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GOODENOUGH, Sir Anthony Michael, KCMG 1997 (CMG 1990)

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BRITISH DIPLOMATIC ORAL HISTORY PROGRAMME
RECOLLECTIONS OF SIR ANTHONY GOODENOUGH KCMG
RECORDED AND TRANSCRIBED BY SYD MADDICOTT.

SM: This is Syd Maddicott, working on the British Diplomatic Oral History Project. It's Friday, 27 May 2016. I'm with Sir Anthony Goodenough and we're going to be discussing his diplomatic career.

Entry to the FCO

SM: Anthony, tell me why you joined the FCO.

AG: A combination of influence of family, school and university, I think. Family - there was a tradition of public service – my father was in the Navy and I had a grandfather who was in the Colonial Office; there was no Foreign Office connection. But at school (Wellington College), again a very strong tradition of public service. There'd been a couple of Foreign Office PUSs who had been at Wellington after the war – Michael Palliser and Derek Hoyer Millar - and I had a friend in my House at school who had decided he was going to go into the Foreign Office and that made me think about it and then I got to New College Oxford, where the head of the college was William Hayter, Sir William Hayter, who'd been Ambassador to Moscow and I think as a result of his influence no fewer than six of us over a two-year period joined the Foreign Office.

SM: Anthony, tell us more about your entry into the FCO.

AG: At the time (1963), there were two methods of entry into the civil service and diplomatic service, called Methods One and Two. Method One was a full-length academic exam, which had started long before the Second World War and you chose the academic subject that you were doing your degree in and there were seven three-hour papers. Method Two was introduced after the Second World War, really for the benefit of people who had done their degree before the war, gone off to fight in the war and then come back and couldn't be expected to do an academic exam, having been out of touch for four or five years, and it consisted of a series of interviews and tests and committee meetings, where you demonstrated your skills as a chairman and things like that.

The first step in the exam was a series of short papers, essays, precis, comprehension, that sort of thing: three one-hour papers. If you got a certain mark, you were allowed to go into the Method Two, the interview method. If you got a mark just below that, you qualified for the Method One, the academic exam. If you got a mark below *that*, you were out and your candidacy terminated.

I failed to get the right mark for Method Two, the interview method, but I got a high enough mark to do Method One, the academic method. This meant that, three weeks after my Oxford degree, I found myself sitting down in the Civil Service Commission in London, taking seven three-hour papers in my subject of choice, which was so-called Modern History. That actually, was the last year in which the Method One exam was used for entry to the Foreign Office. Thereafter, only Method Two was available and I think I was one of two diplomats who took that exam that year - David Dain, who went on to be High Commissioner to Pakistan, and myself.

1964 –65 Desk Officer, South-East Asia Department

SM: Right. And your first job was in South-East Asia Department?

AG: Between university and the Foreign Office I spent a year in Borneo, in Sarawak as a teacher with VSO, so by the time I got to South-East Asian Department I hadn't heard a telephone for a year so it was quite an ordeal getting used to office life. I joined very close to the time of the election, which was September/ October 1964 when Wilson's Labour government got in and I remember looking out of the window, down at the movements in Downing Street as Wilson arrived.

I was the Philippines desk officer and also desk officer for the South-East Asian Treaty Organisation: a South-East Asian sort of NATO but without standing forces. The membership was America, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand and, if only because of the presence of France and Pakistan, there was very little of actual political or military value in the organisation. The US tried to invoke its membership to justify intervening in Vietnam, but the organisation wasn't willing to go along with it and so they had to intervene unilaterally in Vietnam.

My job was simply to co-ordinate instructions for a monthly meeting of the ambassadors representing the eight countries in Bangkok and their meeting was mostly about

housekeeping matters – there were some social and economic programmes. And I also had the job of preparing for the tenth council meeting in London which meant preparing a lot of briefs and that was quite a useful initial training because it taught one the procedures used by the Foreign Office, it taught one liaison with other government departments and it gave me a lot of basic drafting work to get my teeth into.

SM: You talk about this job as a useful training; did you not get any formal training when you joined the FCO?

AG: All we had was a three weeks' orientation course in the India Office Council Chamber of the twenty-or-so new entrants into the basic Third Secretary grade. I can only remember three things about that training. One was that the Chairman, a delightful, retired ambassador, wore blue canvas sailing shoes because he had gout. Second, there was an excellent talk by Ewen Fergusson on his experience in his first job overseas, as a Third Secretary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (which I was to visit later) and thirdly, there was a memorable talk by Patrick Reilly, Ambassador to France, the only one of our lecturers who delivered his talk from his feet; the rest were sitting down.

SM: And you were in South-East Asian Department from '64 to '65?

AG: Yes, it was only a year and then I was moved to PUSD. I should say that most of my contemporaries found themselves abroad after a year or else they went off to hard language training. I was sent to SEAD and I think part of the reason for that was because I was thought to have had some experience of living overseas when I was a VSO in Sarawak (very different kind of work) and with the benefit of hindsight, looking back on it, I rather wish that I had gone abroad earlier.

1965 – 67 Permanent Under-Secretary's Department

SM: And so, what were your duties in PUSD?

AG: They were mainly liaising with the intelligence services. The head of my department was that wonderful man, Christopher Ewart-Biggs, later murdered by the IRA (in Dublin as Ambassador) and he described the work as 'looking up Whitehall's trouser leg'. One of the aspects of the work was that because of its sensitivity, when I was dealing with other parts of the Foreign Office, I used to have to deal direct with senior staff because of 'need-to-know' and I suppose that I had one asset which was that I have a very bad memory and I can neither

remember the people that I worked with nor the subjects that we were working on, with one exception. I was given a rather one-off responsibility which was to do with the publication of *SOE in France* by an Oxford scholar, Michael Foot. It had been decided - and I think Burke Trend, the Secretary to the Cabinet, was one of the driving forces - to allow publication of a history of the activities of the Special Operations Executive in France. Michael Foot had produced a 400 page book; it had been published and then a number of people whose names were mentioned in the book complained about the terms in which he had written about their secret work in France during the war and they began to sue the Government for what had been written.

And there was a lot of sort of clearing up work on that. I used to have to go back to the original documents on the basis of which Michael Foot had written his account and see whether I thought what he had written justified, was supported adequately by the archives. It was rather academic work, extremely interesting and I remember that it involved on one occasion, a meeting in Burke Trend's office in the Cabinet Office to decide on whether to publish a second edition of the work or whether to wait for a little bit longer. It must have been one of the rare opportunities for a virtually new entrant to have direct contact in a small meeting with the Cabinet Secretary.

1967 Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies

SM: So then in 1967 you went to the Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies. Tell us what that's all about.

AG: This was a five months' course run by the Treasury for home civil servants and members of the Diplomatic Service. There were twenty or maybe thirty of us and we had a series of lectures, study groups, learning about economics. It was described as "getting an Economics degree (a full Economics Degree) in five months" and was thought to be the opposite of the RCDS (Royal College of Defence Studies) which has been described as "a four months' course squeezed into a year". The disadvantage of doing the course was that immediately after it (and we'll talk about this in a minute), I went on to learn modern Greek and go to Athens so I didn't have any opportunity to use my economic knowledge and by the time I did economic work years and years later, I'd pretty well forgotten what I'd learned. But the extra time in London, as it happened, provided a good opportunity to marry my wife and we got married just before we went to Greece.

1967-71 Athens, Second Secretary

SM: Tell me about the posting to Athens, then. That was in '67?

AG: It began with six months' language training which took place in Athens itself. My predecessors had done some training in London and then my immediate predecessor went off to Salonika and did his training there by himself without his wife, but kind Personnel Department, given that we'd only just got married, agreed that Veronica could come with me and we would do all our Greek language training in Athens. We spent a couple of months in a flat of our own and then we lived with a Greek family near Nea Smyrni just outside Athens for four months and then I began working at the Embassy. Looking back on it I suppose it might have been better if I'd been on my own in a purely Greek environment but it was extremely good for my marriage.

We had, as teachers, Alkis and Aliko Angelou. He had been a professor of literature at Salonika but he'd lost his job as a result of the Greek coup d'état of 1967; his brother had been detained on one of the islands and he was regarded as suspiciously left-wing. He was a wonderful teacher and they became very close friends. He taught me and Aliko, his wife, taught Veronica and of course the advantage of us both doing it was that by the time I started work at the Embassy, Veronica could speak Greek as well, if not better than I could.

SM: Fine. So, tell me about the job

AG: The job was basically internal – political. The coup had taken place in April; I started work in about March the following year after my language training, so the Colonels - Papadopoulos and Pattakos and the others - had been in power for a year or so. The job itself consisted of trying to follow what was happening politically, including what was happening to the detainees of whom there'd been originally six thousand imprisoned on the islands of Leros and Yaros, their treatment, their gradual release. I used to get requests from London for information about specific named individuals and then I would do my best to find out where they were through the contacts that I made. I followed as best as I could government legislation and the publication of a new constitution. There was a referendum before we left on the abolition of the monarchy and its replacement by Papadopoulos as President. The regime was gradually taking steps towards restoration of democracy (sort-of); they were very hesitant and unwilling steps and all that needed to be analysed and reported. The Council of

Europe was considering whether Greece should be suspended from its membership in view of the dictatorship; in fact, it withdrew in 1969. It jumped before it was pushed.

I used to monitor the local press. I kept in close touch and gradually got to know some of the younger members of the former political world, people who had been members of parliament before the coup, some of them had even been ministers and they were curiously indulgent towards this very junior Second Secretary whose job it was to keep in touch with them.

SM: You were sent around the country. Where did you get to?

AG: The Ambassador was very keen that I should travel as much as possible and to begin with I went to Yanina in the north and to Crete and I called on the local Nomarch and met university people, but after a bit he said “No, Anthony, what I want you to do is to go where none of the rest of us can go to. Take a train, then take a bus and when the bus gives up, take a mule and when the mule gives up, take your feet, but go to the outermost corners of Greece and come back and tell me what you’ve found.” And so I did two trips like that; one was to Agrafa in northern Greece right up in the heart of the mountains in northern Greece, by going first to Karditsa (I think by train) and eventually to Agrafa on foot and on mule. And I did a similar trip down in the Peloponnese, from Patras, over the mountains to Tripoli. On each occasion I needed a cover story because the local police would have been very suspicious of a member of the Embassy going in those remote places without any explanation for their presence. So my cover story in northern Greece to Agrafa was that I was studying the little known churches, sixteenth – seventeenth century churches of Evrytania and in Patras I was following in the footsteps of a Greek doctor who in the 1890s had made a journey from Patras with a mule over the mountains to Tripoli.

SM: Were these journeys illuminating? They’re obviously interesting but ...

AG: I can’t pretend that I discovered anything wildly unexpected, but it told us that the Colonels’ writ ran throughout the country to the most remote places. It was quite clear from the police that they knew that I was coming and were following my progress; they were curious but they seemed to be satisfied with my cover story and it also told me that there were people in the villages who I was able to speak to privately who were not at all keen on the Colonels. It told me something about the economic and social conditions of these remote places and I remember being struck by just how poor some of the villages were. The only comparable place that I had seen at that stage of my career in Europe was in the foothills of

the Pyrenees, where there were depopulated villages and people living in very impoverished conditions.

SM: What were the key things that British policy aimed to achieve in Greece at the time?

AG: Looking back on it I suppose probably there were four. We wanted to see the restoration of democracy; we wanted Greece to preserve its military effectiveness as a NATO ally; we wanted to protect British interests, notably commercial interests (there were plenty of British companies wanting to do business in Greece) and we wanted to influence Greece to the extent that we could, in their foreign policy particularly in its relations with Turkey and Cyprus. Most of that was way above my head and was dealt with by the Ambassador and the Counsellors. As I say my focus was very much on what was going on inside Greece at the political level.

SM: Any other impressions of Greece that you'd like to recall?

AG: Well, a very happy time from a family point of view. That's where we started our married life. We had a very nice flat near the Embassy, in Karneadou Street. Two or three or four years later a member of the British Council was murdered by terrorists in his car as he drove along the street outside our flat. I think the terrorists mistook him for a member of the political section of the Embassy, but there was no violence or terrorism during our time.

Two of our three children were born in Athens and we had a lot of very happy times – weekends, holidays in Thassos, Corfu and the Pelion peninsula. Embassy life was fairly leisurely. We'd start early in the morning and go on to about 2.30pm on three days of the week and on two days of the week we'd finish a bit earlier (at lunch time), go off and have a siesta or a walk in the country and then come back for another two or three hours work in the evening. That sort of life is, I dare say, impossible now if only because people live too far away from the Embassy for it to work like that.

When I left, I expected to go back to Athens. I assumed that with my modern Greek (I'd taken the advanced exam and I spoke reasonably good Greek and could read it fluently at that stage), I would go back later on in a more senior position but, as I'll say later on, that was not to be.

1971 – 73 Private Secretary to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary /Minister of State

SM: Anthony, passing on to your career in Africa or related to Africa, you came back from Athens I think in 1971 and took up a role as Private Secretary with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary and then with the Minister of State at the FCO. Is that right?

AG: I came back from Athens and became a Private Secretary, first to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary and then to the Minister of State. In Athens, just before I was due to leave, the Embassy had a visit from Tony Royle, who I think must have been Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the FCO at the time and I was detailed off to look after him and I must have made a reasonably good impression because I heard later that he'd asked for me to come back as his Private Secretary. But the timing didn't work. I couldn't be released from Athens in time to take up that job. However, Personnel Department had sort of marked my file and so, when I came back, I was made Private Secretary to another Parliamentary Under-Secretary, who was actually the Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Lords and therefore the Foreign Office spokesman in the House of Lords.

He was Lord Lothian, Peter Lothian (who was a friend of Alec Douglas-Home), a Scottish landowner, an extremely nice and astute man, but without much political background or experience, I think, and certainly no ministerial experience. This was right at the beginning of the Heath government in 1971. So, part of my job was non-African related and I suggest we deal with that later.

An important part was the African bit. He was responsible for British relations with sub-Saharan Africa. He did a great deal of travelling, as did his successor, Lady Tweedsmuir and perhaps I'll just say a word about her. She'd been a Member of Parliament for Aberdeen South for twenty years. I think she'd either lost the election in 1970 or else she had decided to retire. She'd been 'booted upstairs' to the House of Lords. She was a very feisty, very politically savvy minister, popular with everybody, very energetic, a formidable lady and as Minister of State she had rather more responsibilities than Lord Lothian had but, again, we can deal with the other things she did later on. For the moment, I just want to focus on my job as the Private Secretary for, effectively, the Minister for Africa.

There were one or two ways in which the context then of our policy towards Africa was completely different from the context twenty years later when I returned to Africa as High Commissioner to Ghana. First of all there was apartheid South Africa which complicated our relations with black Africa. Most black Africans, not all, wanted a very tough policy on sanctions towards apartheid South Africa. Two of the exceptions were Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast and Hastings Banda of Malawi; and I remember Julius Nyerere in Tanzania telling Lord Lothian when Lord Lothian visited in 1971 or 2 that Houphouët-Boigny and Banda were like Jews supping with Hitler in their relations with the South African government. So, that was one way in which the context was different. Another way, a very important way, of course was Rhodesia. We had had the unilateral, illegal declaration of independence by Rhodesia in 1970, 71, was it or 69 even (*Note: it was 1965*) and we were responsible for trying to find a way of bringing Rhodesia to effectively majority black rule. We had, Lord Lothian had very little directly to do with that process because it was handled at the level of Secretary of State but the consequences for British relations with Africa of that difficulty were very considerable. And a third way in which the context was different was that on the first of January 1973 Britain joined the European Union and during the course of 71 and 72 negotiations were taking place in Brussels on the terms for Britain's entry; and the Africans that Lord Lothian and then Lady Tweedsmuir met were obviously extremely interested in that process because they saw it as likely to affect their own relations with, not only Europe but the United Kingdom.

I arrived at my post, Private Secretary to the Minister for Africa, sometime in July 1971. The House of Lords, Parliament, was still sitting and Lord Lothian was busy answering questions and taking part in debates. We hadn't intended to pay a visit to Africa until probably September and were beginning to think about which country to visit when suddenly the news came that President Tubman of Liberia had died in a London hospital from the after effects of prostate surgery. We heard the news, I suppose, on a Friday or Saturday. By, let us say, Tuesday lunchtime, it had been decided that Lord Lothian should fly out to Monrovia on the midnight plane to attend the funeral and that Prince William of Gloucester should also go to represent the Queen. Prince William of Gloucester had worked in the diplomatic service including in the High Commission in Lagos and he had a first-hand knowledge of West African affairs, so he was obviously a very good choice. I was told that I was going to have to look after both Lord Lothian as Private Secretary and also Prince William as his sort of ADC as he wasn't intending to take his own ADC. So, having heard at lunchtime, we busied

ourselves in the afternoon, I hired some morning dress and evening tails to conform to the Liberian dress code which was on the formal side. Somebody bought a very handsome wreath from Harrods to be taken out to be laid at the right moment by Prince William. I had to get my clothes up from Henley-on-Thames, where I was living temporarily because we hadn't yet found somewhere to live after leaving Athens. I think I had time to visit a flat which we were trying to buy in Holland Park and at midnight we took off from Heathrow to Monrovia.

SM: So, the Tubman funeral; tell us more about that.

AG: I can't remember the details of exactly what we did but there were two or three specific incidents which I will remember forever. The first happened in the church during the main funeral service. The moment came for the heads of delegations (in our case, Prince William) to lay a wreath on the coffin in the centre of the church. The Chief of Protocol called for Prince William to lay his wreath but then we discovered that we didn't actually know where the wreath was. A search ensued, conducted mainly by the Chief of Protocol and me.

I despaired at finding the wreath and I suggested by whispering to Prince William that he lean forward over the already placed wreaths to rearrange them thus trying to conceal the fact that our own wreath wasn't available. But at that moment the Chief of Protocol uttered a glad cry which echoed round the church, saying "I found it" and he took it down from the pulpit where it had been hung in pride of place, so great was the glory of the Harrods' wreath. He handed it me, I handed it to Prince William, Prince William laid it on the coffin. Prince William and I stepped back. Unfortunately I hadn't noticed that the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, was standing immediately behind me and I was about to tread on his toes when I was hurled aside by his bodyguards and I slunk off ignominiously to my seat.

The next episode in this great saga: the service was concluded. We all trooped out and we followed the bier along a dusty road to the cemetery and I remember shuffling along behind Prince William and Lord Lothian; we were walking immediately behind the diminutive figure of Haile Selassie and the vast figure alongside of Idi Amin whose first appearance on the African stage this was and I overheard one Liberian bystander say to another: "Look, that must be the emperor's bodyguard". We proceeded; we reached the cemetery and there was the tomb ready to take the coffin. It consisted of a huge marble tomb alongside which were

some metal rollers which were electrically operated. The coffin was placed on the rollers and the idea was that you pressed a switch, the rollers rotated and the coffin glided into the tomb and then it was going to be taken below ground by a sort of hydraulic lift. The switch was pressed, the rollers rotated, but the coffin didn't move and we all looked around to see what had happened and it was Prince William who spotted that the edge of the coffin was stuck on the edge of the tomb. So he gave it a little surreptitious prod with his toe and the coffin aligned itself with the tomb, slid into the tomb and then was taken down by the hydraulic lift. At that moment Prime Minister Busia of Ghana who was standing by fainted, so great was the press of very hot people. Again, Prince William came to the rescue by pushing back the crowd: I helped him and the wretched Busia was resuscitated and led away, thankfully no worse for wear.

SM: So you went on a big programme of visits with Lord Lothian?

AG: I went on nine separate country visits with Lord Lothian and eight with Lady Tweedsmuir. We covered the main countries of the Commonwealth; not quite all. Ghana we didn't cover, I think because they owed us a lot of money, but we went to Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Swaziland, Botswana, Zaire. In the case of Lady Tweedsmuir, I remember a ten-day visit to Nigeria; an extraordinary length of time. In those visits, the aim was to familiarise Lady Tweedsmuir, Lord Lothian with what was going on and so there was an extensive programme of visits to agricultural products, development training, universities, the countryside generally, game parks.

I think I'm struck looking back on it how relatively thin the agenda was but that was as much as anything due to the problems presented by South Africa and Rhodesia in our relations with black Africa. So the agenda tended to be sometimes discussion of Rhodesia, although many of our interlocutors avoided the issue - we agreed to differ. Nyerere was an exception and I remember the call on Nyerere vividly. He came across as a very sincere, very charismatic, interesting, charming man who mixed sort of serious reflections on policy with nervous and slightly hysterical laughter. We talked about the principles on which it might be possible to find a Rhodesian settlement; the black African community was insisting on no independence before majority-rule. Interestingly, Nyerere himself didn't mention the subject; instead he talked about our own five principles which stopped short of African demands and expressed the hope that we wouldn't further dilute those five principles.

We met Haile Selassie; we met Amin (and I'll have a story or two to tell about them in a minute); we met Seretse Khama of Botswana, an extremely impressive man who had been a notably successful Prime Minister of Botswana. We met Chief Jonathan in Lesotho.

SM: Amin and Haile Selassie?

AG: Lord Lothian went to Uganda right at the beginning of Amin's time as president. He'd overthrown Obote during Obote's attendance at the Singapore Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in, I think, '70 or '71. He was regarded as a "good thing" to begin with by Britain and other western countries. He'd served in the East African Rifles. It looked to us as if he was a huge improvement on his predecessor, the rather dreadful Obote, and so a sort of honeymoon ensued for a year or so and Lord Lothian's visit took place during that honeymoon. We had one or two interesting insights into his character. I remember a call at his 'Command Post' which is how he'd renamed Government House in the centre of Kampala. I accompanied Lord Lothian; so did Harold Smedley, the Under-Secretary for Africa at the time. We sat in a circle talking to the president; we were offered a tray of drinks, it looked like a glass of water, some Coke, some orangeade, that sort of thing; a steward brought the tray round; I took some Coke, Harold Smedley took a glass of water, Idi Amin took a glass of water. I was scribbling away taking notes of the conversation as usual and suddenly I heard a kind of splutter from Harold Smedley next-door and afterwards we asked him what the matter was and he said "Well, it wasn't water, it was neat gin" and we concluded that the steward had got the bottles muddled up in the presidential fridge and that Idi Amin was in the habit of drinking neat gin for his elevenses. He was allegedly a good Muslim.

He and his senior wife came to dinner with Dick Slater, the High Commissioner. She was an attractive woman but didn't speak much English and all was sweetness and light during that visit. Less than a year later, Idi Amin announced a policy of expelling Ugandan Asians (Asians living in Uganda) and no less than 30,000 or so eventually came into Britain with many more tens of thousands going to other parts of the world.

SM: And Haile Selassie?

AG: I went to Addis Ababa, both with Lord Lothian and with Lady Tweedsmuir. Haile Selassie was an important figure on the African stage; Ethiopia was a big country; one of the largest countries in black Africa but without the same kind of colonial history as some of the rest of Africa.

I remember the first time we visited was with Lord Lothian and we were ushered into the imperial presence, into a large throne room. A formal introduction was effected and we were then taken into a small private sitting room behind, where we were given tea and chocolate cake. On the second occasion, Lady Tweedsmuir was accompanied by me (I'm 6' 2"), by Martin Ewans, who was the Head of East African Department at the time He was at least 6' 2", if not 6' 3" and by the Ambassador who was Willy Morris, much the same height as the rather small figure of Haile Selassie. We were each introduced to the Emperor and I recall that was when we discovered that he had a sense of humour because he looked at Willy Morris at his own level, he looked at Martin and he looked up at me and he said to the Minister: "I see that Her Majesty chooses her envoy to my court with care".

One of the calls that Lord Lothian, I think it was, made was on Sheikh Karume who was the President (if that was his name) of Zanzibar, which was a part, of course, of Tanzania. We went over to the island and went and called on him in the old building occupied by the British Resident in colonial days and I remember the Sheikh, who was a black African, not of Arab descent, wearing a very white, tight sort of colonial suit standing at the top of the steps leading into the Residence to greet us. He ushered us in, took us to the small room at the back of the house where we were given tea – afternoon tea and cucumber sandwiches off old EIIR china left over from the Residency days. He was a pretty unattractive man. The East Germans were busy giving him advice and some money and I remember some very unattractive flats which had been put up by East German money in which the wretched Zanzibaris were housed.

One of the things one has to remember is that in those days (we're talking of the very early 70s) we were in some cases ten years after colonial rule, so memories of colonial times were very fresh: the earliest Commonwealth country to have got its independence was Ghana in 1957 and many of the others got theirs in the early 1960s and in some cases as late as '66. So it was less than ten years after colonial rule and British visitors had to tread pretty warily;

there was a narrow line to find between showing interest in what was going on and showing rather too much interest and thus laying oneself open to criticisms of neo-colonialism.

The agenda of the time, the subjects discussed by visiting ministers, were of course Rhodesia and South Africa (Britain had just supplied some Wasp helicopters to the South African government and I remember Nyerere saying to Lord Lothian that he very much hoped that the South African government wasn't going to ask for any more Wasp helicopters).

The effects of European Community membership were near the top of the agenda and I recall a visit made by Lady Tweedsmuir to Lilongwe in Malawi when there was a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference taking place and she gave one of the keynote speeches, at which she talked about the possible implications of British membership of the European Community for Africa. She argued that, because European Community membership would strengthen, in the long run, the British economy, that would enable Britain to be more rather than less use to its African friends.

There was also a discussion of the terms on which African countries would agree with the European Community on Aid and Trade. You'll remember the countries of the ACP (African, Caribbean, Pacific countries) were negotiating with the European Community in Brussels what was called Yaoundé 1, 2 and 3, I think and there were some Lomé conventions too, which were the terms on which the European Community would give African countries access to European markets and the quantities of aid that would be provided; and the British line at the time was of a very general kind to encourage these African countries to concert among themselves to agree exactly what sort of relationship they wanted with European Union. So that was an important part of the agenda.

Another significant item was the consequences for European, in particular British, farmers in Tanzania and Kenya of the local policies on Africanisation.

After the Second World War a number of British people went out and bought land in the highlands of Kenya and on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. They built them up to very prosperous concerns. In the highlands around Eldoret in Kenya there were Pyrethrum farms. On the slopes of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania there were mixed farms, including fruit farms, (strawberries were grown) and some of these farmers had their own landing strips, their own

light aircraft which they used to fly their strawberry crop to Nairobi, there to link up with trans-continental planes flying into the European market. So they were prosperous farms and the farmers lived in many ways an idyllic life and quite naturally Nyerere, the socialist in Tanzania, and to a lesser extent the Kenyan government wanted to 'Africanise' these farms and the question was what terms would be offered to the farmers concerned.

I remember going to the farms on the slopes of Kilimanjaro with a wonderful view over central Africa; high up, so with distant views across the blue hills and they lived in very pleasant bungalows with a kitchen garden around them; an African workforce, of course and they had the time of their lives and the more honest amongst them realised that they weren't going to be able to carry on doing that for ever; the less realistic regarded it as Britain's job to ensure that they could continue to live there forever. The purpose of the ministerial visit was to listen, to give their morale a bit of a boost and to try, as far as was possible, to ensure that they got reasonable compensation.

Nyerere made it clear that the presence of these European, particularly British, farmers was inconsistent with his long-term socialist policies for Tanzania but that they had a place in the economy of Tanzania for the time being. Kenya was less tough and I think probably, history showed that the European farmers in Kenya got better compensation than they did in Tanzania. Now of course, such people are history.

SM: Tell us more about the agendas of the visit

AG: Of course, one of the big differences between then and the 90s, when I went back as an Under-Secretary, was that, although we had an aid policy, and we provided a certain amount of aid, we didn't link our aid to the quality of government in the countries concerned in the way that we came to do in the 90s. So the discussions which Lord Lothian and Lady Tweedsmuir had with African leaders didn't spend very much time on the nature of policies pursued by the countries concerned. There wasn't the same emphasis on good government, democracy, rule of law and sensible economic, market-based policies as there came to be later. All I can remember is one short conversation with Idi Amin on economic policy when Lord Lothian probably stressed the need for economic policy reform after the excesses of the Obote regime, to which Idi Amin said that he'd come to realise that the economy was every bit as much an enemy as the armed soldier or words to that effect.

Another subject, an important subject, which was dealt with by Lady Tweedsmuir during her visit to Nigeria, was both over-flying and landing rights for Concorde – the aviation authorities in Britain were trying to secure traffic rights for Concorde to reach South Africa; on which the viability of the whole project partly depended. So during her visit to Lagos in, I suppose, '73 or perhaps '74, she discussed with the Nigerian authorities this subject and was told in firm terms that there was no question of allowing Concorde to refuel in Lagos; and that in effect put an end to the hopes that we'd had of establishing a Concorde service to South Africa.

SM: Presumably it was because they specifically objected to the destination?

AG: Precisely.

SM: You were going to say something about The Gambia, I think.

AG: One of the visits made by Lord Lothian to West Africa was to The Gambia; an extraordinary country entirely surrounded by Senegal. One can't help thinking that that was one of the countries which had suffered from the way in which the boundaries had been drawn back in the nineteenth century and it would have been far better if Senegal and Gambia had been a single colony of either the French or the British, but preferably not both. Anyhow, Lord Lothian called on President Jawara who was an admirable man; a very good, sensible, incorrupt, wise leader of his country for twenty and more years and I have more to say about him in the 90s. He lent us his presidential launch. We went up the St. James river and we landed at an island on which a fort had been built in colonial times, which was one of the very early trading forts put up by the British: a charming spot, on which Baobab trees were growing and I remember picking up a Baobab fruit and taking it back to London where we sampled its seeds, which taste of lemon.

We had a spot of bother because the tide went down as we were approaching and the presidential launch got stuck on a mud bank. The small boat in which we went to the island lost its outboard motor and so the party was separated: some were marooned on the island, some on the launch, before eventually the tide rose and happily, we went on our way, but all this meant that we were much later leaving the island than we should have been and I can

remember the magic of that moment. One almost imagines Sanders of the River rounding the bend in the river and the sound of Paul Robeson singing Sanders of the River, Sanders the wise. I forget how it goes... (*Note: It was 'Sandy, the strong, Sandy, the wise'*)

During my time as a Private Secretary, my minister visited two diamond areas; one in Sierra Leone and the other in Botswana and the contrast was extremely interesting. In Sierra Leone we were flown up to a small town called Kenema in, I think, the east or the south of Sierra Leone and as we came into land, we could see what looked like large mole hills on the runway. The pilot threaded his way between the mole hills and we realised as we landed that they were in fact illicit diamond diggings because the diamonds were alluvial and they were found on the surface. We went into the centre of the town which was a lunar landscape of illicit diamond diggings surrounded by one or two buildings, including a Barclay's bank with the familiar blue sign on the outside and one could see the underneath of the foundation stone where an illicit diamond digger had been exploring for diamonds; not in the bank's vault but in the soil beneath the bank. Lady Tweedsmuir was offered a small diamond by somebody who certainly didn't have a title to it. I recall that she declined.

The consequence of the alluvial diamond deposits was that it was impossible to control access. They were scattered in quite a wide area and so the government authorities couldn't tax the proceeds; anybody could come in and dig for diamonds and the State, the people as a whole, got no benefit at all from the presence of the diamonds in Sierra Leone.

By enormous contrast, in Botswana the diamonds are found in pipes, almost wells, where they are concentrated. So all you had to do was to put up a fence, a security fence and surround the pipe and you could control access in and out and the State, the Botswana State, could get its fair share and I think that that difference between the two diamond 'minings' in those two states explains some, but not all of the difference in the prosperity and the fortunes of those two countries. Botswana - an extremely successful, although very poor country, which managed to get a reasonable benefit from the diamonds and Sierra Leone, which didn't. Of course, there was more to it than that; the quality of the leadership had a lot to do with the difference also.

Another very important part, the most important part of the first year or so of my job as Private Secretary, were the proceedings in the House of Lords on British accession to the

European Union, the EEC as it was called then. What used to happen was that Geoffrey Rippon, the British negotiator, and his team would come back from Brussels after an overnight negotiating session. They would spend the morning drafting a statement on the progress of the negotiations for the House of Commons. Around 12-12.30 a copy of the statement would be sent along the corridor to Lord Lothian who then had the unenviable job of repeating the statement in the House of Lords immediately after it had been made in the House of Commons. He would need to be briefed and there was never enough time to do so and he found the task an extremely difficult one.

I don't think this is surprising and I'm not sure that I gave him the support that he really needed.

In due course, Lady Tweedsmuir became a member of the government team which was responsible for taking the EEC accession bill through the House of Lords and I would sit for hours and hours in the official box as she took part in those debates.

In addition and separate from the EEC work, the Foreign Office Lords Minister would have to appear before the Lords pretty well every afternoon, to answer questions on foreign affairs, and the questions could be on any aspect of foreign affairs and again, I would need to organise a briefing of the minister by the relevant department, to tackle these questions and to deal with any follow-up questions asked by the Lords.

There were a number of big debates, not only on the European Union, and I remember well the very last one, when the moment came for full parliamentary approval to be given, and Edward Heath having successfully completed the business in the House of Commons, came along and sat on the steps of the throne in the House of Lords for the closing stages of the final House of Lords debate and vote on accession. One had the sense of being present at a major parliamentary event. Looking back now of course it's ironical, post referendum.

In addition to the European Union work Rhodesia featured largely. This was when the government of the day was trying to work out a settlement in Rhodesia, acceptable to the majority of people, including the black majority. Lord Goodman was sent out to agree terms of a possible settlement with Ian Smith; then Lord Pearce was sent out to report on whether those terms were acceptable to majority opinion in Rhodesia and there were major set-piece debates in which their Lordships had plenty to say on the subject.

SM: Lady Tweedsmuir; was she related to John Buchan in some way?

AG: Her husband, Lord Tweedsmuir, was John Buchan's son. He was her second husband; her first husband had, I think, been killed in the war and she had been MP for Aberdeen South for twenty years and was an extremely experienced parliamentary operator. There was a big contrast in the performance of the two lords in the House of Lords; Lord Lothian had had rather little experience in that kind of a role, whereas Lady Tweedsmuir was extremely expert at getting their Lordships on her side and she became a powerful figure in the House of Lords.

SM: What other issues came up during your time as Private Secretary to the Leader in the Lords?

AG: Under Lord Lothian; his other big responsibility was for disarmament, and he would go out, both to Geneva and to New York, for sessions of the Disarmament Conference (I confess I have very little memory of the substance of the work at that stage). As far as Lady Tweedsmuir was concerned, she was the Minister for economic matters in the Foreign Office and this involved, amongst other things, a visit to Santiago for UNCTAD 3, when she made a speech on British policy on trade and development. It also involved three separate visits to Iceland to try to find a solution to the Cod War. You remember Iceland extended its limit to 200 miles and was trying to drive out British fishermen from what they called "Icelandic waters". So we had three separate negotiating sessions up in Reykjavik. She would go accompanied by representatives of the industry, both the owners and the unions and some of the sessions she had with the Icelandic teams were in private, some were in public, attended by those representatives. She was a very tough negotiator and it was good that she could be seen to be tough by the industry and the unions because the ultimate outcome was not at all what we would have wished from the beginning.

1974 – 77 Paris, First Secretary (Economic)

SM: After your time as a Private Secretary in London, what happened next?

AG: I spent two and half years as a Private Secretary. Then, in the natural course of events, I came up for an overseas posting. I had hoped to go to Brussels because I'd become interested in the European Union (EEC as it was then called) during my time as a Private Secretary. In the event I was sent instead to Paris where I did economic work and I saw this as an opportunity to consolidate my Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies course, although

the work in fact was rather different from my economics course. Remember the political context, which was that we were only two years after accession to the European Community; Ted Heath's government had fallen in '74, after the three-day week. We left a London of power cuts, blackouts, candles rather than electricity, not enough goods in the shops, and we arrived in Paris and it was like entering the "promised land": shops were groaning with goods, lights were blazing and France was in a very optimistic frame of mind and tended to look down on the rather sad experience that Britain was going through at the time. There was a degree I thought of French condescension towards Britain, which was uncomfortable.

My first year, I spent as a British representative on the Co-ordinating Committee. The Co-ordinating Committee was composed of NATO members plus Japan and it was designed to prevent the export of strategic goods to the Soviet bloc and to China. They maintained a list defining the qualities of machine tools, electronic goods, computers, that sort of thing to the Soviet Union and China and every third year the list was overhauled and new parameters defining the kind of computers, electronic equipment that could be exported were agreed. So this involved long days; four days a week for six months going through with a fine-tooth comb the embargo list.

SM: Anthony, was the Co-ordinating Committee a good thing in retrospect? Was it useful; did it serve a useful purpose?

AG: I'm probably the wrong person to ask. Our noses were so close to the page that all we could see were the parameters and whether we succeeded in defining them in a way which was helpful to British commercial interests, as well as protecting our defence interests.

There, I believe, we probably were successful; you would have to ask somebody else on the effect of the embargo on the defence capabilities, electronic computer capabilities of the Soviet Union.

SM: Anything more you want to say about the Committee?

AG: The British delegation was composed of three or four or five civil servants, one from the Department of Trade, two from the Ministry of Defence; I used to lead it. We got to know each other well and they used to spend (my colleagues from Whitehall), used to spend the weekend in Paris because it wasn't worth going home in between. We got to know the other delegations fairly well as well, and it was a very harmonious meeting, although every now and again we'd get pretty fed up with the antics of this or that other delegation.

I remember on one occasion, my American colleague came in after lunch and put a large box on the table. The Chairman, who rejoiced in the name of “Monsieur Indelicato” (an Italian), invited the British representative to speak on the next item, and I was just about to make my intervention, which was probably going to involve some kind of an assault on the American position, when Ted Papendorp said: “Wait Mr. Chairman”, he took out the box, lifted the lid off and took out a GI helmet. Putting it on his head, he crouched down and said: “Let the British attack commence”. And this was the kind of atmosphere in which we worked.

The delegation was also supported by representatives of industry, so you had a firm in the Midlands who might be producing machine tools, who would come out to join the delegation to lend their expertise and to try to ensure that the parameters we agreed were as helpful as possible to their own commercial interests. And it was a question always, of balancing the commercial against the strategic. Could we raise the parameters of a particular computer in the interests of getting more business or would that give some kind of advantage to the Soviet Union?

After a year completing the list review, I was then switched to full-time economic work and I specialised in energy matters and in industry and in regional, transport and general EEC work. The objective really was to keep Whitehall up-to-date as far as possible with detailed French departmental thinking on the various dossiers that were under negotiation in Brussels. We used to try to follow French policy on the key items under negotiation and, if possible, we’d try to influence their thinking. So the job entailed getting to know ten or twelve key French officials in some of the economic departments as well as the Quai d’Orsay and there was a definite technique to this; a technique which was taught to me by my predecessor, David Miers.

His advice was “you will ring up somebody in the Délégation à l’Energie, for example, and you will not get past his secretary until six o’clock in the evening, so ring after six and you’ll find that he answers the phone himself, and you introduce yourself, and you say may I come and see you? And he’ll say well, my diary is terribly busy, what about three weeks from now?” You’ll say “Snap” and you’d make a date to see him in three weeks’ time. You’d then use those three weeks to brief yourself in detail on the subject that you wanted to see him about – on energy, on oil pricing, on exploration in the North Sea, for example, and you’d get information from Whitehall departments, you’d prepare your vocabulary and at the end of three weeks you would go down and astound him (you hoped) with how much you

knew about his subject. And after that you became a sort of *interlocuteur valable* and he would be willing to see you or to take your telephone calls, and in due course no doubt, he would accept a decent lunch and you'd have two hours of his undivided attention to spill the beans on whatever the subject was.

One of the subjects under discussion in Brussels, was whether the community could agree on a minimum selling price for oil; this was a minimum price, not a maximum price, so as to protect British investment in North Sea oil exploration. We had thought that at a summit it had been agreed that a minimum selling price be set. I'd been slightly surprised that we'd achieved this because I knew the French were strongly against it; they were wanting, for obvious reasons, to drive down the prices as far as possible, and I remember taking out to lunch a member of the Délégation à l'Energie (who went on to be French Ambassador in Washington) - a very high-powered man who'd worked for a short time as one of General De Gaulle's junior staff, and I raised the subject of the MSP and he absolutely tore me to pieces and said that "if I seriously thought the French had agreed on an MSP, I'd better change my thinking". And I think this was part of a deliberate campaign on the part of the French, to unpick an agreement which had indeed been reached at summit level and it was the beginning of a very successful campaign by the French to change that agreement.

SM: There was a London interval.

AG: There was. David Miers, after leaving Paris went back to Energy Department in London where he was the Assistant. He and somebody else were invited to do a review of diplomatic entertainment worldwide and he took six weeks out of Energy department for the purpose. I was drafted back from Paris to fill in for him, working for Stephen Egerton, and I found the experience a very useful one to my own work, doing Energy in Paris. When I was in the Embassy, I would have reported to London on what I'd been doing. Back in London I would reply to my letter and then, back in Paris after David Miers's return I would reply to that one.

SM: What was family life like in Paris?

AG: We lived in a house in St Cloud, just the other side of the Bois de Boulogne, rather against the wishes of the hierarchy in the Embassy who thought that I should be living more centrally. In fact we were very close; it only took half an hour to get to-and-fro. Our daughter went to a French school (*école maternelle*) and learnt very good French at the age of

five and six and went on to get a French degree. We used to go every year to Brittany for sailing holidays with family and friends. Again, it was a very happy time.

1977-78 Assistant, Maritime, Aviation and Environment Department

SM: Ok, so after Paris, Anthony, you came back to London for a long period and did a number of jobs. Tell us about the first.

AG: I came back to London for a total of five years. I discovered after I had retired that Personnel Department were thinking of posting me back to Athens as Head of Chancery, directly from Paris and the reason they hadn't was because we asked to come back to London for the sake of particularly our second child. So it's ironic I suppose, that that should have happened and as a result I never returned to Athens. We had five years in London, divided between three different jobs. The first one was, as Assistant in Maritime, Aviation and Environment Department; I was dealing particularly with air service agreements, hijacking, the environment and Airbus, but most of my time was spent on the first two, air services and hijacking. The lead department in Whitehall for air services was the DTI, and one of their Deputy Secretaries or Under-Secretaries would negotiate an agreement governing the terms for air services with the relevant country concerned and the job of MAED was to try to ensure that other foreign policy aspects relating to relations with the country concerned, were taken account of. This wasn't always easy because the DTI tried to isolate air services from all other aspects of a relationship.

The other big subject that I dealt with was hijacking. There were a number of hijacking incidents during my year in MAED, most notably the hijacking of Lufthansa flight 181 by the Palestine Liberation Front who wanted to secure the release from a German prison of members of the Red Army faction. The hijacking took place more or less at the same time as a summit meeting between Prime Minister Callaghan and Helmut Schmidt of Germany. Callaghan had offered Schmidt any help that we could give and Callaghan had offered him some help with SAS observers. So the SAS had been present when the hijacking was brought to a successful conclusion in Mogadishu by the German intervention force, the GSG 9. History doesn't relate the exact role which the SAS played on that occasion; I accompanied, after the incident, a Deputy Secretary from the Cabinet Office (on the defence side) to Bonn for a debriefing of the Germans and we heard much of the detail, perhaps not

all, of what had happened on that occasion. The hijackers had been killed; none of the prisoners as I recall, had been harmed.

That incident gave a powerful impetus to planning work which was being undertaken in Whitehall for military intervention in the event of a terrorist incident, and I remember going (I think it was to Manchester) for an overnight exercise, led by the police, on a terrorist incident. I also took part in some of the work on Airbus. You'll recall that Britain agreed to provide the wings for Airbus and that negotiation on the terms of our involvement reached its climax in the summer holidays of 1978 when I happened to be in the Department without the Head (Martin Morland), who was on leave. I remember taking part in the negotiations led by senior officials in I suppose, the Department of Industry at the time, concluding that agreement.

1978-80 Assistant, European Integration Department (Internal)

From MAED I was posted after only a year, to a gap in EIDI (European Integration Department Internal) as an assistant. This was five years after UK accession to the EEC and it was only three years after Harold Wilson's 1975 referendum when Britain had voted overwhelmingly to maintain its membership of the Union in the light of his successful renegotiation of the terms of our membership.

My main responsibilities as Assistant were on the European Parliament; the first direct elections to the European Parliament took place in 1979. I was also involved with the European Community budget; it was during that time that it became apparent that the UK net contribution to the budget was going to reach the then astronomical sum of £800 million and the British government of the day devoted a huge effort to reduce this figure. That work dominated business for the next three or four years, including under the Tory government which came in in 1979.

I remember doing work on the kind of levers that might be available to the UK to secure our objectives, including the possibility of withholding our own budget payments. There was work on the extent to which we might invoke the Luxembourg Compromise which would have enabled us to use a national veto in that area, and I used to do a lot of work co-ordinating EID's contribution to briefing the Prime Minister for the European Council, and I did a certain amount of speech writing for ministers' use in parliament. It was a fascinating two years, getting to grips with some of the big European Community issues of the day.

SM: Who were the people you were working with?

AG: The Under-Secretary at the time was first of all John Fretwell who went on, of course, to be Ambassador to Paris and then David Hannay who went on to be Ambassador in Brussels and then to New York; so, two extremely powerful, able people. The Heads of Department were Peter Petrie and Nick Spreckley, again exceptionally able in their field. William Marsden was the other Assistant (there were two Assistants) at the time, although whether that was strictly necessary, I'm not sure, and some of the desk officers, indeed all the desk officers, were high-powered individuals including people like John McGregor who did the budget, Alyson Bailes, Michael Arthur, who went on to be Ambassador to Bonn and High Commissioner to India, Dick Wilkinson, Emyr Jones-Parry. It was a star-studded department and it meant the role of the Assistant was not always obvious.

1980-82 Assistant Secretary, European Secretariat, Cabinet Office (on secondment)

SM: So, European Integration Department Internal, what followed after that?

AG: I was seconded on promotion (which I was pleased about) to the Cabinet Office, to the European Secretariat; it was the first time that I had worked for home civil servants. The Deputy Secretary of the European Secretariat when I first arrived was Michael Franklin who went on to be Permanent Secretary of MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries) and then his place was taken by David Hancock who went on to, I think, be the senior PUS in the Treasury – two outstanding people. They were supported by an Under-Secretary called David Elliott from the DTI, who was my immediate boss and who then went on to be the Deputy Ambassador to the European Community in Brussels; I enjoyed working with him.

There were two Assistant Secretaries, of which I was one and then there were four Principals below us. It was rather a top-heavy structure, and after I had left the European Secretariat, the number of Assistant Secretaries was reduced from two to one. I'm not surprised by that; it's the only job that I ever had in London when I had time on a regular basis for a decent lunch break and I used to go off to a library to get some books; that I wasn't able to do in any other job that I did in London.

SM: So, Anthony, the Assistant Secretary job; how would that relate to the grades in the Foreign Office?

AG: Counsellor; an Assistant Secretary would have been a Head of a Foreign Office department.

One of my main responsibilities was preparing, helping to prepare and co-ordinate the agenda of European Councils and the Prime Minister's briefing notes, and I recall that after one European council, Mrs Thatcher invited everybody who had been involved in the preparation of the Council to No. 10 for drinks to say thank-you, which was much appreciated.

I was Chairman of an official Whitehall committee, which prepared the British brief for the enlargement negotiations which were taking place in Brussels to admit Greece, Spain and Portugal. It was, I may say, the first opportunity I'd had in my career to act as a chairman of a formal committee and I began nervously and hesitantly, but eventually learnt the art and looking back on it I do wish very much that we had been given some practical experience in the art of chairmanship at an earlier stage in our careers.

I provided part of the Secretariat for Ministerial Cabinet sub-committees, so I saw some of the Ministers of the day discussing matters before Cabinet sub-committees and learnt about the special arts of cabinet minute-taking; I used to attend and prepare the agenda and organise follow-up to what was known as the "Friday Butler" meetings which took place (as the name implies) every Friday when Michael Butler our Ambassador to the European Community in Brussels, would come back for discussions with Whitehall departments at a meeting chaired by at first, Michael Franklin and then David Hancock, on the week's work ahead. And it was a very good opportunity to take stock of how Britain was getting on with its various objectives in Brussels at the time.

The other piece of work that in the event didn't happen was an idea to give the European Secretariat a sort of think tank role on European affairs and I remember some discussion of whether we should write a paper on what was known in the trade at the time as "variable geometry": the idea that instead of every member state agreeing to move together at the same speed right across the piece, different groups of member states would proceed at varying speeds on this or that aspect of the work. This idea was rejected and I remember the point being made that it was important that Britain should move at the pace of everybody else (those were in the days of course, before we started to secure special exemptions and in the days before the euro was launched without us).

During my time in the European Secretariat, the Falklands war was fought. The European Secretariat wasn't directly involved, but I do recall seeing the telegram traffic from the Foreign Office and warning signals beginning to appear in the telegrams about the intentions of the Argentinians, and I remember thinking and hoping that somebody was dealing with the subject because it wasn't apparent to me that that particular nettle was being gripped. I remember the first meeting, our first Whitehall-wide meeting, being held on the Monday morning after the Argentinian intervention. It was chaired by Robert Wade-Gery, a Deputy Secretary, who had just come back from a holiday in India and had arrived pretty well hot-foot from the airport and I'd never seen such an outstanding exhibition of "coolness" under what must have been very considerable pressure.

He began the meeting by saying "well, Ladies and Gentlemen, I think this is an occasion when the best is going to be the enemy of the good; we need to prepare a paper for ministers by lunchtime on the options available to us and we'd like contributions from all departments concerned. Please let me have your drafts by such-and-such a time. As I say the best is the enemy of the good." I thought it was a good slogan for the occasion.

At the end of my two years in the Cabinet Office, I took stock of my own personal position and whether I wanted to bid for more European Union work or to do something different. I had found EEC work important and interesting and certainly demanding and I enjoyed working with first-rate Whitehall and FCO colleagues. I had a personal belief, which has become stronger over the years, in the value of the UK's membership of the community, but I felt that as far as my own career was concerned, it would be more sensible for me to head in other directions. I didn't want to continue to be a specialist. There was a very narrow pyramid and I wasn't sure there were going to be jobs at the top of that pyramid open to me. I thought there was a certain lack of scope for individual initiative and I thought that generalisation offered a better chance of reaching higher in the service. I was attracted by the thought of the wider world and of the unknown, so instead of bidding for a European job after the Cabinet Office, I bid for a job out of Europe.

1982-86 Islamabad, Head of Chancery

SM: Next in line for you was a posting abroad. You decided to go for the wider world and you went to Pakistan.

AG: I applied to go to India because India is bigger and offers more scope, but Personnel Department decided to send me to Pakistan. I personally think they thought a combination of Robert Wade-Gery and Anthony Goodenough in Delhi might not be a healthy one. We'd have got on very well together, I have no doubt, but we might have been too demanding of staff and a combination of Oliver Forster and Anthony Goodenough in Islamabad might have been a better mix, so that is what happened.

I went to Islamabad and I worked very happily for a year with Oliver Forster, an extremely popular figure with all staff, from top to bottom and with a wide and deep experience of the sub-continent. His place was taken by Dick Fyjis-Walker who became a very close, personal friend and I very much enjoyed working for, with him for my last year in Pakistan. Bill Fullerton and Brian Watkins were successively the economic counsellor. Bill was the No 2 when I arrived and I was No 3 as head of Chancery, and when Bill left I moved up to be the No 2 and Brian Watkins was the Consul General and did the commercial work and aid work.

In Chancery were Shona Falconer and Mark Lyall Grant, Mark went on of course, to be eventually to be Ambassador to New York and advisor to Mrs May in No. 10. Other members of the political section included Anthony Hawkes and Hugh Macleod and Trevor Williams was the Head of Administration. It was a very unusual Embassy because of the very large number of junior staff; there were I think in my day, fourteen grade 9s (equivalent to 3rd Secretary) immigration/ visa staff, half of whom came from the Home Office and half from the Foreign Office and they were engaged in vetting the thousands of Pakistani applications for visas to Britain; they had a difficult task due to the number of documents that were forged.

So my main responsibilities were as head of Chancery to co-ordinate the work of the Embassy, including the Consulate-General in Karachi; I was in charge of the political work of the Chancery. After Bill Fullerton had left I would be the Chargé d'Affaires when the Ambassador was away and so that gave me my first experience of being in charge of a mission for short periods. I also had an important pastoral role which I shared with the Consul General and the Consul, including for visa staff whose life was not an easy one in Pakistani conditions and they needed a good deal of care and attention from time to time.

The job included the extremely unpleasant task on one occasion of having to tell one of the visa staff, who'd been involved in a car accident in Islamabad late at night with his wife, that his poor wife had died in the accident.

Security was also a perennial concern, straight forward, anti-criminal security but also security against political demonstrations; there'd been a history of violence from time to time in Islamabad. Terrorism, there'd been no particular terrorist incident directed against British staff but at the back of our minds was the fear that some kind of a terrorist threat might arise.

SM: So, what were our political objectives in Pakistan?

AG: Well, looking back on it, there was a degree of similarity with our objectives in Athens, not surprisingly, so top of the list was probably the restoration of democracy to Pakistan: that was what the government of the day, the British government of the day, would have liked to see. Whether it was realistic, is for history to judge.

SM: Who was actually running Pakistan at the time?

AG: General Zia-ul-Haq, a military dictator who'd displaced Bhutto and executed him, prior to my arrival. So that was objective no 1; objective no 2 was to do all we could from the side-lines to get the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan, and I don't want to go into in detail what we were able to do in that direction. There was a lot of work arising out of the presence of 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Peace with India, the threat of friction leading to armed conflict between India and Pakistan was ever present. I wasn't there at any one of the Indo-Pakistan wars but the relationship was an uneasy one. During a period when I was Chargé d'Affaires between Oliver Forster's departure and Dick Fyjis-Walker's arrival, Indira Gandhi was assassinated in Delhi (President of India) and the finger of suspicion, the finger of Indian suspicion as always, was directed at Pakistan and I remember the lengths to which the Pakistan government went to convince the Indians of their innocence.

SM: Excuse me. Wasn't she assassinated by one of her Sikh bodyguards?

AG: Two of her bodyguards

SM: And wasn't that in connection with her actions against the Sikh extremists in Amritsar?

AG: That's it. So, Amritsar, next-door to Lahore, so you can see the way in which the Indian mind worked.

Thirdly, obviously, unsurprisingly, our objective was to protect and promote British interests in Pakistan, by which was meant our commercial interests, but also we had to remember that there was a very large Pakistani community in Britain, with close relations still living in

Pakistan and that gave Britain a particular interest in the welfare of Pakistan. We had some powerful assets working for us: the history of the sub-continent and of the British presence in India and Pakistani perceptions of British power and influence. The perceived long reach of Britain worked very much in our favour. We had a post in Islamabad, we had one in Karachi. The British Council was active and valuable, the BBC was widely respected, there were close military and indeed personal links between Britain and Pakistan. I've already talked of the Pakistani community in Britain. The fact that we had a permanent seat in the Security Council in the UN gave the British voice some power with the Pakistan government. I don't think that our membership of the European Union was particularly valuable to us in the circumstances of the time, although the fact that the European Union member states usually spoke with one voice on such matters as the treatment of the detainees and other political matters probably helped. I think it probably helped in a small way, but not in a major way to our position in Pakistan, as did the fact that we were both members of the Commonwealth.

SM: You talked about Pakistan's membership of the Commonwealth, but I think they were in-and-out at various times, for various reasons. Tell me the story of the sign.

AG: You're quite right, and during my time Pakistan was out of the Commonwealth. I think the point that I was making was that I'm not sure that Pakistan attached an enormous importance to getting back into the Commonwealth as soon as possible, although it was glad enough to be able to do so when the moment came. In my day, the sign on the gate posts outside the Embassy read "British Embassy". I understand that when the moment came for Pakistan to re-join the Commonwealth, somebody took the sign down and was just about to throw it away when they realised that on the other side of the sign it said "British High Commission, so they polished it up and turned it round and screwed it back in again, and no doubt when the same thing happened again in Pakistan (I think it had to leave the Commonwealth again; my memory is vague now), they probably just swivelled it around and saved a bob or two.

SM: Tell us about your impressions of Pakistan and the internal politics of Pakistan while you were there; this was during Zia's dictatorship.

AG: It was a thorough-going military dictatorship and he didn't hesitate to clamp down on opposition if necessary. He was gradually moving in the direction of the restoration of democracy and I can't now remember the particular steps that he took in that direction although during my time there was some kind of elected assembly with rather limited powers;

I made it my business to get to know some of its members. One always has to remember with Pakistan that it's a highly feudal society, there's a very thin layer of highly educated, sophisticated, politically aware number of families at the top (there's said to be 20 ruling families at the top of Pakistani society); the army plays a very important role (a very high proportion of the expenditure goes on the army), and the history of Pakistan since independence in 1947 has been the history of army intervention alternating with short periods of democracy. That was certainly true up until the moment I was there.

In the background, one was conscious of this thing called Islamic fundamentalism, but I don't think in my day anybody foresaw the extent to which fundamentalism would grow. Zia appeared to be a devoted Muslim and he was making moves in that direction, but I didn't get the sense that they were very determined.

The presence of the refugees, I've mentioned. Huge numbers in the North-West Frontier Province but also down in Karachi and they were a source of instability. Provincial politics were important and we did our best to keep up with what was going on, both in Lahore, where we didn't have a post and in Peshawar, up in the North-West Frontier and Baluchistan, although I never myself visited Quetta in Baluchistan.

On the external side, the big fact was the presence of the Russians next-door in Afghanistan. When I left Pakistan at the end of 1985, I didn't know anybody who would have predicted that Russia would leave Afghanistan within so short a period of time. I thought that in the fullness of time they would probably achieve their long-term objective of a warm-water port on the Indian Ocean; what we didn't know of course at the time was what was going on in Moscow and the price that the Russians were paying for their involvement in Afghanistan.

The Indian relationship, I've mentioned, was enormously important. There was always friction going on in the mountains in Kashmir, the presence of China (a friend of Pakistan) just across the border, up the Karakoram Highway was important and we used to have the occasional contacts with the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad. I don't think it would be useful to analyse the rest of Pakistan's foreign policy agenda at this point in time.

SM: So tell me; what was life like as a diplomat in Pakistan? Perhaps you'd first like to tell me about the issues between Britain and Pakistan, at the time.

AG: Trade was important; it was dealt with by the Economic Counsellor and the Ambassador. We had a limited aid programme, as well. The Pakistani opposition in the

form of Benazir Bhutto and others was active in London and that was a factor in our relationship with Zia's government. The Pakistani community in Britain was both an opportunity for Britain, particularly in the commercial side but also a potential source of trouble.

We had a number of visits during my time. Not Mrs Thatcher, who'd come just before I arrived, David Waddington, the Minister of State in the Home Office came out, Admiral Fieldhouse (who was at that stage Chief of Naval Staff and later Chief of Defence Staff), came and that was during my time as Chargé. I remember Zia inviting Admiral Fieldhouse and me to a dinner down in State House; I sat next to Zia on his right (the admiral was on the other side of the table) and to my dismay at the end of the meal before I realised what was happening, Zia had got up and was standing behind my chair to take it out so I could stand up. He was a very courteous man.

Princess Anne came out as well and she had an interesting and successful visit both to Islamabad and to Peshawar, where she visited I think, one of the refugee camps.

We always had to be alive to the possibility of trouble in Jerusalem or in Mecca, having implications for our own security. In 1981, the British Council Library in Rawalpindi had been burnt down, and I can't remember the connection between why that happened, but it was following some kind of incident, I think, in Mecca.

SM: What was life like as a diplomat living in Pakistan?

AG: Islamabad, itself is a new city, 20 miles or so from the old garrison town of Rawalpindi: large houses, spacious gardens, tree-lined avenues; a very pleasant place to live, on the threshold of the foothills of the Karakoram Mountains. So, wonderful walks up in the hill; old hill stations where one could go for weekends. It was a very nice attractive place to live.

We got to know some of the local people quite well. We were very lucky because an old school friend of mine had lived there; lives still in Pakistan. His father, General Shahid Hamid, had been a Military Secretary to General Auchinleck once-upon a-time and had become a junior minister in Ayub Khan's government and he introduced us to his family.

Veronica's cousin, or first cousin once removed to be precise, Molly Ellis, had been kidnapped as an 18-year-old girl by Afridi tribesman from Kohat in the tribal territory up near Afghanistan, and this had been a legendary event which had given rise to at least two

romantic films because Molly had been kidnapped, kept for nearly three weeks, walked all over the surrounding hillside, but eventually restored to her father. What the films didn't say was that her mother had been murdered, so when she, Molly, came to visit us, she was the subject of much attention by the local Pakistani press and we accompanied Molly, together with the family of one of the Pakistani political agents that had rescued her in 1923 or so; we accompanied her to her mother's grave at Kohat; a very moving moment.

I also met the Pakistani Chief of Naval Staff, a man called T. K. Khan, who I discovered had been a midshipman on secondment to my father's cruiser, HMS Newfoundland, in the 1950s when it was posted to the Indian Ocean. We used to have very happy family holidays in the north, as well as in India. I did a memorable trek up to the basecamp of Nanga Parbat with some of the immigration staff; we had picnics in the Margalla Hills, we went to the old fort at Rohat, up to the pine woods in Karor, and as I said, in those days there was no security threat. I'm fully conscious that nowadays it's impossible for members of the Embassy, members of the High Commission to have the kind of life that we enjoyed then. We were very lucky.

1986 –1989 Head of Personnel Policy Department

SM: So then, after Pakistan, you came back to London to take up a more senior position I think, is that right? It would have been a promotion.

AG: I was originally going to go to Malaysia as the Economic Counsellor, where I think I would have worked for David Gilmore, which would have been wonderful.

SM: Gilmore became the Permanent Under Secretary, didn't he?

AG: Yes, he did. In the event, we had personal reasons to come home, rather like after Paris. So, I asked to come back to London and I was a bit disappointed to be sent to the Administration rather than to a geographical department. I was appointed as Head of Personnel Policy Department in Matthew Parker Street, five minutes' walk or so away from the main Foreign Office. My room was on the top floor, the sixth floor, next door to the Gents and off a corridor which was treated as a smoking zone. The Chief Clerk, the Deputy Chief Clerk, the Chief Inspector, the Heads of Personnel Operations Department were all on the ground floor so I used to do a lot of trotting up and down the stairs to get to my office from the outside and from their offices.

PPD's responsibilities were manpower planning, establishments, equal opportunities, discipline, recruitment (the recruitment section was in a next-door building). Logically it would have probably been better for the department to have been part of Personnel Operations Department, but it would have made a very unwieldy department, so it made sense to divide the two and to give PPD the responsibility for the theoretical world of policy rather than the real world of people.

As far as the manpower planning work was concerned (without going into too much detail), one of the main subjects, which was a perennial matter for discussion, was the right balance between the 'E' stream (the so-called Executive stream, many of whom had come in either as school-leavers or increasingly as graduates, but not having passed the Fast-Stream entrance exam); the right balance between the 'E' stream and the 'A' stream (the fast-stream entrants).

It wasn't an easy matter to get that balance right; it had implications for the rates of promotion in each of the two streams and we were expected to do some so-called modelling work. I may say that I knew nothing about modelling and the clever thing to have done, looking back, would have been to find an expert 'modeller' from some outside organisation or firm to come in and give us some advice, but in those days that wasn't done and so we simply applied some common sense and tried to come up with the right answer.

There were some quite serious promotion blockages in the 'E' stream and I'm not sure that we were very successful in relieving those blockages. We also had to deal with the perennial problem of a very small number of officers (perhaps 1% of the total; less than 1%), who had, to use the jargon, 'run out of steam'. They were not performing as well as they should have performed, but it was very difficult to know what to do with them. They would be found jobs where they couldn't do much harm, but they didn't do much good either and we examined exhaustively a variety of different options for tackling this problem. We (or POD) could of course try to persuade them to retire voluntarily but why should they agree? We could retire them compulsorily on the grounds of limited efficiency, or even on structural grounds, but it was a laborious process to go through all the various hoops required for compulsory retirement. Somebody devised a scheme called 'up-and-out': you promoted somebody on the understanding that, at the end of the next job, at the higher level, he or she would then leave, which is a device used in the Ministry of Defence, I believe.

There was an option called 'cascade' whereby an officer would go as a senior-grade Ambassador, say, but at the end of four years, would, if he wanted another job, have to accept

one at a lower grade but that bristled with difficulty as well. So, in one way or another, the problem remained unresolved. Ironically, I myself retired a year early from Canada at the age of 59, instead of 60, having been asked to sign a contract before I went to Canada, saying that I would agree to go there for four years and not for the five years that would have taken me up to 60, so that was the device used ten years or so later by the administration for relieving some of the promotion blockages.

SM: Hoist with your own petard?

AG: I don't think that I was regarded as having 'run out of steam', but I was very much hoist with my own petard and I went quietly.

We used to have an annual negotiation with the Treasury on the numbers to be allowed in the senior grade and at the Counsellor level; the Treasury hoped to use this as a way of driving down numbers in the FCO. There was a perennial shortage of high quality officers available at the First Secretary level; every Head of Mission and every Head of Department around the world wanted a fast-stream, highly capable, policy-capable, grade '5' First Secretary and there were only a limited number of such people available. Ministers had a habit of asking for 'their' people who'd caught their eye, possibly because they'd been Private Secretary, to be given early promotion or to be appointed to some desirable post overseas, not realising of course that for every person that they saw at first hand, there were another half dozen whose work they didn't see directly, but who were also highly capable people.

We considered having a special open competition to attract people later in their careers and indeed you Syd, I think, came in on such a competition yourself?

SM: Well, it was the general open competition that I came in on; they just made an appointment at a higher level.

AG: Yes, and I think that was as a result of a particular change that was introduced largely as a result of Geoffrey Howe who was Secretary of State; he asked whether it wouldn't be possible to raise the age of entry to the fast-stream from twenty-something to fifty-something. I remember putting up a submission with POD which argued on the whole that it would create great difficulties if people came in at 50 because they wouldn't have time to learn enough about the job to be useful at a Head of Mission level. PPD saw some structural advantage in introducing people at a later age and so, having set out the arguments 'for' and 'against', we left the decision to Geoffrey Howe, who came down on the side of 'raising the

age' to 52. I met Geoffrey Howe years later at a local dinner and reminded him of this incident, but he had no memory of it at that stage.

SM: So, the structure was an issue. What was the other issue?

AG: Structure was an issue. 'Equal opportunities' was an issue, always. We needed to make sure that everybody had an equal opportunity at entry, but also for promotion and for jobs. The issue in those days (whatever it is now) was particularly as between men and women. That was largely a matter for POD, to make sure that they treated men and women equally and fairly, but we had to make sure that the theory, the policy was right. I remember going through diplomatic service regulations to take out all references to 'he' and to devise circumlocutions to avoid references to gender, which was usually possible, but sometimes grammatically rather awkward.

One particular aspect of course, was the ban, introduced I suppose when homosexuality was legalised in the '60s, the ban on employing gay people. There was a requirement for the Head of PPD every year, to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State himself, on whether the ban should be maintained or not, and I made such a recommendation, I suppose three or possibly four times and on each occasion I recommended that the ban should continue. The chief grounds, as far as I can remember was that a homosexual officer, a gay officer might be subject to blackmail in countries where the ban on homosexuality is still in existence (there were many such countries, then), but of course I must have glossed over the argument that you can only be blackmailed if your sexual preference is secret, and if you have admitted your preference, then you *can't* be blackmailed. However, in the cultural climate of Britain at the time, it seemed right to make the recommendation that I did, year after year, to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State of the day, each year agreed with the recommendation and so the ban was maintained. I don't look back on that with great pride and indeed I think my successor, David Walker, was absolutely right (looking back on it now) to have changed the recommendation and as a result of which, the policy was reversed..

Our work on establishments was quite simply that we were in charge of the jobs as opposed to the people, so that in Ghana for example, there was a senior grade Head of Mission, there was a Counsellor or maybe two, there were some First Secretaries, there were some Second Secretaries, there were some Personal Assistants, there were some visa officers and so on. And we were in charge of the 'slots' of the jobs (POD then had the job of filling the slots)

and that was a big job. It was run very well by a man called Peter Kemp, who was an extremely experienced officer and it was done partly with the help of 'inspectors' who travelled the world to give advice on what the establishment structure of each post should be and there was a team of 'home inspectors', too.

During my time in PPD, increasingly a new system was being developed, called the 'Top Management Round', whereby each post and department put in a recommendation each year for central consideration on what their establishment should be and whether they needed more or whether they could manage with fewer officers.

So you had more than one system being run side by side. I've set out separately, in my remarks on my time as AUSS for Africa, a scheme which I originally developed with colleagues in PPD and which subsequently I launched as a pilot scheme in the Africa Command as AUSS, for giving to geographical AUSs a degree of responsibility, delegated responsibility, for the manpower 'slots' (not the people, but the manpower 'slots') in each command. I won't go over that here now.

An important, but luckily not enormously time-consuming, at least for most of the time, part of the job was responsibility for conduct and discipline. From time to time, there were alleged disciplinary offences reported to the Department, which required review and, if necessary, some kind of action taken against the guilty. There was only one particularly time-consuming case and I won't go into the details, because it affects an individual, but on that occasion I found it necessary to come in and spend an entire Sunday, reading a personal file of the officer concerned.

My objective always was to make sure that we were in as full a possession of all the facts as possible about the person's career and his personality, whether there were any extenuating circumstances, before reaching any kind of a judgement. One needed to balance fairness to the individual with upholding the rules and, from time-to-time we would find that we were blown off course on other work because we suddenly had to divert our attention to a particular disciplinary case. Any serious case had to be dealt with by a formal disciplinary board, usually headed by the Head of PPD. Sometimes if there were a more senior case, it would be headed by somebody more senior than I was. I was allowed to deal with trivial cases e.g. somebody who might take a small travel allowance, a commuting allowance (which the rules allowed), but then they'd ride to work on a bicycle, so they'd save, you know, 100 quid, a year or so, which was naughty but not wicked.

It wasn't a pleasant part of my duties, but I thought it was enormously important and I used to fuss a good deal about the application of the rules to individual cases.

SM: What were the most serious offences that you had to deal with?

AG: I'd rather not go into it because it would identify individuals.

One other minor aspect of the work was to help with a little committee which was chaired for some reason by Nicholas Barrington who was the Under-Secretary for what were known as the 'Public Departments', which included Consular Department and others. Why he chaired it, I can't now remember. Anyhow the committee was called DOFFCO, which stood for Dissemination of Facts about the FCO and what it did was to find ways of persuading the outside world that we were not over-resourced, there weren't too many diplomats, that the budget wasn't excessive. From time to time there would be a newspaper article or a question in parliament about the alleged extravagance with which we conducted foreign policy on behalf of successive governments and the facts needed to be assembled to demonstrate that we were a small service, rather smaller for example, than the total numbers employed by the driving license authority in Swansea. The cost was minuscule compared to a tank or a hospital and the country could therefore very well afford a small highly trained, highly motivated, high quality diplomatic service. So we marshalled the facts and we provided them for use, as necessary.

I did a very small amount of travel. I went to Nigeria with Tim Eggar in his capacity as a Junior Minister in the Foreign Office responsible for migration matters and visa work. We were considering establishing a new visa regime for Nigeria, giving visas to Nigerians wanting to come to Britain and the Minister decided that he wanted to go out to see the visa work being done in Nigeria. I went with him. I also went to a Heads of Mission conference in the Caribbean, in Kingston, Jamaica, and then I went on to see the work of our High Commission in Barbados and the tiny post we had on the island of Saint Vincent (I think it was one UK-based officer); and that was helpful to me in doing establishment work back in PPD.

SM: Were there any particular people you worked with, that you recall?

AG: The people were the best part about the work. There was an extremely congenial and, I may say, rather high-powered group of people in the Administration. The Chief Clerk was first John Whitehead, a highly cerebral man who went on to be Ambassador to Japan and

then his place was taken by Mark Russell, equally able no doubt, but perhaps with a larger and warmer heart, who'd been Ambassador to Turkey. My immediate Under-Secretary was Christopher Long, an old friend from my days in the Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies, and then David Moss. The Finance Under-Secretary, whom I worked with too, on establishment matters was Roger Tomkys and then, in POD, there was David Logan, who I'd known since we were small boys together in Malta, and he finished as Ambassador to Turkey. Edward Clay, Robin Janvrin, who went on to be Private Secretary to the Queen, David Wright in Personnel Services Department, who went on to be Ambassador to Japan, Veronica Sutherland, Head of Security Department, who became Ambassador to Dublin and then Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth and then she was President of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge.

(And) in my own department, I was assisted by Bruce Dinwiddy and David Fall and then Tom Phillips, who went on to be Ambassador first to Israel and then to Saudi Arabia and Ann Grant who went on to be High Commissioner to South Africa.

So, we were a very happy bunch of people and it was one of the pleasures of working in the Administration. I have to admit that, having not looked forward to the experience of PPD, I ended up counting myself lucky to have served in the Administration. I might add that a short time after I started in PPD, it was suggested that I move to Southern European department, where a vacancy was expected to arise at short notice, as Head of Department, but in fact the vacancy didn't open up and so I didn't move, and looking back on it, I'm very content.

1989-1992 High Commissioner to Ghana

SM: Anthony, we'll move on to talk about your time as High Commissioner to Ghana from 1989 – 1992. Can you tell us first of all how you came to get the job?

AG: I was working as Head of Personnel Policy Department in London and my ultimate boss was the Chief Clerk, Mark Russell, and the time had come for me to look around for my next job. I thought it would be a good idea to get another string to my bow and I told Mark that I quite liked the idea of going to Eastern Europe and I knew that both Romania and Bulgaria were coming up. This was before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union. So I said that to Mark and he said: "No, no, Anthony, you don't want to go to Eastern Europe; nothing ever happens there. You'll find it much more interesting to go to West

Africa; that's a really interesting place". I imagine that he was short of candidates for West Africa. So, anyhow, I threw my hat in the ring and I was given the job of High Commissioner to Ghana and this quite tickled my fancy because my maternal grandfather had been the Governor of the Gold Coast from 1925 to 1932 or so. We were a little bit concerned that the Ghanaians might not welcome the grandson of a colonial governor back as High Commissioner, but ...

SM: What was his name, by the way?

AG: His name was Alexander Slater, Sir Alexander Ransford Slater. He'd been Governor of Sierra Leone and prior to that he'd been the Colonial Secretary in the Gold Coast during the First World War, so he went from Colonial Secretary, Gold Coast; Governor, Sierra Leone and then back to Governor of the Gold Coast before his last job which was the Governor of Jamaica from which he was invalided and retired early having suffered Blackwater fever, which no doubt he had contracted in the Gold Coast. So, we made enquiries and it transpired that the Ghanaian government saw no objection to this family connection and in fact, I think they were rather tickled by the association. When I got there I found that the name "Ransford" was a not uncommon name amongst Ghanaians of a certain generation and I began by wondering whether perhaps my grandfather wasn't quite as strait-laced as my grandmother always asserted, but then I realised that it was the habit to name a child after some well-known local personality; hence the popularity of the relatively unusual name of "Ransford".

I arrived in Accra in 1989 and by that time it was ten years since Jerry Rawlings, the President, had first seized power and it's worth just saying a word about the historical background: Ghana had been given its independence in 1957; Nkrumah was the first president. During the 70s, a succession of military coups by generals in the Ghanaian army had delivered extremely bad government. The economy had declined dramatically; latterly, the situation had been made worse by the sudden arrival of a million or so Ghanaians who'd been chucked out of Nigeria along the coast and the standard of living of the average Ghanaian had deteriorated dramatically.

Rawlings came in as a young flight-lieutenant to clean the place up, as he saw it, in 1979. But he almost immediately, having executed three of the military dictators on the beach

below Accra, he almost immediately returned the country to democratic rule for a short period. But corruption continued, economic mismanagement continued and he decided to return. That was referred to as the “second coming”. His “second coming was on the 31st of December 1981 and this time he announced his intention to “come in and do a proper job” and ensure that the economy recovered and that in due course some sort of democratic government, sustainable government was put in place. Part of the economic recovery programme involved a negotiation with the international financial institutions in Washington. I knew the three men who had conducted those negotiations: Kwesi Botchwey, a very impressive minister of Finance, Joe Abbey, a professional economist who had also been High Commissioner to London, and Tsatsu Tsikata (who was a cousin of the strongman of the regime, Captain Tsikata) who was head of the Ghanaian Oil Company. These three had gone off to Washington to do their negotiations; dressed in their Ghanaian robes they must have made a colourful impression on the hard men of the World Bank and the IMF.

Part of the economic recovery programme which the Ghanaians insisted on was a programme which rejoiced in the name of PAMSCAD. PAMSCAD stood for the Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Consequences of Adjustment. The theory was that adjustment, that is to say, currency reform, divestiture of parastatal companies, cuts in public expenditure including a reduction in the Civil Service - all that was going to be a very painful process for the Ghanaian people and so what was needed was some kind of fund in order to mitigate, to reduce the pain for the average, the poorest Ghanaians and so the PAMSCAD programme was born and I’ve often thought that other nations too need a PAMSCAD programme when there’s a period of austerity, made necessary, including e.g. Britain and e.g. Greece.

The most important part of the work of a High Commission was to support the Ghanaian economic recovery programme through our own aid programme. We had a full-time Aid Officer from the ODA, a First Secretary who was in charge of the programme. We also had what was called a “good government programme” and looking back on it, I think that whoever invented the term “good government” had much to be proud of. The phrase originated in a speech made by Douglas Hurd as Foreign Secretary in, I think, 1981 to the Overseas Development Institute and he pointed out that it was very important to ensure that as the price, if you like, of an aid programme, the quality of government in the country concerned was improved. So, you needed freedom of association; you needed rule of law; you needed proper attention paid to the private sector. Countries which tend towards

pluralism, public accountability, respect for the rule of law, human rights, market principles should be encouraged. Governments which persist with repressive policies, corrupt management, waste and discredited economic systems, should not expect us to support their folly with scarce aid resources which could be used better elsewhere. And that was a very important plank in our policies towards Africa and increasingly we and other Western donors were linking our aid to better quality government.

Another important part of our work was helping British businessmen - the commercial work of the High Commission and I'll have some more to say about one particular contract in a minute. A further important part was visa work. Britain had found it necessary to start a visa regime for both Ghana and Nigeria and other West African countries, but we hadn't made adequate provision for processing the visa applicants and when I arrived there were long queues standing out in the rain and the heat, waiting for their turn to be interviewed for visas. Luckily, we were able to get agreement very early on to the construction of a proper waiting area and this made a big difference to the reputation of Britain in Accra and I was lucky to have benefitted from this although the plans had been started before I arrived. The British Council were active. They had a good library and they did a lot of very useful work in both Accra and Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti region further north and we supported their work and we also had a British military advisory training team of four British officers who were busy training the Ghanaian army. And my son Nicholas, aged 18 at the time, who spent part of his gap year in Accra with us, taught them dinghy sailing - taught some of the Ghanaian army dinghy sailing in the bay at Tema. There was also a police adviser and I remember that when I saw Jerry Rawlings, he was particularly warm in his references to both the British military advisory training team and the police adviser.

SM: I wonder if you'd go on to talk a little bit more about Rawlings in detail.

AG: I realised as soon as I got there that the key to trying to ensure that the economic recovery programme was continued and that Ghana eventually returned to democracy, was Rawlings himself. And I studied him as far as I could, from all angles. I didn't actually get to call on him until July; I'd been there nearly eight or nine months. My predecessor, Arthur Wyatt, had found it much easier in Rawlings' very early days as President to get access and they used to have long, tête-à-tête conversations but things had changed when I arrived and he was increasingly difficult to get access to, for diplomats.

SM: Can I ask, did the fact that you had arrived sometime the previous year; did the fact that you couldn't get to him till July 1990, mean that you couldn't present your credentials or did you ever have any practical difficulties that arose from that?

AG: No, I arrived in October 89 and I was able to present my credentials. I think it must have been to the Vice President and I can't now remember and I had perfectly ready access to all the main departmental ministers and to the members of the Provisional National Defence Council (the PNDC) which was a kind of super cabinet so I had no practical difficulty on that score.

I had met or seen or heard Rawlings casually because I used to try to see where he was going in the country and appear in the audience wherever he went, so I had actually shaken his hand but I didn't have a proper meeting with him until July. Heads of Mission used to wait in a kind of queue when they arrived and eventually he would see a batch of us together. My turn came in July; on the 6th of July (I remember the date because it's my wife's birthday) and each of us had expected to get twenty minutes with him. My meeting lasted more like an hour and a half and it fell into three parts, really. He began by asking me my impressions. We sat together on a couch in an upper room in Christiansborg castle, where my grandfather had once lived and there were a number of advisers present; there must have been about half a dozen people, all of whom I'd got to know by that stage and he sat, turned away from me, looking at me over his right shoulder and he asked me my impressions and I spent quite a lot of time telling him my impressions of Ghana and trying to work in the main points that I wanted to make about the importance of the economic recovery programme and his own democratisation programme.

He'd begun with a programme of district elections and I referred to those and I referred to the pain being suffered by the average Ghanaian because of the austerity programme. I also made a reference to the importance of the rule of law and freedom of speech and it was those two references which suddenly triggered a very emotional outburst from him. To the freedom of speech he recalled a very unpleasant book which had recently been published alleging his misbehaviour with, I think, a German woman and he ...

SM: You were talking about your first impressions meeting with Rawlings.

AG: Yes. The second stage of the meeting was when he started to talk and spoke in very strong terms about freedom of speech; what he saw was an abuse of freedom of speech in a book that had recently been published about him. And then he spoke about the rule of law and he referred to a young child of six who had been beaten by the child's stepmother and he said the law courts didn't give this child protection and I said something to the effect that perhaps the law courts needed some reform because that was their job, to protect individuals against abuse of that kind and I remember him saying "Well, if the law courts won't do it, I *will*". And he spoke with great passion; his upper lip quivered and I almost began to feel that I was about to be thrown out of the room, but then we moved into the third stage of the discussion, when we started talking about the bilateral relationship between Britain and Ghana.

So, we moved into the third part of the discussion, which was calmer. We talked mainly about the bilateral relationship. By this time he had turned towards me and we were sitting really very close together on the couch and from time to time he would pat me on the knee and we would sort of gaze impressively into each other's eyes, as each of us made our various points. And at one point he said to his advisers: "He's an Englishman; give him a cup of tea" and it was at this point the advisers realised that they were in for a much longer meeting than they had bargained for. He made some very warm references to the British aid programme and as I said earlier, particularly the value of the British military advisory training team and the police adviser and right at the end, his final words were, almost his final words were that "yes" he did recognise the importance of the private sector and "yes", he did want to find some way of restoring the right kind of democracy to Ghana. He asked me whether I had any other questions and I said yes, one other which was "Could we meet again?" And he said "Yes, yes, we must do that" but it never happened.

But it never happened until the time for my farewell came and then I had another meeting with him which I remember less clearly and which probably concentrated on many of the same subjects, particularly the bilateral relationship and it was a much shorter meeting.

SM: One thing that always struck me as rather curious about Rawlings was that somebody with the very lowly rank of flight-lieutenant should become ... should assume power when

presumably there must have been much senior military figures around and secondly that he never seemed to seek to upgrade his rank.

AG: I think those are two very interesting questions and I'm not sure that I know the answer. Part of the answer to the first is that he saw his role as coming in to clean up the excesses of his superior officers, hence his execution of the three generals on the beach below him, below Accra. As to him not promoting himself, he wasn't interested in rank; and I'll come in a minute to what I regard is to the key to his personality. But first I'd like to say a word about my subsequent relationship with him after July 1990. I tried to see him again. I failed, although I passed up one rather fascinating opportunity when my mother came out. She had had her 21st birthday in Christiansborg castle and she arrived in time for her 80th birthday party in the Residence. I asked the Chief of State Protocol, who worked as a kind of Private Secretary for Rawlings, whether it would be possible for my mother to visit the castle again. He consulted Rawlings and said yes, by all means and we had a tour of the castle; both my mother and her younger sister, my aunt, and the day before they were due to leave Accra, I got a message from Alan Cato, the Chief of State Protocol, inviting my mother, my aunt, my wife and myself to tea; to meet the president and sadly the date on which we were invited was after their departure and we couldn't change the flight so, that was a great disappointment.

I asked myself why access was so difficult and I think part of the answer was in a mistake I made. When I arrived I did, in accordance with diplomatic custom, make the rounds of my diplomatic colleagues and I tried to see them all (there were twenty or so), including some of the Eastern Europeans - this was before the fall of the Berlin Wall. And one would have a discussion about the situation, the politics, the economics, Rawlings and so on. I heard from a Ghanaian civil service friend (and I can't remember the dates, exactly) that one of the ambassadors - I think it must have been an Eastern European - had gone around saying that I had questioned Rawlings's economic competence. I can't remember what I said; it may very well have been to ask, to raise the question of how much understanding of economics Rawlings had. My own view was that he probably had about as much as I did, but that was another matter.

At any rate, the Ghanaian civil servant friend of mine thought that this was an attempt by the Eastern Europeans to pour poison into Rawlings's ear and the ears of Rawlings's advisers. Whether that was behind my failure to get closer to Rawlings, I don't know; he was pretty

inaccessible to diplomats at the best of times. He was a busy man; he was subject to enormous pressures and in a way, the proof of the pudding was in the eating because, during my time there, he and the PNDC were moving cautiously towards putting in place institutions which would eventually lead to elections, both to an assembly and presidential elections. Those elections took place after I left and Rawlings successfully stood in the presidential elections and won under a new constitution. Those elections were judged to be reasonably free and fair by international observers and he won for a second time five years later, I suppose; maybe four years later and then he stood a final time, but was defeated and this represented an acceptance by him of the will of the people. So Rawlings's acceptance of electoral defeat gave a powerful impetus to the programme of democratisation in Africa.

SM: Tell us about your impressions of Rawlings as a leader and as a personality

AG: His mother was an Ewe woman, from the south-east corner of Ghana, near the Togo border; his father was said to be a Scottish businessman. There were various stories about his attempt later to visit his father in Scotland and the stories had something in common; he was said to have called at the house of the man who he believed his father to be; to have been answered at the door by a man who said that Rawlings was out and Rawlings later realised that actually this had been his father, who hadn't wanted to meet him. That must have been a searing experience for him.

When he came to power as a young man in '79, he was regarded by the international community as a kind of Marxist revolutionary; his friends were Gaddafi in Libya, Mengistu in Ethiopia, the Cuban government. I could see no signs of ideology in his outlook on life. I don't believe he was a Marxist; I don't believe he was motivated by Marxist ideals; he was intensely patriotic; he had a deep and genuine sympathy for the poor and the dispossessed; he was suspicious of the rich West and by extension, of the private sector; he was suspicious of foreigners but he was willing to recognise that some of them had a valuable contribution to make to the recovery of Ghana.

In private, he was curiously inarticulate and that is the way I found him when I called on him in July 90 and he himself said on that occasion that he sometimes had difficulty in expressing himself, but put him in front of a crowd and he would talk for hours; if not in an articulate fashion, in a way that was readily understood by the Ghanaian crowds. He had a wonderful

phrase which was current when I was there “When the going gets tough, the tough get going” and he would use that kind of phraseology in his speeches which tended to be extremely long. I think above all, he was a pragmatist. He was genuinely distressed and shocked by the state to which Ghana had fallen in 1979; he was appalled by the corruption he saw and he was determined to do something about it and I think myself that history will be much kinder to him than some of the opposition, the political opposition, he faced at the time.

Because of the difficulty of further meetings with Rawlings himself, I used to explore other opportunities and I got to know quite a wide cross section of people including people who were relatively close to him and I was fairly well satisfied that what I said to them would get back to his own ears.

On one occasion I recall taking part in some kind of development meeting/ seminar of one or two of the key Western donors. I'd been given a name badge when I entered the hall and it said “Anthony Goodenough” and underneath it said “Ghana”, so when my turn came to speak, I showed this badge to the audience and said how proud I was that I had been described as representing Ghana and then I went on to give my usual spiel about the importance of economic recovery and good government and so on. I got direct confirmation within twenty-four hours that what I had said had been reported to Rawlings and that he'd liked my reference to my pride in having the word “Ghana” attached to my name tag. So that was an illustration of how whatever I said was being reported back to him.

I referred to the Kotoka airport. When I arrived, the airport was a rather sleepy, run-down building, usually full of happy Ghanaians either about to fly out or meeting their relatives flying in. There wasn't much division between airside and landside so there was no security. The control tower was a pretty primitive affair and as part of the economic recovery programme and the investment in new infrastructure there was a contract to resurface the airstrip and to overhaul the control tower and the consortium known as Taylor Woodrow, known as Taysec in Ghana, and Plessey were fighting for this contract which was going to be supported by some of the British aid component. The main opposition came from a similar French consortium; the French ambassador and I got on very well (I liked him a lot), but we used to eye each other askance at our regular European meetings knowing that each of us were pulling every trick in the book to try to win this contract. I spent a lot of time trying to

identify the key figures in the Ghanaian government administration who were going to be involved in this decision.

It seemed clear to me that Kwesi Botchwey, the finance minister was a key figure and so it proved because one happy day he rang up to say “Anthony, you’ve won!” and Britain had indeed won this contract. The next day I met the Frenchman who had a very long face indeed and it transpired later that we had each been negotiating with different parts of the Ghanaian “machine” and I suspect that the two parts we were negotiating with didn’t actually know what the other one was doing and it illustrated the nature of the Ghanaian administration.

One of the ways in which I had identified the key figures in the Ghanaian decision-making machinery was by talking to a Ghanaian friend and it seemed to me that it was extremely useful wherever one was to have one or two local people that one knew well; one trusted who without betraying the interests of their own country or people could nevertheless give one advice on local ways and local methods and I’d been lucky enough to have been given an introduction to somebody well informed about the Ghanaian administration by a cousin of mine in Britain, who had worked with him in the past. I remember asking him who I should be talking to on this subject of the airport and he gave me some key advice which I would not have thought of by myself. And I found later in Canada, the need for a similar sort of person to give one local advice on a local situation.

SM: Did you get around the country much?

AG: As much as possible and probably more than most diplomats: one used to go and see the local administration; one saw the district Assembly representatives and I used to make a point of calling on the tribal chiefs. Two memories in particular: one of the Asantehene, the king (chief) of the Ashanti, if you like, with whose predecessor of course Britain had fought the Ashanti wars and the first time I called on him was some time after I’d arrived because he’d been away in London (he had a house near Harrods); so I went to call on him in a formal way. We each had our own linguist for the formal purposes of the call and there needed to be another linguist between the two linguists in order to preserve the local protocol. So, he would say “Welcome” in the local language; his linguist would say “Welcome” to the middle linguist and then the middle linguist would pass it to my linguist (who was the British Council representative) and she would say “Welcome”. And I would say “Thank you very

much for receiving me” and so it went and this went on for about ten minutes, at the end of which the Otumfuo, His Majesty, said: “Well now. I think that completes the formalities; let’s talk English now”.

The other occasion I remember which was in its way more moving was calling on an elderly chief in the north of Ghana called the Sandema Na who was eighty. He was blind, he’d suffered from River Blindness and I was ushered into an upstairs room into which a warm wind was blowing from the surrounding rather arid countryside and he greeted me. We had an interpreter (a genuine interpreter this time) present and he recalled having attended the coronation in 1953 and he said how delighted he’d been to see, washing themselves in the puddles in the Mall, birds with which he was familiar from northern Ghana. And this was before he was blinded but it obviously lived in his mind’s eye ever since; and we talked about those times and we talked about Britain and Ghana and it was a delightful and very moving memory.

One always had an exchange of gifts and I would often be given a wooden stool or a Ghanaian cloak and my usual present in return was a bottle of Black Label which used to go down particularly well. Many Ghanaians used to drink it mixed with Campari (not to everybody’s taste). On one occasion, I was given a live turkey which presented me with a bit of a problem because I wasn’t sure that I was going to be able to get it back to Accra and what I was going to do with it when I arrived but the local District Officer solved my dilemma by suggesting that I give it to a health clinic, which is the next visit that I made after calling on the man that had given me the turkey.

During the provincial touring we were shown local schools; sometimes they were without roofs, but the children sat on the floor under a broken roof learning what they could and we seemed to visit an extraordinary number of things called KVIPs which stood for the Kumasi Ventilated Improved Privy. On one occasion we were shown proudly a twelve-seater; I was careful to stay upwind! The purpose of course, of the chiefs and others receiving me so warmly was to try to improve the chances of them getting some aid project for the district; a well or a better road or a health clinic. And on one occasion, I remember that I arrived somewhere to find myself being created a “development chief” which meant that I returned to Accra with a rather uneasy feeling that I was going to find it difficult to live up to my name of “Development Chief”.

Diplomats in Accra spent a certain amount of time talking to each other including coordinating aid programmes. There used to be a regular weekly meeting of the Heads of Mission of European Union countries and these were useful in their way. On one occasion though, I don't know how useful it was, but it was fun, the Dutch Ambassador suggested that, as an act of community solidarity if you please, we should travel together by rail from Takoradi, a port down in the southwest corner of Ghana to Kumasi in the centre. The train was due to leave at 6am; it didn't actually leave until nearer 9am and we spent the day proceeding at a stately thirty or forty miles in a private coach laid on by the Ghana Railway Corporation up to Kumasi which follows the line of the gold fields from Kumasi down to the coast and we passed derelict mine buildings. The forest stretched interminably and Their Excellencies in the carriage amused themselves as best they could. One of them was playing chess, with himself; another one (a Dane) was reading "Martin Chuzzlewit" in the original. Now we each arrived with a huge picnic box because we felt that we would want to share our meal with our colleagues so we ended up with six times more food than we actually needed; my Italian colleague who was a delightful man but whose English wasn't always easy to understand, provided a delicious cake which proved even more delicious than it looked and I remember we lavished him with effusive thanks, perhaps as a way of making up for the fact that we couldn't understand what he was saying.

During my two and a quarter years in Ghana, I made one trip by road circumnavigating Ghana, so through Togo, Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, up to the Dogon Valley and then down through Ivory Coast via Yamoussoukro, the capital and back into Ghana.

The most vivid memory I have of that tour which took us of course through mainly francophone countries, was of a crossing on the border between Burkina Faso and Mali and we chose a little-used road and when we came to the border we found a custom post with a single policeman sitting under a tree with a small corrugated iron hut. We introduced ourselves (there were six of us in the party) and asked permission to enter the country and he said – this was the day after, I should say that we had heard by radio of Mrs Thatcher's resignation and fall and the policeman at the border crossing said to us "Ah, vous êtes Britanniques. Dites-moi, pourquoi la dame de fer est qu'elle a démissionné?" And I thought that this was interesting; that this man in a rather remote corner of West Africa was

absolutely bang-up-to-date and was moreover, fascinated by what was happening in London and fascinated in particular by the fortunes of Mrs Thatcher.

During my time in Accra the Liberian civil war was in course and some terrible atrocities were taking place. In the end the Ghanaians decided, with many of their West African neighbours, including in particular Nigeria, to intervene in Liberia to try to maintain peace. The organisation was called ECOMOG. The first commanding officer of this military force was Arnold Quainoo who was one of the nine members of the PNDC in Ghana and I always remember two things about him: he suddenly turned up at the High Commission one day (fairly unusual for a member of the government to call on a High Commissioner but it illustrated the fairly easy access we enjoyed to everybody excepting Rawlings and he wanted to talk about Liberia. And secondly, I went to call on him shortly before I left, to say goodbye and he gave me a small wooden animal carving and he said “High Commissioner, I want you to keep that on your desk, wherever your desk is, forever to remind you of me” and I thought that was very touching ... I still have it on my desk but it’s lost its ears.

I was moved at short notice from Accra. I had expected to spend at least three years in Ghana and had hoped to do so because it would have been interesting, apart from anything else, to be there in time for the presidential and national elections, but one day, early in 1992, I got a message that I’d been appointed Under-Secretary for Africa in London and that I was needed back in London in three weeks’ time. The reason for this sudden departure was strangely enough the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union. It had become necessary to find an ambassador at short notice to the Ukraine. Simon Hemans, the Under-Secretary for Africa, spoke Russian and was selected for this job and that meant filling the vacancy of *his* job and Personnel Department looked around to find somebody who they could put in at short notice in his place and I was the person selected.

So, we moved at very short notice from Accra. We left from the airport, actually to go down to South Africa in order to begin to learn about the rest of my new area of responsibility and I remember being rather surprised that the Russian Ambassador had come to see me off. It wouldn’t have been surprising to find one’s European Union colleagues there and indeed I expect they did go, but for the Russian Ambassador, of course, it was a new departure and this followed the collapse of the Soviet Union and much improved relations between Russia

and Britain and a much more friendly environment in which to get to know local Russian diplomats.

SM: Anthony, so is there anything else in your time in Ghana that you think's worth recalling?

AG: I think there's one other incident. In many ways, dealing with the Ghanaians was a delight. Individually they were enormously friendly and welcoming and I enjoyed my encounters with most of my official interlocutors.

There was one exception. I got instructions one day just before, I suppose, the first Iraq war to lobby the Ghanaians for their support perhaps in the UN, perhaps in dealings with Saddam Hussein (I don't recall the precise details), but I asked to see the Foreign Secretary Obed Asamoah who I'd never found a particularly easy person to deal with although he was always correct and always willing to see me if I asked to see him. So, I said my piece on Iraq and I probably pitched it pretty strongly; perhaps too strongly because after I'd spoken, he got up from the chair he was sitting in, went over to his desk and made it clear that the interview was at an end. In effect, I was thrown out of his office, which was a fairly discomfiting experience at the time and it took time to get back on terms with him. I did it by asking to see him to (quote) "review the bilateral relationship" and I went down with a list as long as your arm of all the various ways in which Britain was actually helping the Ghanaian government and the Ghanaian economy and people: our aid programme, military assistance, police training, British Council (you name it; we did it) and at the end of it he said: "I had no idea you were doing so much". So, out of bad came good and perhaps I don't actually regret having spoken perhaps a bit more strongly than I had intended to do so at the time.

AUSS, Africa, 1992-95

SM: So Anthony, now we move on to your job as AUSS, Africa from 1992 to 1995; can you tell us a bit about the appointment and what the job involved.

AG: Yes, this was my third African incarnation. The first was as a Private Secretary in the seventies, and then High Commissioner to Ghana and then from that straight back to London at short notice to take Simon Hemans's place. There were two levels above department in

those days. There was something called an Assistant Under-Secretary of State (and that was me doing Africa) where incidentally twenty years earlier there'd been two if not three AUSSs and above me there was a DUSS (Deputy Under-Secretary of State) who dealt with Africa and the Middle East and I'll come back to the DUSSs in a minute.

The purpose of the job was to advise ministers on policy towards sub-Saharan Africa (so we're not talking about the North African states); it included however the Indian Ocean countries of Seychelles, Madagascar and Mauritius and the Commonwealth as a body, in particular responsibility for preparations etc for the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting which happened every second year and that was a crucifixion if ever there were one and I'll talk about that separately.

I had working for me two departments: African Department Equatorial and African Department Southern. There used to be three if not four; there was a West African Department, an East African Department, a Southern African Department and a Rhodesian Department once upon a time. And of course each department appeared in a different place in the office telephone directory and I remember enjoying a small "coup": when we reduced departments from three to two, we called one "Africa Department Equatorial" and the other "Africa Department Southern" ; both beginning with "A" and they thus appeared together in the office directory and they appeared as the first and second departments in the whole office and I remember reporting this to the PUS's morning meeting and this was greeted with some merriment and by the PUS who described it as a "coup d'état".

At any rate there were two departments and they were headed by powerful counsellors: Robin Christopher in the south, Tom Harris in the north. Commonwealth Co-ordination Department was, as I say, dealt with separately under David Broad. There were twenty-five missions, Ambassadors and High Commissioners in sub-Saharan Africa in forty-three countries and some of them, of course, were accredited to more than one country. In my case, when I was in Ghana, I was also accredited to Togo, next door. And so we worked on policy and we had responsibility to an extent for the management of financial and manpower resources available for the work, and again I'll come on to an interesting development in management, later.

So, our responsibilities were as the final source of policy advice to ministers on Africa and the Commonwealth. We paid particular attention to the obvious priorities of South Africa,

Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Angola, Mozambique, and the Horn including Ethiopia. We had representational duties with contacts in the business/ academic/ diplomatic world in London and the media and we tried to form some objectives against which our performance could be measured and objectives which would guide us in that work.

As far as the ministerial and official hierarchy were concerned, the Prime Minister himself had little time for Africa, not surprisingly; John Major was the Prime Minister throughout my time as AUSS. Very occasionally a senior African Head of Government would be wheeled in to see him. I must say he used to give me the impression of being rather relieved for time out of his rather more disagreeable experiences of managing the rest of Government and his conflicts with the people he called “the bastards” in the Tory party. I remember accompanying him when Mandela came in to see John Major, Rawlings, a Nigerian or two; possibly more in Kenya. That kind of level would have been received by the Prime Minister and I would go to Number 10, probably to be the only official adviser present apart from a Private Secretary, once or twice or three times a year; that kind of thing.

The Foreign Secretary, who was first of all Douglas Hurd, and then Malcolm Rifkind, again they did not have very much time to devote to Africa. They were wrestling with European matters, wrestling with the appalling events in the Balkans, China, you name it they had more than enough to do without bothering about Africa. The exceptions were probably South Africa above all, Nigeria and Kenya and then, if something horrible happened, Rwanda (of which, more later).

There was a minister for the ODA; a Minister for Overseas Development, Lynda Chalker who combined that responsibility for development with Minister for Africa and this was unusual I think in post-war governments; normally there would have been a Minister for Overseas Development, as well as, separately, a junior Minister in the diplomatic wing of the Foreign Office who would have been given responsibility for Africa; as it had been in the seventies when I was a private secretary to Lord Lothian and Lady Tweedsmuir.

There were pros and cons to the arrangement of having a single minister for development and Africa. The pros were unity of policy; there was little risk arising of a serious conflict between the officials in the Overseas Development Administration and in the diplomatic

wing. We worked to a single minister and any differences that arose could be ironed out at that level. And because of the importance of aid in Africa, I think it was a very sensible and logical arrangement to brigade the two responsibilities together at ministerial level.

There were however one or two disadvantages. One was that there just wasn't enough ministerial time available to give to the whole of Africa, to the extent it probably warranted, and Lynda Chalker inevitably and rightly devoted most of her attention to those countries in Africa with a big aid programme and she had less time for example to devote to the francophone countries where the aid programme was smaller. And the consequence of this was that I used to find, as an under-Secretary, that I was being given more responsibility, particularly in some countries, than I would otherwise have had if there'd been ministerial time available and that of course made my job more interesting. There were occasionally times when it would have been good to have had a political input at ministerial level, different to the departmental one, but I can't think of any serious specific instances where there was a significant problem.

SM: Was Lynda Chalker the Minister in charge during your whole time as AUSS to Africa?

AG: Yes. Yes she was and she was a formidable Minister. She knew the subject well. She'd had enormous ministerial responsibility: I think I'm right in saying that she was one of the very few ministers who held ministerial rank throughout the time of the Conservative administration under Mrs Thatcher and John Major. So she had a very wide experience; she knew Africa pretty well and she had developed good relations with senior Africans across the continent. And that was certainly true of Rawlings, Moi, Malawi, Zambia and most of the rest and the South African government; both the pre-majority rule government and Mandela's government. She was a very valuable resource (she used *that* term) but I mean a very valuable person if one wanted to get across a serious message at high level which a High Commissioner or Ambassador might be having difficulty getting across. She would visit; she would expect to see the Head of State and they would listen to her because they respected and they liked her; she had an extremely good manner with senior Africans and they warmed to her. And she was a good minister to deal with; she knew her own mind, and I enjoyed working with her and for her, very much. I didn't always travel with her because that could often best be done by the head of the relevant department and I felt that my time was better

used in visiting the parts where she didn't always have time to get to or get to as much as she might have wanted to.

The Deputy Secretaries in my time, were first of all Mark Elliott, who was an old friend from Oxford and then David Wright who I knew well from our days together in the administration; they mostly left me and the rest of the officials (the Departments for Africa) to get on with it, under the minister. They would help and support when necessary. On South Africa they *did* get involved and David Wright went with John Major to South Africa after the elections in '94 and it was right and proper that he did so because he had that much wider experience, but as I say, on the whole we were left to get on with it. And they focused most of their time on other duties.

So, just taking stock, of the resources available for our foreign policy in Africa, and I think perhaps it's worth just standing back at this stage to say, to reinforce the point that Africa occupied a pretty low priority in British foreign policy at the time and quite rightly so; with the exception mainly of South Africa, British interests and objectives and policies lay elsewhere. So, just to itemise the resources we had:

- There were three departments: Two African departments and the Commonwealth department
- 54 staff
- There were 25 missions with 250 staff
- There were running costs of £30 million or so
- Programme expenditure of one kind and another of another £15 million

And then *we* and *I*, in particular, had input into how money spent on overseas estates, IT, transport were allocated; there was £9 million of that. I had an input into British Council policy on Africa; I had a big input into how the aid money of £300 million or so was spent and there was also the BBC African Service of £3 million and I think I was consulted occasionally on that. So much for resources very briefly ...

When I arrived I suppose what I might have done was to ask the Heads of department to tell me what they saw as British interests in Africa, but one joins a moving train and I don't think that I ever did that and it was only as time went by and to a certain extent with the benefit of hindsight that I came to try to formulate in my mind what British interests in Africa actually were. And now fifteen and more years, twenty years on, I can't be sure to what extent I

recognised those interests at the time and to what extent I'm speaking only with the benefit of hindsight; but here goes ...

SM: What were the British interests in Africa in the period 1992 to 1995?

AG: There were fifteen or so Commonwealth countries and these were going to be re-joined by South Africa, which had left and was going to join again; they were going to be joined by Cameroon and Mozambique in '95; much later they were going to be joined by Rwanda.

And this was, to use Douglas Hurd's rather graphic and I think accurate phrase: "This was the hand that History had dealt Britain" and to some extent I felt at the time and still feel that this was a kind of moral responsibility. We wanted to be able to help, avoid the cost of rescuing collapsed countries.

I'm thinking of Somalia; I'm thinking of the risk of major problems arising in South Africa if majority rule hadn't worked. I'm thinking of other countries with which we had a close connection and if they had really gone down the plug-hole then I think we would have found ourselves having to find the resources to try to rescue *them*. And I think today, speaking in 2016, today's migration problems and the threat of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, help to illustrate some of the consequences which we were trying to avoid. At the time, there was no question of a serious flood of migrants coming from West Africa, coming across the Mediterranean into southern Europe. But at the extreme, if Africa itself (and we helping Africa) had been more successful in setting up stable prosperous, self-sustaining countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the threat of migration that we're seeing today would have been reduced. So, we had an interest to spend in order to save. And as a subsidiary of that point, we also had in mind the interest of avoiding the knock-on consequences. Take Zaire; there are nine other African countries on the borders of Zaire. If Zaire were to collapse and indeed it *did* collapse, the consequences for some of those countries were going to be pretty serious; same goes for Nigeria and Ethiopia. Ethiopia, had it disintegrated, would have destabilised the whole of the Horn of Africa. So there seemed to me to be a pretty clear British interest in spreading prosperity, spreading stability through the means of good government and democracy to avoid these knock-on effects.

We had a general interest in promoting democracy and good government, both because we thought that this policy would strengthen stability in the countries concerned, but also

indirectly in the rest of Africa. If you like, failure in one country would reduce the credibility of those countries, those policies elsewhere.

A separate and distinct but related interest was our humanitarian responsibility. Now, you remember the famine in Ethiopia, which was brought to international attention by Bob Geldof and it was quite clear that the country as a whole felt a moral responsibility to provide humanitarian relief. There was a British commercial interest in Africa but it was *very* small compared to British commercial interests elsewhere. I would guess that British trade with, I don't know, Ireland, France, dwarfed the whole of our trade to sub-Saharan Africa. So it was only a small proportion of total British exports and overseas investment, but of course it mattered to the individual companies concerned. And there were some very big hitters amongst them and I'm thinking of BP which was trying to identify (they call them "elephants") major oil wells of more than a billion barrels, in Angola. RTZ (Rio Tinto Zinc) in Madagascar; they wanted the agreement of the Malagasy government to open a mine for ilmenite in southern Madagascar; ilmenite being the stuff you need to make white paint, for example.

RTZ had big interests in South Africa and there were plenty of other well-known household-name companies like Shell and Unilever and BAT, DeBeers (diamonds), Land Rover, Guinness, Taylor Woodrow, Plessey, Barclays, Standard Chartered Bank, and so on. So, back in London there were any number of businessmen who were keeping in touch with the African departments concerned and with me personally about their interests in those countries.

And then there were British citizens resident in Africa; long-term British citizens in Africa especially Eastern Africa because of the colonial history; especially South Africa; a very large community of British citizens there and even countries like Malawi and Zambia had I think eight thousand/ twelve thousand British citizens resident there so they constituted a British interest in Africa and their professional, commercial as well as personal interests needed defending.

There were also some British tourists; not vast numbers, but there were 27,000 in Mauritius in 1992. There was also the question of course of African immigration to Britain, both from West Africa for which we had set up our visa regimes in Nigeria and Ghana and there were

also Asians from East Africa, particularly after Amin had slung out the Ugandan Asians in 1972. So, there was a British interest.

There were some defence interests; not enormous but significant. Places like Ghana and South Africa and Seychelles provided ports-of-call for ship visits; I remember a couple of ship visits to Ghana when I was High Commissioner there. Aircraft staging: planes on their way from Britain to the Falkland Islands in 1981/ 2 had been given landing rights in Senegal, which were essential to their operation.

SM: Did that serve us at all during the Falkland's war?

AG: Yes, that's what I'm talking about. Sorry, that's the point I was trying to make. In 1981, at the time of the Falklands war, our planes going out to the Falkland Islands were given landing rights at Senegal, by the Senegalese government with whom we had enjoyed a good relationship. There was the land of Diego Garcia, those islands in the Indian Ocean which were leased (I think that's the right word) to the Americans and served as a base for American activity in the Iraq war; they were a very important sort of joint asset. Of course they incurred us in serious difficulties with the Mauritian government of the time because the original citizens of Diego Garcia had been moved to Mauritius and rather wanted to go back

SM: The Chagos islanders

AG: The Chagos islanders.

There was a certain amount of British training, not enormous, but some, in e.g. Kenya, Botswana and there were African peacekeeping troops which played a useful part in UN peacekeeping operations around the world, both within Africa and I can think of some specific examples, but also outside Africa, to the extent that African countries' armed forces were capable of providing serviceable peacekeeping troops. They were playing a useful part in the international community. In Africa I recall, that Botswana had troops in Mozambique and Somalia, Zimbabwe in Liberia and later on Ethiopia, in Rwanda; just to take a few examples.

SM: And I think that's become increasingly important, hasn't it?

AG: I don't know what's happened since then.

SM: African troops seem to have taken up some of the slack that has happened from the West reducing its contributions

AG: I can well believe that being so and of course one advantage from the African point of view was that these troops were paid UN rates, so it was quite a useful source of foreign exchange and certainly for the individual soldiers, although whether they were paid individually or it was done through the state, I don't know. There was (and this is not far-fetched) an environmental and scientific interest in Britain amongst environmentalists, scientists in Africa; I think particularly of Madagascar, 80% of the flora and fauna of which is endemic to Madagascar, not occurring anywhere else. So rather naturally, if you're a scientist, if you're an environmentalist, you do take a particular interest in a country like Madagascar and the same could be said of the rest of Africa.

There was the health interest. Don't forget that HIV seems to have started in central Africa. There was a very interesting dispatch, which I hope is on record, written by Kelvin White, our High Commissioner to Zambia, in I think about 1986 when I was in Personnel Policy Department, about the rising threat of HIV in Zambia spreading outside from Zambia to neighbouring countries and eventually of course, overseas. Rawlings of Ghana and Museveni of Uganda were amongst those African heads of government who, to their credit, were willing to talk in very frank, explicit terms in their public speeches about the threat to public health, state stability represented by the HIV virus. I recall a statistic in Malawi which said that some 75% of the armed forces of Malawi were HIV, were HIV positive. So, this health threat, the containment of this health threat, represented a very significant interest for the international community and, therefore, for Britain. And I think one should not lose sight, one should not forget the damage done by, first of all by Thabo Mbeki and then by Zuma in South Africa, in what they had to say about the HIV virus.

There was a British political interest in Africa. We needed the support of Africans in the United Nations, in the Non-aligned Movement or through the OAU on the international agenda. And as I travelled around Africa - I visited some twenty-seven countries as an AUS in the course of some forty-two visits (so, some of them I visited more than once or even

twice) - I constantly found myself remembering that the more moderate, helpful, friendly of the governments were giving Britain support on the causes to which we attached importance in the international arena and, conversely, the hostile ones were working against our interests.

Our Security Council credentials were also relevant. We had a national interest in preserving our permanent membership of the UN Security Council and, to be a credible permanent member, we needed to play our part in Africa. I'm thinking particularly here of Mozambique and Angola where civil wars had broken out (and we can talk about that more in a minute), but our willingness to play a part in trying to find political solutions and indeed providing troops in a logistical capacity to the UN force in Angola - in, I suppose, '94 or so - was clearly a British interest.

We had an interest, discernible even then - I suppose more so now - in trying to block Islamic (nowadays we call it "Islamist") expansion - expansion through places like Zanzibar, Tanzania, the east coast of Africa; expansionism southwards from the Sudan. And we had a general political interest in helping to maintain and demonstrate our world-wide international role. Of course, if ever there were to come a time when we cease to have a permanent seat in the United Nations or we wanted to stop playing a serious part on the international stage, our interest in Africa would diminish politically.

So against that background of interests, what were our overall objectives? And "objectives" was increasingly becoming a sort of buzzword in the Foreign Office; we needed to define our objectives, to take stock of our resources and to try to match the deployment of resources to specific objectives. And I think our general objectives on Africa more or less wrote themselves: we wanted to safeguard Britain's national security, we wanted to build Britain's prosperity by increasing exports and investments and we wanted to support British nationals.

So far as our individual geographical priorities were concerned, they were these: overwhelmingly and priority number one, first and foremost, was a peaceful transition to majority rule in South Africa. When I arrived in '92, De Klerk's policies, leading eventually to majority rule, were going forward, but there was a very serious doubt in Whitehall and elsewhere as to whether the transition would be accomplished peacefully. I recall in particular being told on my first visit to South Africa and constantly reminded of the point by the South African Ambassador, Kent Durr, in London that the objective in 1992 was to *share*

power with the Blacks; to share power between the Whites and the Black majority; not to hand over power. And it was because we thought then that was probably not going to be achievable that we were so concerned about the whole transition process.

We were by no means sure that it would be accomplished peacefully; and it's worth perhaps just itemising the main threats that we saw then to the successful transition to majority rule in South Africa. We were afraid of a right-wing Afrikaner backlash. We were afraid of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Zulus under chief Buthelezi; we were afraid that they and the ANC would be unable to agree on what the new arrangements would be. We were desperately afraid of the risk of political assassination – there were a number of assassinations of important figures during my time as AUS, but above all we were terrified that an assassin would get to Mandela or De Klerk. And had that happened, the effect on South Africa and the peace process would have been dramatic. And we were fairly sure that neither Mandela nor even De Klerk were adequately protected. We were frightened of a breakdown in the relationship that was being built up over time between De Klerk's government and the ANC; the successful completion of majority rule depended critically on co-operation between the two. And underlying all these risks, was the risk of violence – general violence, specific violence, violence engendered by assassination and the crime rate, the assassination rate, a lot of it between Zulus and the ANC was pretty serious. I seem to recall the figure of 20,000 deaths, whether murders or crime or political or whatever each year. But one should not exaggerate, because it was noticeable that it was possible to move around in South Africa as a white visitor peacefully. I recall being taken by John Doble, our Consul General in Johannesburg, on a Sunday driving his own official Jaguar – he drove us, the two of us to the church in central Soweto and we were the only white members of the congregation; and at the beginning of the service, the pastor asked John, who the congregation knew, to introduce me as the visitor. And that was a Sunday morning in Soweto, where there'd been some bad things happening, but we were safe. I recall in the township of Alexandria, in the heart of Johannesburg, going with Tony Reeve, the Ambassador, to the inauguration of a small cricket pitch, for which the Ambassador and the Embassy had provided from their gift scheme some cricket equipment and that was in the heart of Alexandria which was a no-go area for many whites.

I recall a story from the Khayelitsha township, outside Cape Town; I'm not sure that I didn't meet some South Africans and I told them that I'd just been into Khayelitsha with the

Embassy Land Rover to deliver some equipment to a boys club or a health clinic or something of the kind and the white South Africans present expressed astonishment that we had been able to do this safely; and of course the reason was that the Land Rover with the Union Jack on it was well known to the people of Khayelitsha and they treated its occupants with respect because the Embassy was well viewed by the black community and by the ANC.

So, to some extent, I digressed here. That was our centrally, most important geographical priority up until majority rule on 27th April (the elections) in 1994.

A second order but very important objective/ priority were the end of the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique. Now there's no need for me to go into the background. The civil war in Angola between the MPLA and UNITA was sort of winding down but it was still in progress and Savimbi still had ambitions to be the head of government. In Mozambique RENAMO and FRELIMO (FRELIMO being the government party) were still at war and Britain was doing its best behind the scenes to ease the transition, to get relations between the warring parties towards elections. I got to know a bit Dhlakama who was the head of RENAMO who was well known to the Embassy and the ambassador; and here I'd like to say a word about Richard Edis who was our ambassador to Mozambique. His predecessor Maeve Fort went on to be High Commissioner to South Africa later on. And both played an extremely valuable role behind the scenes in nudging the two sides together.

On the first day of the two-day elections in (I can't remember the date) 1994 or so when FRELIMO and RENAMO fought those elections - at the end of the first day - RENAMO was coming to the conclusion that it was being discriminated against and wanted to opt out of the elections and annul them and it was Richard Edis and his staff who played an essential backstairs role in persuading Dhlakama to continue the elections. And I remember the UN representative, a man called Ajello saying to me afterwards that Richard had been one of the architects of the successful transition to democratic rule.

I recall two more incidents worth mentioning on Mozambique. I went there with Lynda Chalker at some stage in the run up to the elections and we decided to go and see Dhlakama in his forest lair. We were flown in a plane, owned by a member of the Embassy (I think his name was Nick Busvine – I apologise to him if I have got his first name wrong, and we were flown up country - Lynda Chalker and the Ambassador and I and the Private Secretary - to

find Dhlakama and we couldn't locate the air strip because it was only visible end-on and it was very narrow and there were tall trees either side. So you had to get into exactly the right position in order to find the damned thing. We found it eventually after a good deal of circling. We landed, the trees were at our wing tips; we came to a halt and we were greeted outside the plane by Dhlakama who was wearing a very natty blue blazer and blue-stripe regulation foreign office type shirt with a natty club tie and grey flannel trousers and I strongly suspect that he'd bought these in Oxford Street immediately after I had given him lunch in London, a month or two earlier on.

Anyhow, we sat down on rather uncomfortable wooden upright chairs by the side of the runway because there wasn't time to go to his headquarters and we had a discussion about the situation during the course of which Lynda Chalker urged him to do everything possible to hold elections and to submit himself to the democratic process.

We then flew on from there to Nyanga in eastern Zimbabwe, where some five hundred or so RENAMO and FRELIMO troops were being trained by the British army. And I think the theory was that, if you put anybody down in front of a fierce British regimental sergeant major or CSM, they would unite in sheer terror at the experience; so you had representatives from the two warring sides, being trained in this camp in Nyanga, side by side, learning to work together, and the idea was that they would both go back to Mozambique and train, in their turn, the army, the united army in Mozambique. Lynda Chalker took the salute; she was flanked on one side by a RENAMO general and on the other side by a FRELIMO general. There were flags, but sadly only the flag of Zimbabwe, the host country and the Union Jack. RENAMO had vetoed the use of the Mozambique flag because, in their mind, it was associated too much with FRELIMO.

I remember asking one of the Mozambican troops - perhaps it was a stupid question - anyhow I asked him if he'd been FRELIMO or RENAMO and he drew himself to his full height and said: "I, Sir, am a Mozambican soldier" and of course that was an absolutely textbook, perfect answer and it illustrated I think the success that this particular project had.

SM: You're going to talk about some other African priorities.

AG: I'm talking about our geographical priorities: South Africa, ending the civil war, Angola, Mozambique. I think in the next category came big, important Commonwealth countries like Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe. And, to begin with Nigeria, this was a sad time in Nigerian affairs - Babangida was nearing the end of his rule and he was looking as if he was moving slowly, cautiously towards the restoration of democracy. He more or less appointed a civilian caretaker prime minister in the form of Ernest Shonekan who'd been a businessman; then there were elections and they seemed to be won by chief Abiola, but at that point General Sani Abacha stepped in and seized power, so once again you had a Nigerian dictator taking the place of a Nigerian dictator who had unsuccessfully set about restoring democracy. So this represented in our minds a very serious step backwards for Nigeria and therefore for British policy in Africa.

Kenya presented a happier picture, although when I first went there it seemed to me that we were being disproportionately hard on Kenya. It was more or less a democracy; they were hesitating over multi-party rule; there was corruption – yes, but not as bad as it became later, I think. There was weak economic management, but on the whole President Moi had been a good friend of Britain over the years and he presented a much better prospect than people at the other end of the extreme like Mobutu and indeed, the Nigerian generals. I remember calling on Moi, being taken there by Kieran Prendergast our High Commissioner and he, Moi, was clearly accessible to Kieran Prendergast and he was even willing to see a visiting Under Secretary like me. We had a discussion about Kenya's internal problems as well as about Rwanda and the East African community. So, Kenya was moving more or less in the right direction; more slowly than we would have wanted, but it was moving.

Zimbabwe was at a very interesting stage in its history. Mugabe was there. I always felt there was a tug-of-war taking place in him, between his heart, which was old-fashioned, un-reconstructed socialist, state-managed economy and on the other hand his head, which was beginning to tell him that he needed to move in the direction of market-based economic policies and democracy. At that stage, talking of '92-'95, his head was getting the better of the argument. There was discussion about dispossession of white settler farms, but the problem was being managed in a reasonable kind of way at that time and it was only much later that he seemed to turn his back on the West, the Commonwealth, sensible economic policies, a decent government in the direction that he's now taken.

He was invited as a government visitor, as a guest of government and was given the full works. He was given a mighty dinner in the city of London and he was received by the Queen; he was given the treatment. And I remember watching him at the dinner at the Guildhall and wondering what on earth this former guerrilla leader, left-wing socialist made of the capitalist environment in which he sat in the Guildhall. So I think, looking back on it, we probably got it wrong and I rather wish we hadn't invited him to London at that stage. But, given the policies that he was then pursuing and given our overall objectives, perhaps it was understandable.

Just to take a step back for a minute. As we approached majority rule in South Africa, more rosy views of Africa's fortunes were not entirely fanciful. There were three things going on: South Africa was emerging out of its purdah, as a result of apartheid, and it was possible to imagine a rising tide of prosperity spreading from South Africa, southern Africa, through Zimbabwe gradually northwards. This was being helped by the end of the Cold War enmities leading to sort of proxy war in Mozambique and Angola between the super powers. It was being helped by a growing recognition throughout the continent about the importance of better quality government: the good government agenda. It was being helped by a growing recognition of the validity of market-based policies. And so, on the whole we were in a pretty optimistic sort of mood during my three or four years in dealing with Africa at that stage.

I haven't talked in detail about Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia and other significant priorities, but they too were more or less moving in the right direction, but there were some exceptions. And I suppose the most serious exceptions - the ones moving in the wrong direction - were Nigeria (we've talked about), Sierra Leone, where Strasser, the young - I forget his rank but he was a junior officer - seized power with some unattractive associates including a Captain Moussa, I think his name was - executed some of their political opponents; and above all, Zaire and the dreadful Mobutu and *there* was a country in process of disintegration. Power lay with Mobutu's army commanders throughout the country; in some of the country you couldn't travel as a visitor at all; in other parts of the country it still was possible to get around. When I visited Zaire - in '93 I suppose - I remember I had to fly into Brazzaville across the river and then I crossed the river by speedboat to Kinshasa and there I found Kay Oliver who was the Chargé d'Affaires at the time with a very small staff but protected by a Royal Military Police team and she was

playing a useful role in the local political process. There was a UN representative, whose name I forget, there was a Bishop Monsengwo, there was a UN round table trying to bring the Mobutu faction into conversation, dialogue with the so-called democratic faction. It was an extraordinary situation: I called in the morning on the prime minister of one government and in the afternoon I saw the representative of Mobutu's gang; at dinner representatives of both parties were present. It was said that there were civil servants who worked for one faction in the morning and the other faction in the afternoon and this might have been thought a serious source of confusion but for the fact that it was quite clear that neither side had much power to do anything in any case.

I'd like to just step back a little bit and look further at the overall picture of what was happening in Africa during my time as AUS. I think in the grand sweep of history there are actually only going to be two events which will be remembered by other than the real expert. The first is majority rule in South Africa April 1994, which we've talked about, and the second is the genocide in Rwanda which also significantly took place in April '94 and I will come back to Rwanda in a minute. There was a third event which had a big effect at the time and that was the Battle of Mogadishu in October 1993, when eighteen US troops were among other UN peacekeeping forces killed in a UN operation which had been launched to try to create an environment which was secure enough for humanitarian relief to be delivered. Somalia was increasingly lawless and famine stricken and this ended the United States' bloodiest overseas military intervention since the Vietnam war and accounted more than anything for its extreme reluctance to get involved militarily anywhere else in the continent and this had consequences for Rwanda which we'll see in a minute.

Against that very broad background, sub-Saharan African countries fell into a number sort of broad and I suppose overlapping categories. There were those that were more or less, to a greater or lesser extent, meeting the donors' good government criteria and the ones at the top of the class were Botswana, Namibia, Gambia (then – that was before Jawara's replacement by Jammeh in '95, another junior military officer), Senegal and Mauritius. Those were the stars. There were those who could do better, but they were going in the right direction; there was Kenya, Zimbabwe, the Ivory Coast. There were those who were very much in transition, making progress but they were moving from authoritarian, badly managed, repressive governments, towards democracy, good government, pluralism - call it what one wants - and this applied to Lesotho, perhaps to Swaziland, Malawi (Banda accepted the result of elections

against him), Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda (Museveni, I'll talk about Museveni more in a minute), Ethiopia, Eritrea, Cameroon, Ghana, Madagascar and the Seychelles.

There were those emerging from civil war in crisis; we've talked about them (Angola and Mozambique), South Africa. There were ones going in the wrong direction – Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zaire. And there were those suffering disaster and that applies particularly to Rwanda and Somalia and I'd like now to talk about Rwanda.

In April '94 the Rwandan 'genocide' of Tutsis by Hutus took place and something in the region of 800,000 to a million Tutsis were murdered and this has remained in my nightmares ever since. And I suppose the questions are: could it have been prevented by the international community and what was known about it beforehand? Did we have prior warning? I've been asked this question by one or two journalists and academics since then and I've always declined to give an answer on the grounds that a) I was still covered by the official secrets act and, more importantly, that without actually looking back over the files, I don't trust my memory to be able to answer those questions accurately.

But my impression is this: at the time British foreign policy in Africa was focussed elsewhere, overridingly on South Africa, but also as I've said on our other priority areas. We did not have a historical connection with Rwanda; we regarded it as part of francophone Africa. It had been a Belgian colony; the French were involved, they had a presence there. We knew very little about it: our Embassy, our non-resident Embassy, lived 1,000 miles to the west in Kinshasa and it just simply wasn't our "patch". We were focussed on other parts of Africa and moreover we had seen the outcome of the UN intervention supported by the US troops in Somalia, so our whole instinct was to avoid getting involved in it. As we knew in advance, there was a general awareness here that bad things might happen; we knew that there were extreme tensions between the Hutu government of Habyarimana and the Tutsis. I do recall receiving a telephone call from my opposite number in the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, one day and I cannot put a date on it, who was ringing to tell us and to find out if we knew, the signs that they were picking up of some impending disaster. I don't recall what I did with that information; I would have recorded it and reported it at the time and no doubt there are papers available in the archives.

As to what the international community *could* have done, I think that's much more difficult. There were discussions going on at the United Nations: we certainly wished to avoid a verdict of 'genocide'.

As to what the international community might have done, well, in an extreme case there might have been a military intervention and it would have had to have been a fairly sizeable one and it would have been very difficult to mount and, as I said, I couldn't see any reason why Britain without any sort of historical connection, should have taken the lead in that kind of enterprise. Whether it was for the French to do so, I think will be for history to judge. They did send a force (they called it Opération Turquoise), but as I remember it, it seemed to be designed more to protect the retreating Hutus, who retreated over the border into eastern Congo, than it was to do anything else. Of course, what was needed was intervention before the genocide and I think it's to the shame of the international community that that never happened; it's also perhaps to the shame of the African community.

I recall a visit to the other country which imploded during my time but where again we had no kind of representative and not much of a historical connection, although some, and that was Somalia. Very early on in my time as Under-Secretary, the UK had the presidency of the European Union. Douglas Hurd initiated a visit by the Troika i.e. the presidency and the preceding and succeeding presidencies who were Danes and Portuguese, to go on an expedition to South Africa in order to support the move towards majority rule. And we flew down in a VC10 via Ascension Island, having picked up the Portuguese in Lisbon, to South Africa. Douglas Hurd and his ministerial colleagues, supported by the African directors (Denmark, Portugal and me) had meetings with all the main players in the political process. The only specific memory I have of that is of being instructed by Douglas Hurd, as we were going to bed at about midnight after a very interesting dinner party, organised by Tony Reeve to meet all the main South African political players, Douglas Hurd instructed us (officials) to come up with an initiative by breakfast to devise a way of bringing Inkatha, Chief Buthelezi's Zulus, back into the political process. Well not surprisingly, we failed to achieve, to carry out our instruction; not entirely surprising because the best efforts of mice and men had been made for some considerable months, if not years, to do exactly that.

After leaving South Africa we flew back via Kenya and Somalia. Douglas Hurd and the other ministers I think called on Moi and then we went in an RAF Hercules to Mogadishu.

We had to land in a steep spiral in order to avoid any risk of being shot down by surrounding gunfire. It was a time when the centre of Mogadishu had been completely destroyed; it was of course before the Battle of Mogadishu the following year in '93, but we were met at the steps of the Hercules by young men called "Technicals" in open jeeps, each armed to the teeth and with a sort of fixed machine gun at the back of the jeep and we were driven into the centre of the rubble that constituted Mogadishu, then to a UN headquarters where the ministers had talks with UN officials inside the building and the three African directors had earnest discussions in the rain outside with some wild-looking gentlemen about what was going on and these must have been the representatives of one of the Somali factions. And needless to say, we achieved very little.

We then went off, with the ministers, to visit a hospital which was in dire need of all the most basic equipment and then we returned to the airport and flew off, on our way. And I can't pretend that we achieved anything very useful although it clearly heightened our understanding of the terrible situation which was then in force.

While we're on the subject of the Horn of Africa, I should mention Ethiopia and Eritrea (then, one country); the Eritreans and the Ethiopians had collaborated in expelling the dreadful Mengistu, the Marxist dictator who had removed Haile Selassie, my old friend from the 1970s. In 1993 I called on Meles Zenawi, the new president of Ethiopia, and then separately also on the president elect of Eritrea which subsequently became independent, in Asmara, that rather pleasant town with a strong Italian influence. Eritrea was in kind of international limbo; a referendum was due shortly after I went, to decide whether indeed it should become independent and so it was decided. Meles Zenawi was an impressive man: small, highly intelligent, a successful guerrilla leader in effect, who had achieved power and who remains I think in power to this day (2016). He and some of his colleagues had followed an MBA course on the Open University, through the good offices of the British Council, I think, and he spoke highly of that; he wanted us to extend the course to the next tier down of government. He received my representations on the importance of a structural adjustment economic programme and more accountable government and respect for human rights and so on, with perfectly good grace.

SM: You wanted to talk about Museveni.

AG: Yes, he was an important figure and still is, of course. He had successfully removed Obote who'd come back again after Idi Amin; he had established an authoritarian but benevolent, I think, dictatorship, certainly benevolent in comparison with what had gone on before; he seemed to be the sort of man we could do business with and I was given an hour or more of his time with Charles Cullimore, the High Commissioner, and again we made representations about the importance of the right kind of economic policies and more accountable government. And I must say that he listened to us attentively and at that point, although we were a little nervous about his willingness to embrace a full western-style democracy, we thought that he was very much moving in the right direction.

At this point I would like to interject a word about multi-party rule. In his 1991 speech on good government, Douglas Hurd had been careful to avoid pinning our colours to the importance of multi-partyism as such. We recognised that a valid kind of democracy in African circumstances might not necessarily include the western notion of multi-party democracy. There were two views on this. Another view was that, if you have freedom of association, and then you have meetings of opposing groups of people in the street, and then you have a movement by the government to repress those demonstrations, those groups, then it would be extremely difficult for the west to condone such repression. And that being so; there was not going to be much difference between freedom of association and multi-partyism.

I also remember, ringing in my ears, a remark made to me in Ghana by PV Obeng, who was a sort of prime minister equivalent and one of the members of the PNDC and he was talking about African notions of democracy. What he said was that, when the elders of a tribe are discussing a course of action, a course of policy action, all views were listened to with respect; anybody could say what they wanted to say. Then, an agreement was reached and, once the agreement had been reached by the elders, if anybody dissented from that, "you know what we do?" PV Obeng said. "We kill them!" He was exaggerating; he didn't actually believe that for a single minute, but he was pointing out that there were well established ways of discussing matters in an African tribal society, which were very different from western notions of democracy.

SM: You're going to talk about Cameroon.

AG: Yes. Many of my visits to Africa, particularly early on were simply for the purposes of familiarisation; of learning about these countries and also giving what support I could to our Heads of Mission. In some cases I went with a very specific objective in mind and that was true of my visit to Cameroon in 1993. Cameroon, a bilingual state, was composed of old British Cameroon, half of which had gone to Nigeria, the other half of which had joined the Francophone bit of Cameroon; so it was Francophone and Anglophone.

I went at the time when Cameroon had applied for membership of the Commonwealth. They had done this as much as anything in response to concerns from its Anglophone community. My purpose in going was to try to assess whether everybody in Cameroon - both sides, both Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon - genuinely wanted membership and to assess also, in collaboration with, of course, the Embassy as it then was, whether it qualified under the rules of the Commonwealth and in particular the Harare Declaration drawn up at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in, I think, 1991, setting out the conditions under which Commonwealth countries should remain members of the Commonwealth: the democratic principles, if you like, and human rights principles of the Commonwealth.

And I was given the red carpet treatment. I called on President Biya; I called on all the heads of all the other political parties; I called on the electoral commission. I went at a time not long after there'd been an election, the results of which had been challenged by the Anglophone community. The main Anglophone leader as I recall was a man called Fru Ndi.

John Fru Ndi's base was in Bamenda and I went there and before I left I sent a telegram which I wrote in a Land Rover jolting along a rather bumpy track between Bamenda and Douala from which my plane left and where I gave a press conference on the subject in which I avoided saying anything in particular. In my telegram I recommended that Britain should propose that Cameroon's application to join the Commonwealth should be approved in 1993; that Cameroon should join the Commonwealth in 1995, two years later, subject to its having met a number of specific criteria beforehand, including the amendment to the constitution and a better respect for human rights, including such simple things as Biya actually meeting the Human Rights Commissioner and his government providing the Human Rights Commission with a budget on which to operate. That was the advice I sent and I think more or less it was followed. And so at Limassol - the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Limassol in '93 - the decision was taken to welcome Cameroon to the Commonwealth in

1995. And so, by the time Heads of Government met in New Zealand in 1995, Cameroon, I think, had joined.

My last sort of vivid personal memory was of going to Bamenda, seeing all the main players and on my final morning I was invited to breakfast in his house overlooking the valley by the local prefect, French speaking local governor; maybe he was called the governor.

SM: The Governor. As I recall he's got a house that overlooks the whole of city from the hills

AG: That is precisely what I mean and I remember the view. It was early in the morning, there was smoke of cooking fires rising up, there was a morning mist, there were blue hills in the distance and we were ushered on to a terrace overlooking the valley behind his house where there was a magnificent breakfast more suitable to a lunch or dinner including several bottles of claret arrayed for our sustenance. I resisted temptation because I had this telegram to write in the Land Rover going down to Douala.

SM: Talk about Madagascar, then.

AG: I'd never been there before; I flew there direct from London via Paris and I didn't know what to expect. I was given again the red carpet treatment because Madagascar was on the brink of transition to semi-democratic rule. I remember calling on Albert Zafy, the man with the straw hat which was his sort of election gimmick and who'd been elected as President. We were asked to wait in an anteroom to the Cabinet Room where the last cabinet meeting of the old government was taking place and we could hear the sound of merriment from next door as the cabinet broke up. Zafy came out and I had a good and interesting conversation with him, including me speaking on behalf of RTZ's application for a mining permit for the ilmenite mine in the south of Madagascar. And I assured him of British support and pointed out to him that financial support came in a variety of guises. We had a very, very small bilateral aid project which probably included things like English language training, but I said to him that "you must remember Mr. President that one of the yellow stars on the blue EU flag is actually a union jack and we contribute through the EU to a very sizeable part of the European Community's (as it then was) budget in Madagascar. I remember being told by our Ambassador later that Albert Zafy had registered that point and had referred to it again later.

And I also pointed out to him that Britain was making a valuable contribution to the economic development of Madagascar through investment and through companies like RTZ who were willing to put their money into the development of the ilmenite mine.

It was a fascinating country. I hadn't appreciated the way in which the economy and politics were dominated by the - I think they were called - the "Merinas", the Indonesian-blooded people, who had come to Madagascar in the fifth/ sixth century AD and round the edge were the "Côtiers", black Africans who had come over to Madagascar from East Africa around the same time.

The history of our representation there is interesting. We used to have a small Embassy and then economies struck and we had to reduce it to two and I think that was at David Owen's behest; he took the view that two would be enough to keep our foot in the door and to keep the flag flying and to be able to achieve worthwhile objectives and I think he was absolutely right. Our two-man Embassy was well on the map; the Ambassador was well known to the president and he could play a useful, small part in representing British interests in Madagascar.

The Embassy had been closed in the '70s but then reopened under David Owen's reign as Foreign Secretary with the two-man Embassy. It was subsequently closed again but then reopened by the Conservative government in 2005 or 6; so it's had a very chequered existence. My own experience of very small embassies is that they don't cost a great deal and exercise a disproportionate influence in furtherance of British interests.

SM: Gambia.

AG: I went back once to Gambia as an AUSS after visiting it with Lord Lothian in the 1970s. President Jarawa, the vet from Glasgow, was still in power and exercising a moderate, sensible, uncorrupt leadership. I recall meeting him on two, if not three occasions; I think he attended, having been educated in Scotland, the local, either St. Andrews night or Burns' supper or some such thing, and at the end of my visit I had a meeting with him and a number of ministers around a table when he deferred to them but at the same time answered some of my questions himself in firm, confident terms. And I remember him slightly upbraiding me for not including in our good government criteria, insistence on multi-party

rule. In his view multi-party rule was essential and it was nice to be criticised on that score, rather than the opposite

SM: You were going to talk about what you saw as the tools and instruments of Britain's policy in Africa.

AG: Yes. Again, on day one I don't think I had a clear idea of the tools at our disposal, but by the end of my time as an Under-Secretary and looking back on it, I think it is worth distinguishing between the different instruments. At one extreme, at the top level, a visit by the Queen or perhaps a member of the Royal Family is an important tool of British foreign policy and exerting influence. And the Queen went to South Africa in '95 and she went to Ghana (after my time) in 1999. We had our diplomatic missions; we had British ministerial visits – the Prime Minister went to South Africa in '94. Douglas Hurd went to South Africa in my time, so too to Kenya, Somalia, Ghana and Nigeria. Lynda Chalker was forever travelling to Africa and these were very important methods of exercising influence and promoting our views.

We had in the other direction, visits from African leaders to Britain and these included in my time Mandela, Mugabe, Moi, Babangida and Rawlings.

We had our colossal, our large aid programme, which included both the ODA programme and also smaller pots of money available to individual missions or perhaps the AUS from which we could make small contributions to particular projects. For example, we gave some money for desk-top publishing equipment for Ghana's Hansard; we gave some computers for Nigerian political parties which helped to underline the importance we attached to the existence of political parties.

There were the British Council libraries and English language training work; there was the Open University MBA course for Meles Zenawi, this was a sort of soft diplomacy; there were the military training teams in a number of countries: Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Gambia (we were replaced a bit later by Nigerians) and Mauritius. There were police training teams in Swaziland, Namibia, Ethiopia, Nigeria. There was the BBC World Service; we had a transmitter in the Seychelles. In a smaller way there were my Under-Secretary visits; there were the invitations that individual missions, diplomatic

missions, could issue to leading Africans, opinion formers, politicians, radio people, journalists, etc. to London and there were the scholarships that we could also give and all this added up to an important contribution.

And there was the Commonwealth; I referred to the Harare Declaration of '91, and then there were the Millbrook Principles in '95 which I'll talk about when we come to talk about the Commonwealth. Chief Anyaoku, the Nigerian Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, played a very active part in pushing African countries towards democratic rule and I'm thinking on one occasion of a visit made by his deputy to Lesotho just at a critical time in the transition process.

And finally, and very important, there were UN missions - Somalia, Angola, Mozambique but this was at the sort of heavy end of the spectrum. What there wasn't in my time *ever* was consideration given to direct military intervention.

SM: That didn't come I think, until Sierra Leone.

AG: It came in Sierra Leone under Tony Blair and I must say that, in the light of the genocide in Rwanda and other opportunities where a British force or a force from a NATO country could have made a significant difference in preventing something terrible from happening, I sort of regret that we didn't have that in our armoury of tackling the problems of Africa.

SM: British policies in Africa.

AG: Well, I've talked about our geographical priorities but if one's looking at it on a subject basis I think the list is as follows: the good government agenda was very important and it gave coherence to our policy in Africa in the '90s that we didn't have in the '70s, that we couldn't have had in the '70s. The aid conditionalities - the conditions we set for balance of payments aid and for aid projects - made a material difference; we co-ordinated with our main allies: European Union member states (especially France, Germany and Portugal), United States, Russia, Japan. I visited the capitals of all these countries to concert African policy.

We focussed very much on African leaders, via obviously British Ministers and Heads of Mission, in South Africa both pre and post '94 majority elections, Chiluba in Zambia, Chissano in Mozambique, Moi, Museveni, Meles Zenawi, Rawlings, mainly via Lynda Chalker, but also my meetings with him; Muluzi, the new Malawian Head of government after Banda disappeared. We had our failures: failures either in getting access adequately or in exerting the sort of influence we sought, notably the Nigerian generals, Mobutu who was a sort of hopeless case, Banda who became increasingly inaccessible and didn't want to listen to us and Strasser in Sierra Leone.

We had policies of mediation. When opportunity offered we used our Heads of Mission to mediate in an informal kind of way between opposing sides. In Ethiopia for example, James Glaze, our Ambassador, led a contact group of western ambassadors trying to find a way through the differences between Meles Zenawi's government and the OLF, the Oromo Liberation Front, and I remember discussing with Meles Zenawi whether he was content with our efforts of mediation and he encouraged us to do that. Richard Edis, I've spoken about in the Mozambican elections, Kay Oliver in Zaire in a small way, with Bishop Monsengwo.

There was UN peacekeeping. There was conflict prevention and resolution through the OAU. After Rwanda we looked around for ways in which we could strengthen our military contribution to Africa short of military intervention and perhaps in a different way from our traditional military training teams. And we devised an initiative to support African peacekeeping through training workshops, through the possibility of establishing logistical bases and I don't now remember what happened to that because we were in the process of developing it as I left. What I do remember is discussing the idea with, I think his name was Salim Salim, the OAU Secretary General in Ethiopia and with President Moi himself, who made some useful suggestions and I think was pleased to have been consulted on that initiative; an initiative which incidentally was mentioned in John Major's speech to the South African parliament in, probably, Cape Town in '94 and also mentioned by Douglas Hurd at a UN meeting in New York.

We had at the harder end of our policy options, sanctions. We suspended arms supplies to Zaire, to Nigeria; we suspended military training to Zaire; we introduced visa restrictions on Zairians, on the henchmen of Mobutu and others. So there was this range of policy options which was available to us.

SM: What's the difference then, between success as you could see it then and failure?

AG: Well, I think that if one's looking at the ingredients of success for an African country, by far and away the most important is leadership. It isn't an accident that the countries which did well were the ones with strong sensible leaders: Moi, Chiluba, Mandela, Jawara, Rawlings (with some faults), but these men made a very important contribution to rescuing their countries from disaster. The good government agenda; countries which followed this agenda: freedom of speech, pluralism, lack of corruption and so on (I've talked about them) had a better chance of success than the others.

Political stability was linked in our minds to a government that was accountable in some way - perhaps it would differ from one country to another - to public opinion. Sound economic reform programmes, successful reconciliation after civil war and of course the material resources that a particular country might have would make a big difference. Angola with its oil and its diamonds, Botswana with its diamonds, countries with a rich agriculture - Kenya, South Africa - both mineral resources but also human resources, countries with a strong educational background; donor support: the countries which attracted the financial support of the West and which were prepared to meet their criteria.

SM: It might be argued that any country with oil hasn't generally done well out of it.

AG: Well I think there are two views about that. I have wondered sometimes, since I left Ghana after oil had been discovered, whether it would prove to be a curse or a blessing. Potentially it must be an enormously rich source of development; on the downside is the risk of corruption above all and I think that is what Nigeria has suffered very seriously from. Other ingredients of success obviously include things like fair world commodity prices and I remember endless discussions with Ghanaians on the question of whether the world price of cocoa and gold was fair to Ghana. Debt forgiveness or rescheduling; some of these countries' debt burden was so great as to be unmanageable and of course we're seeing the same with Greece now.

Obstacles to success, I mean in a way they are the converse of those - the converse of all the above things are obstacles to success. When the military step in and launch their coup, that's

usually a setback; although not always because I cannot help feeling that Ghana would not have got to the point it now is at without some kind of military intervention, so extreme the situation had become.

Corruption remains a major problem. Certainly during my time it was a very serious problem in Nigeria and a growing problem in Kenya and elsewhere.

The wrong borders. The colonialists and Congress of Berlin got it wrong. It is *absurd* that Lesotho should be a separate country from South Africa and the Act of Union of 1910, I think, foresaw the possibility that Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana (Basutoland, as it then was) should be incorporated within South Africa but that was unthinkable for Britain for as long as apartheid made South Africa what it was. So Swaziland is another example of a country with the wrong borders – Gambia, Senegal, Cameroon – I mean, would that Cameroon had been entirely owned by Germany or entirely owned by France or entirely owned by Britain, but not split as it is between France and Britain having been German up until the First World War. Ethiopia, Eritrea. That boundary is probably now in the right place, more or less, but it was a mistake that it should have been one country at a point. Nigeria, I have often wondered ... The Biafra war of course raised the question whether the Nigerian boundaries, internal boundaries were in the right place.

SM: And of course, the Christian/ Muslim tensions between the north and the south.

AG: And tribal differences. And Zaire is the biggest example of them all. So I'm afraid that many of modern Africa's problems have their origins in the wrong borders.

Well, we've talked about tribal tensions. Tribal and racial tensions remain in many countries an obstacle to success. Nigeria is a big example; Rwanda - that was what the problem was; Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa itself. Excessive population growth is becoming an increasing problem and that was visible in the '90s; illiteracy and poor education.

I've talked a lot about the economic recovery programmes, classic structural adjustment programmes of a sort that are approved by the IMF and the World Bank. But the classic errors right across Africa were all the same. They were corruption, they were excessive public expenditure, a swollen civil service, they were monopolies, they were nationalisation,

they were hostility to the private sector, they were overvalued currency and they were state subsidies. And wherever I went in Africa I found myself talking about the same things and the same remedies. And these structural adjustment programmes, which were a dirty word amongst many Africans, were all designed to tackle these problems.

I think that it's just worth recalling that, in an awful lot of Africa, there was no British representation and we knew next to nothing about these countries. I've talked about Rwanda which is at the top of my list of countries where we had neither an Embassy nor much knowledge of and Burundi is the same. Somalia is another, Djibouti, Guinea, the various Guineas – Conakry, Bissau, Equatorial Guinea - Liberia which I never visited in the '90s although I had for President Tubman's funeral in the '70s, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger - I'd visited them as a tourist from Ghana. I have no doubt that our non-resident embassies knew a bit about them, but if they knew as much about them as I knew about Togo that didn't amount to very much. Benin, Gabon, Gabon, oil-rich and I think it came under the High Commissioner to Cameroon and we did occasionally wonder if we should consider setting up an Embassy there but I never went there.

SM: There was representation there and it was closed I think in the '80s or early '90s.

AG: Yes, well, I think what I'm saying is that in an ideal world it would have been good to have had very, very small embassies – these two-person embassies of the kind we had in Madagascar in several, perhaps even many more of the countries about which we knew nothing. Republic of Congo, Brazzaville (across the water), and Chad; and if one's looking at countries where some frightful problem might develop which would cause the international community to start taking an interest, like Rwanda and Somalia, then, one needs to remember this list of countries about which we knew next to nothing.

I tried to itemise earlier on the resources available to the African departments, the Africa Command as it came to be called, and this brings me on to the subject of what is known as a delegated budgeting system, a fairly esoteric administrative subject, but I developed an interest in it when I was head of Personnel Policy Department. Personnel Policy Department was in charge of establishments and from time to time colleagues from other parts of the office would ring me up and ask if they could they have, say, another first secretary or a

second secretary, either for their own departments or for one of the missions for which they were responsible.

And I was left to decide whether this was possible and where the person could be found and we did a bit of work on it in PPD and came to the conclusion that it might be worth trying an experiment, which was to give a geographical under-Secretary some kind of delegated responsibility for at least jobs – the question of the actual people was left aside because that was a matter for POD and moving people immediately is more difficult than adjusting the establishment of a mission into which the people could be fitted later.

And we thought also that it might be worth combining that with delegating responsibility for some of the expenditure available to a mission, Heads of Mission gift schemes, visits, scholarships - that kind of thing. So I recommended to the Chief Clerk of the day, who was John Whitehead, that we try an experiment with a volunteer AUS, perhaps Latin America. Well, he looked at the proposal and he decided against it. I tried again with his successor Mark Russell a year or two later and I got a similar response, so PPD was left holding the baby.

I went off to Ghana as High Commissioner and I came back in '92 to find, to see very early on that the PUS and the Deputy Secretaries (the Board of Management) was going to hold a kind of away weekend at Chevening, the Foreign Secretary's country house, on management issues and I wrote the PUS a little note saying that I had one or two ideas about management issues, including the possibility of delegating the responsibility for establishments to AUSs and he (very generously, I thought) invited me to the meeting and I think that I was one of two Assistant Under-Secretaries who attended that weekend. Of course it was a fascinating occasion as it gave me a view of what was happening at a higher level across the board. But in the course of it I volunteered the African Command as the guinea pig for the kind of experiment which I had had in mind when I was head of PPD; and it was agreed that the experiment should be both tried in the African departments and by Jeremy Greenstock who was the assistant Under-Secretary for Western Europe.

So we both conducted our experiments and to begin with we very much flew by the seat of our pants, with very little support. In the case of Africa and in consultation with my heads of department, we made one or two changes to the pattern of representation overseas and of

course, if we made a saving in one country and were told that we could use that saving in another part of our command, it gave us an incentive to make savings. And then we added in gifts and added in visits and one or two other things and after a year or so, the management in the office took stock and they rather liked the results of our experiment and moreover, it was very much in tune with wider management initiatives taking place in Whitehall as a whole.

So, the next thing that happened was that it was rolled out right across the Service. With the benefit of hindsight I think myself that that was a mistake and my original idea had been to deepen the experiment in Africa and Europe before rolling it out across the Office as a whole. By deepening I mean that we might have tried to include other budgets, given Under-Secretaries' responsibility for wider budgets than just manpower.

The scheme had bristled with minor technical difficulty, but they were all perfectly resolvable and in due course, each AUS was given one and I think eventually two or even three people to help with this system. It was pretty unpopular, it has to be said, with colleagues who didn't, all of them, enjoy being diverted from the pure milk of policy work, for which they saw themselves as best, most interested in, to this minor, management, administrative issue. But I found it rewarding and I also found the little cell we formed in the African Command, of people looking at resources across the board, could also be used gradually to look at policy across the board. So, for example, the peacekeeping initiative, I think we may have well developed in that cell rather than in one of the two geographical departments (although I now can't remember that for certain).

SM: Hello, this is Syd Maddicott. I'm with Anthony Goodenough. It's the 29th January 2019.

And, Anthony, I think we're going to talk today about your role in dealing with the Commonwealth as AUSS.

AG: Yes. My Under-Secretary responsibilities included not only Africa, which was the major part of them, but also the Commonwealth and this didn't mean that I had responsibility for Britain's bilateral relations with non-African Commonwealth members, only for the institution itself and any questions which affected the whole membership.

For most of the time, Commonwealth Co-ordination Department, under the excellent David Broad as Head, got on with the routine work, whatever was needed. One of the very few issues where I was involved was the review of the Commonwealth Institute in Kensington which led eventually to the British government announcing its intention to withdraw funding. The problem was the Foreign Office's remorseless budgetary constraints. I think David and certainly I felt that this was a short-sighted decision, but we were powerless to prevent it.

SM: Anthony, give us your views about the Commonwealth and its usefulness.

AG: It seemed to me that it was a useful, but not essential organisation which could help to bridge the gap between the developed and the developing world. It could make a contribution to multi-cultural and multi-ethnic co-operation: I'm thinking of the Commonwealth games and the annual Commonwealth Day service in Westminster Abbey and I remember Archbishop Tutu dancing on the pavement outside.

It could play a helpful political role by bringing pressure to bear on those of its member governments which were abusing human rights or refusing to hold elections, for example, and there were a number of Commonwealth organisations perhaps of varying value, but I'm thinking of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which brought MPs together; the Commonwealth of Learning, based in Vancouver to provide distance learning; the London based Commonwealth Foundation which promoted closer contact between professional associations throughout the Commonwealth. And there were in fact, quite close legal contacts between Commonwealth members which I think, helped at the margins to strengthen the rule of law where it was weak. And of course, it was valued by some Commonwealth leaders, particularly the smaller ones and particularly those in Africa, as a channel through which they could make their voices heard.

SM: Did the Commonwealth, in your view, add much value to our bilateral relations with other Commonwealth states?

AG: I don't think it made much difference to our bilateral relations with the bigger, developed Commonwealth, I'm thinking of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, because contact would have flourished without the Commonwealth and I think the same is true of many of the bigger Commonwealth members, but it did probably help strengthen our relations with some of the poorer and smaller Commonwealth countries and that included countries in Africa as elsewhere.

Some of my colleagues tended to dismiss the Commonwealth as more trouble than it was worth. For me the main point was Douglas Hurd's point that it existed as part of the hand which history had dealt Britain and we might as well make the most of it and it wasn't an alternative to the other organisations of which we were members, but it did add something to our international reach and influence and I had absolutely no doubt that, in our place, France would have taken the organisation very seriously indeed, as indeed it does with La Francophonie.

SM: I've heard Australians and Canadians say that we were nuts not to make more of the Commonwealth, so I think lots of people must agree with you. This was I think, an interesting time to be dealing with the Commonwealth and South Africa being a particular issue because, I think, when you started it must have been under the apartheid regime.

AG: Yes, I'd like to come on to that in a minute, but just to stand back for a moment ...

The most important part of my work on the Commonwealth occurred every second year with the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (known as the CHOGMs) and every second year these took over my life for an unpleasant week or so. As AUSS for the Commonwealth I attended two of these meetings, the first was in Limassol, Cyprus, in '93 and the second in Auckland, New Zealand, two years later in '95. Both were unforgettable and pretty frightful experiences, although I suppose I must now admit that I'm quite glad to have gone if only to be able to boast that I've survived this ghastly experience. I should add that many of my Diplomatic Service colleagues, of course, had much more intensive conference experience, I'm thinking of EC meetings and the UN, and no doubt they enjoyed them, but they frankly weren't my scene.

SM: So, tell us about the role of HM The Queen in the Commonwealth. I see that the Commonwealth has recently agreed to invite Prince Charles to be the Head of (the) Commonwealth when his time comes to take the throne. What was it like when the Queen was present?

AG: Yes, the Queen has indeed placed enormous importance on her role as Queen of the Commonwealth, Head of the Commonwealth and of course, Queen of the fourteen or so

realms in the Commonwealth. She used to attend CHOGMs, I think all of them, at least until recently. In Limassol she stayed on the Royal Yacht, Britannia, on which she gave a reception for delegations, including me: one of the two occasions I saw for myself the value of the Royal Yacht in promoting Britain (the second was to be in Canada later on).

SM: She wasn't of course involved in the detailed discussions.

AG: No, but she had an opportunity to meet all the Heads of Government taking part in the conferences.

SM: So, who else took part at senior level in the British side of things at the two CHOGMs you went to?

AG: The practice was for the Prime Minister, himself or herself, to lead the British delegation and that is what happened in Cyprus and New Zealand when John Major headed our delegation on both occasions. Douglas Hurd as Foreign Secretary at the time, accompanied him to Cyprus, but he didn't have a specific role and rather wisely made a side trip to the Middle East during the conference. He also had what I thought was a rather good idea of inviting African Foreign Ministers for a round table dinner discussion on African issues while the Heads of Government were otherwise engaged. In Cyprus, Hurd had just been replaced as Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary by Malcolm Rifkind; and so in fact Lynda Chalker went to Auckland to provide the Prime Minister with ministerial back-up.

SM: And were you accompanied by any other senior diplomats?

AG: Yes. During my time the Permanent Under-Secretary led the official delegation: in Cyprus, David Gillmore and in Auckland, John Coles, and on each occasion the delegation included two or three other senior Foreign Office and ODA officials to cope with whatever the specific agenda was. So it was quite a high-powered team on both occasions.

SM: How did the meetings go? What was the format and the procedure?

AG: Again, the procedure was much the same on both occasions. Heads of Government met formally to discuss their agenda which had been worked out by the Commonwealth

Secretary-General beforehand and then they went off by themselves to spend a day or so in informal meetings at a retreat somewhere out of town. They weren't accompanied by any of their officials and that gave them an opportunity to get to know each other. Officials, for their part, retired to something called the Committee of the Whole but it became familiarly known as the Committee of the Black Hole, and there we discussed what became the 'communique' of the meeting.

Theoretically, the communique was supposed to record the conclusions of Heads of Government; and so to some extent we relied on reports reaching us from the Heads of Government via the Commonwealth Secretariat to compile the communique. But many of the subjects of the communique frankly were never discussed by Heads and they were included only so that, I suppose, it could be said afterwards that the Commonwealth had addressed a wide agenda and as far as I know, some nine tenths of both the Cyprus and New Zealand communiqués were read only by a tiny group of experts in our various Foreign Ministries and then consigned to the archives, perhaps one day to be consulted by scholars, but not by anybody else much, and I'll have more to say about the one tenth which was more interesting, later.

SM: Well, would you like to go into the details of the substance that was covered at the two meetings you attended?

AG: I would in a minute, but I do want to dwell for a second on this Committee of the Whole, because it made such a deep impression on me.

You must picture, Syd, a small conference room in Cyprus; it was in a basement of the hotel with some 50 officials seated at an oblong table, each representing one Commonwealth member state and in the second row there was a supporting cast: quite a lot of officials in the case of the larger states. The representatives of the smaller ones might have only one or even no supporters. We worked our way through long drafts circulated by the Secretariat and the process could take all night. The record was held by our final session in Limassol, Cyprus which lasted nearly 24 hours non-stop. Sandwiches were supplied in the conference room. You might say that the smell of humanity enriched the atmosphere. The protocol was that the representative of any member state was entitled to talk for as long as he liked, or she liked (but there were no *shes*, luckily for them, present) and on one occasion at 3am we listened for

some 45 minutes to the views on the Middle East of the representative of one small Commonwealth Pacific island territory. Eventually we emerged bleary eyed, short of sleep, under-exercised, with a final draft for submission to Heads of Government for their approval. We then got off our reporting telegrams to capitals and we left thankfully for the airport.

David Gillmore as PUS, attended the entire meeting of the Committee of the Black Hole in Limassol and afterwards he got a very nice letter from John Major, the Prime Minister to thank him for the work of the delegation which included the sentence: “Your own performance in sitting up night after night to negotiate a 74 paragraph communique plus a 52 paragraph annex, culminating in a 22-hour session into the final day, was an epic performance which will find its place in the annals of the Diplomatic Service”.

SM: Tell me if you can remember the substance of the two meetings in Cyprus and Auckland.

AG: Yes, well starting with Cyprus, the CHOGM there was not one of the best and it was inevitably dominated by discussion of the Cyprus problem because the Cyprus delegation tried to enlist the Commonwealth on its side in its quarrel with Turkey. The communique changed nothing of substance, but the Cyprus government was able to tell its public opinion that it had successfully championed their cause against Turkey. More helpfully, in Cyprus, the meeting had agreed to lift economic sanctions against South Africa (which at that point was still outside the Commonwealth) given the moves that the South African government under De Klerk was making to end apartheid and to grant voting rights to the non-white majority. But it also agreed to continue for the time being to maintain its arms embargo and this was fine as far as it went, but probably had very little effect on events in South Africa as de Klerk’s government inched its way towards accepting majority rule just a year later.

As I have already recorded separately, the meeting agreed to accept Cameroon as a member state. This was more or less in line with the recommendations I had made to British ministers after my recent visit to Cameroon and it paved the way for Cameroon’s attendance at CHOGM in 1995.

So, the 1993 meeting left me with a feeling of mild dread at the thought that I might still be AUSS for the 1995 meeting. And so it proved. But, in practice, the New Zealand meeting was more eventful and achieved much more than I had expected.

In '93, I'd flown out to Cyprus on the Prime Minister's RAF plane and I recall a briefing meeting with him on the flight when he was his usual friendly self. Otherwise I had seen virtually nothing of him in Cyprus. In '95 I flew out to New Zealand commercially via Tokyo, breaking my journey there for talks on Africa with my Japanese opposite number. But, once in Auckland, events conspired to bring me in closer contact with John Major.

The 1995 CHOGM was in New Zealand, in Auckland. Unfortunately it coincided with France's decision to conduct a series of nuclear tests - there were six of them in the Pacific and this inevitably provoked an angry debate at CHOGM, particularly from countries in the region and equally inevitably John Major, the PM, had to disassociate Britain from his colleagues' general condemnation of France's nuclear tests. I mean, frankly, Britain's own nuclear status and its friendship with France took precedence.

So, it looked at one moment as if the whole meeting was going to be dominated by this row, but in fact the row was superseded by the news on almost the first day of the meeting of the execution in Nigeria of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others in Nigeria. I should interject that Nigeria had decided not to attend CHOGM because it was frightened that it would be the subject of criticism and attack from the other Commonwealth members for its military dictatorship. Saro-Wiwa, was a writer and a human rights activist and he'd been condemned to death for four alleged murders. He claimed he was framed by Abacha's government and on the very morning of the CHOGM in Auckland the news reached us that he'd been executed the previous day by the Nigerian government.

In fact I heard the news at 6am in my hotel room in Auckland where I was rung up by the BBC, who wanted a comment and of course this was the first thing I had heard about it. Having only got to bed rather late the previous evening, I wasn't probably at my most brilliant. However, I disengaged myself as best as I could and went upstairs to find a private secretary who wasn't answering their internal phone. He'd actually heard the news and it was already agreed that the Prime Minister would have a breakfast meeting at which he would decide how to react to this news before he left for the retreat. (You remember that

CHOGMs are divided into two: the formal proceedings in the capital and then the Heads of Government go off for a retreat for discussion amongst themselves somewhere else; in this case, it was going to be at Millbrook.)

So, the PM held his breakfast meeting and I was invited to attend and I remember spending most of the meal answering questions from John Major as best as I could. Mercifully, I had decided to visit Nigeria just in advance of the CHOGM because I rather suspected that Nigeria might feature. I couldn't have predicted the execution, but I could have predicted and did predict that there would be discussion of Nigeria at the meeting. So, I'd gone off to Nigeria to brief myself and I was adequately briefed for the purpose. After the breakfast Major described the executions to the press as 'judicial murders' and said that he personally didn't see how Nigeria could stay in the Commonwealth under those 'circs' and simultaneously President Mandela, who appeared at CHOGM for the very first time, South Africa having been readmitted to the Commonwealth at the coming of majority rule in 1994, was saying to the press that *his* delegation would be recommending Nigeria's suspension until a democratic government was elected.

And so, that very morning, before the Heads of Government climbed into their plane for their retreat at Millbrook, there were emotional appeals by both Mandela and Mugabe and, what with their support and John Major's own backing and that of the Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, the Heads of Government were persuaded to suspend Nigeria from Commonwealth membership despite concerns voiced by some of them that to do so would infringe Nigerian sovereignty. The Heads also decided that, unless Nigeria made pretty rapid progress in fulfilling the agreed Commonwealth principles on democracy and good governance – these principles had been worked out at Harare in, I think, 1990, within a timetable which hadn't yet been decided, but was likely to be a couple of years - Nigeria would be expelled from the Commonwealth. I think it was the fact that the execution coincided with the meeting of the Heads of Government and they were all there together, that produced a decision, quite a clear decision, on the suspension of Nigeria.

Equally the execution affected the course of the debate at Millbrook, where a Commonwealth Action Programme on the implementation of the Harare declaration was agreed. This included a kind of ladder of measures, ranging from technical assistance to punitive action in the case of gross abuses of human rights, to support the Harare principles and encourage the

restoration of democracy if an elected government were overthrown. The Heads of Government also set up a standing Commonwealth ministerial action group to deal with violations of the Harare principles.

This action programme agreed by the Heads had been drafted and worked up by the Secretary General who'd been consulting fairly widely over a number of months and had been playing his cards close to his chest. We had been arguing for a fairly tough declaration because we wanted to use it to promote our good government agenda, but we weren't sure exactly where he had got to. Frankly I think we were pleasantly surprised that the Action Programme was as tough as it was and even more that it was agreed by Heads of Government

SM: Remind me who was the Secretary General was at the time?

AG: Chief Anyaoku was the Secretary General, a Nigerian whom I got to know quite well in London and who was an ally, but I felt the need to watch him closely and we didn't always agree.

SM: Presumably, you know, dealing with countries like Nigeria would have been in principle, a little more difficult for him anyway.

AG: Yes, and I think it was to his credit that he took as strong a stand as he did. So, that was *the* most important part of the new Zealand CHOGM. The other aspect of it was about membership of the Commonwealth because, as I said, this was the first time that South Africa had reappeared as a member of the Commonwealth and that was very good news. It was also Cameroon's first appearance and I think we've already spoken in another context about the decision to admit Cameroon. Another country which had applied for membership was Mozambique and we in Britain were a little undecided about this. The Secretary of State, Douglas Hurd, was inclined to stretch the criteria to include a country like Mozambique which hadn't of course ever been part of the British Empire, so strictly speaking it didn't conform to the usual historical criteria. On the other hand, it was surrounded by Commonwealth countries in southern Africa and the South Africans: Mandela, the Zimbabweans: Mugabe, and other Southern Africans were all in favour of admitting Mozambique.

SM: As a fellow frontline state?

AG: As a fellow frontline state, although it was of course post frontline times. And so it was decided that Mozambique would be invited to join and it was the first of the 'non-British' countries to join the Commonwealth. There was going to be another exception, later on, after my time, in the shape of Rwanda. So that was interesting and important for the Commonwealth. Otherwise, the CHOGM discussed the usual range of subjects: multilateral debt, money-laundering, financial crime, reform of the UN, aid and development, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Fiji, Bosnia, the other international issues. As usual the conclusions were drafted by the Committee of the Black Hole as in Cyprus, and recorded in a lengthy communique which I strongly suspect has never been read since, except by some aficionados.

But the British delegation, I think, came away from New Zealand feeling that our main objective had been achieved which was to capitalise on South Africa's return, to give the Commonwealth renewed impetus, particularly in its promotion of good government. And there was a feeling that the Commonwealth had indeed been given fresh vigour: people could point to the Millbrook Action Programme, the return of South Africa, the accession of Cameroon and Mozambique. Who they asked, would want to join a moribund club? I think probably it was too soon to judge then, but at least it looked as if we might have a better opportunity than for many years to turn the Commonwealth to British advantage.

CHOGM's last action was to accept the offer which John Major made to hold the next CHOGM two years later in 1997 and that offer was accepted. In the event, it was to be held in Edinburgh in October 1997 and to be chaired by Britain's newly-elected Prime Minister, Tony Blair, by which time I'm thankful to say I wasn't going to have to attend my third CHOGM because I was no longer Under-Secretary for Africa. By that stage I was in Canada.

SM: So Anthony, do you want to kind of sum up your final thoughts about your time as Assistant Under-Secretary of State?

AG: For me, it was one of the most rewarding and interesting jobs I did. I almost said *the* most interesting and rewarding, but anyone who knows Canada or Ghana will know that those were wonderful jobs.

It was rewarding because one was at the centre of policymaking; one saw what was happening across the board. I attended every morning the PUS's morning prayers (as it was called) when all the other Deputy Secretaries and Under-Secretaries attended and the PUS went round the table and anybody said what was on their mind and reported the main events of the day. So it was a wonderful way of keeping up with what was going on. The job was not easy; it was fairly stressful - one never knew quite what was going to happen next – an assassination in South Africa during the transition process might make an enormous impact – it certainly made an impact on one's daily agenda but it brought one in touch with a huge range of problems in countries and I loved it and I was very lucky to be able to do so much, so much travel.

Travel, I think, was a very important part of it. I do not think it would have been possible to have made the contribution that I hope that I *did* make without doing those forty-two or whatever individual country visits, in the course of which I met not always the head of government but very often the head of government and if they were in town, the foreign secretary and other senior ministers. I found it very important to try to gain the confidence of Heads of Mission. I remember when I was High Commissioner in Ghana I had a very good relationship with the then Head of West African Department Charlotte Rycroft, who sadly was killed in a car accident later in Canada, and we had a good correspondence going about policy towards Ghana and I wish looking back on it, I had managed to do more of that sort of thing with my Heads of Mission but my travel programme served that purpose.

I was conscious at the time, but more so since, of the importance of keeping in touch with other people in London interested in Africa: the experts, the academics, the Press, anybody with a knowledge of Africa. I wish I had spent more time with them but there are only so many hours in the day. British business head offices in London were an important source of information but it was also very important to try to keep them informed of what we thought was happening. I think it was important and I wish I'd done more background reading on African history. I did some, but not as much as I now wish that I had done.

Above all, there was an opportunity in that job to make a difference to British policy on Africa and to make a difference in Africa; and in a way, working as an AUS was a very bad preparation for working as High Commissioner to Canada because, as AUS Africa, you had an agenda. You had your good government agenda, you were trying to persuade countries to

do this that and the other and that was really unthinkable in Canada; there were items, and we can talk about this later when we talk about Canada, when we certainly had advice and points that we wanted to make to the Canadian government, but it was an entirely different relationship and perhaps, when I arrived in Canada, I had too much recently in mind the opportunities that I had had to change things as an AUS.

I suppose my final thought is that during (I think this is a comment valid throughout one's diplomatic career, but particularly so in African circumstances) one needed to be constantly aware that today might be the day when the totally unexpected happened.

British High Commissioner, Canada, 1996-2000

SM: So Anthony, we come on to your final posting in the Diplomatic Service which was to Canada. Can you tell us a bit about that and how it came about?

AG: I was of course working as an Under-Secretary on Africa and the Commonwealth in London; I started that in '92. In about '95 I began to think of where I might go for my final posting. At one point I put in a bid to go to Nigeria, but it was decided that I should stay in London a bit longer because, having just achieved majority rule, South Africa was going through an important phase. So I stayed on for another year. There were three posts, four posts perhaps, that I was interested in and at least partially qualified for:

- Athens, where I'd started my diplomatic career, but there was another better qualified candidate;
- New Delhi, which I'd not served in, but of course I'd been in Pakistan next-door, and again there was a better qualified candidate for Delhi;
- I was seriously interested in South Africa but for a number of reasons, some of them personal, I decided not to put in a bid for that. I might not have got it in any case because Maeve Fort was in the frame and proved to be an outstanding High Commissioner, and it was also suggested to me by the Chief Clerk of the day that I might put in a bid for Canada. That hadn't occurred to me and I felt very flattered because there'd been a succession of senior people, more senior to me, in the job before me, and indeed my successor was in a strict sense more senior than I was, so I think I was lucky to get that job. In my own mind I wasn't particularly well qualified for it.

I'd had minimal experience of the country, limited to being a waiter on Canadian National Railways during an Oxford vacation in 1961, but as far as professional qualifications were concerned, my African experience (my previous two jobs) really prepared me very poorly for Canada. There were such enormous differences in the nature of British interests and objectives: on the one hand, the developing world of Africa with a big aid programme, highly authoritarian in government and on the other hand, a highly developed, sophisticated country like Canada and a firm democracy.

The ease of access that I had had to African Heads of government and foreign ministers, both as AUS and previously in Ghana, contrasted with the difficulty that I was to have in getting access to (certainly) the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Finance Minister in Canada, although I had good access later to all the other ministers. On the question of how British diplomacy could actually make a difference in its foreign policy, the answer was very different in Africa, where the aid programme was an important tool, from what it was in Canada. More specifically, I lacked defence experience; I had no experience of NATO (which was important in the work we did in Canada). Trade Policy I had minimal experience of and I had no recent European Union experience. All that I saw as a handicap and indeed, so it proved to be. But whatever Canada was, contrary to the reputation that it sometimes had in the Service, it was never, never dull.

SM: What about the environment and what you saw as UK interests in Canada, then?

AG: Well, the political context was that there was a Liberal government throughout my time in Canada. The Liberals under Prime Minister Chrétien, had come into power in '93, three years before I arrived and they were to win a general election during my time there in '97 and they went on and remained in power for some time after I left. The other important political context was the fact there had been a referendum on Quebec secession just before I arrived, and I'd like to say more about that later.

As far as the economic context was concerned, the Canadians had been going through a difficult time economically. The Liberals confronted a huge public debt (over 100% of GDP) and they were very much the back of the G7 pack, so they had brought in a policy of very tough austerity. Despite that, Canada was still first in what was known as the UN Development Index which measured things like income, educational level and life expectancy. They came top year after year, to their immense pride.

As for our interests in Canada, fairly self-evident in most respects: large two-way trade and investment. Politically Canada's shared membership with the UK, of all the big international organisations: G7, NATO, World Trade Organisation, OECD, the Commonwealth, the UN, etc. We had very similar agendas on terrorism, drugs, crime, money-laundering, development; not I may say on climate change, which I'll mention later.

Another interest we had (and I didn't appreciate this until after I learnt I was going there) was in Northern Ireland and I'll say something about that; and a further, extremely important interest was the importance to us, to the UK, of the unity of Canada.

Defence: we had an important interest in Canada's commitment to NATO which was we felt, diminishing, and the contribution that they made helpfully to UN peacekeeping; military training: 10,000 British troops trained every year at the training ground in Suffield, in Alberta, and there was also a big training ground for infantry at Wainwright in the northern part of the province. There was also a Trails End army training camp in Alberta. The Air Force trained low-flying in fast planes at Goose Bay in Labrador. Defence sales: we had two or three possibilities of selling big equipment to Canada (and I'll say more about that later), and we had shared intelligence interests about which I won't say anything.

As to our objectives, objective-setting was fashionable (in my mind, it was valuable and important) and we worked out a set of objectives with the Foreign Office North American department and I'll just list them very quickly.

At the top, but I guess anyone could find this in any set of objectives for almost any country in the world, was simply to re-invigorate the bilateral relationship. We wanted to help keep Canada united, we wanted to encourage Canada to keep up its defence strength and keep it committed to NATO. Of course, we wanted to stimulate trade and investment, we wanted to strengthen trans-Atlantic links, especially relations between Canada and the European Union and we wanted to encourage Canadian support on international issues: climate change, for example and (as I've said), Northern Ireland.

In working out what we were trying to do and how to do it, we were very conscious that there were a number of quite specific obstacles in front of us, and the first (perhaps not entirely obvious) was that the relationship between the two countries was and is so close and so strong in every conceivable aspect of national life and government policy that it's quite

difficult for diplomats to make a difference. So the question was, 'How could we overcome that?'

A further obstacle was that if you're sitting in London looking across the Atlantic at the North American continent, what you're enormously conscious of is the great big bright sun of the United States and next-door, rather in the shadow, inevitably because of the disparity of size, is Canada. So London's interest (when one's sitting in London), the interest in North America, is dominated to a very large extent, by the United States. We felt that there was a strong risk of each country taking the other for granted. There were a few irritants, not overwhelmingly important. There were some trade issues and there was the question of pensions: the Canadian government argued that the British government should index-link the pensions paid to British citizens living in Canada. Successive British governments had declined to do this and this was a constant irritant, and of course, of great importance to the poor individuals concerned.

SM: Am I not right in understanding that what irritated the Canadians so much was that we did have such an agreement with the Americans to up-rate the pensions of British citizens living in the US and the Canadians felt this was poor repayment for their loyalty to the Crown, the Commonwealth and ..?

AG: I had forgotten that, I confess, but I'm sure you're right and that would have enhanced the Canadians' distress.

We had some powerful advantages; above all, of course, the close ties of blood. There were something between 30% and 40% of the Canadian population who had come from Britain originally and there were close family ties. We had a shared history, we had shared common values and, outside Quebec, of course we had a shared language. We had a shared Head of State, and I'd like to say a word about the monarchy in a minute.

The fact that the UK has global weight (member of the Security Council, etc.), enhanced Canada's interest in us. Canada saw the UK as an important gateway to the European Union, I recall a figure in 1998 of about 50% of Canadian investment in the European Union was in the UK. Question in 2017, 'What will happen after Brexit?'

SM: Absolutely.

AG: Further advantages were the shared membership of the international organisations that I have talked about. We had close defence ties, not only those training grounds but also a programme of exchange officers: there were twenty or so, maybe thirty or so at any one time, of British officers seconded to Canadian units

There was a tremendous Canadian interest, particularly amongst the young, in the arts, in music, in drama and we were going to be able to capitalise on that (I'll explain in a minute) and there were practical matters: the ease of access to ministers, to almost all ministers and to senior officials. There were frequent UK ministerial and official visits to Ottawa throughout my time, excepting Prime Minister Blair. Ministers used to call in at Ottawa on their way to Washington.

We in the High Commission and in the Consulates General found that all doors in Canada were open to British representatives. We had offices in Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver; we had some local representatives elsewhere and during my time we opened a little trade office, staffed by a locally-engaged officer (a Canadian) in Calgary and we found an honorary representative in Quebec city, who was very valuable in getting access to Bouchard for example, the Premier of Quebec.

The British Council had an outstanding programme, an excellent programme; the BBC was widely respected; there were close military and intelligence links and, as I've said, there were numerous official, professional, commercial, personal links of which the High Commission probably only knew a tenth of what actually was going on.

We share a monarch. We share the Queen, who is Head of State of both Canada and Britain. This meant that I did not have diplomatic credentials, the credentials that a head of mission is usually sent overseas with, from the Queen to the Head of State of Canada because it would have meant me delivering a letter from the Queen to the Queen or the Queen's representative. So I was the representative of the Prime Minister (at the time I was there, Tony Blair) and previous Canadian governments had rather kept the British High Commissioner at a distance during royal visits to Canada for perfectly understandable reasons. Prime Minister Chrétien and his government took a more relaxed view and Veronica and I were included in a very small (there were only 8 or 10 of us) tea party at the Prime Minister's official residence when the Prince of Wales visited Canada in 1996, and we were also included in '98 in a lunch which the Queen gave to Chrétien at Buckingham Palace. This was a small informal lunch of a dozen people and it was unusual and extremely nice for us to be included in such an event.

The Queen's visit to Ontario and Newfoundland in June '97 was interesting. Of course, I had no part in the Queen's programme in Ontario and initially the Canadian authorities told me they didn't see why it was necessary for me to go to Newfoundland, where the Queen was going to attend celebrations of John Cabot's 500th anniversary of his arrival at Newfoundland. I pointed out that if the Queen was there as the Queen of Canada, it would surely look a bit odd if there was no representative from Britain from which John Cabot had set sail. And this, I think, persuaded them that it was acceptable for me to attend and Veronica and I did so and it was great fun; we didn't meet Her Majesty, but we were included in a lunch for her.

A notable event, a tragic event of course, took place in August '97 with the death of Princess Diana, which aroused as much interest and dismay, as it did in London. Huge piles of flowers were left at the High Commission in Ottawa and at the Consulates General. I recall Brian Austin who was the Consul General in Vancouver, whose office was on the second floor, finding flowers on the pavement outside his office: the pile was so great they didn't know what to do with them. So he suggested tentatively in a radio interview, that it might be nice if people were to come in due course and take away a bunch of flowers in memory of Princess Diana, and in this way, quite soon, there were no flowers left, but they found a good and happy home and I thought that was a very imaginative thing to do.

The death of Princess Diana gave rise to some discussion in the press and amongst ministers, including Foreign Minister Axworthy and John Manley - I think he was Defence Minister or possibly Minister of Industry at the time - about the future of the Canadian monarchy, but Chrétien scotched that very quickly and made it clear that, as far as he was concerned, this was not a subject that needed to be debated. I think I'm right, that towards the end of my time, we in the High Commission felt that Canadian attitudes towards the monarchy were beginning to change and were not quite as strong as they had been, but the mood was perhaps changeable.

I used to reflect on to what extent sharing a monarchy with Canada helped and hindered the pursuit of our foreign policy objectives in Canada. There were some disadvantages. If the monarchy ever went through a period of unpopularity, as was the case after the death of Princess Diana, then Britain itself might suffer from that; and a further disadvantage I was conscious of was that we couldn't use a visit by the Queen to promote British objectives and interests in Canada in the way that her visits to the United States were used and gave the

opportunity to the Embassy in Washington to promote Britain. On the other hand, the advantages of sharing a monarchy were overwhelming. Not only could Britain benefit from the monarch's usual popularity, but the sense of sharing a monarch gave us a sense also of a shared identity, so in my mind the advantages of this shared monarchy are of fundamental importance. Question: Is this going to change? And I suppose that a moment of possible change might arise at the moment of the royal succession. I think that one has to bear in mind that for constitutional change of this kind to be made in Canada, a majority would be needed in both Houses of the Federal government in Ottawa and in each of the provincial legislatures, and that includes tiny Prince Edward Island, which was passionately royalist.

SM: OK Anthony, you've given us a lot of background there about the state of play in Canada, between Britain and Canada on your arrival. Given the state of the bilateral relationship, what did you then set out to do?

AG: The first year that I was there was the last year of John Major's Conservative government, so in a sense, the relationship was marking time. Labour won in May '97 (was it?) and in June '97 Chrétien and Tony Blair met (I think for the first time) in the margins of the G7 summit at Denver in the United States. And at that meeting they agreed something which came to be known as the UK / Canada Joint Declaration – a resounding title - it was a fairly boring bit of prose, but cleverly crafted, cleverly drafted and its purpose was to provide a stimulus to re-invigorating the bilateral relationship. The two prime ministers pledged themselves; specifically they recognised that although the relationship was solid and substantial, it could benefit from a process of modernisation. They wanted to broaden the range and depth of bilateral ties and there was more in that sort of vein.

That seemed to be a surprisingly valuable instrument, a tool if you like of our diplomacy because it meant that I could go along to any organisation or any ministry, any department in Canada and say: 'Look here's this resounding declaration issued by the prime ministers; what are we going to do about it in your neck of the woods?' and it had an effect. For example, for the first time in Ottawa, a Canada / UK parliamentary association was set up by the Canadian parliament to strengthen contacts with Westminster. There'd been plenty of individual contact but there hadn't been a sort of formal mechanism to encourage ...

SM: Because we'd never seen the need to have mechanisms to get close to somebody we were so close to.

AG: Precisely, but as time goes by, we couldn't continue to rely on that. So that was useful.

Memorandums of understanding were signed in all sorts of areas: education, aerospace, science and technology, prison services, law enforcement technologies and these provided a framework in which the relevant experts could be brought together and examine how they could help each other and learn from each other.

A Canada / UK Science and Technology fund was set up by the British Council and the Canadian National Research Council. And then there was a very jolly event called the UK Accents Festival of music, dance, film, literature, food and fashion, design; you name it, it was there. It took place in Ottawa, it was organised by the High Commission, by the British Council, the excellent British Council representative, and for a period of months there were all sorts of exhibitions, film shows, visits, designed to promote British activities in all these various fields. There was an exhibition for example, called 'Destroy', which was a punk, graphic design. I enjoyed opening that. There were three little statues, one of which was called 'Stump Girl' which looked like a cross between one of Tolkien's Ents, a sort of baby Ent and a child and it stood about 3 or 4 feet high just outside the High Commission office in downtown Ottawa. It was stolen! And this aroused immense interest in the Ottawa press. We thought we'd better replace it, so another one was cast and put in its place and then later on, the first one reappeared, so we had two 'Stump Girls'. Each step in this saga of the 'Stump Girls' received close attention in the local Ottawa press and was fun and gave us a good image I think, particularly amongst the younger Canadians.

We managed in other words to project a modern British image in Ottawa focussed very much on the 18-30-year-old age group. The *Ottawa Citizen* described Britain as a 'zap and zoom, high-tech outfit on the cutting edge of art'.

There were a lot of ministerial visits from the Tory government in my first year. I think there were no fewer than ten ministerial visits, including the Defence Minister, Portillo, Forsyth, and Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and others. Under Labour, '98 was a particularly busy year for ministerial visitors. Robin Cook the Foreign Secretary came, Chrétien was in London for the re-opening of Canada House; there were a lot of other ministerial meetings: defence, finance, trade, development, environment, transport, culture, education, public services. Gordon Brown as Chancellor of the Exchequer came to Ottawa in September/ October '98 for the Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting. In 1999 there were fewer visitors and by the time I left Canadian officials, ministers were beginning to ask:

‘when is Prime Minister Blair coming? We think that the British government must be losing interest in Canada: No Prime ministerial visit!’ In fact a visit by Blair took place not very long after I had left.

SM: Quebec’s attempt or the separatists in Quebec’s attempt to gain independence was a big issue when you arrived in Canada, just after the referendum; do you want to tell us about that issue as it developed while you were there?

AG: Yes. There had been a previous referendum in 1980 which had led to Quebec remaining part of Canada. The one that took place in 1995, just before I arrived, had been lost by the Quebec separatists by a very narrow margin: about 54,000 votes on a 93% turnout. So, 50.58% in favour of a united Canada against 49.42% in favour of secession: an extremely narrow margin and perhaps only saved just in the last two or three months of the campaign when the rest of Canada woke up to danger.

When I arrived, I discovered that there continued to be a serious concern amongst the rest of Canada about the threat of another referendum and possible secession and I reported as such in my ‘first impressions’ dispatch. In the event I was proved to be too pessimistic.

I’d like to say a few words about the policies the Federal government pursued to try to diminish the risk. Immediately after the referendum they sought a Supreme Court opinion on the legality of a ‘Quebec’ unilateral secession and two years later the Court published a very influential opinion, in which it concluded that Quebec could not secede unilaterally, but, if a clear majority of Quebecers voted for secession on a clear question, the rest of Canada should negotiate the terms of secession in good faith. In other words this meant no ‘UDI’, no Unilateral Declaration of Independence, the rest of Canada should be consulted and there should be a clear majority on a clear question.

SM: Do you want to talk about the question because that’s quite an important point, isn’t it?

AG: Yes, the question asked in October ’95 was, and I quote:

“Do you agree that Québec should become sovereign, after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new economic and political partnership, within the scope of the Bill respecting the future of Québec and of the agreement signed on June 12th 1995?”

Gobbledygook! What did it mean and did the voter understand it?

SM: The one thing that struck me was that everybody believed that it was a decision about whether Quebec was going to be independent however obscure the question was, at the time of the referendum.

AG: I'm sure that it's true. In the event, part of the response by the federal government was to publish something called the Clarity Act which was very much the brainchild of the Minister for Federal Provincial Relations, Stéphane Dion, a former academic who was very influential in the formation of federal policy on Quebec. The Clarity Act provided legislation which insisted on a clear question and a clear majority in any future referendum on Quebec independence, so that was part of the federal response.

During the course of '97 and '98 they developed what they called 'plan A' and plan 'B'. Plan 'A' was to show that the Federation worked and to make Quebecers feel more at ease within it. A declaration was made in Calgary in '97 by the Anglophone provinces - the rest of Canada - which acknowledged what it called Quebec's 'unique character', but it affirmed the equality of all provinces. So plan 'A' in a way was an attempt by the rest of Canada to say 'Quebec, we love you; you're an important part of Canada. We need you'.

Plan 'B' was the more negative side of the argument and it drew attention to the risks and consequences of separation and to ensure that if it happens it's conducted fairly and legally.

The question arose of what Britain's position should be and whether it should allow itself to be drawn into any kind of discussion on the future of Canada and the view was taken in London (quite correctly) that we had to be extremely careful not to be seen to be taking sides in an internal event, an internal matter for Canada. On the other hand, there were going to be advantages in making our position clear, so after a great deal of discussion at ministerial and official level involving Liz Symons, the Minister of State for North America in the Foreign Office, and involving also Robin Cook, the new Foreign Secretary, a formula was worked out for use by ministers and officials (including me as the High Commissioner) on Canadian unity. And I won't quote the whole thing but it began by saying 'what Canadians do on a matter of this kind is for them to determine in keeping with their deep respect for democracy and the rule of law; so far as the UK is concerned we attach great importance to our excellent relations with a strong and united Canada'. And I used to go around the country with a little note in my pocket which I could use at short notice on any occasion, and I used to draw on it in speeches. I remember using it on one occasion somewhere out in the west of Canada at a public seminar of some kind which happened to be attended also by the new Russian

Ambassador, Alexander Churkin, who subsequently went on to be the Russian Ambassador to the United Nations - a very powerful and able man (who sadly died in 2017 prematurely whilst he was still at work) - and he said to me after I'd quoted Robin Cook's words on this subject: 'one is always safe' he said 'using the words of one's own ministers'.

So that was our formula. The French had a similar formula, but theirs was slightly less clear: 'Non-indifférence et non-ingérence' – non-indifference and non-intervention.

President Clinton made a couple of visits to Canada. One I think before the referendum and one during my time in Canada and he made some important remarks on the value of federalism which were widely quoted in the press and I believe had some specific effect on Quebec opinion. I'm not sure looking back on it whether the British position had any long-lasting effect.

Throughout my time in Canada and during this debate on Quebec's future, I was very conscious of the possible parallels between Canada and the United Kingdom. Before I went out to Canada I remember calling on the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind who said (I can't remember the exact words) that he thought we should do well to pay attention to what was happening in Canada on possible Quebec separation because there could be implications for the United Kingdom's own debate on its future and on the possibility of Scottish independence. So I took an interest in it. I suggested that Sir Quentin Thomas, who was Head of the Constitutional Unit in the Cabinet Office, should come out to Ottawa for talks about devolution with George Anderson who was the Permanent Secretary (Deputy Minister, as it was called) for federal-provincial relations, for talks about devolution. I thought we might have lessons to learn from Canada. He came in '98. He had I think, a useful exchange during which the Canadians expressed their concern that UK devolution might prove to be a 'slippery slope'.

SM: So you've got Rifkind's exact words?

AG: I've looked up the exact quote by Malcolm Rifkind when I went to see him before going to Canada. He said: 'cessation would have implications on the UK's debate on its own future' and that phrase was very much in my mind throughout my time in Canada.

It was fairly clear in '97-'98 that North American department had doubts about the Quebec-Scotland parallel. They thought that I was pushing that parallel too hard. I personally, looking back nearly twenty years later, think that if anything, with the benefit of hindsight I

wasn't pushing it hard enough. I still think that Chrétien's policies are relevant to the UK today: plan 'A', to show that the union works in favour of Quebec (or Scotland) and the rest of Canada (or Britain) in contrast to the very negative campaign run by the British government from Westminster prior to the Scottish referendum in 2015 and plan 'B' on the consequences of separation. I think a further element worth considering is insistence that the rest of Britain should be consulted on the terms of separation if it were to happen and I can see merit in some kind of a 'clarity' act providing for a clear question, unbiased in either direction, with a clear majority, but I'm conscious that that might have implications for other parts of the United Kingdom as well.

What is the risk in future of Quebec cessation? For the moment the danger seems to have receded. By the time I left Canada I'd formulated in my mind four factors which, when they come together, could lead to trouble ahead. The first is the natural swing of the political pendulum under which inevitably a separatist 'Parti Québécois' will probably come to power; the Liberals won't be in power for ever in Quebec. The second is that at a certain point in the future they may discover a similarly charismatic leader to Lucien Bouchard, who was the very charismatic figure in the Canadian referendum of '95 and then subsequently became leader of the Parti Quebecois. The third is economic recession. When times are hard, people look around for somebody to blame and inevitably Ottawa is blamed by a Quebec government and that can cause trouble. And the fourth is, if the federal government of the day were to make a mistake - make some kind of political mistake e.g. by not paying enough attention to the possible risk of the thing happening. So I think that one needs to look out for those four sort-of signals which could be relevant in the future and maybe, the same applies to Scotland.

A quick word on the defence relationship and on NATO; remember, our objective was to encourage Canada to maintain its defence strength and its commitment to NATO. During my time in Canada, as a result of the economic problems and pressures on public expenditure, the Canadian defence budget had come under pressure and Canadian defence forces were no longer as effective as they had been in the past. The Canadian Chief of Defence staff of the day went as far as to say that 'if the government of Canada were to ask me to go into a high-intensity theatre of operations with the equipment that I have to day, I would have to say that I cannot do it'. Foreign Minister Axworthy, perhaps conscious of this, developed something he called his 'Human Security' agenda. He found I think, in Robin Cook, a useful ally on some of these things. They were all well-worthwhile doing for themselves. The Human

Security agenda included such things as getting international agreement on a ban on illegal trade in small arms, a landmines treaty which was signed in '97 with Clare Short, Minister for Overseas Development, from London coming out for the signature ceremony. Action against human rights abuses, action to protect civilians during conflict, action to ban the use of child soldiers – something like that.

SM: I seem to recall defence sales being a very salient issue.

AG: Yes, it was big and important. There were two or three major contracts which engaged the attention of the High Commission during my time. We were successful after a long campaign in persuading the Canadians to lease four Upholder submarines, our nuclear-powered submarines which had been run by the Royal Navy. And after an exciting and particularly eventful campaign, we eventually persuaded the Canadian government to buy 15 air-sea rescue helicopters, the Cormorant helicopters and also 18 Hawk trainers. This involved a lengthy campaign with the government and I made personal interventions with the Prime Minister, his foreign policy advisor, the Defence Minister, the Minister of Public Works, senior officials, relevant members of parliament and with of course, advice all the time from Whitehall and the defence staff of the High Commission.

SM: I seem to recall that Chrétien wasn't keen on the deal. He wanted to give the business elsewhere.

AG: You're right. On assuming office in '93 he actually cancelled a deal which had been concluded under his Conservative predecessors on the grounds that it didn't provide value for money, so we had to persuade the Canadian government that they were wrong and that in fact, it did provide value for money – it was a fair price and the equipment was exactly the equipment needed by the Canadian authorities. So that was the principal obstacle that we had to overcome.

SM: Trade and investment?

AG: Trade and investment: an important part of our work. A lot of the work of course was done by the Consuls General in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver; indeed the Consul General in Toronto was the Director General for British Trade and Investment throughout Canada. So he ran the British effort in Canada. I used to go down to Toronto - I must have visited it some forty times in my four years in Canada - and to Montreal, nearly thirty times, and I would go and lend my support to the work being done by the Consuls General. We

opened a new trade office (as I think I've mentioned) in Calgary and I used to get involved in one or two specific pieces of business. I recall trying to persuade a company called JDS Fitel who made fibre-optics to invest in Britain. I got to know the Chief Executive and indeed the owner Jozef Strauss, a delightful Canadian Jew living in Ottawa and Veronica and I got to know him and his wife a bit. We invited them to dinner on one occasion and of course we realised that we were going to have to make sure the meal was kosher, so Veronica went out and bought some new china which would be the first time the china was used, therefore acceptable to a Jew and the kitchen was duly vetted by and probably blessed by a Rabbi and we took very considerable precautions to make sure he would enjoy and feel comfortable in our house.

SM: He was obviously very, very orthodox?

AG: He was an extremely orthodox Jew, you're quite right and I'm happy to recall (I think I'm right in saying) that they did in fact, make an investment in Britain. I don't know if they're still here.

We spent quite a lot of time trying to strengthen the transatlantic link, particularly between the European Union and Canada and to promote the UK as Canada's gateway to Europe. We were conscious of course that the Canadian centre of gravity was probably gradually shifting westwards, so although Canadian links with Europe were strong, their links with Asia and Latin America were of growing importance and above all the Canadian economy was dominated by their membership of the North American Free Trade area (NAFTA) with the US and Mexico.

To some extent the formal relationship seemed a bit 'stuck' when I arrived. This was partly a result of the lingering effects of the Turbot War when Spanish fishermen off Newfoundland looking for turbot had been arrested by the Canadians for using nets with too small a mesh. This had left a very nasty effect on Canada's relationship with the European Union. It was partly because the EU-US partnership – the transatlantic economic partnership - always seemed to take precedence for understandable reasons. And I think both sides in Ottawa and Brussels and London had difficulty in finding the people, the human resources and the sheer political will to tackle the various irritants in the trading relationship. I won't go into details, but things like genetically modified organisms, wine-labelling, veterinary standards, the disease affecting pines – the pinewood nematode. There was a lot of technical work to be done to try to solve these trade irritants. There was a certain amount of activity which was

helpful I think, during my time. There was an EU – Canada action plan worked out in '96. In '97 we exchanged lists of barriers to trade; in '97 there was an agreement banning the use (particularly by the Canadians in the far north) of leg-hold traps in catching animals. We, the UK, tried to do our best to push forward the EU-Canada relationship during our presidency of the EU (the first half of '98); it was during that time that Robin Cook visited Canada.

Unfortunately his visit happened to coincide with some unwelcome publicity in the British national press about his marital affairs and I had to show him on arrival at the Ottawa airport what the Canadian press were saying on the subject. He spent the journey from the airport to the Foreign Ministry, when I had hoped to be able to brief him on the talks he was going to have with Foreign Minister Axworthy, in talks with his political staff in London on how to deal with this unwelcome publicity.

He attended at our request, a seminar that we had organised - Martin Uden, the Economic Counsellor, had largely organised this. It took place in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and present were all the representatives of the European Union countries in Canada. There were members of the press; there were Canadian officials. It was a big event - there must have been more than 100 people in the room and it was an opportunity to debate the EU-Canada relationship. We had hoped that the Foreign Secretary would agree to give a short speech to this event timed to coincide with his short visit, but we were told by his private office that he couldn't commit himself to giving such a speech because he wouldn't have time to write it himself. He had talks with Axworthy, as I have said, mainly on the Human Security agenda.

The other big event in the EU-Canada relationship during my time was Chrétien's visit to London; I've mentioned this already. This was in May '98 and so we were in the presidency and we took the opportunity of Chrétien's meeting with Prime Minister Blair for them to sign an agreement between the EU and Canada on some minor trade-related matters.

The following year '99, EU –Canada relations continued frankly, to languish. In the year before I left, the final year before I retired the Foreign Office had decided to look again at some possible areas of co-operation between the EU and Canada on things like wine and spirits and veterinary matters and mutual-recognition qualifications. There was a highly technical agenda which was of great importance to those concerned, but I don't recall any great advance in any of these areas.

SM: Northern Ireland was a big issue, I know; I remember.

AG: I had no idea when I was posted to Canada that I would be so much involved in Northern Ireland affairs and I confess that I was not well-sighted on the matter. I had been advised however by my predecessor Nicholas Bayne to visit Belfast and acquaint myself with the latest state of play. You remember the Good Friday Agreement was eventually signed in the course of '97, so negotiations were ongoing at that time. And I found on arrival, that the Canadians were indeed extremely interested in Northern Ireland, mainly perhaps because of the large community of Irish origin, both Catholic and Protestant, in Canada. I was constantly asked 'how things were going'; I was occasionally asked to make speeches. I recall being invited to be the guest of honour at a dinner in Toronto given annually by an organisation known as the 'Apostles' and there were 12 of them as one would expect and half of them were of Catholic Irish origin and half of them were of Protestant Irish origin and their purpose in life was to demonstrate that Irishmen of all faiths could sit down and 'break bread' happily together, and I gave a speech to that dinner. On another occasion my Irish colleague in Ottawa, Paul Dempsey, with whom I worked very closely and who became a personal friend, he was invited down as the guest of honour at the same occasion.

Specific things that the Canadians did to help the search for peace in Northern Ireland included the appointment of General John de Chastelain, who had been a Canadian CDS and Ambassador to Washington – he was a major figure, incidentally of Scottish origin - and he was invited to be the Chairman of the Independent International Commission in Northern Ireland under the peacekeeping agreement, responsible for ensuring the decommissioning of arms by paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland. And he did that. He went out in '97; little did he expect that he would continue to do it until 2011 and he played a significant part in the decommissioning process.

The former Chief Justice of New Brunswick, a man called William Hoyt, was invited by us and I remember conveying the invitation to him in '98 to take part in the Bloody Sunday enquiry and he too was engaged in that process for very much longer than he must have expected at the time. Also in '98 a Professor Clifford Shearing who'd been Director of the Centre of Criminology at the University of Toronto was invited to join the Independent Commission on policing in Northern Ireland and he made a valuable contribution to that. More generally - the Canadian government provided financial support for some of the NGOs working to bring the two communities together in Belfast.

In I think it was '98 (it might have been '99) Chrétien himself visited both Belfast and Dublin. I went with him in his party to Belfast and he met all the main figures involved at the time. I remember asking whether he was going to have an opportunity to visit some of the worst areas affected by the troubles in Belfast and initially his programme would have taken him well clear of the big wall which separates parts of Belfast and I'm happy to say that he did go down and see them because it seemed to me very important that with so much Canadian interest in what was really happening in Canada it was important for the Prime Minister to see for himself the real situation.

And in addition to Chrétien's visit to Belfast and Dublin I recall hosting both David Trimble of the Ulster Unionists and John Alderdice of the Alliance party on their visits to Ottawa for talks with the Canadian authorities. So there was a lot going on on Northern Ireland and I found it of absorbing interest in having the opportunity to understand better what was actually going on.

Another international issue on which we were active was climate change. You recall there was an agreement in Kyoto which must have been in '97 (was it?) when agreement had been reached on a possible new climate change treaty. Canadians had not been able to sign up to it possibly because of the position of the provinces - environmental matters were a matter for them rather than the federal government and the crux of the matter was whether Canada should take the domestic measures needed to reduce CO2 gases by the 6% they had actually promised in Kyoto. I felt that that hope was 'moonshine' frankly. We did our best through a policy of dialogue, talking to the press, persuasion, talking to Canadian authorities to persuade the Canadian government of the seriousness of the threat. I invited Sir Robert May the government's Chief Scientific Advisor to come out to stay at Earncliffe and to give a lecture to the Canadian official and scientific community in Ottawa, which was a very well attended event.

SM: Okay Anthony, let's move on to talk about how you spent your time in Canada and get some kind of impressions of, your impressions of Canada from your time there.

AG: I did a lot of touring. I probably spent about 30% of my time outside Ottawa - a lot of visits to Montreal and Toronto as I've said. Visits to other provinces I counted up once and I probably made about 50 to the other provinces during my time - eight each to British Columbia and Alberta. I was lucky enough to be taken up in a Canadian Air Force Hercules to 'Alert', the listening station 400 miles from the North Pole on a visit there, and I was also

included in what was known as the Northern Tour of Northern Canada. The Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a tour for diplomatic Heads of Mission in turn, to go (again in a Hercules) all-round the north and we went to Iqaluit, to Resolute, to Polaris, to Pond Inlet and so on, ending up in visiting Churchill on Hudson Bay and we had the opportunity in the course of a week to learn some of the basic facts about the North. And one has to bear in mind that the sheer size of the Northwest Territory and the Yukon is the same as Europe west of the Urals, plus Turkey, but it's got a population of 98,000 people or it had at that stage – half of whom were aboriginal, and the treatment of aboriginals was an important and difficult matter.

We were told of the strategic importance to Canada of the north, both in terms of minerals, oils and gas and I think a kind of psychological importance too, to the country. We learnt at the scientific centre on Resolute that the most recent research had found temperatures of minus forty, instead of the expected minus 55 or 60, under the influence of global warming. It was clear that the Canadians attached great importance to their sovereignty over the whole of the North and we wondered whether in the future they would run into trouble with other countries wanting, as the ice began to recede, wanting access to and free passage through the North. Looking out of our Hercules' window hour after hour as we crossed this great frozen expanse, members of the Diplomatic Corps from the Sahel in west Africa (desert areas), clearly saw a very attractive source of fresh water and we wondered in the future if California, for example, wouldn't want to try to persuade the Canadians to draw fresh water from the north. And some of the diplomats with us came from highly populated, densely populated areas and we could imagine them saying to themselves 'a useful space for more immigration' and indeed the extreme North was no more inhospitable in its way than some of the countries from which they came. So it was a fascinating week-long expedition.

I spent a lot of my time giving speeches and in short appearances on television, radio and press. I recall a particularly memorable and enjoyable indeed, visit to Montreal when Veronica and I were invited to be the guest of honour at the annual Saint Andrew's Ball. We were accommodated by the committee in the Queen Elizabeth Hotel and were given room 1472, which I'm sure you'll recall was the room in which John Lennon and Yoko Ono conducted their second 'bed for peace' event, in something like 1969 (I forget the exact date). Then we went from there down to the ballroom to take part in the festivities.

In the course of '98 which seems to have been a particularly busy year, I made something like twenty-six platform speeches. One of them was in French in Quebec; another was at the unveiling in Quebec City of statues of both Churchill and Roosevelt, but a statue of Mackenzie King the Canadian Prime Minister of the day had been left out by the Quebec authorities and my speech needed to steer a rather careful path between avoiding offence to Quebec on the one hand and avoiding offence to the federal government on the other hand.

In the same year I probably made in addition to my twenty-six platform speeches: twenty more, shorter speeches (5-10 minutes), five TV appearances, editorial briefings, radio interviews. I used to rely on colleagues to do some of the drafting, but once I got into my stride I was probably drafting two-thirds of these myself; I probably placed too heavy a load on certainly some of the staff, in particular speeches that were related to areas that I really knew nothing about, like NATO and others.

I also did my best to support something called the London Goodenough Association of Canada. There is a house in London, in Mecklenburg Square, which serves as a kind of boarding house – progressively, it's becoming a college for post-graduate students from all over the world and there's a very strong Canadian membership, and it was founded by my grandfather in 1931. So because of the name association, I was invited to meet them and they used to come and have drinks once a year in the Residence in Ottawa and I would meet their membership throughout Canada, wherever I went. Somebody from the London Goodenough Association would pop up and say 'are you related?' and the answer was 'yes' and they would be friendly and nice.

SM: I also recall that the Canadians had difficulty in believing that your name really was 'Goodenough' and I remember one lady introducing you as 'Sir Anthony Goodenow'.

AG: That's common. One particular occasion I remember was a visit by Stephen Hawking and he came to a lunch that I gave for a small group of Canadians including the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, down in Toronto. We had a very interesting conversation between him and the rest of us - him with his voice synthesizer, on the future of the world. I wish I could remember exactly what he said. He also attended - he Stephen Hawking attended - the opening of something called the 'Sudbury Neutrino Laboratory' in northern Ontario.

I used to take advantage of visits by ministers and others to Ottawa to organise discussions with Canadian opposite numbers and experts over dinner or lunch. Clare Short came to such

an event, Adam Ingram, Chris Smith, the Intelligence Security Oversight Committee, the House of Lords' Select Committee on Science and Technology, Sir Robert May and many others. And the Canadians used to enjoy these occasions – they were very good at taking part in a 'sort-of' semi-organised round-table discussion and I like to think they were useful.

SM: You've got your own impressions of Canada.

AG: Yes, inevitably. These developed and changed as time went by. Initially it was easy to believe, as the Canadians maintained, that this was the best country in the world (apart I suppose from Britain) and there were some obvious ways in which it was extremely successful. It had a small population in a very large territory. The quality of the people was very high and they were well educated. They had rich natural resources – oil, gas, minerals, timber. They had a very high standard of living. Their democracy worked. They had a good respect for human rights and despite their growing ethnic diversity in their immigrants, social relations were very harmonious. And they had, they were lucky I think – not every country has this - to have in the United States, a strong and friendly neighbour. And of course I asked myself whether this picture was accurate and reliable and inevitably as time went by, some of the problems that Canada faced came increasingly into focus. Initially I could see clearly enough that a major problem was Canadian unity (we've talked about that), the increasing alienation of the west: the growth for example in Alberta was much greater than the Atlantic Provinces; the aboriginal issue was a major problem - a lot of poverty and there was a dilemma for the Canadians in whether to encourage integration or whether to go for self-government, which is what they did with the creation in the north of Nunavut.

As far as the economy was concerned; yes, the recovery of the Canadian economy from the hard times of '93 had been a remarkable success story. The figures and facts showed that, but it was also true that Canada was over dependent on the US market. If the US ever 'caught cold' Canada risked 'pneumonia'. There was a growing 'brain drain' to the United States. It was said that between '89 and '96 something like 35,000 professionals of one kind or another went to the US; that the net loss increased from 11% in the '80s to something like 50% in the '90s. A single example: the thousand nurses who left in the '80s or 90s represented 40% of their graduating class. Another weakness was the obvious lower productivity in Canada than the US. And there was a disconnect between the country's ability to create wealth and to create jobs.

There were some social issues becoming increasingly visible. The old were doing extremely well, rather like the UK, but the young were having a harder and harder time to adjust to the changes that they faced in their expectations. So I could see a risk in the future of tension between the generations. There was a growing disparity between the very high salary earners of the Silicon Valley (so-called), near Ottawa and the very low wage earners in places like the Nova Scotia coal mines. There was also a process of what you might call political balkanisation. The governing party, the Liberals, two-thirds of its MPs came from one province, namely Ontario. The main opposition party, Reform Party had no MPs east of Manitoba and the next largest party, the Bloc Québécois (the Quebec Secessionist Federal party), had MPs in only one province and as for the Conservative party (in the first half of my time) they were very sparsely scattered although obviously they recovered later.

I asked myself whether there was too much government. Were there too many layers? There was the federal layer; there was the provincial layer; there was the municipal layer. Were there too many provinces? Was there too big a disparity in size between the mighty Ontario and the tiny P.E.I.? Was the central government too big? I compared California which had a slightly bigger population and a bigger economy than the whole of Canada and it sent to Washington 54 members of Congress. The Canadians (smaller) sent 399 representatives to Ottawa. And the result of all this was an expensive and very burdensome bureaucracy with overlapping and rather confusing responsibilities between the different layers of government. And then there was the issue of where the population lived. On the one hand 70% of the population lived in eight major cities and 80% of the total population lived in towns of over 10,000. So, on all those grounds one needed I think to conclude that although the picture of the best country in the world was true, there were some warning signals ahead. On the other hand (and I think this the sort-of final word on the subject for me), there was a healthy determination; a really wholly admirable determination by both the government and the people to face up to these and other issues they faced, and none of my reservations fundamentally changed the picture of a highly stable, prosperous, healthy and fully functioning democracy.

SM: You wanted to say something about the Canadian identity, I think.

AG: Yes. I mean the Canadians agonise over 'do they share a national identity'. For example, there was a quiz in one of the local press and the winning entry was Question: Define the Canadian identity. The winning answer was: 'As Canadian as possible under the

circumstances.’ Trudeau in the 1970s is quoted as having said ‘Canada is a country not a nation’ and people would refer to the Canadian mosaic of its peoples – mostly immigrants compared to the American melting pot. I remember talking to some Americans in Williamsburg and they regarded Canadians as being in the United States’ ‘attic’.

There was another nice little piece in the *Globe and Mail* in Ottawa: ‘Canadians are generally indistinguishable from Americans and the surest way of telling the two apart is to make this observation to a Canadian’. On the other hand there were clear differences between Canada and in particular the United States and I think this does help to define the Canadian identity. Whereas the United States’ constitution talks about ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’, the Canadian constitution talks about ‘peace, order and good government’. I remember asking the Mayor of Kingston who’d recently met the Mayor of Syracuse in New York State, whether they’d discussed the differences between the two countries and he said ‘Yes’ and we came to the conclusion that in the United States, the US government is regarded as a threat to the rights of its citizens whereas in Canada government is there to provide protection for their rights.

I recall words written by Jan Morris, the writer and journalist, in 1995 just before the referendum. She wrote: ‘the end of Canada would mean the end of ‘Canadianess’, the general Canadian sense of public kindness and concern would be overwhelmed by the general American sense of *dog-eat-dog*’, and I think that put it very nicely.

I give the last word to the High Commission Information Officer Laura Markle who went on a briefing course to London on information work and she was asked when she came back whether she’d had a good time and enjoyed it and she said: Yes, everybody had been extremely friendly, but she’d been puzzled by only one thing, which was when she got on the tube to go to work in the morning, and had said ‘Good morning’ to the carriage, nobody had replied.

SM: She didn’t understand the rules, obviously.

AG: So, my conclusion when I wrote my ‘first impressions’ dispatch was that even Canadians of very widening ethnic origins shared common characteristics of civic-mindedness, tolerance, lack of stridency and seriousness of purpose.

To finish, one or two things stick in the memory: the arrival of the *Matthew* from Bristol having crossed the Atlantic – the replica of John Cabot’s ship in 1497; in his so-called

discovery of Newfoundland. It arrived out of the mists early one morning with the Queen sitting under a canopy with I hope, a foot-warmer and a blanket around her - out of a morning mist in a bitterly cold summer's day in Newfoundland as the drizzle came down, and all the festivities that followed that event.

The tour I made to the North on the Hercules, which I talked about; my visits to Labrador, where I saw RAF low-flying exercises in Suffield; the big tank training exercise in Alberta; the strength of the defence relationship. Chrétien's visit to London; Canada's contribution to the peace process in Northern Ireland; my annual appearance at the equestrian show jumping championship held at Spruce Meadows in Calgary by Ron and Marg Southern – an occasion when the arena saw contests between the top show jumpers from all over the world with an audience of 50,000 and I was invariably invited by Ron to give the opening speech; the only occasion I have given a speech to 50,000 people who actually listened. A very short speech – four minutes was max.

I remember of course the holidays we had. We were lucky, we went hiking in the Rockies; we went skiing in the Eastern Townships. We visited Georgian Bay (part of the Great Lakes system), staying with Veronica's Canadian cousins. We went dinghy-sailing off Nova Scotia; we explored the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec; we went whale-watching and bear-watching in a ketch off Alaska from Vancouver Island; we walked in the Gros Morne National Park in Newfoundland. We spent an unforgettable final two or three days at an Assiniboine lodge in the Rockies.

And I remember also, the pleasure of living in that marvellous house 'Earncliffe' which had been first owned by John A. MacDonald the first Prime Minister of Federated Canada and which the British government had bought in the '20s as the house for the British High Commissioner. It was in an excellent strategic place, just opposite the Department of Foreign Affairs and Canadians of all walks of life loved coming to it so it was both a family centre and a centre for us to entertain and get to know our Canadian hosts.

SM: 'Earncliffe', didn't the Canadians ask us to give it back?

AG: They did so in the time of Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister and I can't remember the name of the Canadian Prime Minister who – he was a Conservative Prime Minister.

SM: John George Diefenbaker?

AG: No, later than that! My mind's a blank. Anyhow, they did ask for it 'back', to which the answer was 'they never had it in the first place' and Mrs Thatcher made it absolutely clear to the Canadian prime minister of the day that it was British property and would remain so. It was Brian Mulroney!

SM: The other question I wanted to ask was, I seem to recall that after you'd been about a year in Canada, you were knighted. Tell us about that and the experience and how you felt about it.

AG: Yes, it happened about a year after I left, by complete surprise. I'd rather discounted the possibility and of course I was enormously chuffed. I recall that I got the news on the morning of an evening that I'd agreed to go out to supper *en famille* with the Deputy Minister of DFAIT (Gordon Smith) and his wife and I rang him up beforehand to say: 'Gordon, I should warn you. I've been be-knighted!', and he was full of congratulations.

I mean, I think that the Canadians took it as a compliment to themselves that Britain sent somebody who was subsequently knighted. It certainly helped me in getting access wherever I wanted it and I was usually put in the front row of any diplomatic activity. I think knighthoods, these gongs are, if not a tool of the trade, at any rate a very valuable instrument in promoting Britain overseas and I very much regret that my more recent predecessors haven't been similarly honoured. I have no doubt at all that if I were there now I would not have been knighted, so it's a changing policy that one's seeing rather than a downgrading of the quality of the people that Britain sends to Ottawa.

SM: One assumes that that can be interpreted, misinterpreted by the recipient countries in question who suddenly feel that their relations are being downgraded in some way.

AG: Yes, I think that could happen in some countries. I don't think it probably happens in Canada because Canadians understand what's going on and understand the public trend of policy, but I think it's a mistake.

SM: Anthony, thank you so much for sharing your recollections.