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This is an interview with Sir Clive Rose on 30 August 2003 in Lavenham, Suffolk, by Virginia Crowe.

VC Where did you go to school?

CR I was at Marlborough, 1935 to 1940.

VC Ah, so you went straight into the war did you, straight from school?

CR I did a bit of teaching for a few terms after that, and I went into the army at the beginning of 1941.

VC A tough time. And then at the end of the war, after I understand very distinguished service with the Rifle Brigade, you then had to find a job. What led you to the Diplomatic Service?

CR I married at the end of the war and went up to Oxford, and was one of those married undergraduates pushing a pram around, which is a very different life from the life of a normal undergraduate. I went into the Diplomatic Service. Why? I suppose I had done a lot of travelling in the war, in the army, and I rather liked the idea of travelling and I met a man at Marlborough, Lord Jowett, who was the Lord Chief Justice and he said what are you going to do, my boy? I said I was thinking of going into the Foreign Service and he said learn Russian. I said do you think so and he said yes, that is the language of the future. So I sat down and learned Russian on the linguaphone in the evenings after I got back from my lectures and whatever else. Elisabeth was, I think, rather bored with the linguaphone but it was a labour of love. I then went to Drogheda, into a Russian family in Ireland for three weeks financed by the sale of some pieces of jewellery my wife had inherited in order to learn to talk some spoken Russian before taking the exam. I arrived at the house of the people I was going to stay with and the lady was a Caucasian aristocrat who had left Russia with her husband; her father had been colonel in the Imperial guard at the time of the revolution and eventually settled in Ireland. She came to the door and I greeted her in my best linguaphone Russian, which I thought was pretty good, and she looked at me in horror

and said you speak Russian like a Moscow tram conductor. I realised how proletarian the Russians had become in the thirty years since my hosts had left. I first of all got into the Commonwealth Relations Office and was then transferred to the Foreign Office, but I was never, in the whole of my career, sent to a Russian speaking post. Nor did Russian seem to be a feature in my career planning at all until I reached my last, not my last but the last but one, overseas job, which was the Head of the MBFR delegation in Vienna in 1973 to 1976. In the plenary sessions I used to sit next to the Russian deputy ambassador, a man called Michael Smirnovsky who had been ambassador in London, and on my other side I had the American ambassador. I noticed that Smirnovsky (who was sitting rather close) was very careful to put his papers up on his left side so I couldn't read what he had got in his brief. I said to him one day, you know Michel, there is no point in your doing that because I can't understand a word that is written there anyway. He said, 'Ah, we know better than that'. As I reflected on this I thought I had worked out what happened. When I got into the Foreign Office on my Russian, Philby was in operation and I think that Philby probably got hold of, and sent to the KGB, names of all the people who had got into the Service at that time, in his time, who spoke Russian. This had gone on my records, and it remained there for the thirty five years since then. When I was posted to this job as head of the delegation in Vienna it was one of the things that was reported about me to the Russians. Very interesting the way the long arm of the KGB stretches back.

VC That's fascinating.

CR Very interesting, but I think that's the only way I can work that one out.

VC When you went to the Office and when you applied for the Office did they actually take any interest in your Russian? I mean was it because you had Russian that you got recruited?

CR No. They weren't in the least bit interested. It didn't occur to me, partly because first of all I went into the Commonwealth Relations Office and I went to India, to Madras, under the CRO and whilst there was offered a transfer to the Foreign Office. I came back to the Foreign Office at the beginning of 1950. It was probably lost in the mists of time as far as the Foreign Office was concerned, but not as far as the KGB was concerned.

VC When you joined the CRO was there any kind of induction, or did they just put you to work straight away?

CR To work straight away, and I think the CRO was the most inefficient Department I have ever discovered in Whitehall. It was a good thing it died eventually and was amalgamated into the Foreign Office; its personnel management was appalling, didn't know how to deal with people, didn't consider their interests at all. I can give examples of my own experiences but I won't go into the detail. They were a badly managed Department, they were a cocked-up Department really, a combination of the old India Office, the Colonial Office, and the Commonwealth Office and it wasn't a very successful thing, in my view.

VC This business of not taking people's careers or interests into account, one hears some terrible stories about that. Did they try and post you without your family or something?

CR Yes. My first post. I was a young married man just down from Oxford and I had a child, our first child, and we were going to Madras and a fortnight before we were due to leave for Madras a telegram came into the CRO saying there is no point in Rose bringing his family because there is no accommodation for them. So I then had to arrange that they should stay behind and go out alone. This was my first, not very helpful, start. So we went out to Madras, I had to stay in an hotel, but the allowances granted for somebody of my rank, which was second secretary, were not sufficient to allow me to stay in a first class Madras hotel. I had to stay in a second class Indian hotel. Second class Indian hotels were not all that good. There were cockroaches all over the floor and so on. So it wasn't a very pleasant induction really.

VC But you stayed?

CR I stayed only for fifteen months because when my wife came out, she got very ill, she got a thing called tropical sprue and she had to be flown home on a stretcher bed, I had to sit up holding her hand throughout the journey. She was never able to go back to the tropics again. But when I transferred to the Foreign Office the CRO never transferred any of my personal

papers over to the Foreign Office, so the Foreign Office had no record of any of this and some years later when I was actually posted as ambassador in Lomé, which is right in tropical West Africa...

VC ...resident ambassador?

CR Yes, resident ambassador. I had to explain to Personnel Department when they told me, that I was very sorry, I couldn't go there because my wife was not able to go to the tropics. They had no record of any of this information. I got a doctor of course to produce the answer, but nothing was transferred by the CRO at all. I don't know what happened. It was typical of the CRO administration.

VC And still you stayed in the Foreign Office when they made a mistake of that magnitude, you didn't blame the Office?

CR I didn't blame the Foreign Office for that one. That was not their fault, they simply hadn't any record, my records hadn't been passed over by the CRO.

VC You very helpfully gave me a note of your career. Could you just list where you have been for the record and then we'll...

CR I went to Madras first of all in 1948 and spent fifteen months there where I was mainly dealing with what were called assisted passages, that is giving financial assistance to British people left behind who wanted to get back to England, and the money to do it.

VC That must have been a tough job for a young second secretary. You were making difficult decisions.

CR It was a fascinating initiation really. It was an initiation because we had certain rules, certain written rules and one unwritten rule. The written rules were that they had to be British and had to have some contacts with the country and hopefully somebody to look after them when they got home; that last one was a discretionary one. And they would be likely to

settle down if they were bi-lingual. The 'likely to settle down' was elaborated in a highly confidential memorandum. This meant, are they black or white. At that time blacks were having quite a difficult time in settling and so this was a judgement I had to make; were they white enough to qualify? One day a completely English young woman came in to see me in my Office and said she would like some help to go home. Her father was an ex-soldier, married and they lived in Bangalore. She was eminently suitable for passage and I gave her a passage. She went off happily. A week later a young black man came in and he said I would like a passage to England. I went over all the grounds why I thought he wouldn't settle down very happily and said sorry. He said but you gave my sister a passage last week. These were the sorts of hazards. It was an interesting starting point for a career.

VC It put you on your mettle.

CR It certainly did. Then I went back to London and went back to the Foreign Office and I was there from the beginning of 1950 until 1953 dealing with the Persian Gulf states, on the Persian Gulf desk, that is to say Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the seven Trucial States and Oman. That was a fascinating job in many ways too. It was a sort of semi-colonial administrative job. They were all British protected states. They were states which were all bound by treaty made in the 19th century with the British government under which we had control over their foreign affairs and their defence and we had certain jurisdiction rights over foreign nationals in their countries. And under the treaty relationship when they made contracts with oil companies, the oil company had to sign a political agreement with the British government to in effect behave itself. That was the sort of thing we negotiated, and I was responsible for doing that, assisted by one of the Foreign Office lawyers, with oil companies as and when they took out contracts in those states. I think the Foreign Office didn't really like this much. It was a sort of colonial task, which didn't seem, in the eyes of most people, to have much to do with diplomacy; it wasn't what they thought the Foreign Office was about; it was a hang-over from the India Office, which had been run by the Government of India directly.

VC You say the Foreign Office, was it really the Foreign Office or the CRO?

CR No, I am talking about the Foreign Office now, the CRO didn't come into it. At least

they may have had it for a short time, but they handed over to the Foreign Office. By the time I got there it was a Foreign Office task. But it had really been done by the Government of India, from India. Most of the people working there, the political agents as they were called, in those states, and the political resident in Bahrain, who was the controller of the whole lot, were Indian Political Service people. They were gradually being phased out and replaced by Foreign Office people, but they didn't understand the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office didn't understand them. The Foreign Office didn't like having to administer territories, a task it wasn't used to. So I had an interesting time because I was rather left on my own to get on with it. And I will always remember the Political Resident when I was there was a man called Sir Rupert Hay, an Indian Political Service man all his life, elderly, near retirement. He said to me once, Clive, I don't understand, I get lots of letters from you telling me what to do and giving me good advice, always appreciated, but occasionally I get one signed by somebody else, Bunny Fry, an Assistant of the Department and occasionally by somebody called Geoffrey Furlong. Who are these people who sign letters? I said the way we work in the Foreign Office they are actually both my superiors, Fry is the Assistant of the Department, Geoffrey Furlong is the Head of the Department. If it is something really important I have to get them to sign it. Well, he said, I would rather deal with you. The most interesting thing that happened during that period was the formation of a body which was known initially as the Trucial Oman Levies. There was great concern in the early 1950s about an increase in slave trading in the seven Trucial States. The Trucial States were those now known as the United Arab Emirates, there were six of them, we added another one, so seven were combined together, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, and so on. We had to decide what to do about the slave trade, which was becoming a serious problem with the slave traders setting up camps along the coast, which was very uncontrolled. There was no police force, there was no army there at all. We had three options; one was the traditional 19th century thing; send out a gunboat and bombard the slave camps. The second one was send a body of British troops out there to police the place. The third one was to establish a local police force, which would recruit its own local people. I remember putting up a long memorandum to Ernie Bevin. He would only actually read one paragraph in a covering page, so the memorandum had to go out to everybody between me and Bevin who read the one paragraph, which was the recommendation. The recommendation which we came down to was we should try and set up a local police force. The War Office, as it was in those days,

refused absolutely point blank to send troops. The Admiralty refused to send a ship and really we had no option. The Treasury didn't like forming a local police force because it was going to be expensive, but when it came up to Ernie Bevin he sent my minute back, which had got everybody's signature, right up the hierarchy, and he just wrote two words in the margin, and the two words were; 'no bombarding'. I took 'no bombarding', as did my superiors, to mean go ahead with forming the local police force. That was all we got as authority. We went to the Treasury with a request for authority to pay for a 100-man force. The Treasury jibbed at a 100-man force, much too many men, we can't afford that, they didn't want any at all really, but, if you must, it must be below 100. So we got it down to 70. One of the conditions made by the Treasury was that if it was going to be done the Foreign Office would have to pay for it, it would come out of their budget but no War Office resources were to be used in forming, establishing, or organising this force, which meant it was entirely a Foreign Office force. So I had the task of drawing up the establishment, equipment scales, pay scales, and so on. Fortunately I had some good contacts in the War Office and they helped me a lot, so we got them straight. And I also had Glubb Pasha, General Glubb, who was then running the Arab Legion in Jordan and he came in a lot, was very helpful in advising me how to get this thing organised. He also lent us an officer to command them, Hankin-Turvin, a lieutenant in the Arab Legion, on secondment for two years to get things started. It was fine, he spoke good Arabic, and so on. We had more difficulty in selling the project to the Treasury than we did to the rulers of the Trucial States. The only one who jibbed was the ruler of Abu Dhabi who was a bit of a rogue and he liked to be able to raid over the borders into Saudi Arabia, which is a very undefined border. But he was eventually persuaded that it would be a good thing, and in his interests, so we started setting up and recruiting. We were about to go into operation when a blast came from Saudi Arabia. King Ibn Saud had got wind of it, summoned the British ambassador and said this is a disgraceful act of aggression against his territory, and against his security interests by the British government whom he had always regarded as his friends. This was 70 men, mark you. And they hadn't even been recruited at that time. So we had to think again, or rather my superiors had to think again. I would have said, to hell with you, and gone ahead with what we had planned, but we did think again and it was then decided, unfortunately, to cut it to about 40, so from 100 we are now down to 40 men to monitor this whole stretch of coast. The King was told it was only 40, and he was given all sorts of assurances that we would restrain the

Sheikh of Abu Dhabi's depredations in his country, and so on, and that we had no hostile intent, it was entirely an internal security body. We set it up and it got going and it was very successful, very much appreciated by the local people. It was the first police force that they'd had to date, and a lot of the slave traders were warned off. It dealt with a lot of local crime and so on which the sheikhs on the whole came to warmly recognise. It flourished and came to be called the Trucial Oman Scouts. It was the basis, years later, of what is now the United Arab Emirates Army. It had a bit of a sequel in 1951. All this happened in 1951. Then in 1952, Roger Makins as he was then, later Lord Sherfield, was sent out to the Gulf with the main purpose of trying to advise the Sheikh of Kuwait, whose country was in the Sterling Area, as were all the Persian Gulf states, on the investment of his money. The Sheikh of Kuwait was then thought to be the richest man in the world. He wouldn't rank today but in those days he was said to be drawing an income of £50 million a year from the oil company. The problem was he had got one or two Lebanese advisers who were advising him rather unwisely, in the Bank of England's view and the Treasury's view, as to what he should do with his £50 million. The idea was to get out there and try to persuade him to set up an investment board in London to invest in Sterling securities. Roger Makins was sent to do this with the Bank of England and a Treasury man.

VC What was Roger Makins doing...

CR He was Deputy Under-Secretary of economic affairs in the Foreign Office. He had just been appointed as ambassador to Washington; he hadn't gone but he was waiting to go. So I went out. I was the desk man, who knew about the area and so on. I went as his assistant, and we went to Baghdad and then down to Kuwait and he did a wonderful job and persuaded the Sheikh of Kuwait. The Political Agent thought we would never do it. He thought the Sheikh would never understand what we were talking about but Makins was absolutely marvellous in getting it across. The Sheikh of Kuwait actually set up this investment board, though his rather silly British agent tried to talk me out of it but we succeeded in dealing with him and the Sheikh set up the board, and at the time it was very efficient. It solved the problem anyway as far as the Treasury and the Bank were concerned. The others went home and Roger Makins and I went to Riyadh.

VC Where were you at this stage?

CR I was on the Persian Gulf desk in the Foreign Office.

VC But in those days flying out to the Middle East was not such an easy thing to do, was it?

CR Yes, it was quite unusual. We went to Baghdad first and then down from Baghdad. Roger and I went to Riyadh, had various adventures on the way, which are too detailed and lengthy to tell you about. Riyadh was the Royal capital and you weren't allowed to wear western dress there in those days. The moment we arrived, we were put up in the royal guest palace, and the court tailor was sent round to measure us for our Arab clothes. We had them in no time, an agar and a white khaffir and a long brown robe. We tried them on. We looked silly. However, we had to wear them the whole time we were there. We had an audience the next morning with Ibn Saud. Roger's agar wasn't fitting very well, he had a rather pointed dome like head and he couldn't get it to stick so he sort of jammed it on. So we set off for this audience in the throne room, a long audience chamber, and the drill was you bowed as you came in, you bowed halfway down and you bowed when you got to the King, anyway there were three bows and you squatted down beside him. Sheikh Yamani was doing the interpreting. We squatted down, I was next to Roger on one side of the King and the ambassador and a member of his staff were on the other side. Halfway through the audience when Roger was in full flow trying to explain his case, and apologising for any alarm we had caused the King, bringing compliments from Churchill, Anthony Eden and so on, I saw the ambassador gesturing to me and pointing at Roger Makin's head. I looked up and saw that his agar was about to fall off. The bowing had shifted it, so I thought the only thing I could do was jam it on so I put my hands up and I just jammed it down on his head. This caused consternation. Ibn Saud had two rather villainous looking Somali body-guards standing behind him and they saw this happening and they drew their swords. I suppose they thought I was assassinating my boss. Fortunately Roger turned round smiling and said thanks very much old boy, and everybody relaxed. That was a very strange episode.

VC What was Roger Makins like? You say that he was very able, what were his qualities?

CR He was extremely good at putting complicated things very simply. He demonstrated this with the Sheikh of Kuwait. He was very good in that way, he had a very fine brain and he could put a complicated thing in very simple language so that an ordinary person, a non-expert, could understand it. We had a lot of entertainment in the Gulf. I remember one dinner we went to with the Sheikh of Sharjah. We were told to wear black tie and dinner jackets. We arrived and were squatting on the ground with a whole roast sheep in front of us, which we ate with our hands. We didn't much like doing this in dinner jackets as we were going to get in a mess, but the delicacy was the sheep's eyes, which were offered everywhere we went to Roger as the honoured guest. He didn't like sheep's eyes not surprisingly so I was the eye eater and every time he got them he handed them to me. So I had to eat two sheep's eyes on most social occasions when I was in the Gulf. I got quite used to them, though they are not exactly the delicacy that I would choose. And I remember meeting Christopher, his son, some years later when I was at the embassy in Paris where Christopher was a second secretary. He said, I know who you are, you are the man who likes sheep's eyes. I said, what makes you think that?. He said, well, that's the reputation you've got in my family.

VC I must say Clive, from everything that you have said so far, there was a lot militating against the enjoyment of your career at that stage.

CR I enjoyed it really, but I wouldn't want to eat sheep's eyes again much.

VC But the technicalities of running this Trucial Oman exercise, if you like, were taxing since you were in London and you were doing the negotiations in London. Did you go out to the Gulf a lot or were you depending on the information coming out...

CR The negotiations with the oil companies were done in London. I didn't do it in the Gulf. They had their people, mainly the Iraq Oil Company and the American Gulf Oil Company, which was operating in Kuwait. There were two principal oil companies that we had to negotiate with. But we also had jurisdiction over foreign residents. We appointed a judge, an English judge, who went round the Persian Gulf sitting in court. And the political agents all exercised the powers of magistrates over British citizens and other foreigners in their particular state. These powers were defined in Orders in Council and Queen's Regulations.

These we had to work out in the Foreign Office. Fortunately we had a very good legal adviser with Vincent Evans, who subsequently became the chief Foreign Office legal adviser. I think he went on to the International Court. He was a close friend in those days, a close colleague, and he and I used to work together without much involvement by others.

VC How old were you at that stage?

CR I was 29 or 30.

VC A young man for that kind of responsibility?

CR I suppose, yes. It was the sort of thing that, if you belonged to the Colonial Service, you would expect: you had exactly that sort of thing at that age, it just was different. It wasn't something that the Foreign Office was used to. It was an unusual job for somebody in the Foreign Office.

VC So in the end you were bridging cultures between the CRO and the Foreign Office.

CR The India Office really.

VC That's very interesting.

CR It was very bizarre.

VC And unusual. Were there other people doing this kind of bridging, a sort of winding down of the Indian legacy?

CR There weren't many and I think this was the only thing the Foreign Office took over. I took over from Tom Rogers who later went to Bogota as Ambassador. He had been permanent secretary in the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and he was at that time a first secretary in the Foreign Office. Another second secretary, Bill Cranston, was working alongside me doing some aspects of the job.

VC But it is interesting that somebody should be a Permanent Secretary as a colonial official in Pakistan, then go on to do a first secretary job in the Office.

CR I don't think a Permanent Secretary in the Pakistan foreign ministry at that time meant very much. He was a very good chap, Tom, a former Indian Civil Servant.

VC After this wonderful and rather exotic experience, they sent you to?

CR Bonn. Bonn at the beginning of 1953 shortly after the treaty signed in 1949 came into force. But the independent West German government was still fairly new. My responsibility there was Berlin affairs. I was dealing almost entirely with Berlin from Bonn, working closely with Americans, French and German officials. I sat on a quadripartite working group which met regularly to deal with the continuing problems with the Russians over Berlin.

VC Was any Russian involved in this?

CR No. I didn't deal with the Russians. Our function was to agree on how to react to Russian actions and to advise our Ambassadors and the GOC in Berlin how to deal with them. Invariably there was a Berlin crisis just before a holiday weekend, or so it seemed. Come Good Friday there was a Berlin crisis. The Russians would time it perfectly.

VC And deliberately, I think.

CR I think so, yes. They thought we would be off our guard.

VC 'Berlin affairs'. What kind of things would they consist of?

CR In hold-ups on the railway relating to the special Allied train which went through East Germany, between West Germany and Berlin, and dealing with problems which arose there. Either people were arrested or the train was stopped and held up. Dealing with incidents on the border between East and West Berlin (the wall hadn't been built at that time). Dealing

with events concerning the administration of Spandau, there were a host of problems. These are just examples.

VC Civilian problems? I have been reading Anthony Beaver's Fall of Berlin. One's very aware of the problems for the civilian population. Did they come your way?

CR Yes, they probably did. My memory is not really good about this. I can't really remember all the details, but I know that we were constantly in session to deal with problems and of course when I was there the East German revolt of 17 July 1953 took place. This was an alarming episode but the Russians backed down eventually. I remember too much detail but I know that Berlin was a very active subject.

VC What was it like living there?

CR In Berlin?

VC Yes.

CR I was not in Berlin. I worked in Bonn. The Embassy was in Bad Godesberg, next to Bonn but I and many others on the staff lived in Bad Honnef and other places east of the Rhine. In those days, there was no bridge and we used to cross the river on the same ferry as Dr Adenauer who lived in Rhőndorf on the east side of the river. The ferry officers used to keep a space for him so he could drive on at the last moment with two escort cars. There was low slung Porsche in front and then his own car and a car full of police behind. The car in front had a pair of policemen in it. Our great plan, rather irresponsible, I suppose, was to try and block his exit so that he would get separated from his police car but we were always frustrated by the ferry people until one day we managed to stop the Porsche getting off, and it was a great achievement. Adenauer had to drive off without his Porsche escort. Eventually the Porsche got free but there was a steep dip from the ferry going down to the shore and then up again the other side making a sort of switchback. I remember the Porsche driver was so furious that he drove at full tilt over this and of course bounced at the bottom of the dip and both their hats came off. A tremendous cheer went up from the British Embassy staff.

VC It doesn't sound very friendly, that relationship.

CR It was just fun. There was no maliciousness about it. It was purely an attempt to puncture the pomposity of it.

VC Did you get to know Adenauer? Presumably he was above your pay grade, as it were?

CR I went back from Bonn, to the Foreign Office German desk later when Macmillan was Prime Minister. He used to have regular meetings with Adenauer, alternately in London or in Bonn, and I used to attend those, sitting directly behind the PM, as record taker. And on the other side behind Adenauer was Fritz Caspari who was my opposite number on the British desk in the Auswärtiges Amt in Bonn. He and I used to compare notes over what either of our principals had said during these talks and so we made sure we got a decent record. That was interesting. I did about three of those, one in London and two in Bonn, but yes, I did meet Adenauer at that time. Nothing more than shaking by the hand, but it was an interesting experience to have been present. The only other thing that happened during that period in the Foreign Office whilst I was on the German desk was the first post-war German State Visit made by president Heuss, a great coup for the then German ambassador, Von Herwarth, who was a very nice man who had been the head of protocol in the German Foreign Office in Bonn. He was very keen to have this first visit after the end of hostilities, which he saw as sealing Anglo-German friendship. It happened I think in about 1957. I had a lot to do of course with preparations for the visit, in contact with Herr Herwarth and his Embassy staff. One memory I have is of drafting the Queen's speech for the state banquet she was to give as the centre piece of the visit. I decided to put in a chunk about her German ancestry, which was a risky thing to do, but it seemed to be worth trying. I put in a piece about her German connections and it went up through the usual channels via the Prime Minister and eventually to the palace. The final version basically kept what I had drafted but somewhat watered down. The warmth of my references was made slightly less warm. At that time the Foreign Office was coming under strong attack from the Beaverbrook press, the Daily Express, for the visit at all and it was thought that we had to be very careful about how warm we were going to be in public. So it was watered down. The British ambassador in Bonn, Kit Steel,

was of course all for the sort of speech that I had written, but the palace and the prime minister's office thought that they couldn't risk being quite as friendly as I had suggested. Anyway von Herwarth was pleased that the main point of the Queen's German connections had been made.

VC What date was the visit planned?

CR I think it was 1957 or 1958, but I can't remember exactly. But the visit itself got a very mixed press. I used to keep a pile of press cuttings on my desk. There was an anti pile, quite high, there was a pro pile which was really about half the size and there was a neutral pile in the middle, which was probably the highest. But the anti was fairly strong.

VC What was the purpose of the visit?

CR The point of the state visit was to put a seal on Anglo-German reconciliation. German President Heuss had a great anti-Nazi war record but he was not a man who took any part in political affairs. I don't think he would have had much of a chance with Adenauer as Chancellor. It was largely a ceremonial visit.

VC Did you go to the palace? Were you involved in all those grand ceremonies in the palace?

CR I think I did. I didn't go to the palace dinner, of course, I was simply the man who did the drafts. No I didn't go there, I went to one or two of the receptions but I had a very good relationship with the German embassy. I think they accepted I was doing my best to make the visit a successful Anglo-German event.

VC And that had presumably a knock-on effect on the kind of meetings you were having on German re-unification.

CR Yes. The Head of my Department was Pat Hancock, who was subsequently our ambassador in Rome, but he and I used to go to a series of meetings, quadripartite, with the

French, the Americans, the Germans, and ourselves, in Bonn or in London or in Paris in order to discuss this problem which was the big issue of the time. It was a combination of European security and German re-unification. The idea was to try to offer the Russians some sort of security deal, which would enable them to look more kindly towards German re-unification, to try to buy them by security assurances into accepting the re-unification of Germany. It never had much chance of success, actually, but we had to go on trying, largely for the Germans' sake because they wanted it then. It was a political necessity. The relations between the four allies were on the whole pretty good. The French were usually the odd men out. I remember one meeting in Paris where, it was in July and it took place over the weekend of 14 July, and the French were determined to have a holiday on the Monday, which was Bastille day, so they said we won't have a meeting that day. They had tabled a paper which we and the Americans thought was totally on the wrong lines and we didn't like it at all, couldn't accept it as it was. It had to be modified and Pat Hancock said we weren't too happy with it. Anyway we wanted to go through it and translate it more carefully and it was left that we and the Americans would have a look at the changes we wanted to make during the Bastille day holiday when the French were out of action. The American, my opposite number, was a man called Ted Lampson who was the American representative. We got together and spent most of the day on this, virtually re-writing the paper, trying to bring in as many of the French phrases as we could but we wrote it to meet what we wanted. We tabled this as a slightly revised version on the following morning. The head of the French delegation, a man called Laloy, looked at it and said, this is a totally different paper which has no relationship whatever to the French proposals. If that is the way you are going to treat me, I am no longer going to take any part in this, and he got up and walked out, leaving his number two to carry on. This was a bit of a shock.

VC Dramatic.

CR Dramatic. He did come back. In the last week he gave a reception at which in the end he was quite conciliatory, so we made it up.

VC So it was a sort of classic negotiating technique, was it?

CR It didn't get him anywhere because we didn't actually accept his paper.

VC I was going to say, how did the paper work out in the end, was it a good compromise?

CR We got almost all that we wanted and the Germans agreed with us, it was three to one. But the French, as was so often in those days, I'm afraid, found themselves isolated. It was not a French German hook-up, by that time it was much more Anglo-German. We helped the Germans in a number of ways.

VC What sort of things were you thinking of? Kőnigswinter?

CR There was the annual Kőnigswinter conference of course which was a great initiative by a German and then there was the conference centre where we invited groups of Germans - trades unionists and business men and so on...

VC ...I think it was probably Wilton Park.

CR It was Wilton Park. The Germans met together with their British opposite numbers at this centre and this was to try and get across to the Germans how we ran our trades unions movement, how the CBI worked and so on. This was a sort of rehabilitation, which they greatly appreciated and very much enjoyed. That and Kőnigswinter contributed to strengthening Anglo-German relations in those days. The French did nothing comparable.

VC I rather fed you Kőnigswinter as a possible example. Were there other things?

CR Those are the two main things, we just had a good relationship with them. Those were the two pillars, and Macmillan established a close relationship with Adenauer.

VC A personal relationship?

CR A personal relationship, that went well, and fed down to relations at all levels, official and non-official.

VC I'd like to pursue the relationship with the French. You said, "as the French so often are". What is the basis for that?

CR When I was in Bonn the French were determined to milk the Germans in terms of occupation costs...

VC ...as after the previous war?

CR As far as they absolutely could. The man who was the French High Commissioner, François Poncet, had been ambassador in Berlin before the war. His son many years later was French foreign minister. He lived in palatial style in a place called Schloss Ehrlich south of Bonn. I once went to dinner there as a young man with Elisabeth and he had a powdered footman behind each two chairs in kneebritches, all Germans, paid for out of occupation costs, and the style was semi-imperial, all paid for by the Germans. This was the attitude at that time. That didn't exactly help.

VC But later on? The French have always been slightly individualistic in European affairs, haven't they, have you got any thoughts about the reasons for that?

CR Well, in those days the French were very determined to keep the Germans down, put it like that. They supported Adenauer's wish to try to integrate Germany into the European Community, the West European community, because they shared his view that that was the way to prevent the Germans from going ahead and doing the sort of things they had done before the second world war. That concept got a lot of support from the French. But the French were resistant to the idea of Germany joining NATO with an army, which was one thing the Americans were counting on. To resolve this problem the British government proposed the Western European Union treaty, the Brussels treaty, which was a sort of bridge between the Germans and NATO. Seven West European countries were in the WEU at that time, Germany was one, and there were all sorts of restrictions on the Germans, what they were allowed to do in terms of re-armament under the original Brussels treaty, which enabled the French to be able to accept re-armament within the context of this rather restricted

framework, and gradually it made it easier for them to become full members of NATO.

VC Was that a British supported initiative?

CR Anthony Eden was actually the architect of the proposal which, though I didn't have much to do with at that time, led to those treaties and enabled the French to accept rearming Germany.

VC Thank you. The other thing I wanted to pursue with you was the importance of personal relationships between statespeople in international affairs. You have pointed it out between Macmillan and Adenauer, is thee anywhere else that you saw it? Do you think it a key ingredient in international affairs, or is it just an optional extra?

CR No, I think it is absolutely essential. It makes all the difference in the world. If I can switch forward a few years to the Vienna talks, we will come back, I think it is integral to our whole diplomatic effort. I'm not now talking only about ministerial contacts, the establishment of good personal relations on the diplomatic front at all levels is absolutely essential for smooth diplomacy. The reason I am switching fast forward to the Vienna days when I was head of the delegation to the MBFR talks is that these were the first and only negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. There was eventually an accord. We have never negotiated on this subject since. We started them off in October 1973 when there were twelve NATO countries and seven Warsaw Pact countries involved, nineteen altogether. The French didn't wish to take part. We had no precedents, there had been no sort of previous occasion for talks of this kind between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, or even between West and East, and it was then the middle of the cold war. We got to the point where after a lot of trying the Russians had accepted having talks of this kind on the build up of forces down the centre line of Europe. The idea was to try and make a general reduction on both sides. We wanted it and assumed they wanted it; in fact they wanted a reduction on the Western side without any reduction on the Eastern side. I am not going to talk a lot about this because I wrote a lengthy account which was published in FCO Historical Occasional Papers No 17 (October 2002) entitled "Détente, Diplomacy and MBFR". An interesting aspect was the relationship between the NATO heads of the delegation and the Warsaw pact

delegations. The latter started off extremely frostily. We were on different sides, we doubted one another's motives, and we had nothing in common. On the Western side, not many of us had houses, we had a house, the German had a house and the American deputy had a house, but not many other ambassadors had houses. We started off having rather formal dinner parties, mixing East and West. They were a complete flop. We found that the Warsaw Pact people would not open their mouths in front of the Russian, they saw what he was going to say and then agreed with him. It was a total frost and they were very stuffy and so we had to abandon them. We realised that we were condemned to live together for some years in the negotiations and we were very much a closed community. We weren't mixing with the other diplomats, the bilateral representatives in the country at all. We were a close circle of nineteen delegations and we had to find some way in which we could establish reasonable personal relations if we were going to have rather acrimonious negotiations, disagreeing with one another across the table and so on, we had to have some way in which we could actually live together. Dinner parties were obviously no good, receptions were equally not much good at that stage. In the formal negotiations we had had frequent plenary sessions at which each side made a set speech, with no debate. This got us nowhere, so we decided – East and West - to reduce formal plenaries to one a week. In between we established a weekly "informal" session of three Ambassadors on each side – the Russian plus two of his allies and the American plus either the German or myself plus one other. To maintain the appearance of "informality" we met in one of the Ambassador's houses, round the dining table, where we had three hours of hard-hitting discussion, after which we broke off for a drink together. On the social side, we needed to do something to establish some sort of personal mutual trust, which is needed before you can negotiate even if you are on the other side. So the American deputy had the idea of singing together. We started by a very small group in my house and in his house and in the Russian and German houses Where we met for an informal supper and then sang one another's songs. After a bit this was enlarged and the Americans produced a song book of American and English songs, Russian songs, Czech songs, songs in fact of all the countries who were participating. The Russian songs were in Russian script and phonetic Russian and in English translation. Songs like A Tavern in the Town, Swannee, Clementine, the sort of thing that everyone belts out and we used to meet together, just the ambassadors, though occasionally we invited deputies to come but it was normally just the ambassadors. By that time we were meeting together for dinner, usually in a restaurant in Vienna and after

dinner Dean, the American deputy (the only one always present) would produce the song book which he would hand round and we would then sing alternately an Eastern song and a Western song. He would shout out number 25, number 43, and so on and it was a tremendous success. It really broke the barriers down and we used to enjoy singing together. We didn't have to have any polite conversation and we thoroughly enjoyed the singing and it broke down the barriers to personal relationships so that we all became on first name terms very quickly and we found that that meant that at either plenary sessions or the informal sessions we were able to say some tough things to one another across the table and afterwards meet together without any sort of feeling of unease at all. It was a remarkable experience. I've got a copy of the song book, about the last surviving one I think. It was something the press knew about and were desperately anxious to get hold of the song book. I always said it was the one NATO secret that was never revealed. They never got it, but they kept on asking to see it. You know this old saying that NATO 'Secret' means don't leak it until tomorrow, 'Top Secret' means keep it till next week. This was one that never leaked.

VC Diplomacy takes many forms.

CR Very many forms. This was a fascinating one. It clearly did work and from that we then built quite a lot of things we used to do together. We went on walking trips together, the whole atmosphere lightened up. In Vienna, in the MBFR negotiation, in the MBFR community of nineteen we literally lived, ate, drank and slept MBFR and people outside us found us totally dull because whenever talked about something we talked Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions. The object of MBFR was to achieve a reduction of the forces on both sides confronting one another in the centre of Germany, the centre of Europe. The Russians objected to the word balanced because they wanted equal percentage reductions. We didn't want equal percentage reductions because that would leave them with superiority. By balanced we meant unequal reductions and the big argument which we had most of the time was how to make sure that if we reduced we didn't do as the Russians wanted by equal percentages which would leave the situation exactly as before. They had to lose more than we did in the West so that we should get down to about equal forces on each side.

VC Thank you. The song book thing is remarkable and your description of the negotiations

shows how important it is to be versatile and flexible and inventive in your diplomatic methods. I mean when people talk about diplomatic entertaining, which gets a lot of stick in the press, there are different ways of entertaining each other and the point of entertainment you have illustrated very well.

CR The only thing I would say about the fascinating experience of these negotiation is that I was there for the first three years. These were the most important ones because whatever back was to be broken we broke in those three years, they fizzled on for a long time afterwards. But the relationship with the Foreign Office I found a very difficult one. The reason I found it difficult was that the key thing which we were aiming at in Vienna was that we should retain total NATO solidarity, and it was something we managed to achieve. We had a private ginger group, which consisted of the American ambassador, the German ambassador and myself, who tried to steer the negotiations. The rest of the NATO people knew about it, but it wasn't talked about, they turned a blind eye to it; so long as we didn't push them too far, they took our lead. And we did manage to keep an enormously solid front, such a solid front that the Warsaw Pact people were totally unable to penetrate it; they couldn't wedge drive at all, they found it very difficult. I remember talking to, I think, the Polish ambassador who said they had tried very hard to drive wedges and couldn't get a wedge in between the NATO members. I said that is more or less true with the Warsaw Pact, isn't it? We don't get many wedges into the Warsaw Pact front. He said there is a difference; your solidarity is by common consent, ours is imposed on us.

VC Interesting that he would have said that. That seems to me to reflect the trust he had.

CR ... he was a very interesting Pole, actually. He was so pro-Western that when one was talking to him on his own he began to forget he wasn't a member of NATO. It was only when he was with the Russians he was as hard line as anybody. When you got him on his own he was far less ... which didn't mean that you could drive a wedge in but you could actually talk sense to him in a way that you sometimes couldn't with the Russians. The interesting thing about it was this, we had our strategic guidance from the NATO alliance for the talks and the agreed objectives, but we had some Foreign Office guidance for broad policy agendas, much in line with things like presenting to Parliament that any reductions

must depend on reaching agreement with the Russians, we must support the Americans or they will be in trouble with pressures to reduce their troops in Europe, which they could resist by keeping their troops in Europe on the basis of an agreed reduction, and various other things which were all very sensible, but the tactics and presentation were left to the ambassadors in Vienna, which is right and the only way in which you could do it. My problem was that while we were maintaining agreement on tactics and presentation within the NATO group I had a lot of back seat driving from the Foreign Office on tactics and presentation, which I disliked and resented because it was not possible to do both. You couldn't take tactical instructions and presentational instructions and at the same time maintain the solidarity with your eleven colleagues on presentation.

VC Couldn't you make the Foreign Office understand this?

CR Not the individual concerned.

VC So it was about individuals?

CR It's about individuals. I had a difficult passage with a particular individual.

VC How did you manage it?

CR Well, I will tell you a little story which may illustrate the way I ended it. First of all I used to take no notice of it because my own feeling was NATO solidarity was more important than rather minor tactical suggestions coming from the Foreign Office. What was important was that NATO should work together and we should agree on the steps we should take and the timing of them and these should not be dictated by one government, so I determined that should take priority. Harold Wilson, when he was Prime Minister, was going to pay a visit to Brezhnev and there was a tremendous build up to this. It was going to be a great occasion. It must have been 1975, in Moscow. The instruction went out to all embassies that we must be nice to the Russians over the next period because we didn't want anything to muddy the waters of the Wilson Brezhnev talks. This was quite difficult in a rather tough negotiation. We were walking on parallel paths not opposite sides and, anyway,

we were working with other people in NATO. I was due to make a speech and I made a speech, which as in all cases we had agreed what we were going to say with the rest of the NATO group. I made a speech which had some pretty hard hits at the Russians about the negotiations and as usual the text went back to London. I got a sharp telegram from the Foreign Office saying that they found my speech somewhat rebarbative, and inconsistent with the instructions which I had been given to not be unpleasant to the Russians prior to the visit. Please in future submit draft speeches for the next week or two for clearance by the Foreign Office before I made them. This was quite difficult actually because the drafts were agreed with the NATO allies. Well, I thought, I'd better somehow deal with this so the first one I did send was a draft telegram which I timed (i.e. someone had to go into the FCO to deal with it whatever time it arrived) which said the following is the text of the speech I am going to make at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning, grateful for approval. That meant somebody had to come in, look at it at 9 o'clock at night, and get a telegram off to me before the morning. I did this two nights running and after the second one I got a telegram saying no further drafts need be submitted.

VC Another example of how you have to be inventive and clever. Did this happen often in your own experience and were you aware of it in the Office, a sort of mismatch between the Office and the man on the spot? I mean when you know your chap in charge of the Department is rather more junior than you as ambassador, when you are higher up the totem pole and you are a deputy under-secretary, or something. Was it often a difficult relationship?

CR Not really in my experience I don't think. That was a definite attempt by the Office to steer what I thought was my prerogative, what I thought I was paid for and also would have run counter to the general, and much more important policy, which was to retain NATO solidarity. I don't think I had any particular case otherwise apart from that one experience when I was at loggerheads with the Office.

VC And succeeded and triumphed. At the end of MBFR how did you feel, had you achieved a great deal in your time there?

CR I thought we had achieved a lot because what we had made the Russians realise that we had security problems as well as they did. They came thinking the security problem was on their side, that they were battling against an aggressive, oppressive, NATO policy and that they had to do something to try and contain NATO. Their whole object in the early days of the talks this was to do this. I think at the end of three years, there was a quite firm understanding that security had to be mutual and if there were to be a reduction to equalise the situation it wasn't so much equal reduction, it was really that we had security problems as well as they did. That was one thing. The other thing we achieved was a remarkable solidarity between NATO countries at a time when NATO was actually having quite a lot of difficulties over other problems. This was a model really of how NATO could work together.

VC Was the MBFR negotiation the thing that you think of with greatest pride in your career or were there other things? (Break) You were about to reflect on your time in Washington.

CR Washington was a fairly straight forward post. It was fascinating and I was dealing mainly with defence matters and European affairs. The defence relationship was very close between us and the Americans. That was at the beginning of Nixon's time and there's not really very much I think that I can say about it. The only thing that perhaps I would say is that I think one always felt, as one does in London or in Europe, that Washington was a power house. I never realised quite how much power until I got there and realised that here was the real might behind the West. It was workaholic, you worked at breakfast, worked at lunch, dinner and it was that sort of life, frenetic. That's probably all I can say. I had good relations with the Pentagon and with the State Department over important things in our relations with them – the nuclear deterrent among them - they were very close and straightforward. So many people have written about them and talked about it that I doubt there is much of value that I can add.

VC I think what you said about realising what a powerhouse it was is very important and it must be something that is even more the case now. The powerhouse of Western diplomacy or whatever. The gaps are even wider now when you have got a more socialist Europe, I am thinking in the simplest terms of the kind of holidays that we legislate for in Europe while the Americans still only have two weeks.

CR Yes, probably more. I suppose that's true because when I was there we weren't in the European Community in those days and there is, I dare say, quite a difference now as one would expect between the situation when I was there pre-European Community, and now we are members of the Community, where there are liable to be a different sort of differences. And obviously differences which didn't arise in that period.

VC So perhaps when you were there it was one of those periods when we were closest.

CR We were closest, I think we probably were, we had very close relationship over the whole nuclear field when I was involved, the nuclear and the defence field when we were negotiating about Polaris, negotiating about SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) and so on. And that was really quite a fascinating time. SALT were started by Nixon and they were the first strategic negotiations between the Russians and the Americans, started by Nixon, to negotiate about reducing nuclear weapons and we were very much involved, although on the side-lines, because we were concerned about the effect it might have on our own nuclear weapons on which we relied, to quite a large extent, on help from the United States and also of course on the effect it might have on the NATO deterrent. So it was of close interest to us.

VC Thank you. We are bouncing about but there is a continuous theme. We were talking about your involvement in nuclear things and when you were in the FCO in 1962 to 1965 you were doing the Polaris negotiations as an assistant in PUSD.

CR Yes that's right. The only reason I put that in was I was involved to the extent I was the man in the Foreign Office in PUSD (Permanent Under Secretary's Department) who was most concerned with the Polaris negotiations and the problem of our deterrent, whether we should have an airborne deterrent of a seaborne deterrent at a time when Macmillan went to Nassau and negotiated the agreement with Kennedy to have Polaris. It was a fight at one time, which I sat on the margins of and watched, between the airforce and the navy.

VC That's one of the things I wanted to explore with you, the relationship between the Foreign Office and the other departments on a very important issue.

CR Well, at that time there were two of us concerned with defence planning in PUSD, John Waterfield and myself. We split the world between us. I had NATO and the Americas and he had the rest of the world, Middle East, Africa and the Far East. We used to deal on a daily basis with defence planning teams. There were three service defence planning teams in the Ministry of Defence under the Director of Defence Plans who were set up to deal with different areas and we used to meet as an integral part of the team probably twice a week, each of us for a whole morning, sitting with, and as a member of, the Ministry of Defence team working on planning papers to submit to the Chief of Staff on our respective areas. The relationship which we established then with the Ministry of Defence was very close indeed, we were on good terms with one another, popping across and seeing one another in meetings, and it was a very good relationship in every sense of the term, we all knew one another very well. I have a feeling it is not as close now as it used to be.

VC And there were no differing departmental objectives, or differing departmental agendas?

CR Well, there were defence agendas, points on the defence agendas which sometimes in the Foreign Office we wanted to modify and foreign policy things which occasionally they said look, this is going to work out to our detriment in defence terms. But there were very occasionally times when we didn't manage to reach an agreement at our level. I was a first secretary then. I suppose they were lieutenant-colonels or that sort of level, I can't remember the rank. At that sort of level we got on with the work and we usually managed to iron out problems. I can't remember any outstanding ones but I don't think we had really difficult problems.

VC I'm sure you would remember if you did.

CR Yes, I would, but I don't remember any and I think it was a good relationship. I don't think that continues in the same way now, I rather gather it doesn't. The only thing I have to say about that is when I was in NATO, much later on...

VC As Ambassador to NATO

CR When I was ambassador in NATO, sitting as a permanent representative on the Council, when I was there which was my last job, of course I had a large Ministry of Defence contingent in my delegation, two Ministry of Defence counsellors and several others on the military side, one was a full admiral, another an air chief marshal; it was all part of the same delegation. I think our relations with the Ministry of Defence on the whole in that delegation were pretty good. I must say that I found they tended to be rather inflexible. I can remember one incident. The NATO ministerial meetings in December took place on a back to back basis, that is to say there were meetings between NATO defence ministers for the first three days and then they were followed by NATO foreign ministers. I remember a year when I thought we must try to make sure that the objectives which we were following in both sets of meetings were consistent and that we had a consistent theme. So I sat down a week or so before the meeting and sent a long telegram addressed both to the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence setting out ideas about how we should carry through the main theme so that it would fit in with what the Defence Minister or the Foreign Minister said. When the Defence Secretary came out I said to him I hope you found my telegram helpful. Yes, he said, but I couldn't make any use of it. I said, why? He said because my briefs had already been prepared. I said, couldn't you change it? And the answer was, that's not the way the Ministry of Defence works. All the ministers have briefs and they are done by a certain date in the department and they are set in concrete. That's just an example of the way I felt the Ministry of Defence worked as a rather inflexible department.

VC When you were in Washington and doing defence planning there what were your relations like with the military staff there? Did you coincide with the military attaché and his staff?

CR I can't remember what it was called, but there was a special military mission, a very large mission, under an air marshal when I was there. Yes, they were pretty good. Although my instructions were dealing with defence I had very little to do with them; they weren't concerned with policy at all, they were almost entirely concerned with the mechanics of relationships, practical arrangements and I don't think we discussed much in the way of defence policy. I don't remember often consulting them. Occasionally I had to ask for a

technical point but I don't think we had much to do with them over business.

VC Going back to when you were assistant in PUSD, what do you remember about the Polaris negotiations? Hairy or...

CR Well, I remember it was touch and go. But I wasn't at Nassau and I wasn't directly involved in the negotiation there, but I knew what was going on and the Americans didn't want Kennedy to let Macmillan have Polaris. I think Macmillan was very persuasive and more or less said if you won't oblige me we will have to give up our deterrent. We had a certain edge and I think, I'm getting a bit hazy in my memory here, but my recollection is that we had an arrangement by which the Americans where to supply us with Skybolt, which is an airborne missile which was going to serve for the modernisation of our airborne deterrent and was something which we were all keen to have because it would have brought us completely up to date, state of the art. Then Skybolt was cancelled at the last moment, at very short notice. We were notified with very little warning and we were left to consider what we should do as an alternative. One of the alternatives was to buy Polaris. I think Macmillan used the argument that we had been badly let down by the Americans over the cancellation of Skybolt, and therefore they had an obligation to help us by supplying Polaris. This was the persuasive argument, which led Kennedy to disregard his advisers, his experts, and supply Polaris. I hope I am not being inaccurate here; I am trying to recollect, and the impression I have is that that's what happened. There was a lot more to it, of course, than that. I do know the initial reaction of the American staffs was to advise Kennedy against supply, but he gave way.

VC And the idea, if you like, of moral blackmail of the Americans, was that a political policy that came out of the Foreign Office or from where?

CR ...I suppose it came out of the Cabinet. I suppose out of the Defence Committee. Certainly it wasn't issued by me!

VC No, I shouldn't think you are into blackmail.

CR I wasn't at the level where that sort of thing is welcomed.

VC If I look at your career you went from the PUSD job to Paris, to a commercial job. This brings up one of the things I wanted to ask you about the Office. Here you are, somebody who's skilled and whose expertise is being honed in defence and defence planning and they send you to Montevideo and then they send you as commercial counsellor to Paris. This variety of jobs in the Office, this lack of specialisation, is it a good thing? Have you any views on that?

CR ... Well, let me put it like this. It's a very good thing for people who are going to be bilateral ambassadors. But I never did that because I specialised, and my two ambassador jobs were the MBFR one and the other was NATO, and both of them utilised my main craft as an expert on defence, which I had been really trained to do. If you don't become an ambassador at a normal bilateral post it is enormously valuable to have had wide experience. I think on the whole it is a mistake to direct peoples' careers in too much of a specialist direction at an early stage. When I was in Eastern Department on the Persian Gulf desk we had a lot of discussion about this in relation to producing Arabists. I remember sitting in on a committee talking about training Arabists, how much variety they should get in their early careers to make them suitable people to put in as the top Arabist ambassadors in posts like Baghdad, Cairo and so on. One of the things the Foreign Office had to balance was making sure that people who were destined to become top ambassadors in Arab countries should have enough experience in other parts of the world to be able to make a credible attempt at explaining our policies in those other parts of the world. To have direct knowledge, not just paper. And it meant people who were doing Arabic, going on and spending a lot of time in the Middle East, should get an alternative, say, one in every three posts outside the Arab world. And I think that is important. I mentioned earlier on that I was posted to Lomé as ambassador after I had been in PUSD and said I couldn't go because of Elisabeth's health, in fact the alternative was this job as a commercial counsellor in Paris. I remember being asked, with a certain diffidence, by Bernard Burroughs, as the Deputy Secretary in charge of PUSD, who called me in and said I am wondering whether you will accept this job? It is quite outside anything you have done before. He told me what it was and I said I would be absolutely delighted to go there. I had always wanted to do a commercial job at some point

and I thought it would be absolutely splendid. There was a great sucking of teeth, apparently by the Board of Trade, as it was then, as to whether they would accept somebody as counsellor in Paris, which was quite a key export promotion post, who had never done a commercial job before in his life, but they were over-ruled; the Foreign Office evidently thought I could handle it. I went there and thoroughly enjoyed it. I think, on the whole, for both of us, it was the most enjoyable post we have had.

VC All the other jobs you've had, and I don't know about Montevideo, do seem to have involved a lot of out of hours work; for example, you were talking about MBFR, where you were sending telegrams late at night. Was it a more regulated life as counsellor commercial in Paris?

CR Well, no, not really. Except to the extent in Paris of having to entertain the British exporters and their opposite numbers, that sort of thing. A lot of that went on at night. The most interesting thing that happened there was that I ran a British week in Lyon. That was a time when we were doing a number of British trade promotion weeks around the world. We had had one in Milan and I had been to see how they did it. There was a body called the Export Council for Europe composed of businessmen who were supposed to run these weeks. They appointed a man as Director of the British week stationed in Lyon. He was a total failure. He was sacked and I was asked if I would take it on in addition to my job as commercial counsellor in Paris, which was great fun to do. But it was quite a lot of work as it almost meant commuting between Paris and Lyon.

VC Before the days of TGV.

CR Yes. I went to Lyon and did a lot there. It was a marvellous week. We got British goods in all the shops in Lyon, Union Jack shopping bags and so on. We had an extraordinary time. Traditionally the British Council always used to put on an opera in the British week as part of the celebrations and they chose, an extraordinary choice, The Rape of Lucretia. A more dismal opera to try to make a week jolly you can't imagine. It was dismal. But all sorts of amusing things happened. I thoroughly enjoyed doing it but it was quite hard work.

VC Again the question of department or inter-departmental co-operation. Interesting that the DTI or Board of Trade could take a strong view about the appointment of commercial counsellors, and it is interesting that the British Council would put something on without liaising with the person in charge.

CR It was extraordinary. Patrick Reilly and his wife Rachel were very musical, very keen on opera and so on...

VC ...Patrick Reilly, he was the ambassador was he?

CR He was ambassador and it may be that he liked The Rape of Lucretia. I can't imagine anybody else doing it but it may well be that he had been asked. I can't remember actually how it was chosen. We had the Duke and Duchess of Kent. We always had Royalty on these occasions and we were very worried we would get Princess Margaret, because Princess Margaret was a demanding and not wholly popular figure round the embassies, as you probably remember. We wanted somebody else. It wasn't our choice, it was allocated, and they were splendid.

VC And it worked wonderfully?

CR They did a wonderful job, really marvellous.

VC Yes, the relations with Royalty are mixed, aren't they, in Foreign Office lore and in people's experience.

CR Quite mixed. I had the Duke of Edinburgh when I was in Montevideo, he came out and was difficult to handle.

VC Was he an un-guided missile?

CR I'll tell you one story. He had been on a South American tour and he went to Rio first

and in Rio he was mobbed by the press. They really got out of hand. He got very angry with them and we got a message from the embassy in Rio, watch out, he doesn't like the press, better keep them away from the aircraft so there's a chance to pre-brief him before he sees them. So we banned all the press from the tarmac and the only people who greeted him off the aeroplane were the ambassador and myself as Head of Chancery and the Foreign Minister for Uruguay, four people, and he came down with his entourage, looked round and said, where's the bloody press? We said, well sir, it was understood that you didn't want the press. I never said so. Why the hell haven't I got the press? Not the best start.

VC A can't win situation. But talking about Montevideo takes me back to the question of here you were, a chap who obviously was tremendously able, going up the Office from strength to strength. Montevideo looks like a bit of a diversion.

CR Banishment.

VC Well, I don't know about that but it comes back to this point about how you train your top diplomats. Was it a useful experience?

CR It was useful I think to the extent that I learnt some Spanish on the job since I never had a chance to learn it beforehand. Initially I took a dictionary when I went to see the foreign ministry, looking up any word I didn't know in Spanish. It was useful from my point of view because at a very junior age I had six months in charge. The ambassador had a long leave and that gave me an opportunity of running my own shop at a medium level post but otherwise I don't think it was a very useful posting. It gave me some knowledge of South America which I wouldn't have otherwise had. I went to Rio, went to Buenos Aires and learned quite a bit about South American politics.

VC Was that useful in any way later on?

CR Interesting, but I don't think I ever used it again. It was different from anything I had ever done before, it was a complete diversion really. One of the reasons I went there was that the then head of Personnel Department had been born in BA and he was a great proponent of

the idea that South America was the future continent of the world and that you must have a lot of people who had experience in South America. It was the old idea that Brazil is always a country with a great future.

VC Exactly, and that is probably why the Duke of Edinburgh went; he was always a great proponent of Latin America, wasn't he?

CR Yes. Some of Montevideo was amusing because a lot of extraordinary things happened there which it would be a great waste of tape to tell you about.

VC But it is interesting. A change is as good as a rest. You came back from Montevideo to an important, demanding, job in the Foreign Office in 1962 and then after that you went to the Imperial Defence College. Again this is specialisation, but I think it is not often regarded as a terribly demanding secondment that. I don't know if you want to comment on your experiences?

CR It was one of the most useful jobs I have had. I went to the IDC, now called the Royal College of Defence Studies. I spent a year there which, having had quite a lot of defence experience, it brought me into touch with senior officers of the three services because the RAF were then requiring, and the Army particularly, less so the Navy, all their key future people go there and I made contacts there who in my future life, places like MBFR and NATO and when I was in the Cabinet Office had all become generals or air chief marshals or whatever and they were all people I knew. I knew the top brass, a lot of them from right across the board from that year and they were people who became personal friends. That was absolutely invaluable. I enjoyed the year for that reason. In the Foreign Office I had some friends who had had similar Service experience to me but the thing which the people in the generation after me now don't have is that I had served six years in the army in the war. That gave me a knowledge and feel for the Services that modern people just haven't got, can't have. The only thing I would criticise about it is that it was very useful for me because I went on in my career in the defence world, so that was a good basis for it. What I think is a pity, and I actually wrote about this in an article after I came away from it, is that people often said 'give him a year out, he needs a rest, send him to the RCDS' without any feeling

that he was going to go on to do something for which it is useful. To my mind, the FCO should use it as a place where you send people who are actually going to go on and do something which is going to have a defence connection. Like NATO, or a post where defence is important, otherwise I think it is a waste of time.

VC A waste of an opportunity.

CR A waste of an opportunity. I think we ought to use that place on the RCDS for people who are actually going to go on to a defence oriented career in the future and I think that is not happening now. The reason I wrote to the PUS about it some years later was because I reckoned it wasn't happening and it ought to be because I think it is important not to miss it. And particularly at a time when people in the Service have not had the experience that I had of serving in the Forces.

VC It's an opportunity really that shouldn't be wasted.

CR Which I think is wasted very often. People are put there as a good holding place for a year.

VC It would be interesting wouldn't it to analyse which ambassadors to NATO have actually done that.

CR Very few. I did look at it one time and I found that extremely few had. I was on the RCDS Advisory Board when I retired and I was asked by the PUS to suggest somebody who might succeed me. I went through the people who would be eligible who had got promoted and just retired who actually had been at the RCDS themselves, because obviously somebody who had a career during which he knew about the RCDS would be suitable and remarkably few people qualified from that point of view. We did settle on somebody, I think it was Tom Bridges. I think it is very important. I think it is something I would like to emphasize, if you put somebody in there just as a sort of year out it is a wasted opportunity.

VC Sounds right. And you continued your defence expertise in the Cabinet Office didn't

you?

CR In the Cabinet Office, yes, I had defence and overseas affairs plus this extraordinary one off one, the Civil Contingencies Unit.

VC Oh yes, civil defence, isn't it?

CR The Civil Contingencies Unit is the body which actually dealt with civil emergencies. I was chairman of at official level. The Home Secretary was the chairman of it at ministerial level, where it was a mixed committee, mixed officials and ministers. We had the problem of preparing contingency plans and dealing with civil emergencies, dealing with the 1977/78 oil tanker drivers' strike, for example. The main emergencies in my time were in the Winter of Discontent in 1978/79, which was very time consuming, and the fire brigade strike, when the Army manned the Green Goddesses. The Civil Contingencies Unit was in the charge of a brigadier who was responsible for keeping emergency plans up to date, such as the Government War Book and plans for civil (peace time) contingencies. The Committee which I chaired had no fixed membership. I invited people to come to it from the Departments which were actually involved in the contingency we were considering. It might be Thames flooding, in which case we would have a different set of people from those you would have for dealing with, say, airport security in the Midlands.

VC But there were permanent people there?

CR There was always besides myself, somebody from the Home Office, always somebody from the Treasury and somebody from the Ministry of Defence. These were four permanent members, otherwise often the DTI, of course, very rarely the Foreign Office during the Winter of Discontent, but the Department of Transport and so on. Of course, over the Winter of Discontent we were in session at official level almost permanently, interspersed with ministerial meetings. During the Winter of Discontent; the problem was to try to make sure there was a plan ready for any contingency which was likely to arise. We never knew each day which particular body of people was going to strike next. The Prime Minister worked out with the Secretary General of the Trades Union Congress and the Home Secretary and the

General Secretary of the TGWU, as the main union concerned, a Memorandum of Understanding which listed certain types of product, or commodity, which the pickets would not block, and which would be given free passage through the country. These were essential materials without which the country could not keep going. Salt was a very important one. I can't remember the others but there were about half a dozen commodities. There was a small group set up which met every morning. I was the chairman of it with an under-secretary from the DTI, and an under-secretary from the Department of Transport. We met with two representatives of the Transport and General Workers Union, the one mainly involved. One was a splendid chap who eventually became secretary general of the union. He had been a Royal Marine Commando...

VC Who was he?

CR His name was Hammond. I respected him for his honesty. The other was a complete fellow traveller. I'd like to tell you his name too, but I won't. The first one was always trying to co-operate and make the thing work, which was the purpose of our meeting. Every morning in the Cabinet Office I got reports from around the country about how the Memorandum of Understanding was working or not. I used to consider the reports with these two and they would try to find out what was happening and stop the obstructions and report the next day what they had done. I always knew I could rely on the first man to try to make it work. But I could never rely on anything the other man said. They were as different as chalk and cheese. The latter was very plausible and perfectly pleasant but I never felt any confidence in him.

VC It's interesting that having spent a lot of your career in sort of military situations. Here you are in a command and control situation yourself.

CR It was a very interesting period that, over a long period.

VC ...again, you were working tremendous hours I take it.

CR yes I was. I don't want to over-emphasise this but they were very long hours. This is

another criticism I have of government. I was often in the Office till late at night and had to get there early in the morning. I then had a flat in London, in which I used to stay during the week, and for a long time I flogged home by Underground, finding that all my Ministry of Defence colleagues from brigadier upwards all had chauffeur driven cars to and from the office. I went to the Cabinet Secretary and said look, I am getting exhausted, I need a car. He arranged that I should be able to get a car from the car pool every evening when I wanted one. I would ring up and say I wanted a car at such and such a time to take me home. And they came and collected me at 7 every morning. But it was necessary to say look, I must have some help. I think we are terribly mean about people who are really quite pushed into giving them the sort of help which the Services take as automatic.

VC Yes, which the private sector also certainly takes as automatic.

CR I think people who are particularly pressed need it but not necessarily at normal times.

VC Not as a right but as a need.

CR If you have got a really tough period and somebody is working very late, very long hours, then I think that it ought to be automatic to supply a car and a chauffeur to take you home and collect you in the morning.

VC It sounds very reasonable to me.

CR I think it is a reasonable thing and I think it is something which obviously adds to your efficiency.

VC Well, this phrase about a duty of care comes up in modern management of the Services, and that is not care.

CR It isn't only in government service.

VC Clive, let me develop a rather sensitive area if I may. Here you are in your committee of

mixed civil servants and Foreign Office people. You know how Foreign Office people are often regarded as having a superior attitude; they are often not much liked by their Home Civil Service colleagues. Would you care to comment on that?

CR The whole of my time at the Cabinet Office I was chairing probably two or three committees a day on various aspects of defence and foreign policy, which had wide ranging implications. I have to say this not as a criticism but a note for posterity, I nearly always found the Foreign Office representative, anybody from the Foreign Office, outstanding compared to the representatives of the other Departments. It was very apparent. Usually he was a rank below, the Home Departments always sent assistant secretaries or under secretaries, and the Foreign Office probably sent a first secretary, sometimes a counsellor, but always the constructive comment was liable to come from the Foreign Office representative.

VC And did this cause resentment amongst the colleagues?

CR Sometimes. The Treasury didn't like it much. The Treasury were always worried because the Treasury likes uniformity and I have a strong view that the Diplomatic Service is a totally different animal from the Home Civil Service. The Home Civil Service works to different standards with different needs reflecting their different functions. The Treasury doesn't like that and always tries to resist it. The other Departments to some extent think we are a race apart, we think ourselves a race apart, and this creates a certain amount of jealousy of the Foreign Office. I remember one under secretary once saying to me, 'Of course, being in the Foreign Office you have the most wonderful lives, you go abroad, you have splendid houses found for you and are able to drink as much as you like, a wonderful life,' in a rather resentful voice. But of course you and I know the reality of that.

VC Which is?

CR Which is that you have to find your own house, almost everywhere until you become an ambassador and very often it is very difficult, very often you find a perfectly beastly house.

VC And what about the effects of the life on the family and...

CR ...of course there are the problems for family life. I personally think the most important thing overseas in Diplomatic Service life is housing. I felt it wherever I have been, there are very few places I served in as a junior where I got any real help from administration in finding a decent house. I think it is terribly important for morale. I think ambassadors and senior members of the Service need to keep, I am talking now of about twenty years and more ago, I have been retired now for over twenty years, but rarely did I find, the senior people working in the mission kept enough of a supervisory eye on the administration officer. Administration officers were left to their own devices and they were the people who actually dealt with accommodation and the amount of help they gave was very varied. Sometimes it was distinctly unhelpful as I often found. The Americans did it much better. Their deputy head of mission is always the person in charge of administration. I know we have given up the Heads of Chancery position in the office, life is different.

VC Yes, management has become such an important aspect.

CR Well, I think it is probably improving enormously. In my day I think it was on the whole a failing because after all family morale is important to the officer's efficiency. Then there was the question of education and travel for children at boarding school. When my first child went to boarding school, he had one holiday journey paid a year. We had to organise the other ones. This changed and eventually we got three paid journeys. That is a rather different matter. I think that health and housing are the two key things. I felt that if my staff, both in NATO and Vienna, were properly housed, sympathetically housed, the whole morale was quite different. I don't think nearly enough attention was paid to either of these things.

VC You talked about Foreign Office people making more helpful contributions to your civil contingency meetings than many others...

CR ..No, that wasn't civil contingency, there was hardly a problem with that because the Foreign Office were seldom involved. These were the ordinary committee meetings dealing with different aspects of defence and overseas policy.

VC Yes, sorry, I was mistaken. But the point I was trying to raise was why, do you suppose, the Foreign Office people were able to be so much more succinct and helpful in their interventions, was it to do with their training, their selection or what?

CR I think it is two things. First of all on the whole, certainly in those days, that the Foreign Office was regarded as one of the élite departments and probably got the better people, but I think the other thing is you were doing a very different function. In the Foreign Office you are expected to recommend policy, to put forward proposals for policy action...

VC ...even abroad?

CR ...even abroad. And particularly in the Foreign Office. I am talking about in London now. You are an initiator. Right from your early days in the Third Room at the beginning, you start putting up suggestions, proposing what you would do and so policy formation is absolutely inherent within members of the Foreign Service. It is their job to recommend action and policy and they get involved in policy formulation right from the start. In the Home Civil Service my impression was that it was not quite the same. You were executing policy as it was handed down because, so often in home affairs, the policy is made by ministers. Foreign policy is rather different. Education, health, whatever, ministers have a definite policy according to their party line, Cabinet decisions and so on. And so often, I think, policy is handed down for executive action. People in the Foreign Office are used to speaking up and saying, we will do this or that. People in the Home Civil Service were not used to speaking up in quite the same way. This is a tremendous generalisation. I wouldn't want it thought I am suggesting there are poor quality people in the Home Civil Service or that they don't have good ideas about policy but I think it is a sort of distinction, which, in very general terms, is valid.

VC It comes from the training. That's very interesting and it is useful to have that said because one is aware of the tension sometimes between the Home Civil Service and the Foreign Service.

CR Well certainly in that Cabinet Office job I was aware of them, they surfaced from time to

time.

VC They did. Can I ask you about relations with ministers, you were talking to ministers quite a lot. Any comments on the particular qualities, or lack of quality, of the particular ministers you dealt with?

CR Well, the ministers who I liked dealing with were the people who dealt with me as an ordinary human being, not as a servant. Some I got on extremely well with, from all parties, and some I found difficult. This is just by way of an example. In the Civil Contingencies Unit at ministerial meetings I had to sit next to Merlyn Rees, who was the Home Secretary, and they were discussing the use of troops in dealing with one of the many strikes affecting essential services, possibly the ambulance service. I said I would just like to make clear, the problem of bringing troops in, was that you couldn't do it at the drop of a hat. You cannot say I want troops to intervene in a few hours time. People are on leave, on courses and other things, you need a certain build-up. I outlined this in the meeting and said look, you couldn't turn on a tap and move in troops tomorrow, it doesn't work like that, it couldn't possibly work. I got a strong rebuke from Tony Benn, who said to me don't think you can tell ministers how to employ troops; if we want troops, troops will be there to do it. I said well, I'm very sorry minister, there are problems. The meeting broke up and the next day he came to me and said Clive, I'm very sorry I spoke to you like that yesterday. I shouldn't have done it. It was very rude and you are quite right making the points you made. Which I thought was handsome. I am not a great supporter of Tony Benn but I thought that was a nice gesture. My relationship was good on the whole with ministers.

VC You didn't find any of them intolerable?

CR When I was in the Cabinet Office, David Owen was a young Secretary of State and I know in the Foreign Office he used to like dealing with people of his own age, it really meant he was dealing with counsellors rather than more senior officials. He didn't really want to hear advice from old lags in their 50s, he wanted younger people and I used to have under secretaries and deputy secretaries ringing me up and saying something is coming up in Cabinet next week. We can't get the Secretary of State to put this in, would you mind putting

it into the Prime Minister's brief?

VC To try and circumvent him.

CR Well, not to circumvent him but to make sure the point was on record, that it wasn't just overlooked, as happened occasionally. I didn't have any problems.

VC Any who struck you as particularly able at that time when you were dealing with serious things?

CR I liked Callaghan and got on well with him. But I remember once getting across him. This was during the Winter of Discontent and one of the ports had been badly blocked, I think it was Immingham, not letting any supplies through, and Callaghan said to me I want the Army to take over the running of that port, we can't have it blocked. I said that is quite a tall order. He said, don't argue with your Prime Minister, you go away and do what you are told. So I rang up the GOC, North West district, and said, general I have got an instruction from the Prime Minister. He said, oh yes, what is it. I said to him, you are to take over the port of Immingham. He said, 'What!' I said, well, this is the order I have been told to give you. Oh, he said, how do you think I am supposed to do that? I said, general, that is your problem. So anyway, he said, I haven't got anybody who knows anything about running ports, and anyway I haven't got enough men. I said, look, just detail a couple of people this evening to work out a contingency plan, what you would do if you had to take over the port at Immingham. Just put this on paper and I'll come back to you in the morning. I went back to him in the morning and he said, I've had two people working on it, it doesn't look very easy. I said, No, I didn't think it would. Anyway I went to the Prime Minister and said, Well sir, I have got the general's contingency plan, he has got some ideas in terms of planning ready, do you want me to order him to go ahead? He said, I think perhaps we won't do that now. We will think of some way round it.

VC But he didn't apologise for being peremptory with you before.

CR No, of course not. I didn't expect him to, nor would he. I liked him. I got on very well

with him. We were in Guadeloupe together, the summit meeting between President Carter, Schmidt, Giscard and Callaghan in Guadeloupe at the beginning of 1979 just before the Winter of Discontent really began. Guadeloupe was a wonderful French Caribbean resort and it had been cleared by the French to have the Big Four and their entourage there. I was there with Sir John Hunt for this, I can't remember who else we had but my job was to keep in touch with what was happening on the industrial scene at home and I had to make sure we were kept up to date and knew what was happening. That was when the Winter of Discontent was beginning to boil up. People were going on strike and so on and I used to get telegrams every day about the state of play and who was going on strike next, what problems were likely to come and so on. Of course the statesmen met in this wonderful seaside resort in the middle of the English winter in January. They had a morning meeting, the four of them, when they talked about world affairs. I didn't attend that. Then, in the afternoon after lunch, things were relaxed. Callaghan put on his bathing trunks and sat around on a chair on the beach relaxing. That was the point at which I had to arrive and tell him what was going on back at home. I found it extremely difficult on this wonderful sunny beach with him relaxing in his bathing trunks to get across the fact that there were quite serious problems on the home front which would have to be dealt with when we got back.

VC Did he take it?

CR Well, he used to say, 'Oh Clive, go away'. No, he took it all right. But it was the contrast. My arrival, probably dressed in a suit, with this bunch of telegrams which he had to look through, everything falling apart, it was quite an unpleasant shock in that sort of situation.

VC But there was quite a political outcry when he came back. The press made a great deal of his remark about "what crisis?" on his return.

CR ...well, it was nonsense. He didn't say that, though that was how he was reported in the press, it was one of the tabloids, I can't remember which one it was; he had a press conference, he was very exhausted but he had a press conference at the airport as soon as he came back and took a lot of questions about the growing crisis and the trades union strikes

and so on. It was very difficult for him; he hadn't been there and had to answer them straight away. He was reported as having said, crisis, what crisis. That was the headline, but it wasn't what he said at all. He said something like, yes, I know there are some problems, but we will now try and sort these things out, or some thing like that. It was a gross misinterpretation of what he said, but of course it stuck. Very unfair.

VC This time in the Cabinet Office which looks so bland, obviously the title is bland, isn't it, but as a Deputy Under Secretary in the Office doesn't give any hint of the variety or intricacy of the job that you did there. Was it the most interesting job you did? Can you make any kind of prioritisation in your enjoyment?

CR It was the most varied I suppose, and also I suppose in a sense the most powerful. Because when one spoke to a Department one was able to say I am so and so speaking from the Cabinet Office and the Prime Minister needs so and so

VC And you were able to influence what they were saying, it wasn't you just passing the message down, you were having some influence on the decisions that were being taken and passed on, I suppose.

CR In that case it was normally that I wanted some advice or a paper or information from a Department and I was not ashamed to use pressure when I wanted it quickly. I used that phrase in order to get the information quickly. But, of course, I didn't have any influence on what Departments did. The influence came from the decisions of the committees, of which I chaired probably up to a dozen, on foreign affairs and defence. They all had particular problems they were looking at and made recommendations to the ministerial Defence and Overseas Affairs Committee, the principal Cabinet Ministerial Committee on these subjects.

VC It almost makes it sound as if going on to this hugely prestigious and important job of being permanent representative to NATO seemed like a rest cure compared with what you were doing before.

CR No, it wasn't a rest cure. It was a very interesting time. It was in the middle of the Cold

War, don't forget, and we had the Russian invasion of Afghanistan during that period. We also had the Polish crisis during that period.

VC The Polish uprising?

CR The Polish uprising, yes. Though those were the two biggest events, there were problems between the European members and the United States over the deployment of short range nuclear missiles in Europe. The Americans wanted us to have them and NATO agreed to have a deployment of these nuclear missiles in Europe on the condition that they were accompanied by attempts to engage in nuclear arms control with the Russians. The two had to go together; they were two sides of the same coin. The policy for deployment was very controversial, brokered by the Americans, which NATO supported on this condition. The two things were linked, the deployment had to be accompanied by negotiation. But the Americans, when Bush senior came into office, about the middle of 1980, wanted to abandon the arms control and continue the deployment. This led to a great row, sparked off by Richard Perle. In the end a small group of European ambassadors, of which I was one, made it clear to Perle that dropping the disarmament condition was unacceptable, and it was agreed by all the Ministers that the original understanding must be maintained. We had various problems of that kind. We had rather a poor American Permanent Representative who was unpopular, nobody liked him much, couldn't get on with him, he tried to bounce us all into agreeing that all nations should pull out of the Olympic games in Moscow in 1980. This was after the Polish uprising and the Russian action in Poland. We had a great argument in NATO about this. The American representative handled it extremely badly. The situation got so tense that an Under-Secretary, George Vest, had to come over from Washington to calm things down. I was glad to find that I had known him well in Washington, and I said to him, that the situation was getting pretty bad, and that it was about time he came over to get it under control. He did pretty well in soothing ruffled feathers!

VC It's another example of where person to person contact and your previous experience could actually be capitalised on...

CR ...it worked. The other thing, remember was that President Carter had the great idea at

that time, 1980, that NATO should be involved in discussing terrorism, not previously a traditional NATO subject.

VC A man ahead of his time.

CR Terrorism was one of the subjects on his agenda. He appointed an ambassador for terrorism. He came to NATO to see us and talked to everybody saying they had great trouble in the Lebanon and elsewhere round the world and wanted to put it on the agenda at NATO. I said I have problems with the IRA which are of serious concern to us, just as you have problems elsewhere. If we put terrorism on the NATO agenda, I am quite sure we will want to include the IRA in the discussions. He said we can talk about that later. The result was that we never got terrorism on the NATO agenda. Because that was a time when massive US arms and financial support was being supplied to the IRA and the US Government was doing nothing to stop them.

VC Interesting that.

CR Very interesting.

VC Well, the whole American attitude to terrorism now is very different.

CR ... it was very interesting at that period. American support for the IRA was a complete block.

VC The political impact of the Irish was terrible, but is there any other thing you remember particularly from that time?

CR No. I don't think so. Nothing that hasn't been well publicised. I don't think it affected our relationship in NATO. The thing about NATO at that time, and it was rather like Vienna, is that the ambassadors to NATO were a club. We knew one another terribly well and we were all working in the same building. So we were able to go around and see one another and if we had a problem just ring up and say if you are free I'll just come around and see you.

NATO was a very effective club, and a very effective political alliance because of the close relationship between Permanent Representatives, which was made much easier by the fact that our offices were so near to one another. Wander down the corridor and talk. Nobody outside NATO knew we were doing it and this meant that there was no media publicity about who was talking to who.

VC Geography is history again, isn't it, and when you have got a common project things can go better. Not singing from the same hymn sheet as you did before?

CR The Greek representative when Papandreou was Prime Minister of Greece was a very nice man, but he spent most of his time collecting antique furniture and I said to him once, how do you have time to do it? And he said any submission I make to Athens is totally ignored, so I might as well spend my time collecting antiques.

VC One way of doing the job, I suppose. Clive, you have been marvellous at talking at such length and with such coherence in very important areas. A couple of last questions, if you had your time over again would you do this job again?

CR If I had my time over again yes, I would do it again. Absolutely and whole heartedly I think. It is difficult to answer now because I know so many of the down sides but I would. Many people have asked me, since I left the Service when I retired, about going in to the Foreign Service and I always said look, let me start by telling you the downside, and all the problems you have to face, then I will tell you, despite the problems, I enjoyed it and I would do it again. Are you prepared to face that you would have a lot of difficulties involved with family, health and housing, distance from, children, parents, all these? I started off by saying that at the beginning before I answered the questions. If you ask Elisabeth the question she will give you a different answer.

VC I will ask her in a minute, quite informally.

CR She will say, oh for God's sake no, not again. It is a difficult life for wives, as you well know, and she was especially conscious of the downsides. Despite that she always gave me

tremendous support. I often used to think that as an institution the FCO were less than appreciative of the support which diplomats needed and got their wives to enable them to do their job.

VC And which for you is the best memory, whether it's when you are being the most effective or in the most enjoyable position, perhaps it's a two pronged question, but if you look back really what stands out?

CR As being enjoyable or...

VC ... as being one, enjoyable and two, I suppose the thing you are most proud of.

CR Difficult.

VC It is a difficult question, I should have given you notice of that, really. But perhaps the gut reaction, the immediate reaction is...

CR ...I think actually NATO.

VC NATO. Enjoyable or...

CR Proud of. You see the whole time I was at NATO I was under a very severe security restriction, under direct threat from the IRA. My house was surrounded by floodlights...

VC ...was this the official residence in Hoilart?

CR Yes, this was Hoilart. The whole house was surrounded by floodlights. I had a metal grille over the door to my bedroom, my bathroom and study and metal window shutters which came down, I had a panic button next to my bed, I had closed circuit television control over the gates and barbed wire all round the perimeter fence and my car was armour-plated and bullet-proofed. I had an armed escort for my driver who had a gun at his hip and would not let me get into the car until he had recced the surrounds and he always got out of the car

first and looked around before he would let me get out. We could not go out, weren't supposed to go out without him, which meant we lived in a very confined situation. I used to come home periodically. I would get the overnight ferry, Zeebrugge to Felixstowe on Friday night and I would get the ferry back on Sunday night. Once every six weeks or so I would do that. The official car with driver and my escort, drove me and another driver with my own car behind drove to Zeebrugge. I would switch to my own car and drove first onto the ferry and when we came home we settled in our cabin before the rest of the passengers came on and when we came back on Monday morning my armoured car was waiting there and I switched to it straight away, another driver took over my car and we set off first and got away before the other vehicles came off. We used to do this about once every six weeks, it was a tremendous relief to get away. It was all right for me in a way, because I could nip off to the office, once I got inside the perimeter I had double security guards around me. It was quite a different business at home and rather lonely for Elisabeth.

VC So NATO, your last post, was in fact the pinnacle of your career, was it?

CR Yes, the pinnacle of my career certainly. It was I suppose the most rewarding. Well, one is sitting round that table feeling that one is on the governing board of NATO and that is quite inspiring really, one is dealing with all aspects of the alliance. I don't think it was the most enjoyable post but I think Elisabeth would say, and I would agree with her, that Paris is the post we enjoyed most. We also enjoyed Vienna. That was enjoyable. Those were the two. Washington I found fascinating, but I wouldn't say it was my favourite post. I think Paris and Vienna between them took that spot.

VC Thank you very much.