

## **BDOHP Biographical Details and Interview Index**

Sir Christopher Mallaby, GCMG 1996 (KCMG 1998, CMG 1982); GCVO 1992.

Born 7 July 1936; son of late Brig. A. W. S. Mallaby, CIE, OBE, and Margaret Catherine Mallaby (née Jones); married 1961, Pascale Françoise Thierry-Mieg; one son three daughters. Died 28 February 2022.

Education: Eton; King's College, Cambridge

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## BRITISH DIPLOMATIC ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Sir C Mallaby on 17 December 1997

Recorded by John Hutson.

JH. Sir Christopher, you have done some pretty important things and held some fairly high up post in your career, but before we get there could I ask you, were there any special reasons, particular reasons, why you chose this career or why it chose you?

CM Well, I had travelled a bit. I spent a year doing National Service in Germany. I had gone abroad a bit on holidays and study trips from school and I was attracted by a job which would take me around the world. I had found at school that my least bad subject was languages and so I had added German to French at the age of 15 and that had worked for me better than other subjects. Then I suppose there was a family tradition of working for the public service in one form or another. In my case a lot of my family had been in the Indian civil service and a number, including my own father, had been in the army. I was not attracted by the army as a full time career, but diplomacy seemed an exciting possibility and was my aim, even from the age of about 16.

JH. I see, well that covers your pre-career career. Looking at your first jobs and posts, FCO, Moscow, FCO, Berlin, FCO again, could you tell us whether there was any consultation with personnel department about this, any plan or grand design or even particular factors or was it simply that these posts, these jobs became vacant at that sort of time?

CM. I was 'invited to express a preference'; that was exactly the phrase used as to the hard language I would learn just after entering the Diplomatic Service. I said I would like to do Arabic or Russian and they put me on Russian; I had a very very good eight month intensive course in Russian doing nothing but that, which certainly took one from nothing to being able to use the language for most purposes. So that was definitely in line with my wishes. I also wanted to do the thing I next did, which was to spend three months at the UN General Assembly in 1960; that was the Assembly when Khrushchev and reams of other top figures of the world turned up exceptionally at the Assembly. One funny incident for me was that I

happened to be sitting two rows behind Khrushchev when in fury he took his shoe off and banged it on the desk, protesting against something that Harold Macmillan had said. I am a witness before history, believe it or not, that he did have a hole in the heel of his sock! After that I was moved logically, since I now spoke Russian, to the Embassy in Moscow and spent two and a half years there. That again, was what I wanted and what I expected. Then I had a period in London, again absolutely orthodox. I was dealing in that case with Western Europe; Portugal, Austria, Switzerland, I found there some diversification into different subjects, not dealing there with East-West relations. Then something odd happened. I filled in an enormous list of posts I wanted to go to, about sixty I think. I sent it to the personnel department. There was a misprint; the typist had missed one place out, which was Berlin, and that was where they sent me. So evidently my list was not influential, but I did want to go to Berlin, so in spite of the misprint, I did go to one of the places I wanted. I spoke the language from school and from National Service. I had three years there, again a diversification, a different sort of subject from before, the very specialised subject of the British role as a protecting power in west Berlin, dealing every day with the Berlin politicians about domestic Berlin matters where the allies' say was still relevant. And that was again a completely different role and I think a building block in teaching me different subjects.

JH. Berlin was not then a capital city but a very special place, as you say; it is good to be reminded of that. Is there anything else about these first postings and first jobs before we move where I would like to go, which would be to your year at the Harvard Business School.

CM. Well, after Berlin I was brought back prematurely to the Foreign Office. I was furious to leave Berlin but thrilled about the new job which was to be the desk officer for Soviet foreign policy and that meant really the co-ordinating job at desk level in the Foreign Office on everything to do with East-West relations, everything to do with the Soviet Union, I did not cover the bilateral British-Soviet relationship but all the wider issues of dealing with the Soviet Union; it was a very varied thing, trying to counter Soviet expansion in the Third World, arms control, and the Berlin quadripartite negotiations which brought together two of my areas of knowledge from previous postings. So that was the first really intensive job that I had and it was one of those Foreign Office jobs where there is a pile of policy, a pile of content and a pile of hours; I mean, working always 10-12 hours a day. But it was thrilling

and adrenaline made up for the excessive time spent on the job.

JH. Thank you, that is an admirable summary. And already your career begins to look less random than the beginnings of many equally prominent people. Coming then to the Harvard Business School, which was sometime in 1971; in the works of reference it looks like a sabbatical year, - was it?

CM. No, I had wanted very much to get involved in export promotion, to have a complete change of subject in my work and at that time the most exciting export promotion job at my 1st. Secretary level seemed to be the one dealing with industrial exports in the United States, based in New York. But I didn't know anything about the subject and I wanted some way of learning intensively. The Foreign Office had a system then of sending one person to the Harvard Business School every summer for a three month highly intensive MBA course. We didn't do absolutely the whole MBA course; for instance, accountancy was left out. But we did the marketing element of the MBA course, which normally takes two years, and we did it in three months under extreme pressure. It was very thrilling, very difficult, but it was a way of learning vicariously about American industry, because the cases upon which Harvard bases its teaching are cases set in American industry; so it was an ideal preparation. Throughout the summer of 1971 I was there and in September I moved to New York to do this export promotion job, where I was for three and a half years.

JH. I see. Well it certainly was an ideal preparation and one of the instances, and there aren't so many, of well targeted training, very special training, in the Service. Was the pressure more or less once you were in New York and working on trade development?

CM. Well I had a vertical learning curve, so to speak, to get past in a completely new subject. I had wanted this. I had wanted diversification. At that time it was also thought right that people who had a future in the Diplomatic Service should do commercial work at roughly that age. So I was keen for lots of reasons to do it. And it was a voluminous job; I mean the volume of case work of helping British exporters to find agents, to find customers in the United States; the volume of seeking opportunities in American industry was almost limitless, there were endless opportunities. I think I probably worked the same volume of time as I had

worked in the Foreign Office before, with the difference that it was less difficult inherently; but there was more of a learning curve for me to deal with. The hardest bit was persuading British companies to go for some of the more ambitious opportunities.

JH. Do I gather that you were, so to speak, your own commercial officer or did you delegate the spade work, finding agents as you say, to your juniors.

CM. I had seven commercial officers, two of whom were career diplomats and the others were engineers and other technically qualified people engaged on contract for those particular jobs and I delegated the bulk of the work, the case work to them. But I had to supervise the work quite carefully and there were instances where a larger opportunity was at stake, a larger British company was seeking representation, where there was perhaps a political interest from a constituency MP in Britain, or where we had to go to a British company at a high level to try and persuade them to go for an opportunity; those were the ones where I got personally involved in the case work and I did quite a lot of it. The other side of the job was co-ordination or leadership of the work of the consulates across the United States in export promotion of industrial goods. And I spent at least half my time as a sort of central manager of a very large operation with, I can't remember exactly how many now, but I should think 30 or 35 commercial officers deployed across the country in various posts.

JH. Thank you. That was very interesting. You told me once, quite some time ago, that during this period, I think, one major firm whom you helped to set up its American operation offered you a job. Is that of interest in the relationship between the Diplomatic Service and export promotion and British firms?

CM. There were in fact two firms where I was offered a job. One was a big British corporation who offered me a job as the managing director of their medical technology division. I had been very much involved in helping them to find distribution arrangements for medical equipment in the United States. We had done quite well with that - we had broken into the market with British products in America for the first time. The other firm was a British investment bank in Wall Street which offered me a job which would have been a New York based job, staying in New York open-endedly. Both of these were quite interesting, but

for reasons concerning the enjoyment of the Diplomatic Service and concerning the nature of those two jobs I decided to stay where I was in the diplomatic career. Moreover at that moment I was offered a job which I very much wanted, which was the job of Head of Chancery or as we say today Political Counsellor in Moscow.

JH. Yes, but before we leave New York, could I ask you this? When we read the financial pages, or the business pages, we get the impression that British ventures into the United States market consist of buying American firms, not always with happy results. We can think of Ferranti or British and Commonwealth. Did this business of getting into the market by take-over, by buying firms, come your way?

CM. Yes, it did come my way and there were some cases of that. But mostly I was involved before it got to that stage, where a British company was trying to export to the United States or, at most, was setting up a distribution company within the United States for selling products made in Britain, exports again. Sometimes there was some assembly in the United States, usually in my cases with a green field start. But we are looking at the early '70's, a time when a lot of British companies were making their way in the States and hadn't got to the level where an acquisition would have made sense; also the fashion for acquisition hadn't grown to the extent that it has, into the passion that it is now.

JH. Yes, I see. Could I ask you at this point, before we leave commercial work, what do you think of the overall contribution of the Diplomatic Service to Britain's exports, Britain's balance of payments, Britain's economic success in the world?

CM. Well, I think that there are two important categories of work: one is export promotion and the other is promoting investment by overseas companies in Britain; and both of those do need promotion from some sort of dedicated service. The Diplomatic Service with its skills of widespread flexibility, adaptability, knowing the countries of the world on the spot well, is well adapted to doing that in terms of its deployment and the keenness of its people, not always naturally adapted in terms of the knowledge of its people. So the way it tries to bridge that gap is to hire, as commercial officers to do the case work, people who do have the right knowledge, who are often not British, often are engineers or suitably qualified people hired

for a contract for three or five years. For instance, I am dealing now in post-diplomatic life, with a very tricky case concerning Serbia and the person I am dealing with on the spot is a British diplomat, who is head of the commercial section there, but sometimes, alternatively, a Serbian who is a commercial officer working under him on my particular project. But going back to my own views about the Diplomatic Service and exports. I think we definitely do help. We help more companies new to exports or learning their way in exports than we help the great big exporters, the household names, who know it inside out, know their own markets better than a diplomat dealing with all sorts of commercial work can ever know a particular market sector. Inward investment, again that's a natural for Embassies because Ambassadors and other senior staff do meet the top industrialists of the country if they are doing their job properly, do meet the top bankers, get to know them well, spend weekends in their houses and so on, and are in a position to make suggestions about investment in Britain which, made at lower levels, might or might not receive proper consideration. When an Ambassador, who is a friend, says to a top industrialist, "you really ought to consider manufacturing in South Wales", it is unlikely that they will not consider it properly. So there is a job there. And I would add something more, which is not so orthodox. I think that where British outward investment in foreign markets is obviously going to be in the interest of British companies you should work on that too, you should help British companies to find opportunities, to find the intermediaries like lawyers and bankers that they are going to need. And my own biggest experience of that was the re-unification of Germany. It was extremely difficult for British companies to make acquisitions or to get going as manufacturers in West Germany before unification; and suddenly the whole of the East German economy was up for privatisation and there was an opportunity, with lots of risks and disadvantages, but there was an opportunity to get into the German economy and manufacture there. During my last two years as Ambassador in Germany, from 1990-92, there were about 100 British acquisitions of former state enterprises in East Germany and we suddenly made a serious bridgehead into the German economy. Now, not in every case has that been a success, but in most cases it has, something which it would have been hard for British companies at arm's length to have found out about in detail. But I was able, and our staff on the spot were able, to help as intermediaries, introducing them to the privatising agency, introducing them to the individual possibilities; after that the detailed negotiation, the due diligence investigation, and of course, the actual decision are for the firm itself.

JH. Thank you. Could I now ask you to display some of that adaptability by moving to your next post, something completely different, as you have just mentioned, the post of Head of Chancery or Political Counsellor in Moscow. At that time certainly Head of Chancery meant someone who in effect ran the Embassy as well as being the Political Counsellor. Could you talk about Moscow then.

CM. Well, it was indeed a question of running the Embassy, or co-ordinating its work, and it was a political job of analysing and trying to predict Soviet policy and of suggesting British policy for dealing with, what I regarded as and I am sure this was right, the Soviet threat to us across the world. It was a serious job on the political level, with a great deal of reporting; we must have sent several telegrams about developments in Soviet policy every day. And there was an opportunity; we signed with the Russians a Protocol on Consultations which was really just a document which said that we would build up our exchanges on international matters. But the Russians were very literal about the letter of international agreements and this document gave me a lever for opening doors, to get to see people in the Russian foreign policy machine with whom the Embassy until then had not had contact. So I saw other parts of the foreign ministry than the one which dealt directly with Britain and other ministries with foreign affairs subjects, the institutes which dealt with foreign policy, the Central Committee international department and academics and senior journalists specialising in foreign affairs. We used this Protocol on Consultations as the peg upon which to hang a whole avalanche of letters; to organisations of these kinds, asking for me or others in the Embassy to go and see them and talk about Soviet policy and about British policy and about the current issues of international affairs. And we opened a lot of doors, not all the doors we tried to open, but a lot. There was thus a new dimension to the reporting by the Embassy at that time on Soviet foreign policy. We were able sometimes to quote the insiders who were recommending what the Soviet Union should do, rather than simply interpreting the public statements of the Soviet authorities. They were very consistent; you could get inside their way of thinking and predict what they would do next. I will give you one example of how careful textual reading of 'Pravda' could pay dividends. A young man, in the Embassy at that time, who has since become a senior member of the Diplomatic Service, noticed that the article on the Cyprus problem which appeared one day in 'Pravda' was different in one word from the previous

Soviet line. Instead of saying foreign forces should withdraw from the Republic of Cyprus, which meant the Turkish forces in the North, it suddenly said they should withdraw from the Island of Cyprus, and that, of course, meant also the British Sovereign Base Areas. So we predicted that there would be a change of Soviet policy to attack our position in the Sovereign Base Areas at the next United Nations General Assembly, which was a couple of months away. And that duly happened. It was bound to happen because 'Pravda', as they would say themselves, didn't publish anything by chance.

The other aspect of that time which was new and exciting was that the dissident movement, led by Academician Sakharov in Moscow, was more and more active and Sakharov was communicating with the west very energetically through the Western press corps in Moscow. The Embassy's view until then had been that we would not have contact with dissidents, because our job was to deal with the people in power and conduct the inter-governmental relationship and the commercial relationship between Britain and the Soviet Union. But I thought it was wrong to have no contact and I thought it would be possible for the Embassy to open up on that front to some extent without spoiling our official relationship which, of course, we needed for our main business with the Soviet authorities. So carefully I began to talk to Roy Medvedev and to Academician Sakharov and to some of the others, with the agreement of Foreign Office Ministers in London, and that was a policy which when the change of government came in 1979 was developed much further under the new Conservative government. We got away with it, I think, in the sense that our official relationship with the Soviet authorities didn't suffer from that particular development; it suffered from others, above all the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

JH. Thank you. I can testify that in all of the Soviet Eastern Europe, as one might say, at that time it was normally very difficult to get past the one desk officer who was licensed to deal with you day to day and what you describe, apart from interpreting 'Pravda', was obviously a very valuable thing and must have made the job of yourself and possible other chancery officers much more worthwhile and more useful. I was sometimes sorry, in Moscow, for the people who seemed to do almost nothing but read and discuss 'Pravda' and 'Izvestia' and few other things all the time. You have now dealt in a fascinating way with Moscow and I wonder if we can now move on, or whether there is anything more about that?

CM. I think that there is one other element that is worth mentioning. This is more confidential but is part of the history of the cold war. The Soviet authorities tried from time to time to compromise a Western diplomat, British ones among others. When I say from time to time, that is actually an understatement; they tried it quite often. We had a policy of warning people about that and if we thought that somebody, through any fault of their own or no fault of their own, had got into an embarrassing position, our policy had been to withdraw them from the Embassy because then we saved them from the strain and the embarrassment of possible follow-up approaches by the Soviet secret services. It was often something which the person could not have avoided at all, such as when travelling in the provinces two members of the Embassy might be given a drink which was fixed and they might pass out and things might happen while they were unconscious which afterwards the KGB might have tried to exploit for purposes of blackmail. So it was just a difficulty of the profession, of being a diplomat in Moscow at that time, and we knew how to deal with it. One day we had a case where we rather changed our policy. It was a case of a person in the Embassy, a young man who took home after some Embassy Christmas party or something a young Soviet woman who was a telephonist in the Embassy and he went up to her flat when he dropped her and something happened, not very much, but something happened between them which might have been photographed and which might have been a compromising situation. Rather than withdraw him from the Embassy for this really minuscule incident, what we did was to make it clear to the KGB that the young man had reported this both to the management, meaning me, and to his wife; so we went through a charade of exaggerated visibility in letting them know that this had happened, by my conducting telephone conversations with the wife which certainly would have been picked up by the KGB who would have realised that she knew about the incident and had forgiven him, and me and him walking around the Embassy in the snow, visibly talking deeply about something. They would have deduced what had happened; that he had indeed, told me and his wife about it. That is a tiny incident, but it shows you that as time went on we became a bit more sophisticated even on that rather peculiar front.

JH. Thank you. Yes, I am glad you mentioned that. I can corroborate that that was part of the scene in Moscow. About the same time I was en poste with you and I could mention three approaches to me or my family, none of which got very far and which, of course, I reported;

but they could have become very serious, had we let ourselves in for them. However, returning to the main stream of our work, can we now go on to your next job as Head of a Department at home, a somewhat unusual one, namely arms control and disarmament.

CM. Well, it was logical for somebody knowing the Soviet Union and coming directly from Moscow to move into this field. Arms control and disarmament was a very big part of East - West relations at the time. I was ignorant or pretty much ignorant of the subject, but diplomats have to learn new subjects all the time. You not only change country, you also change field of activity pretty frequently in a diplomatic career. So again I faced a learning curve and by hard reading of the files and talking to experts, I tried to scramble up the learning curve as fast as possible. It was a job which involved, for the first time in my life, a serious domestic political angle. The Foreign Secretary was David Owen and he saw arms control as a subject which had popular appeal in Britain and could be helpful to the Labour Party electorally and perhaps even to his own position with the public. So we were required to be active and positive, to seek progress in arms control. At the same time obviously we were not required to seek the sort of developments which might have undermined the British defence capability; because we were still in the cold war and a key element of our policy towards the Soviet Union was still the strong Western defence stance, including the nuclear defence stance, so that the Soviet Union could not be tempted by aggression, or more likely by threats of the use of force, because the risks were too high. So it was a difficult balance between steps in arms control, which would be tolerable from a British defence and a Western defence point of view, and ones which would also appeal publicly in Britain. It involved sometimes operations which were more for the domestic political angle. For instance, there was an United Nations Special Assembly on Disarmament shortly after I came to that job. In that enormous General Assembly it wasn't going to be possible to negotiate concrete and specific arms control agreements, but it was required by the Foreign Secretary, for good domestic reasons, that Britain should be active and positive and among the leaders in proposing new steps. The way I tried to square that circle was by putting forward a Programme of Action in Arms Control which would be a British proposal about an overall framework for how arms control might be progressed over the coming years, with immediate proposals for arms control, with middle term proposals, and with long term proposals. Frankly, that was more an exercise in public relations than in substance; but it was rather typical of the way some of the subject had to be

dealt with. On the other hand, we had an enormously important and very substantive real negotiation as well, which was the comprehensive test ban negotiation, which came close to success and then was shelved with the arrival in power of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher but was then picked up again much later when a comprehensive test ban was eventually negotiated. It was a very serious, very technical negotiation involving for instance seismic science. How do seismologists tell the difference between a real earthquake and an earthquake artificially provoked in order to mask the reverberations from a nuclear test? There the diplomats, were dealing with the defence scientists at Aldermaston and with seismologists and international lawyers, all sorts of different disciplines coming together in a negotiation where Britain was playing a very, important role together with the Soviet Union and the United States. I think that we came close to an agreement. I remember, for instance, getting down to considering the detail of whether a seismic monitoring station could be placed in Hong Kong or St. Helena or even the Pitcairn Islands, using the remaining British territories across the world as a means of passive monitoring of whether a country like the Soviet Union or China or for that matter Argentina might be testing nuclear weapons in contravention of a future comprehensive test ban.

JH. Yes, I see. Well, that department was sometimes known in the Service as being dry as dust and theoretical, but it was clearly not so when you were a part of it.

CM. If I could just interject there. What you say is true, and the reason, I think, is that firstly it was a period when arms control was a growth area of international relations. There was a lot of Third World interest in it, particular in nuclear disarmament, the Third World saying it had accepted a non-proliferation treaty - and the nuclear powers must therefore reduce nuclear stock piles. Then there was the angle, that I have mentioned already, of domestic interest and the Foreign Secretary of the day wanting very much to flag this subject in his public presentation domestically of foreign policy.

JH. Yes, I see. You then moved sideways in the department and back to the Soviet desk, we might say, except that it was the whole department dealing with East Europe and the Soviet Union and presumably your two immediately previous posts gave you a head start in this.

CM. Well, this was an important moment. Yes, I knew the subject of the Soviet Union though I didn't know the other communist countries of Europe very well. Yes, I knew a big part of East-West relations, namely arms control, but things changed because the Soviet Union had been messing about in Angola and Mozambique, a sort of proxy intervention with Cuban forces there, and there was also a big disappointment in the West about how the Helsinki Final Act had not led to easement of the autocracy in the Soviet Union and the dissidents were still being persecuted. And then came the very important event of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; that was the first time that the Soviet Union had used force to extend the borders of socialism beyond the Warsaw Pact. They had, of course, used force in Hungary and Czechoslovakia to reimpose, or maintain, their system but here they were going outside the borders of the Warsaw Pact and really it led, together with the change of regime in Washington with Reagan and the appearance of the Conservative government in Britain, it led to a serious disappointment in the West, a disillusionment with 'detente'. The relationship with the Soviet Union got distinctly worse. A lot of the exchanges that we were running with the USSR were interrupted and life was colder; the cold war was colder than it had been for some time. So, my period in that job, Eastern European and Soviet Department, was not a period of improvement in East-West relations but a period of relative confrontation. It was important because something else happened as well, which was the new Spring in Poland, the 'Solidarity' movement in Poland. And my view was that the Soviet Union could not tolerate pluralism in Poland any more than it had tolerated it in Czechoslovakia or Hungary or in 1953 in East Germany. I thought, therefore, what they must, in the consistency of their insistence on the Soviet system throughout the Warsaw Pact, put an end to Solidarity in some way or other and, if necessary, through invasion. They did in fact, we knew from intelligence, get the tanks ready, they did motor them up to border, they did wait for a weekend when they could cross the border and go in. But they never actually gave the order to cross the border and they didn't go in. They tried instead another method, which you could call an internal putting back of the clock, through martial law in Poland; that was an attempt to get back to square one which failed. They did turn the clock back in the sense that Solidarity and the Church became less of a force. The pace of change was brought down to nothing, but they didn't get back to square one, they didn't eliminate Solidarity and certainly didn't eliminate the degree of independence that the Church had gained. Thus they were not true to their own principles and we saw what happened. I believe that Lech Walesa is the first hero of the end of the cold war

together, you could say, with Sakharov and some others inside the Soviet Union and elsewhere. But he was the one who really began the pluralisation which later spread right across the Warsaw Pact and into the Soviet Union, which ultimately brought the Soviet Union to an end. I was right in my analysis, I think, that the thing that the Soviet Union from its point of view needed to do in Poland at the end of the '70's and in 1980 was to squash Solidarity; and I was wrong in believing that they would have the willpower to do that. One asks why, if they did it in 1968, they felt they could not do it a dozen years later; and I think one of the answers,- there are several but one of them is 'detente', that is to say, that they had come to value economic and other exchanges with the West, notably imports of American grain, and therefore the cost of interrupting 'detente' completely through invading Poland was sufficiently high for them to look for another way of putting an end to Solidarity; and that way was not effective; martial law did not achieve it; and that was the beginning of the end of the Soviet system.

JH. Were they not also still embroiled in Afghanistan at the time?

CM. Oh yes, they were. And I suppose they would have felt that a crisis on two fronts, a military crisis on two fronts, was more than they wanted. Though, I am bound to say that they could have managed both. It is also true to say that another calculation for them regarding Poland was that they knew that the Polish army would fight - perhaps not as a total force under national leadership, but parts of it - units certainly would have fought and that would have meant Soviet casualties and that put a different complexion on the thing compared with what had happened in Prague in 1968.

JH. And Brezhnev was approaching the end of his life, as we know from hindsight, of course.

CM. Brezhnev was an old man and perhaps his will was not as clear as it had been earlier. But for all these reasons their consistency was not upheld and that was fatal, and a good thing too!

JH. Quite. You then did something rather unusual, moving sideways to a third job in the Foreign Office without an intervening post abroad. You became Head of Planning Staff in 1980, where again you had to learn not to organise, but to organise something different, I

imagine.

CM. Michael Palliser was the Permanent Secretary at the time and he had said to me that he wanted me to diversify my knowledge. Basically, up to then, I had been dealing with Russia and to some extent with Germany and I had had that one commercial posting in the United States. He wanted me to get a much wider view of foreign policy and there had been the question of my being the Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary and one or two other jobs of that kind; also the No.10 Private Secretary job I had been put forward for - twice in fact. So there was a question of how does Mallaby get given a broad job, and the Planning Staff came up and that's what they gave me. It is an everything job, or more exactly it is an anything job. You may be given any subject to think about, to suggest new policies about. You also do a lot of co-ordination. For instance, the crisis management arrangement at that time in the Foreign Office was that we always set up, for any crisis, for instance the Iran/Iraq war or the Polish crisis, a crisis management group, which was headed by the deputy secretary concerned with the crisis subject and the no. 2 was always head of the Planning Staff. So there was a continuity of crisis experience through that person being always on the team. And so I was writing long-term policy papers; I was helping in crisis management whenever there was a need. I was writing the Foreign Secretary's speeches which, with Lord Carrington, was the greatest fun. It required endless supplies of what he called levity, namely jokes and other things that could be put in to leaven his speeches. It also involved, occasionally, being used as a specific handler of a particular problem, where the Foreign Secretary, or more likely the Permanent Secretary, wanted an individual to be assigned 'ad hoc', temporarily to something that had come up. A very varied role, also co-ordinating the overall objectives of the different departments - of the Foreign Office as a whole.

The biggest event for me in that time was the Falklands war. It came right at the end of my time as head of the Planning Staff. I had nothing to do with that subject before the Argentine invasion.

JH. A sneak question. Does that mean that in the period before the Falklands war the potential for trouble between the Falklands and the Argentine was not one of the subjects the planning staff was thinking about?

CM. Yes, that is right. We had not been seized with that one. We might have been. We were seized with all sorts of different things. I can remember we wrote a paper on Cyprus policy. We wrote a paper on whether Algeria could become a stable country. We wrote all sorts of broader pieces on whether the Soviet Union, whether the Warsaw pact, whether East-West relations - a lot of different things and of course, on European integration we wrote a lot. Not the Falklands. Now I was at a conference at Cambridge. It was actually an Anglo-German Koenigswinter conference, when the invasion took place. I was telephoned and asked to come back; I went back to the Foreign Office on a Saturday afternoon and Michael Palliser asked me to co-ordinate the diplomatic side of the crisis; and that is what I did until the war was over. What that meant was leading the work on the United Nations, trying to make sure that we always won the votes in the UN. It was the negotiations which we conducted through the UN Secretary General and through the United States Secretary of State at different times with Argentina, trying to get a peaceful solution where they would withdraw from the islands without our having to fight them off the islands. And it involved the keeping of the European Community on side, the maintaining of sanctions, the keeping of the Commonwealth on our side, the maintaining of sanctions against Argentina by them. A great balloon of work, most of which was concentrated in the period before our task force reached the Falkland Islands, when we were still trying to get Argentina to withdraw without having to drive them off the islands. And it was very very difficult. It involved, for instance, trying to find the arguments which would persuade, let's say, Romania to vote with us. Arguments about how big powers or large regional powers should not invade their neighbours, something which would appeal to Romania's fear of the Soviet Union. The same argument might have been used with Yugoslavia. Selecting the arguments which would appeal to different countries in order to win their votes. And that involved an immense amount of co-ordinating, of knowledge which was scattered all over the Foreign Office and all our Embassies. Sending instructions to our Embassies to get them to talk to the governments and to persuade the governments to vote our way in the UN. It involved thinking about a possible constitutional arrangement for the Falkland Islands which might be sufficient to persuade Argentina to withdraw. We thought about whether the Governor could be replaced by some sort of troika of international people - a German, an American and a Brazilian, I think was one of the ideas. And we thought about the British presence on the islands and how it might be organised in the future if Argentina

withdrew. Expedients which were designed to retain sovereignty for us, in other words to maintain the interests of the islanders, but to give Argentina just enough to persuade her to withdraw peacefully. Well, Argentina was totally intransigent; we got nowhere with that negotiation; and it didn't feel, dealing with them through the intermediary of Al Haig or Perez de Cuellar, that they really had their act together, thinking their own position through consistently and self interestedly. It felt as if we were dealing with a rather random entity which hadn't got a clear view of where it wanted to go. Anyway, they made no concessions; and when task force reached the islands it was clear that we were going to have to use the task force to defeat Argentina and we did. And we maintained a majority voting for us in the UN all the way through the crisis until the British victory in that war.

JH. And that maintaining obviously took some effort; and indeed I have heard it suggested that even with the Americans, the White House and the Pentagon, Mr. Weinburger, were more on our side, so to speak, than the State Department.

CM. Well, there was Jeanne Kirkpatrick, who was the American Ambassador at the UN; she certainly is an expert on Argentina and, I think, had some sympathy for Argentina; or, more exactly, she thought of Argentina as a bastion for pro-Western leadership in Latin America and wanted the Western relationship with Argentina to be preserved despite this act of aggression which Argentina had undertaken. So there was certainly difference within the United States administration but the United States did stay with us, did support us, did help us to some extent with military supplies. Incidentally France, which doesn't always agree with Britain on specific foreign policy matters and had some temptations to see the Falklands issue from a different point of view from ours, France in the person of President Mitterrand did join us and did, for instance, stop supplying Exocet equipment to Argentina. So I think that we can say that, once the awful mistakes which led to that crisis had happened, the actual management of the war itself, - above all, of course, on the military side, but also in the less important diplomatic side, we did do that well.

JH. Thank you. That, for me, has been absolutely fascinating. We must move on, as did your career, and you then did go abroad, but not very far, you became the No.2 in our Embassy in Bonn to Federal Republic in 1982. Helmut Kohl was, I believe, already Chancellor. What

would you like to say about your time there as Minister, bearing in mind that you returned as Ambassador after a spell at home, so we shall be returning to the subject.

CM. Well, Helmut Kohl became Chancellor about a month after I got to Germany, so I saw the very end of the Helmut Schmidt period. I had the job of interpreting the new government, the CDU-FDP coalition led by Kohl and Genscher, for London and I remember writing about how easy it is underestimate Helmut Kohl and in the very first serious pen portrait that I wrote for the Foreign Secretary I said that you would simply rush to buy a secondhand car from Helmut Kohl. And I think that is the way he is; he is a man whom you would instinctively trust; but he is also a man who does not have any surface brilliance, he is a man of bottom; a man of substance, not a man of surface. I thought then that the division of Germany was not in sight of an end and I concentrated on managing the British relationship with Germany, and also our military presence and our continuing position in Berlin, I also tried to do something which became much bigger for me later, which was to be the sort of diplomat who appears in the media and does public speaking, does PR for Britain in the country where he or she is working. I was in Bonn for two and a half years and then I came back to London to the Cabinet Office.

JH. Could I ask a question now, which will certainly come up for your second Bonn period. Namely, how large did EU questions bulk in the workload of the Embassy compared with the bilateral and other issues that you have mentioned.

CM. Quite large. We were not operating, and we do not operate on the basis that EU matters are dealt with by specialists face to face or Ministers face to face; we tried to influence the German position on this or that European discussion by getting in among the ministries in Bonn. The German administration is extremely plural, disagreement in the coalition is a frequent phenomenon when policy is in gestation; there is influence from the Bundestag committees on the government. We tried to talk to the various parts of the system that influence German policy on specific European issues and get the British view across before they took decisions. And in Bonn a really energetic Embassy can do quite a lot of that. The difference between British and German or British and French diplomacy is that we do use our bilateral Embassies in Europe to try and do that. We keep Embassies right up to date through

the telegram system with the discussion of even the most abstruse European matters and we try to back up by bilateral contact in the capitals the work that British diplomats are doing in the multi-lateral European fora. This very day (in 1997), I had breakfast with the new German Ambassador in London, and one of the things he said to me was that he knows nothing about Europe because the people in Bonn prefer to handle that on the multi-lateral level. So he couldn't do that work and he has been told he shouldn't do it. Those are completely different views from the British view.

JH. Thank you. But isn't there another aspect? Things that one must do in a way of simply discovering other governments' views of some agricultural or fisheries or whatever question before the thing arises in Brussels and endeavouring to see where the inevitable compromise might lie. Don't all members have to use their Embassies for that and to a fair extent?

CM. You certainly should. The question of what is the scope for concessions by Germany on any particular issue is a very important question for the British Embassy in Germany. You could say that, on such and such aspects of the issue, Germany really cannot compromise; it would not pass in domestic politics; but on other such and such aspects it is not so important and they might compromise. I would say that it is the role of the Ambassador to put forward suggestions about what particular compromise would suit both British and German interests. And of course London, seeing the thing in more detail, with all the experts in say the Ministry of Agriculture or whatever, may not accept what an Ambassador says. But he should contribute as much say as any of the Ministries in London to the making of British policy on European matters. That goes for Paris, for Bonn certainly, and of course goes for the Ambassador to the European Union in Brussels, most of all. But also for the other bi-lateral Ambassadors in the European Union.

JH. Thank you. One other question which you might deal with, now or later, how did you or the Embassy get on with Herr Genscher, who must have been the longest serving foreign minister ever?

CM. Yes, it wasn't a natural relationship. He is a man of tremendous energy, tremendous imagination, peripatetic like nobody else, and with as strong an eye to his own domestic

political standing as any politician is likely to have; it was sometimes difficult to follow exactly what he intended to do; but that just meant that the Embassy needed to follow his mind through the officials in his office and through contact with him as closely as we could, reading every single speech. You get inside a man's mind by care, energy and effort like that; and I think we had a reasonable relationship with him. Later, when I was Ambassador, he was still there for my first period and I think I had a good relationship with him, - not an easy and a smooth one, a relationship which involved plenty of sharp argument, notably in the period of German unification. which we will come on to. but it was a workable and sometimes a warm relationship.

JH. Thank you. We now turn to your last job in the Foreign Office, except that it was not exactly in the Foreign Office; you were, I believe, Deputy Secretary in the Cabinet Office. I avow ignorance, does that mean that you were the Deputy to the Secretary to the Cabinet?

CM. Yes, it does. The Cabinet Secretary has three Deputies; one Deputy Secretary covers the economy, one covers EU matters and one covers foreign policy, defence and Northern Ireland and I was the last of those. What does one do? The co-ordination of policy in foreign policy, defence and Northern Ireland for the Cabinet. Many issues are trans-departmental; somebody has to get the various departments together, sometimes knock their heads together, in order to produce a coherent policy for HMG as a whole; and most of that is done at official level and does not have to go to meetings of Ministers. Ministers would approve it on the basis of negotiation among departments by officials. Well, I did an awful lot of that. Arms control is a standard example where the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office may have differing interests. Many, many issues require this co-ordination; and I chaired committee meeting after committee meeting, day after day, for three years running on that. Secondly, you are the secretariat of the Cabinet itself for foreign policy matters. So when there were issues to be decided, and there were sometimes at Cabinet level, you wrote the paper for the Cabinet, you briefed the Prime Minister on what she should - it was Mrs. Thatcher - seek to get out of the meeting, what conclusion she should go for, what points she should make on the weaknesses and strengths of the positions of the various other departments. I was also given individual tasks which were sensitive and where no particular Minister had a natural single authority, matters which straddled departments. The first occasion for me was the Anglo-Irish

negotiation of 1985 which led to the Hillsborough agreement, which was the first time that we accorded the Irish Republic any say in the affairs of Northern Ireland. They had an advisory role on matters concerning the Catholic tradition, the minority in North Ireland, as a result of the Hillsborough agreement. It was a very difficult, negotiation, very sensitive in domestic politics. It was led by Robert Armstrong, the Secretary to the Cabinet, and I was the sort of other continuous participant; David Goodall from the Foreign Office and the Permanent Secretary of the Northern Ireland office were among the others. It was really difficult, a really interesting thing, which was over quite soon after I took over that job; but I continued to have a lot of work concerning Northern Ireland and the implementation of the agreement and particularly those aspects of the Northern Ireland issue which affected our relationship with the Irish Republic. But many other subjects occupied me at different times. It was something like the FCO planning staff a few years before, in the sense that any subject could become my total preoccupation for a short time. I would get a subject, sort out a difference between departments, get a policy agreed and then it went back to the departments to implement the policy; and then I would move on to another subject. .

JH. I am interested to learn that two of the three deputies to the Cabinet Secretary were dealing with what I would think of as foreign policy matters. Foreign policy itself and European issues. Did the Foreign Office also supply the Deputy Secretary dealing with European union issues?

CM. No, that has, I think, always been somebody from a Home Department. In my day it was David Williamson seconded from the Ministry of Agriculture who later went on to be Secretary General of the European Commission. There was, of course, somebody co-ordinating home affairs in the same way as the Deputy Secretaries co-ordinated their subjects but that was actually done at an Under Secretary level so it was not quite so senior.

JH. I see. So what was your relationship in practice to the Prime Minister's foreign policy adviser?

CM. Well, the foreign policy adviser was Charles Powell who was extremely powerful and extremely close to the Prime Minister and probably if the person in that job had been a person

less long in the job and less close and influential with the Prime Minister I would have had more of a role as foreign policy adviser to Mrs. Thatcher. As it was, I saw her practically every day and attended meetings and sat beside her in the meetings of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet. But probably my role was limited by his influence.

JH. Thank you. That gives me a cue to ask if there is anything you would like to say about Mrs. Thatcher's "modus operandi" as a Prime Minister, which you think might be of interest to posterity.

CM. There is an important point. Her reputation is for being sure of her mind immediately a subject comes up and for being impatient with advice and detail and impatient with other people's views. That is not true, so far as subjects go which are new to her or where there are new developments to take into account. I have never known a minister so voraciously ready to absorb detail and careful advice, willing to give endless time to discussion so she could get 'up to speed' and really understand a problem. The other side of the same coin is that she wanted to be dead sure of everything that she did, so writing speeches for her, which I often did, was properly exacting. She would call me in late in the evening and we crawled through every phrase of the draft speech to make sure that I could demonstrate the truth of every statement or every fact that was mentioned. Thoroughness, voracious appetite for detail but also openness to advice, at least on new developments and new subjects. That was my experience of Margaret Thatcher.

JH. Thank you very much. May we now go on to your, what I might call, your final period in the service, namely as Ambassador successively to Germany and France, two fairly good long stints. I wonder what your missions were able to do during that time about our relations with them both bi-laterally and in the EU and what the biggest issues were.

C.M. I would like to say first that the plan of the personnel department had been to send me to Moscow, which would have been perfectly logical seeing that I had had two earlier postings there - and then to send me to Germany after that, which again would have been logical, because I had had two earlier postings there. As it was, for complicated reasons, I went straight to Bonn and not to Moscow; and the excitement of that was that I had five whole

years in which to try and achieve something and it was, of course, the time when Germany reunified. And I saw the job, and also later in Paris, as being, of course, the management of the bi-lateral relationship, and the development of the relationship; and the handling, the co-ordination, the aligning where possible of British and German views on international, including European matters. But I also saw it as PR for Britain on the spot. I think that this is a relative novelty in the role of Ambassadors. Going on television and describing why Britain thinks how it thinks on some international matter of concern to Germany or simply speaking in public, or on television, or on radio, or writing articles in the German press about the British-German relationship to try and publicise its successes. Trying in other words to build the image of Britain, also by talking about our achievements in any field, as a personality in the media of the country concerned. Now it is possible to do that in countries with strong media and in democracies where there is free speech and you can say what you want to say, provided you speak the language well enough to do that. I found that the German media were pretty receptive. It went from ridiculous things like going on a talk show where everything was discussed under the sun with a starlet, a football player, a former minister, Karl Schiller, also on the panel with me where I got in a few careful remarks about how unemployment had gone down in Britain; but most of the discussion was about my personal tastes and interests. From that kind of thing, very populist, out to very serious articles and interviews in the German heavier press. So I put a lot emphasis on that. It is a fairly strainful thing to do because you are constantly live on television and you have to watch your P's and Q's very carefully in another language; but I think it is worth it and I think you can achieve something. The biggest event in my time was, of course, German unification and that was difficult for me, because I was a strong believer in the opportunity to get the Red Army out of Central Europe, to end the threat which had been the biggest threat to the West and to Britain throughout my adult life and get into a world where democracy would spread Eastwards across Europe. I did not see reunification of Germany as a danger bringing back a German threat because I believed in the stable democracy of the Federal Republic and believed it could be extended to East Germany without wavering in its stability; and I did not believe in any sort of expansionism or aggressiveness in the foreign policy of an united Germany, although I thought there would be a certain assertiveness coming along. So I was a believer in Britain co-operating in the negotiation to persuade Gorbachev to accept German unification and to remove the Soviet armed forces from East Germany which, of course, was bound to mean the

collapse of the Warsaw pact, because its lynchpin would have been taken away. In London, Douglas Hurd as Foreign Secretary, I think, shared my views but Margaret Thatcher from a slightly older generation, I think, was worried about the re-emergence of a German colossus bestriding Central Europe; she thought that could be a threat to British influence in Europe, even if she didn't think that there was any risk about democracy or expansionism on the German side. She thought it would be a big influence which it would be better not to have to deal with; and she would have preferred to see unification not taking place. So I was between a Prime Minister who was very reluctant and an historic change which I and I think the Foreign Secretary considered positive. In the negotiation - the 2+4 negotiation - Germany, East Germany, America, Russia, France and Britain - about the international terms of German unification, East Germany joining NATO, joining the EU, the location of the eastern frontier, the end of the special regime of the allies in Berlin and so on. Britain was extremely helpful and produced some of the best ideas which got the Russians to agree to unification. In public Mrs. Thatcher remained critical and in two or three interviews during the negotiations, notably an interview in the Wall Street Journal, said things which attracted a great deal of criticism in Germany; because she showed a reluctance about unification which they saw as a reluctance about liberation of 17 million of their compatriots in East Germany.

JH. Quite. That certainly was an event to dwarf all others; I can see that it would rather dwarf all the rest of the Embassy's work; but no doubt there was again ongoing work on the almost innumerable EU matters which do surface.

CM. Of course there was, and that was a subject again which wasn't too easy to handle because the British reputation in Germany regarding Europe was for being reluctant about progress, insisting on getting a rebate to reduce our net contribution to the European budget. That reputation of Britain certainly reflected on the image of Britain in Germany; and being seen as reluctant Europeans made us be seen in a rather negative way overall. There were however subjects, co-operation in foreign policy for instance on the development of the European single market where, Britain was in fact very active and energetic in wanting progress and had very similar views, for instance on subsidiarity, to those of Germany. So my job was both to try to extend the areas of agreement and if I could, to find ways of limiting the areas of disagreement; and also it was to put across the British position in a way, publicly and

privately, with German ministers which gave proper space to the subjects where Britain and Germany agreed.

JH. Thank you. I wonder if again we could move you across to Paris, your final post, to which, I believe, you went to on foot via the Channel Tunnel, according to the media; and ask you just to say what you would wish to say about that final very important post.

CM. Well, I had three and a half years in Paris. I felt that five years in Germany had been a good duration. Having that long gives you time to achieve something; it gives you time to make a reputation for yourself and thus gain influence on the spot. Three and a half years in Paris was great; it would have been ideal, and I think in senior Embassies it should be the rule, to have had the full five years. I did go to France through the tunnel; it just seemed to me that the tunnel being there, not yet with any railway through it, - just a tunnel, a raw, rough tunnel, - its very existence, it seemed to me, enabled me to go to my post on dry land. It would have been the first time that had happened with France. It seemed to me mad to miss the opportunity and, of course, it was, self interestedly, a PR puff for me as a new Ambassador arriving in France; and my purpose was to get that puff in the French media. So I went - I didn't actually walk the whole way, - in a little buggy, which the construction workers who were, beginning put in the rails, used to get down to their work. I went about two-thirds of the way in the buggy and then walked the rest of the way. And it was a success in a sense with the French media, - I think, their imagination was caught by this; and it certainly gave me good start. What I hadn't realised, hadn't thought of, was that I was actually the first British Ambassador anywhere (since we had had occasional missions in Edinburgh) to go to a post by dry land, so the British media, which I hadn't expected, also took an interest.

Well, on more serious things I would say that the British/French relationship is a delicate plant which is very susceptible to incident, to argument about all sorts of things such as agricultural imports across the channel being blocked in Calais and so on. It's hard to make a serious difference to that relationship, but that was the task I set myself and I was lucky, in that there were important subjects at the time where Britain and France could co-operate. We are now after the Cold War; we have France a bit nervous about re-united Germany, looking around for other friends; but above all what we had was a chance to co-operate in defence.

With peace-keeping forces coming to play a very big part in international relations in Europe in the aftermath of the Cold War and particularly, former Yugoslavia. There the British and the French, in Bosnia, had the biggest military contingents and the biggest say in the running of that extremely difficult operation; and it brought Britain and France closer together. We deliberately fostered that side-effect of the Bosnia tragedy - the British/French rapprochement - and we deliberately built on that co-operation to do other things together; such as naval co-operation and other sorts of military links. We established other kinds of co-operation, for instance in the United Nations, and other foreign policy co-operation and I myself founded a bi-lateral scholarship scheme called 'The Entente-Cordiale scholarships' which is a system, a bit like the Rhodes scholars, designed to foster knowledge of each country among the influential people of the future in the other country. So quite a bit happened in the British-French relationship in the period when Edouard Balladur was French Prime Minister and John Major in London and then when Jacques Chirac became President and there is no doubt that there was a significant improvement. So I felt after three and a half years that we had a better situation; I don't feel that the plant of British - French relations has ceased to be delicate - I think it still is susceptible to difficulty. In my last few months I had a very difficult subject to handle, which was the so-called 'mad cow disease', BSE, where the British position was very difficult for the French to understand and where I found myself going on radio and television quite a lot, trying to defend our position. Doing that live in a foreign language on a highly technical subject where the British policy was difficult to put across was one of the hardest things I had to do as an Ambassador.

The life of being Ambassador in France is different from that in Germany in another way which is that access in Germany to Ministers, to Ministries, to Regional Authorities and so on is easy and automatic. In France it is not quite so easy, but in fact I found that you can do it and the beautiful palace which is the British Embassy is the great instrument for that; even the most senior people in France like to be invited to that house; and you can make friends with the key people and thus have easy access to them when you need to speak to them on some problem that may arise subsequently. It is the posting that I've had which is the most social, in the sense that entertaining by the Ambassador is a very important part of smoothing the way and opening the doors for the substance of the diplomatic work.

JH. Just on that subject - do you think that you had too many visitors from Britain to cope with, to do the entertaining of French people that you really wanted to do and to do all the other work which arises?

CM. Well, I'm afraid that the view I took about this volume of work was simply that I had this job for three and a half years and I must simply throw myself into it morning, noon and night and do whatever was required; and that was what I did and probably you couldn't sustain that forever; but it was workable for that long. As to the entertaining side and visitors from London, every time a British Minister or a delegation of MPs or for that matter a famous British writer visited Paris and they came to the Embassy and I gave a dinner or lunch party for them that included senior French people in their subject. So that I made use of the British visitors in order to get to know better the top French people and the two operated in synergy.

JH. Well, I have inspected our Embassy in France, quite a long time ago now; and I can only say that what you say illustrates again your earlier reference once or twice to the need for energy and hard work in the Diplomatic Service. The Service tends to be tainted with Talleyrand's remark about above all not showing zeal - if that's the right translation - not being enthusiastic and unbalanced and it does not have a reputation for superlative energy. I think that this is something worth underlining and that's why I am taking the liberty of making a little speech of my own at this point. Could I ask you whether there were other particular issues during your time and, if not, I would like to get on to Britain's position in the EU and in the Franco-German-British triangle, if indeed it is one, because these things seem to me to be of continuing importance.

CM. I would like to endorse what you said about energy. The fact is that an Ambassador in Paris or Bonn has almost any aspect of the British - French or British - German relationship to deal with - from getting a big British art exhibition to happen in one of the French museums to negotiating minute by minute the next steps in Bosnia - and you simply have to find space in your life for that and you have to rely on adrenaline to replace sleep for large parts of your life. The normal working week is from 8 a.m. to mid-night five and half or six days a week all through your posting.

JH. Could I repeat then that I would like to have your view, from what is an almost uniquely good vantage point of experience, of our position in the EU at the end of your time and particularly in relation to two of the other major powers, France and Germany. We seem to be condemned to be the perpetual unsuccessful third trying to break into some sort of marriage.

CM. Yes, the Franco/German relationship, which I did indeed have to study from both ends of it, is very very important in Europe; and is completely run-in and established and successful. When they have differences, which they do from time to time on important matters, they simply try all the harder to overcome the differences, to find a joint position. Success is usually defined as finding a joint position, more than it is defined in terms of upholding the national position; and that is very unusual in international relations. Yet that relationship, is good in an ultimate sense for Europe because, God knows, Europe has suffered - and Britain has suffered - when France and Germany have been at each other's throats in the past. Yet for Britain, to have the diplomacy of the EU led by those two countries much more than by ourselves is a serious disadvantage; and the question is whether Britain can co-lead with them in Europe. When Britain is in a Euro-sceptical mood European, that's quite difficult. But I would say that we have actually had a lot of influence, perhaps more than we realise, in Europe. The Single Market is a good example; but also the maintenance of the nation State, and the fact that France wants that, is a great help to us; also the Maastricht Treaty with the three pillars; instead of everything being integrated and centralised on Brussels we gave new prominence then to inter-governmental co-operation - foreign policy and domestic affairs - under the Maastricht Treaty. The old single process of concentrating authority on Brussels is diversified by new ideas for inter-governmental co-operation in the EU. We have had a lot of influence, but not as much as our weight would normally justify. I believe that it should be the first purpose of British policy now to jack up our weight and join the leadership, together with France and Germany. I am not talking about a formal triangle, because that would cause all sorts of problems with the other members of the EU. But I am talking about a situation where, when any big subject comes up, we try as hard as they do to reach a common policy amongst the three of us - so that that policy will be very likely to run with the others in the EU. There will be subjects where Britain agrees more with Germany, for instance anything to do with free trade; others, where we will agree more with France, for

instance things concerning defence or the maintenance of the nation state. We should play the tactics of that, the dynamics of the triangle, in order to win influence as hard as we can. I think that it is the opposite of a worthwhile and responsible foreign policy to accept that two other countries in Europe should hold the lead to our detriment.

JH. Thank you. That leads me to a question that I find to be of concern, which is that we seem to be at a perpetual disadvantage in that we were not there when the two major policies which affect large portions of the population in agricultural policy and the Community's fisheries policy were drawn up. Indeed, the fisheries policy - if I recollect rightly - was drawn up rather hurriedly before our entry became effective, when it might have been more gentlemanly to wait until we were there. We have a perpetual position as Ethelred the Unready - as Sir Oliver Wright has remarked ; I don't know if it was a public remark. We are even now doing the same thing with the question of the single currency and I wonder whether this is because we do have an historically different way of administering ourselves from the countries that you might say were run by Napoleon in one way or another for a while. What again, from your vantage point, do you think of this problem?

CM Well, it is true that our psychology is different. At the founding moment of the European Common Market Britain had been on the victorious side from a great war; we had been the only power that had stood up against Hitler throughout the war. We had nothing to be ashamed of; on the contrary. France was ashamed of the defeat of 1940; Germany was ashamed of the whole Nazi episode and the war. So they wanted a new start. They had a different psychology. They thought of the past as something to get away from and the future as being Europe; although actually France always saw Europe as a multiplier for French interests, rather than the incorporation of France into a wider entity. Now Britain stood aside and partly this was because we didn't see for ourselves the need for a complete new start - because we were proud of what we had achieved in the War. So we were not there in Europe at the start and in the first years, as you say, the key policies, especially the agricultural policy, were established and put into effect and when we decided that our destiny lay in Europe we had to accept the existing arrangements. The most we could be was a big influence on decisions taken subsequently. Well, we have indeed had real influence on some things affecting the old policies. For instance the agricultural policy has been reformed very

considerably and we have been a big influence in that. So I don't feel that we have had nothing to do with the way, say, the agricultural policy is run today. But it is a fact that we had to accept some things that others had negotiated. The other difference is that the first years were years of boom and are looked back on in France and Germany as a period of economic success and we did not have that; and so we don't have, looking back on our history within the European project, a period when there was a heyday for us, because of the European project. And that's another difference in psychology.

JH. Thank you. Indeed, our entry practically coincided with the first oil price shock which meant that the days when the Community could throw money at a problem because there was always more money, ceased to happen and that too, I think, was an unfortunate coincidence for our entry.

CM. Absolutely.

JH. Could I ask you something somewhat different? Did you ever want to be the Permanent Under Secretary? Which in fact means the Permanent Secretary and Head of the Diplomatic Service.

CM. Well, the answer to that is yes. At one point, when the job was changing after I had been some time in Bonn, I was on the list of candidates for that. I wasn't tremendously bothered about it because I knew that, if I did not get that job, whatever I did following Bonn could only be something really interesting and exciting. Well, the person who was chosen was David Gilmore, Lord Gilmore, and he did it as well as it could be done. I had the great pleasure of Paris. So I don't feel any disappointment about that, looking back. Either way round, as I said, whatever happened to me then was bound to be going to be fun.

JH. Thank you. I couldn't resist asking that; but I confess that my main interest is the way forward in the international field, in which I include the EU. To take another aspect of that. How far do you think we can successfully go in developing, as the Union hopes to do, joint foreign and defence policies? The former Yugoslavia, which must have preoccupied you ever since your days in planning staff from time to time, the former Yugoslavia is an illustration of

the sheer difficulty, it seems to me, of doing this and doing it successfully. Indeed, some of your fellow senior diplomats or ex-diplomats have said to me that they think it would have been better for there not to have been foreign intervention in these Balkan quarrels.

CM. Yes, there are limits, no question, to what members of the European Union can do together in foreign policy and in military operations like peace keeping deployments. But it seems to me right that we should try do as much as we can together. I don't mean an integrated arrangement with majority voting, where we are all bound by a single policy even if we have voted against it. That seems to me to be totally unfeasible. I just don't see how a government which wanted one thing and was outvoted could go back to its Parliament and say sorry, boys and girls, we have just got to do what we don't want to, what is not in our interest. Every government has to follow the national interest and what the voters in that country ultimately will want. So there are limits, but you should do the most you can. I think it is by co-operation among governments within a broad European framework that that should be done; and I think that joint positions on big issues at the UN, joint efforts in the diplomacy of the Middle East, joint efforts in preventing crises. Take the example right now, in former Yugoslavia, of Kosovo. The European countries should try to get together and should try to defuse that, before it goes violent. And that was the approach we took in Bosnia, together with the very important military deployments. I don't think it was a failure myself, but it certainly wasn't a full success. No question that it prevented even worse things happening, including hundreds of thousands of deaths from hypothermia. We shouldn't forget that the aid operation was a very important one. And we created the groundwork for the Dayton agreement where the Americans drove home the nail and got an agreement which has more or less held the peace since then. So I believe it was right to try; and we did do some good, though we didn't solve the whole problem. We learnt a lot about how to do such things and we should be prepared in Europe to try to keep the peace, if we had to again, in order to prevent another war of the Bosnia type, a regional war. So, I talk about growing co-operation, increasingly efficient co-operation, preparation in the form of joint military exercises, training and so on in peacetime before balloons of that kind go up and I talk about a maximum possible foreign policy co-operation: energetic, ambitious pragmatism.

JH. Thank you. I have heard from Sir Reginald Hibbert of the sheer effort that went into the

political co-operation of the Nine - am I right in saying? - in order to play a part in achieving more co-operation and security in Europe and the sheer effort all the greater, of course, because if nine people are sitting around a table they all have to have their say on behalf of their respective authorities. Do you still see a future for foreign policy co-operation after further enlargement even beyond fifteen of the EU?

CM. Well, that is a very good question, a question which applies not only to foreign policy. When you get up to twenty members or something, can you go on being coherent? My answer is, I'm afraid, a very simplistic one; my answer is that you must try. The larger the number you get, the harder it will be to have a coherent view on any controversial foreign policy matter, but you should try. If you reach a position where say 8 or 12 or 16 of the members have a joint policy and the others stand aside, well, you will still have more clout and more influence as 8 or 12 or 16 than individual members of the EU would have with individual positions on the same subject. So you should do your best and should not say that you only have anything useful when everyone agrees. It is useful to have numbers more than several but less than the lot agreeing on any important subject.

JH. Thank you. And if I may come to another European hobby horse. What do you think about the use and abuse of the concept of federalism? The Federal Republic of Germany seems a successful example of federalism in one country in Europe. Is this an useful idea or just an Aunt Sally in discussion of the future of the EU?

CM. It's a word which has bedevilled the debate between Britain and some of the others in Europe about the destination, the final form that Europe will take. It is rightly called the 'F' word because it has bedevilled things. It is, I think, a word best avoided. In Germany it means decentralisation; it means that as much responsibility as possible goes to the regions and as little as possible to the federal or national government which has so far been in Bonn. In Britain, the word federalism is taken to mean much greater unification than there is in Europe now. And that is true. The German Federation or the United States Federation is much more a single entity than the EU is. So from a German perspective it says we go further; but we don't go to an unitary state; and from a British perspective it says we go further than we the British at the moment think we want to go. So it doesn't help the debate. It obfuscates rather than

clarifies. I think, myself, in fact discussion of the finality, as it is called, the ultimate shape of Europe, is a fruitless exercise because its the best territory to choose if you want to disagree. Its much better to leave that undeclared, because different countries will have different views; and nobody can be sure whether their view of what the finality should be will be the finality that is actually reached one day. Its better to concentrate on what we need to do now. So if the issue is working together more in foreign policy, or if it is co-operating more on the environment, or if it is the implications of the introduction of a single currency among the majority of the members of the EU, then lets look at those, deal with those, solve those and then that will move us forward a bit. Then we will see at each stage how much further we want to go, rather than setting up long term visions on which you simply cannot get agreement.

JH. Thank you. I am tempted by that very helpful answer to put up another Aunt Sally. I have heard Lord Cockburn say that he wasn't going to talk about subsidiarity, a buzz word at the time, because he just didn't think it was a valuable or useful concept. That's not how other people see it; and you have just indicated that for the Germans subsidiarity and federalism are rather parallel and mean somewhat the same thing. There again, we should probably avoid the word; but what about the thing?

CM. Well, it is something where the British and the Germans coincide. Both of us think that subjects should be dealt with at the European level only when that is much more effective than dealing with them at the national or, for that matter, regional level within countries. That's what the Germans mean by subsidiarity. It's also, as you say, what they mean by federalism, and although the word subsidiarity is a particularly unattractive and incomprehensible word for most people, it is a useful piece of jargon for people dealing with European negotiations. It is a principle which is invoked time and again to say 'wait a minute, to harmonise or to make uniform such and such a thing across Europe is counter to the principle of subsidiarity, because on that matter nations or even regions can act at least as efficiently as Europe can.' It helps to define the limits of what subjects are appropriate for European action and that is a helpful piece of intellectual guidance.

JH. Thank you. I have been launching questions at you. In closing, is there anything you feel

you would like to say that you don't feel you have yet said.

CM. I would like to say something about my feelings about being a new ex-diplomat. I stopped a year and a half ago and I look back on diplomacy as an extremely active and enjoyable and worthwhile time. I frequently hear the remark that diplomats today, Ambassadors today, have much less responsibility than they used to because Ministers, in direct contact with their opposite numbers in other countries, particularly in Europe, deal with everything that matters. That is true and untrue. When the telegraph was invented in about 1870 Ambassadors were deprived of the independent power to declare war and that's a very good thing because a lot of considerations come into that momentous decision which an Ambassador in one place does not see. And it is, of course, true from that moment in 1870 until now governments have had contacts more and more with other governments and have also had immediate communications with their Ambassadors and can issue instructions or deal direct with other governments any subject. But at the same time the breadth of foreign policy has increased enormously. In the Embassy in Paris today half the staff are civil servants from departments other than the FCO because agricultural or military affairs or the environment or scientific co-operation are just as big a component of the British/French relationship as the traditional subjects like political work or consular work. So the breadth of an Ambassador's remit has multiplied by many times and at the same time the very top level of decision-making has been sliced off and taken over by Ministers. However, every time a Minister sits down, let's say the British Minister of Agriculture talking about BSE with the French Minister of Agriculture for an hour or an hour and a half, the terrain has to have been cleared by detailed negotiation in advance among officials, so that the really difficult remaining issues, which are hardest to agree on, are isolated and separated from all the other issues and are clarified so that decisions can be taken in a brief meeting at a Ministerial level. Ambassadors are doing that kind of thing all the time, also advising the British Minister before that meeting which objectives are attainable and which are not. I think that the combination of all those factors taken together provides still not only an extremely interesting but also an important role today.

JH. So the conclusion must be that there is perhaps another generation or two or three of broad diplomatic work before we achieves any economies in the FCO vote thanks to the EU.

CM. I don't see a lesser role for British Embassies in the capitals of other members of the EU. In fact, as I said, the more that new subjects come into European business, the more the range of expertise you need within the Embassy; and I think that if you cut Embassies out of European business and then cut the Embassy size accordingly, the British voice in EU affairs would be significantly reduced. The information and preparation of British officials and Ministers in multilateral talks on European matters would simply not be of the same quality and therefore we would not win points, i.e. exert influence, to the same extent. Where I can imagine economies is in the representation of Britain in some other countries outside Europe. I can imagine a joint Embassy with Germany or even Germany and France or even several others in the EU in a whole range of less important capitals. You can imagine anything from the sharing of services like accountants or transport or buildings right up to the actual sharing of an Ambassador who would rotate every three years between the countries sharing the Embassy and who would have a deputy from each of the other two countries and where each individual, would do a certain amount of specifically national work for his or her government but the political reporting and the contact making would be shared among them all and pooled. So there I can imagine change, and indeed I think that the small start that's been made in that field is too small and that a serious drive, setting an objective of say twenty shared posts by the end of 1998, would be feasible.