being in a capital.

RC Some were the same, some were very different. It was a wonderful job. It was my first command in the Royal Navy sense of the word, and everybody loves that. My wife loved every second of Chicago. Chicago is a secret to most Americans. They think of it as a disgusting place with a poor climate and worse politics: undoubtedly it is a place with poor politics and a worse climate. I don't remember any Springs as such: they were short. The Winter is bitterly cold with temperatures way below zero. I remember one day when the radio was saying every half an hour: 'do not take your dog out, it's too cold, the dog would freeze to the ground and wreck its paws'. However, if you live in a flat, you have to take your dog out. We took the dog out. We put boots on all four of his feet, secured with what the Americans would call suspenders, what we would call braces, over his back; a woollen pull-over; and a nylon fur coat on top of that. But when the really smart dogs went out dressed for deep winter on the north side of Chicago, they wore mink. That illustrates a bit of Chicago, a vile climate, richness beyond Croesus's imagination - the old money in Chicago is just extraordinary. Politics are rough, tough, as dirty as they can ever be; which made them enormous fun for an observer but one didn't want to get involved in them. They really were very dirty politics, but great fun. Crime was appalling and drugs and racial crime absolutely dreadful.

One little story. The day we first went there our driver said to Hilary and me: 'only two rules: don't go down to (a named part of) the south side alone, and on the north side (where we lived) there is one area you must never drive through alone, and that's Cabrini Green. It's very rough; people there have guns and use them at the first opportunity: it's dreadful. Well, one day Hilary, alone in our car, was driving between A and B: Cabrini Green was a short cut and she thought 'Good Heavens, the advice is an exaggeration', so she went through Cabrini Green - and had a puncture there. The wheel had been secured with an air tool so she couldn't release it. You'd need to be a weight lifter to undo the wheel nuts. Hilary was

wrestling with them when along came three great big hulking swinging black Cabrini Green Americans. One of them had a 'ghetto blaster' on his shoulder and they were all swaying and bouncing to its music. They came up to Hilary with this loud noise going. They surrounded her, three right around her as she was kneeling at the wheel. One of them shouted above the ghetto blaster but in time to its rhythm: 'can we help, ma'am?'. So Hilary thought, yes, by Jove you could, I wish you would. And she received their help. They wrenched off the wheel nuts, took off the wheel, and put the new one on - all to the ghetto blaster: they were dancing up and down and having a great time. One of them had a gun. At the end, Hilary thought what am I going to do? She took a 10 dollar note from her pocket and said, 'have a drink on me.' This fellow with the ghetto blaster actually turned the volume down and said 'Gee, no ma'am. Just tell your honky friends we ain't all bad.' A wonderful moment.

Chicago was like that. I once wrote a report called Chicago in Psychosis, about Chicago in the fortnight culminating in Chicago winning the superbowl, which is the cup final in American football. Chicago did go crazy, absolutely nutty: all sorts of nutty things happened. If you walked down the road without a Chicago Bear badge in your lapel, you were in trouble. The day of the superbowl was a Sunday. There was always a Sunday matinee at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra which was then conducted by Sir Georg Solti. Sir Georg's wife Valerie and we were in a box. The matinee was re-timed so that everybody could get home and watch the match. During the interval, Valerie Solti, who used to be a television presenter, took us down to a rehearsal room, gave us sheet music and asked us to join in. There was the Chicago Symphony Orchestra chorus, rehearsing, under the baton of their chorus master, the Chicago Bears' Fighting Song. We have these things nowadays in football: they have them seriously in American football. The song was called 'Go Bears, Go.' Georg Solti had set it to music brilliantly. Hilary and Lady Solti went off to the trebles or sopranos, I joined the basses, and we rehearsed. We went back to our box. During the last piece (it was Nutcracker, I recall), we crept out of the box and went down below. To the audience's total surprise, there was an encore. Georg Solti returned to the podium wearing a bear's head on his head. Lady Solti and Hilary led the sopranos and I came in with the basses holding one end of a great computer printout which read 'Go Bears, Go'. The audience had known nothing of all this. Under Georg Solti's tremendously impressive, compelling baton, we sang the only truly musical rendering there has ever been of 'Go Bears, Go.' We sang it, we had to sing it, with the audience standing and cheering throughout, eight times. Chicago

was like that.

Chicago was also professionally tough. The job was a combination of commercial, representational and political work. Those responsible in London for commercial work thought that was our highest priority, and indeed in many ways it was, especially the promotion of inward investment, and especially into Northern Ireland at that stage. Then there was all the representational stuff that goes with being a Consul-General in a super town, in this case one with some of the finest universities in America and some of the finest artistic institutions: the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, one of the three best in the world; the Opera, which shared productions with the Met and with Covent Garden; the Art Institute, one of the finest in the world, perhaps arguably with one of the best collections of Impressionists - and so on. There was tough, difficult political work too, mostly about Northern Ireland – and that work was similar to that of the Embassy. Chicago is the home of the American Firsters who didn't want America to join World War I, nor World War II. There is in Chicago a great deal of poetic nonsense talked about Ireland, and there are more Irish there than could ever have come out of Ireland. On St Patrick's Day, the Chicago River is dyed a brilliant emerald green, the whole river. If you want to drink beer on St Patrick's Day in Chicago, you can drink only green beer. And there is the biggest parade you have ever seen: it rivals the one in New York on St Patrick's Day. The route of the parade is marked with huge emerald green shamrocks on the road and the NORAIID collectors go along collecting millions that day, which went straight to the IRA. They used to say the money was for widows and orphans. Our assessment was that it was used to create widows and orphans. It was really rough and there were some tough, rough, passionate characters trying to prevent us doing any good for the cause, and to stop us explaining the truth of what was going on in Northern Ireland.

I once addressed both Houses of the Illinois parliament in Springfield on the subject. That went down well enough, so I did the same in Minnesota. That worked, but only just, and differently. As I started to speak, the U-shaped balcony of the House was full. From it then unfolded green banners, anti-British banners, now hanging down from the balcony on three sides of the House. About 100 people dressed in emerald green blazers stood up in the front row of the balcony. There was some fairly moderate, fairly noisy heckling, not too bad, but then came the end of the time I had negotiated to speak, so I concluded. The Speaker then said that his Chambers behind the Chair were at the disposal of the Consul-General and

anybody who wanted to continue the discussion with him. So I made my way back there. Some of the green blazers came too and we had a pretty good thoroughgoing debate. I thought I was at least surviving, when in walked the Sergeant at Arms, complete with mace. He came up to me, drew himself to attention, and addressed me, saying something like, 'Sir, you are contravening the Foreign Agents Act and I am going to escort (it may have been 'evict') you from this chamber.' I did know the Foreign Agents Act existed: I had glanced at it. I certainly didn't know what it said. I had assumed that one would never have to know, given the friendly state of Anglo-American relations. Hilary was there and I exchanged a quick glance with her. I decided, with her acquiescence telegraphed telepathically, that I would bluff it out. So I just said as lightly as I could, 'Nonsense Sir,' and carried on. We left fairly soon afterwards. That was just one example of the roughness of the Irish scene and the politics of it in the Mid-West.

I did a lot of television, an awful lot of that, and had one fairly major problem. With Hilary, I had been through a wonderful BBC course they used to do on how to cope with television interviewers of the soft, gentle but able sort with names like David Frost, via the rough tough American anti-pathetic journalist, to the really difficult ones - most of whom seemed to be in Chicago. I had a rule which I had learned from the BBC course, which was never to do any television interview except live. One day, when things were particularly difficult in Northern Ireland, I was asked to do a live interview, of the sort I was then doing frequently. The producer of the news show rang and asked if I would do Channel whatever it was that evening at six o'clock. I said, no I'm sorry I have to fly off to wherever I was going. I couldn't break that engagement. The TV station would not accept my Deputy - who would of course have been fine. I said I'd be back the next day. Then the show's presenter, a well known television personality rang me himself and asked if I would do a recorded interview. I said no, you know my rule, I don't do that. You are a decent fellow, but 'no'. About an hour later he turned up in my office and asked me again, and laid out the case. I laid out my case. Eventually, to cut a long story short, I agreed that I would record, in answer to the obvious question of the day about Northern Ireland exactly 30 seconds and he agreed in turn that the programme would run those 30 seconds without any interruption and without any particular editorial comment. That was the agreement. We shook hands on it and off he went. He said he would send the cameraman down. So I wrote and rehearsed exactly 30 seconds. The cameraman turned up and set up, and I did my 30 seconds exactly. At the end he said 'Gee,

that's fantastic, nobody's ever kept to that kind of agreement before.' So I said, 'well, I have, and now you and I will also shake hands on the deal!' We did so, and that afternoon I went off to fulfil the previous engagement. On my return the following day, I watched the video in the office. The TV station had cut my 30 seconds to into 7 brief segments and between the segments had interspersed longer parts of an interview with the sobbing mother of a terrorist whom we had just arrested in the UK. The British Government position on the issue was destroyed. It was a laughing stock and all the sympathies went the other way. It was a minor disaster. So I had to learn the lesson again, the hardest possible way.

VC Did you take it up with him?

RC I rang the presenter to say that I had only one thing to say: that is I would never do an interview with him again. That's all I could do. He had won. By his lights it was fair game, he had beaten me and conned me. So there were some tough sides to work in Chicago, but it was a wonderful posting. I sailed there on Lake Michigan, three hundred odd miles long and great sailing. There was a man called Harold Washington who was the Mayor of Chicago. The Mayor of Chicago is an important political figure in the United States of America. Harold Washington was a black mayor of Chicago, a good mayor, and he was a very likeable man too. He died in office while we were there and we attended his lying-in-state. This was an extraordinary event. The Irish-Americans were going to be in power now. The lying-in-state was run by the Irish-Americans, and had an Irish style and feel. Harold was a good man and had become something of a friend. One night I had found myself double-booked. There was a lot of speech making in Chicago and I found I had two speeches to deliver at the same time, in two different places. My Deputy was also engaged, so I rang Hilary and asked if she would read my speech at one of them. She did. The next day I had a call from Mayor Harold Washington who said 'I got it right last night Consul-General; you got it wrong. I heard your wife's speech. Could you please ensure she does it every time, she does it far better than you.' Absolutely lovely.

VC But your stories about Chicago show how very important these Consul-General posts can be, especially in the States. I don't know if you can contrast it in any way with your first Ambassador-ship as opposed to your first head of post. I mean it is so different. Maybe it is not a fair question, but you went on after Chicago and some time in the Foreign Office to be

the ambassador in Indonesia. Are there any commonalities? There must be some.

RC Well, being responsible for a mission of UK-based and locally engaged staff, that is the most obvious point in common. Other points in common include dealing directly with London. I've always been of the view that a good head of post writes his own instructions one way or another, persuades London. To an extent that was common to both of those posts so the techniques were in some cases common. I was very fortunate in Chicago, I have to say at this point, because both the Ambassadors in Washington, to whom I was subordinate as Consul-General in Chicago, let me get on with the job, and that was wonderful. They were the immensely wise Sir Oliver Wright and the man who my mother-in-law regards as the most gentlemanly she has ever met, Sir Antony Acland. They both visited us in Chicago, and that was fine. The Head of Chancery of the day in Washington, John Kerr, told me I was the Consul-General with the 1777 tendencies (too much independence). Those points in common have to do with being a member of the Service, responsible for staff, dealing with one's head office. As for the duties in the two jobs, the only other common factor was that one had to make a lot of speeches. I can't think of anything else off-hand: the politics, the climate, the people, the language, the cultures, the tools of diplomacy were all entirely different.

VC It's demonstrating again the versatility you have to have in the Diplomatic Service. And the big issue that you had to deal with in your time was East Timor?

RC One of the issues was East Timor. Yes, there were some other big ones but East Timor was certainly a big issue. It hadn't reached its most difficult part whilst I was there, nor its most exciting. One of my greatest frustrations in Indonesia was that I wasn't allowed to visit East Timor and gain first-hand 'feel'. The reason for that, a British reason, was legal: the Foreign Office legal advisers were absolutely firm that I must not go to East Timor. I went to West Timor and looked across the border. Members of my staff went to East Timor, but the view the Foreign Office took was that if I went to East Timor as the British Ambassador that would imply British recognition of the Indonesian régime there following Indonesian armed invasion and occupation of East Timor in 1975-1976, which we had never recognised. Australia recognised it. America didn't, and we did not. A successor of mine, very brightly found a way round that: while he was sitting in the EEC Presidency, the local presidency, he

would go as the EC representative, or EU member, rather than as British Ambassador. I do wish I had thought of that. I had sat for a year in the EU local presidency in Jakarta because Portugal of course had no relations with Indonesia and we followed (or preceded) Portugal in the presidency. So I represented both the UK and Portugal for six months each in the local European Presidency and had a whole year to think of that bright idea, but failed. My successor but one thought it up smartly, quickly, and visited. I was a bit frustrated, but I had a marvellous member of staff, whose job was what we used to call the Oriental Secretary. He spoke Indonesian to perfection, including the Jakarta argot. He was superb, and brilliant at making friends with the East Timorese. So we knew all we needed to know. I had quite a lot of arguments with the Indonesian Foreign Minister over East Timor, as I did on human rights. He was a real professional and indeed he had been a professional: Ali Alatas had been the Indonesian ambassador to the UN and was a very able Foreign Minister. East Timor nearly always came up when we sat down for a session, the two of us. The highest point in terms of diplomatic action for Britain started after my time when Xanana Gusmao was eventually let out of prison and went straight to the British Embassy and stayed there. That was very interesting and a piece of real diplomatic action and negotiation. Recently, I had the great pleasure of chairing a session at Chatham House with now President Xanana Gusmao: that was quite something.

Among the bigger issues I had to deal with in Indonesia was the question of selling Hawk aircraft to Indonesia, which was achieved during my time. That was a very important matter, including for the preservation of hundreds of jobs in the UK. In order to make it possible, I had to extract both from the Commander-in-Chief of the Indonesian armed forces, sorry, Commander-in-Chief is not the phrase, rather the equivalent of our Chief of the Defence Staff, and from President Suharto, certain assurances that the Hawks would not be used for offensive purposes against the civilian population. That was rather like drawing teeth from an intractable young horse: it required a lot of time, patience and persistence, and culminated in long and difficult interviews. I had no doubt at all that we should sell the Indonesians these aircraft. I had wrestled with the problem and had reached a firm conclusion. So personally I had no problem with the policy, provided we secured those assurances. It was a long campaign and there was also some serious competition from other countries to sell aircraft they claimed were equivalent. It was a long running business indeed but it worked in the end and we secured those assurances. And contrary to the heavily edited, cleverly put

together and thoroughly misrepresenting film by the journalist John Pilger those Hawks were never used in East Timor or anywhere else for purposes of which we would not approve. I am sure of that. Curiously enough, four years after going to Indonesia I went to Australia and we sold Hawks to the Australians too. These were different aircraft I may say - the Hawk is a remarkably developable aircraft. It was a very different campaign.

In Indonesia there were other issues too. There was a whole debate going on in London over the future of the Aid for Trade provision, while my Embassy was using Aid for Trade money to help British companies to secure large projects and project business in Indonesia, including huge electricity generation and distribution contracts. I thought these contracts were desperately important for Indonesia; and it was important too for UK jobs and the economy that we secured them rather than the Germans or the French or any of our other competitors.

VC Was dealing with the business community something that was in common between your job in Chicago and Jakarta, was the one useful to the other?

RC That's interesting. In a minor way one was useful for the other. Yet commercial diplomacy in Chicago was very different from commercial diplomacy in Indonesia. There was a much smaller British expatriate community in Chicago. When I went to call on the CBI before I went to Chicago they told me they knew nothing of the Middle West. They called it a black hole. This appalled me because of the richness of the market place there, so in Chicago I told the staff that the CBI thought this was a black hole. We looked at the trade figures; we mounted several campaigns and we improved the trade figures no end. After a bit, I wrote an article for the CBI magazine. I forget its headline but it was a twist on black hole. The article demonstrated that here was a huge market and argued that would-be exporters had better come and look at it. In Indonesia there was a huge British expatriate community. In about my third of four years there, the Indonesians told me that Britain was now the largest external foreign investor in Indonesia. I didn't actually believe it. I thought we were second. But when, years later, BP acquired AMOCO we were certainly the first. We had a large trade with Chicago and the Mid West, and a bit of investment. Most investment went the other way. Whereas in Chicago, the priority was to promote US investment into the UK, in Indonesia it was British investment that I was mainly trying to look after and foster. And the promotion of British trade with Indonesia, visible and

invisible, was a very different job in terms of commercial diplomacy from the trade job in Chicago. The British expatriate community were important in Indonesia in umpteen ways. When Denis Greenhill was Permanent Under-Secretary he was reputed always to give his last piece of advice to an Ambassador going off to his post as he walked out of the door: 'by the way, George, never forget the British community'. I was glad to have been told that. It became important in tense times when we had to consider advice to the British community, it was important for one's own sanity to have a break from the compellingly complex culture that one had to cope with in Java and the other islands, the multi-levels of meaning of what anyone says, the jargon and so on. It was important to support the British expatriates in their various efforts to keep themselves together as a community, to enjoy themselves, and in their impressive charitable work. The Java St Andrew's Society, an old and successful organisation, ran reputedly the largest Highland Games in the southern hemisphere once a year. The St George's Society (and of course the British are even more British abroad than ever they are in the UK) used, once a year, to fly out at considerable expense to the Society, a major British cabaret artist, lecturer or broadcaster, for a very large St George's Day dinner. Being involved in the British community took quite a bit of time, but was enjoyable and worth-while. The key task for the community was a support role, commercially and politically, in an always complex and sometimes tense situation. I remember that during the second half of my posting, I advised the British companies to hedge their political bets and make some friends other than members of the President's family, because I didn't think he would last all that long. 'Oh, nonsense,' some said. That's one area of necessary work for the British community. Another is to support them when they get into trouble. At one point, corrupt Indonesian tax officials were demanding millions from a major British company, unjustifiably, according to the company's tax lawyer. I had to try to sort that out with the Minister of Finance. There were other difficulties and tense problems surrounding all that side of the picture. And coming back to something I said earlier, one doesn't always need to consult London about that kind of work.

VC You are a long way away for a start.

RC Yes, this is why you join the Foreign Service.

VC But it was enjoyable but perhaps not as enjoyable as it might be, not as enjoyable as your

last post.

RC I think that is right. It is always difficult, and often unwise to compare posts. Going back to the butterfly versus versatility, you would be comparing apples with oranges or even pomegranates, posts differ so much. We enjoyed Indonesia hugely. It is a vast archipelago, 17,535 islands, or whatever it is at the last count by the Indonesian navy at low tide, two hundred odd languages, 3,300 miles in breadth, 1,100 miles north to south. A tremendous variety of culture, geography, geology and so on, religion. The world's largest Muslim country, it also has Christians of all sorts. It has Animists here and there. We were once guests of honour at a Torajan funeral, which was a mixture of Christian and Animist ritual, plus much more, and involved the slaughtering of a live buffalo right at our feet: so we had to sit as this dying buffalo steamed, and the blood ran out. Exciting. Many widely different cultural experiences were necessary, not just exciting but also necessary. Even eating sago maggots the size of my thumb in a village in Irian Jaya. The cultural experience of Indonesia was intense and enjoyable; our diplomatic successes there were as great as our set-backs were difficult to cope with, as everywhere else. The country is extraordinarily beautiful and varied beyond belief. Jakarta is not a notably pleasant town in which to live; there were still open sewers. Although Indonesia is doing reasonably well now economically, in spite of everything, I imagine that in some respects Jakarta is still a difficult place in which to live. The rats and civet cats in the house, the illnesses that occur to one's staff, malaria, everybody had giardia and that sort of disease. So there were downsides, but by Jove it was a wonderful Ambassadorship to have for four years. I learned a bit of the language, enough to include some in speeches, to do the odd interview and watch television, just about. It is not a difficult language, I hasten to add. So it was enormously enjoyable and there were real successes at the end of it. I only wish I could have been there when Suharto fell: that would have been fascinating professionally.

It was indeed a great contrast to slip down the map to Australia. When Hilary and I arrived there, Paul Keating, the Labor leader, was Prime Minister of Australia, Tory John Major was Prime Minister in this country. During that time Tony Blair, then leader of the Opposition, visited Australia where he has personal and political friends. They did not then include Paul Keating so we quietly helped to bring them together. Tony Blair spent quite a little time there, then soon became Prime Minister in the UK. John Howard, leader of the

Liberal/National Coalition, became Prime Minister in Australia. It is a conservative government that he heads there, so those two changes were really interesting. Paul Keating is a great character, a real tough Labor politician brought up the hard way in the way of Aussie Labor politics, a tougher way than in the UK. He is a well, self-educated man, a man who left school young. While he was still, I think, a teenager, he used to make fun for himself at weekends by spending a few cents on the Manly ferry across Sydney harbour. When the ferry was making its way among the rich yachts he would pick one of the most luxurious, and jump off the ferry into the water, be picked up by the yacht and restored with a few gins and tonics. He could talk his way into Heaven knows what. That's Paul Keating, an able political rascal, a wonderful character. An expert, a serious expert, (he was once consulted, so the story goes, by Sotheby's) on English furniture and French silver. There are some lovely stories about all of that, but Paul Keating was quite something as a Labor Prime Minister. He had a certain view of history.

Paul Keating made a speech whilst I was still serving in Indonesia, in which he attacked Britain over Singapore and World War II in 1942 and the fall of Singapore. Having served in Singapore, I had read the history, and I had my own views too. I knew a bit about what the Australians had done in 1942 in Singapore and I knew Lee Kuan Yew's views on that. I knew that Paul Keating had got it wrong, and I found what he had alleged about us having let down Australia pretty insulting. One thing we in the High Commission did while Paul was still Prime Minister was to organise an exhibition in Australia, put together by the wonderful Imperial War Museum, of captioned photographs of a number of events in the Far East theatre during World War II, including the fall of Singapore. The British forces in the Far East had been pretty well wiped out. Their reconstruction was extraordinary. Their contribution to the latter part of the war in the Far East, which involved, for example 600 British ships and lots of other assets, including a squadron of Spitfires, No 54, I think it was, which played a key part in defending Darwin against the Japanese air raids, and shot down Japanese aircraft. The Imperial War Museum put all the photographs and captions together. There was one, I remember, of the Japanese South Eastern army surrendering on board a British aircraft carrier to an Australian. Everything in the Exhibition, photographs and captions, was carefully researched, utterly objective, a fine piece of historical research. We made thirteen copies of the exhibition, because Australia is a huge country, and we moved them all over the place. The then Australian Minister of Defence, Robert Ray, and I opened

the exhibition in Canberra. We deliberately did not invite Paul Keating. Margaret Thatcher attended, with the premier of New South Wales the opening of the one in Sydney and so on. A very fine Australian General, Peter Gration, was Chairman of the Council of the Australian War Memorial at the time. The Canberra exhibition was mounted there. Peter Gration got Paul Keating to visit it privately late one evening. The exhibition was closed, and Paul Keating apparently spent an hour and a half going round, looking at the pictures, studying the captions. He went back a few days later to go through the exhibition again. That was at the time of 'Australia Remembers', 50 years after the end of World War II. The Australians do these things better than we, better than anybody I know. They really inculcate in every child and every person in the land an enduring sense of respect and value of veterans and of people who fought the wars, and do it extremely well. There were events all over the country through the year of Australia Remembers. Our exhibition was one contribution.

We had other contributions including a visiting military band, who were there ostensibly to take part in a rifle shooting competition - which they won. But they, the Kings Own Scottish Borderers, also beat retreat at the Canberra residence before a gathering of the Australian great numbering two hundred and eighty-nine for drinks and eats. The KOSB performed on the lawn. The rehearsal the day before was brilliant. On the day, it happened to do that which it rarely does in Canberra - it rained all through the display. I was concerned we would have to cancel, so my Military Adviser went to check with the Scotsmen while they were having beer and sandwiches before the performance. I was talking to the Australian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister when this wonderful Military Adviser, an immaculately uniformed and bemedalled Colonel, came up to me and said, 'Sorry to interrupt sir,' saluted everybody, and said, 'Sir, the pipe major says 'nae problem, Sorr'.' The Band did a marvellous job. Incidentally, that Military Adviser was Colonel Stephen Saunders, later Brigadier Stephen Saunders, who was murdered in Athens. His wife Heather is one of this country's heroines following that ordeal. Stephen had much to do with that impressive and successful exhibition.

The culmination of 'Australia Remembers' was a huge parade in Brisbane, Queensland, the centre of the direction of the Battle of the Coral Sea and closely involved with the end of World War II in the Far East and the defeat of Japan. Everybody in Australia seemed to descend on Brisbane for this tremendous affair. All the living Australian VCs were on

parade. Afterwards, there was a massive lunch at which Paul Keating made a speech. He had thick speech notes on the rostrum. I was sitting at a table below him with Hilary. He made a speech and gave Paul Keating's view of the history of World War II. He didn't open his notes at all. The speech writers told me that they worked hard and were proud of the speech, to which he did not refer at all. When he came to Singapore he exchanged glances with me, and said the right things about the British, not the wrong things. A good moment. His words this time did not receive much publicity, and perhaps that's as well. An effective exhibition; a nice little achievement.

Paul Keating is a great character. When we finally left Canberra, he was no longer in power or in Parliament. He resigned after losing to John Howard, but I thought that since he had been Prime Minister for half my time in Australia, I ought to offer to pay a farewell call on him, so I rang up his office offering to make a call. He rang back and said, 'Hell no Roj, I'll come and see you.' He did and came to the residence. He was late. He was walking: 'bloody car broke down,' and he walked the last couple of hundred yards. We both had 20 minutes in our diaries. He stayed for an hour and a half. He looked at the official furniture and the pictures. His comments on the paintings were impressive, and we had an interesting philosophical and political conversation. He was pouring out his philosophy. For somebody on the rough side of Australian Labor politics, he sounded at that moment awfully like somebody from New Labour.

While Paul Keating was Prime Minister, we did have some difficult passages in Anglo-Australian relations, including a fairly major row which was mostly between Australia and France, but we were on France's side 100 percent, over the nuclear tests at Mururoa. The French were treated abominably in Australia over that affair and I saw quite a lot of Paul Keating during that time. We eventually won through. Paul rang me and said, 'Look we've got this Commonwealth Heads of Government,' in June, I think it was, 'I don't want to have a fight there with John,' (John Major), 'fix it Roj.' I sent all sorts of telegrams and took some diplomatic action, but what I really think fixed it was Nigeria, which became practically the only subject at that Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. At least the two PMs didn't have a row. John Major had been cross, and rightly cross, with the Australian Government over their attitude to Mururoa. The Australian Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, a very able and sharp man, had issued an initial statement (in Japan, I think) in reaction to the

French tests. That statement was pretty reasonable, but Paul Keating made a change the next day. They just got it wrong, badly.

There were one or two other difficult passages during that time. Then John Howard came in to office. Now we had New Labour Tony Blair in London and 'Tory' John Howard in Australia and that was different again. The Anglo-Australian relationship is notably political in many ways, and now there is a political appointee as British High Commissioner in Canberra. I enjoyed working on this relationship in the different political circumstances. I have stayed friends with John Howard and Alexander Downer, the Foreign Minister, still see a bit of them, and enjoy their company greatly. We did some good things in co-operation. Incidentally, we refurbished the High Commission office building in Canberra. It was a solid but fairly ugly building, built cheaply in the 1950s when the UK had export controls. Currency couldn't normally be exported so money was especially tight. We were lucky that it was built at all and it was a pretty boring building. There was an argument for knocking it down, but of course there was neither the money nor the priority, I suppose it was functional, but it was awful and didn't do Britain any good at all. We compromised. Having been head of OED, I remembered some of the tricks, just a few of them. We constructed a budget which was just below the level at which the Treasury would have to know everything and authorise or reject it, and put the case forward. We evacuated the building for 15 months and re-built it inside. It looked at one stage as though the IRA had been there with a lot of Semtex. It was Hilary's idea to change the structure of the windows so the building now has an almost Italianate look, of real character instead of boring barrack-like. We recessed the windows, ripped out much of the inside of the building, put the back at the front and the front at the back and made it light and airy and to 'look' all the way through. We put a two-storey high glass pavilion cum atrium on the back, which is now the front, and we had the party to end all parties to open it. John Howard came to that and he and I opened it together. We were going to have a British Minister, but there was a three-line whip (and no 'pairing') in Parliament, so the Minister couldn't come and I had to stand in his place. John Howard made an excellent speech that really put Anglo-Australian relations into the 21st century. That was one of our high points in Australia. Yet there were many high points. One was meeting Don Bradman during a test match we actually won. I had a wonderful conversation with Don Bradman - but that's cricket history not diplomatic history.

VC I'm going to take you up, just for a moment, on the residence issue. Residences can play an important part even for such a thing as opening the residence, quite on top of the aspect of residence being good places in which to do business. What we haven't talked about is your time as Head of the Overseas Estates Department where you did improve and rationalise the estate. A quick word on that and how valuable you think the grand old premises were or how expensive and difficult they were.

RC Yes, John Fretwell, who was Ambassador in Paris, once described a residence as a theatre of diplomatic operations. That's the best description that I know. Now theatres around the world vary and you certainly shouldn't have the same sort of thing everywhere. If we had a copybook British embassy building or residence building around the world it wouldn't work in most places - obviously for climatic reasons but also because the importance and needs of the representational stance varies a great deal. Lord Carrington described the Canberra residence in which he and Lady Carrington lived when he was High Commissioner to Australia as resembling 'a golf club or dormy house in the Home Counties'. The house has been extended a little since those days and we thought it was rather better than a dormy house, but it is not, thank the Lord, a colonialist grand building. It is a little plain but also handsome, I thought. Not beautiful, but it has some fine rooms and it does a good job for Great Britain.

This is a difficult but quite important area, partly because it hits the public eye from time to time. The CPRS, Central Policy Review Staff at the Cabinet Office, the Think Tank as they were called when that phrase was new, did a study in the early seventies of the Diplomatic Service. One of the many things the CPRS got wrong was the notion that the Embassy in Paris was far too expensive, lush, over the top, ostentatious and should be got rid of. Fortunately that idea was scotched. To form that view was completely to misunderstand the French perception of the British position in France, not the British view of the British position, but the French. It was the French we were there to influence and to do business with in the British interest. That building is quite fabulous, but it needs to be. The residence in Canberra doesn't need to be fabulous and it would be singularly unsuccessful if it were so. I am just illustrating a point of great difference and variety. There are complexities wherever you look. The ghastly killing in Istanbul recently was at the edge of the site which contains the Consulate-General. In its day, that building was tremendous and most important. Now it

is too big: so we made some flats in it. We rationalised sensibly because we can't sell it or give it back. A recent story: there was a residence of a charming sort in Chiang Mai. We closed the post and London instructed the then Ambassador to sell the place. As I heard it, the Thais said 'well, actually you can't sell it because it is ours. The King of the day allowed you to use it as a grace and favour place, but we have title'. London said to the Ambassador, 'get title.' The loyal Embassy negotiator secured title to it, and the residence was sold to a Chinese Thai who built a restaurant in the garden. Then, I am told, the powers that be decided to re-open in Chiang Mai.

Just one example. There are so many. I am not suggesting by any means that the Diplomatic Service is always right over this subject. I can give you an example from my time in OED. The residence in The Hague, whose central core was very old and historic, was grandiose and an expensive place to run that had seen better days. I concluded we should sell and replace it with a handsome house, not a CPRS style town house but a handsome house. The former residence was called Westeynde. The Ambassador of the day fought this plan tooth and nail, right to the end. After he lost the battle, he wrote a despatch entitled 'The Last Knight in Westeynde' (the play, of course was on the words 'night' and 'knight'). When his successor moved in to the more modest, more effective residence, the Dutch Royal Family congratulated us. The Dutch Government asked why we hadn't done this ten years earlier - 'it's so much better'. So we have our own problems, sometimes, within our Service. But the great houses, Paris, the great Lutyens house in Washington, and more, work productive diplomatic miracles every other day, and are marvellous theatres of diplomatic operations, to use John Fretwell's phrase.

On OED, one reading is that Lord Carrington had got fed up with the Ministry of Works with whom he had to deal years ago in Canberra. He was keen for diplomats to run the estate overseas rather than home civil servants who didn't understand 'the great abroad'. I'm generalising grossly, but Peter Carrington and Michael Heseltine (then Secretary of State for the Environment) agreed that there should be a PESC transfer: money and people would move from the D of E to the FCO. I was asked to head this new FCO Department. I found that it was the largest Department in the Foreign Office, even larger than Communications Department, and that it was peopled by over 200 professionals - architects, surveyors, building surveyors, engineers, estate surveyors, all sorts of experts, most of whom didn't want

to be in the Foreign Office. The FCO was the enemy: they wanted to be where they were before, fighting the FCO, and doing that which they believed was rational and professional. So mine was in large part a management job. I had the sense to try to lay down some conditions for taking on this job to the then Chief Clerk. One was that I should be able to carry forward my leave (he wanted me to start 'yesterday'), to which he readily agreed. Of course in practice, I could never take all the leave. Another 'condition' was that I could have a deputy who was also a Diplomatic Service officer and in the same grade as I. I thought I was otherwise going to be alone with people who could run rings round me on estate matters, because they were such professionals (some of them, I have to say, were superb professionals; others were not); and it was a big management job. That was agreed and, emboldened by that, I said I should like to nominate the Deputy once I had had the job for a few months. That too was agreed. In the event, I nominated not a Diplomatic Service officer but one of the architects. He is very able, has worked overseas and does understand 'the great abroad'. He is Mark Bertram, who three years later was my successor. In his retirement, he is still a highly valued consultant to the Foreign Office. He was promoted in that head of department job to be the equivalent of Under Secretary, and he did a wonderful job. To secure him in as my deputy, promoted from within the new Department, was one of the best things I ever did for the Service

I found in OED that there was no incentive to improve the estate. If we had a white elephant of a place in Ruritania which we could sell for half a million pounds and to reprovide it with a less expensive, smaller, more modern and efficient place, or even a bigger more modern place, we had to transfer the proceeds of the sale to the Treasury, and then start from scratch with Treasury and argue for every penny for the replacement: so there was no incentive to change. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the estate was old and in many cases inappropriate. I did manage, with lots of help including, notably, from our own Finance Department, to negotiate with the Treasury something we called asset recycling. The deal, if I remember it correctly, it was a long time ago, was that we would hold the rent bill for the whole Service (we had rented as well as owned accommodation) at the same level – it wouldn't increase; that we would give the Treasury every year a million pounds off the bottom of all the sales we made; and that we could keep the rest and do with that what we wished and judged sound and defensible. The rent deal was even better, if I remember rightly, than I described just then, because the figure could rise with inflation. So we had no problem on rents. The million

pounds a year frightened me at first but it was always fine, it was no problem and the first deal we did I finalised on the telephone - with an air of calm, I hope - from our house in Kent one Christmas Eve with, I think it was, the Mayor of Kuala Lumpur. We sold a parcel of properties (that's another long story all on its own) and I think we made eleven million pounds. We spent most of it in New York buying property instead of renting at the ridiculous rents we were paying. I'm told that after my time the asset recycling agreement didn't last many years. Perhaps it was a bit too clever. The Treasury reneged after a few years, but at least it was possible to do some favours for the estate and to make some rationalisations. In doing all that, I did find a lot of resistance from senior members of our own Service and their wives, who took some persuading at times. That was an interesting area which again made that job a love-hate one. I didn't join the Diplomatic Service, nor did any of my colleagues, to be a real estate agent. But there was a lot of diplomacy, fortunately, in managing and, I hope and believe, improving the Estate.

VC Yes, diplomacy and negotiation all the way along. I must say this whole area of diplomatic property is worth a little article on its own, isn't it? Have you thought of that?

RC No, I haven't thought of it, as I wrote so much at the time I never wanted to write a word on the subject again!

VC Well, this has been a wonderful morning, thank you very much indeed for your time and for everything you have said. A last word on the Service, perhaps about retirement?

RC Retirement at 60 is too young. When I was 25 I wished they would all move out of the way at 50 so that we could be promoted a bit earlier. That whole stretch of being a First Secretary for ten years, as it was in my day at least, was a bit of a grind. But looking back to 60 now, from 66, I think 60 is an absurdly young age to retire. When I joined the Diplomatic Service there were hard-lying posts, some people were retiring early because of serving in difficult climates; and people wanted to give up at 60 in larger numbers than now because they had suffered medical privations and problems serving abroad. With medical advances and economic progress abroad those problems are generally much less than they were, despite what I said about Indonesia and the illnesses there. At 60 I reckoned I had just about learned how to do the job. I wanted very much to do it for longer. And 60 now, compared to

40 years ago is probably at least 67 - and I haven't reached that yet. I think the rule will change. When I retired I remember writing to the then PUS a letter in which I promised not to take the Diplomatic Service to the International Court at The Hague for age discrimination. The Americans got past all that rather more quickly than we. Even when I was serving in Washington, I was dealing with an Assistant Secretary of State who was in his 70s, and very effective. There were a few about who perhaps should have retired, and that's really the point. I think a system has to be brought in such that people who ought to retire and want to retire do retire happily without deprivation or denigration. And those who want to go on, and are thought able, can go on, subject perhaps to a reasonable eventual limit. I understand that there is now talk in Whitehall that the whole Civil Service will have to change the retirement age. I think that is both morally right and in the interests of the taxpayer. Given that the taxpayer pays its diplomatic servants rather less than our equivalents earn in the world of business (a good deal less) the taxpayer would have a better deal in service delivered from continuing to pay the salary for another, say, five or six years compared to paying the pension, which will be paid for longer compared with 40 years ago because we live longer. The taxpayer gets nothing from the pensioners except some more tax and the ramblings of grumpy old former diplomats, trying to help with a voluntary oral history. The abilities of many people, my contemporaries and those retiring now at the age of 60, are such that they damn well ought to be working for their country a lot more. You have to provide for the structural impact of all that and you must not provide a disincentive to younger people: I think those problems can be solved. If you look at the recruitment figures for the Foreign Office the numbers of people applying still go up and up. Solutions need time and the resolution of some careful quadratic equations to make sure that DS people have a fair deal. In some senses people have more responsibility at a younger age now. Desk officers' minutes can go straight to the Secretary of State. Desk officers attend meetings with Ministers, which was almost never the case in my day, unless one was interpreting. So I think the job satisfaction side is still, subject to morale, deliverable. A decent structure needs to be put in place to do both. My last point is, as I have said a million times already, as I am sure my colleagues have too, that you don't make any money in the Diplomatic Service, but by Jove you have very much job satisfaction.

VC Thank you, Roger.