

Herbert Harold Tucker

Born 4/12/1925 (OBE 1965)

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BRITISH DIPLOMATIC ORAL HISTORY PROGRAMME

H.H Tucker, commonly known as 'Tommy' Tucker, by J. Hutson on 19th April 1996.

JH: Tommy, I see that as far as education was concerned you went to Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Alford in Lincolnshire and then I imagine toward the end of the war you were called up, not to the armed forces but for service in the coalmines as a 'Bevin boy' I believe, so the term was. Could you tell us about that?

HT: Yes, I left school when I was seventeen. I had a very short spell on a local newspaper in Lincolnshire and then was called up to the coalmines. My name was dragged out of a hat and I was sent to Rossington Main colliery in South Yorkshire which is just south of Doncaster and, in fact, we were mining about a mile under the then St Leger race course near Doncaster. My start there was not very auspicious because, after about three months, I was in hospital with a rupture and other complaints and was out of the mines for some time but then went back again for about a year. Then in 1944 I was invalided out of the mines and then resumed 'normal' civilian life (normal civilian life for me).

JH: I see. When I went to university just about the end of the war I remember that the place rapidly filled up with many ex-servicemen for whom the way to university was made plain thanks to their war service. Did they do the same thing for the people whom they had conscripted to work in the coalmines?

HT: No, and in fact this was a bone of contention amongst my fellow Bevin boys that our route to university was more or less blocked by returning servicemen. I mean, good luck to them but it did mean that we were given no special facilities. Our route was not made easier to get into university. In fact, it was made almost impossible to get into university and so I decided to cut my losses, as it were, and had already decided that I should like to try journalism as a career. I then started what was then the traditional route for journalists - local news, weekly/provincial newspapers, and I worked for the *Western Morning News* in Plymouth, the *Sheffield Telegraph* in Sheffield, *Nottingham Journal* in Nottingham and was asked by someone who was working in the Treasury if I would join the Economic Information Unit. This was a small unit set up by Clem Leslie, the originator of "Mr Therm" (the gas symbol), which was then attached to the Cabinet Office but later became

part of the Treasury Information Section. I joined on the information side as opposed to the press, advertising and whatever. But this was a very small band, there were three of us on the information side and about the same number in about five separate sections, each concerned with a particular problem. This was at a time when one of the slogans was 'export or die' and 'increase your productivity' and so on. We had quite good fun and Clem Leslie was one of those natural publicists. I remember when he was appointed at a salary of £3,750; this seemed a King's ransom at the time. Now, of course, it would be nothing at all. After a time there I decided I would rather return to, as it were, a 'proper' journal, so I went back into the provinces to Nottingham, in fact, with the idea of getting back to London, to establish my journalistic credentials. So I worked on the *Nottingham Journal* for about six months and then joined the *Daily Telegraph* in London.

JH: I see, well that leads of course to another question, which is having gone back to journalism how did you gravitate back into government service in the Foreign Office this time as early as 1951?

HT: It was primarily because of the hours of work I suppose. At the *Daily Telegraph* I became Chief Foreign Sub-Editor and my normal daily hours were six or seven o'clock in the evening until midnight or one in the morning which meant that I had quite a lot of spare time during the day. Ralph Murray had gone to the Foreign Office in 1948 to establish a new department called the Information Research Department and after a year or two, he wanted as it were a professional touch on some of the briefs and background information papers that the department was preparing. I had known Ralph Murray slightly when I had a short spell on the *British Morning News* in Vienna. Ralph was then head of the Information Services branch in Vienna and we had vaguely kept in touch. He asked me if I would go to the IRD which was then housed in 12 Carlton House Terrace for two to three hours a day to, as it were, 'knock into shape' various briefings and background papers that the department was preparing primarily for ministers but also for MPs and other such people. These were primarily dealing with Communism, Soviet Communism and its operation both in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The department had been set up in 1948 at the instigation of Ernest Bevin, the then Foreign Secretary, because he felt that the rather vicious and sustained attacks being mounted by the Soviet Union and various Eastern European countries on Britain and the British colonial and imperial record needed answering. The prime practical mover in setting up the department was Christopher

Mayhew, now Lord Mayhew, who was Parliamentary Secretary to Ernie Bevin. And the department started as a very small unit with the idea of providing information to those in authority with information to counter the allegations and attacks being made upon us by the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

JH: Perhaps you could just say what you were doing in Vienna and when. I didn't know you had been and worked there and, indeed, when you were in the Information Section of the Treasury, you said you were on information as opposed to press, radio contacts etc. Perhaps you could explain the difference as well? It may have a bearing on what you were doing in the Foreign Office.

HT: Yes, indeed. The *British Morning News* was a British language newspaper established in Vienna just after the war by the Allied Commission of Austria and I joined it in the middle of 1946 as a sub-editor. It was an un-pretentious newspaper but its aim was to keep the troops informed of what was happening back at home; sporting fixtures and what have you. Bearing in mind in those days you didn't get the *Financial Times* three hours after it was printed and so on it had a good circulation and went down as far as Italy. And it was run by the information services branch of the Allied Control Commission under Ralph Murray and, later, when he left by Charles Beauclerk who became Duke of St Albans. On the economic information unit I should perhaps explain that the various sections had their own particular responsibilities. The press section dealt directly with newspapers, magazines and what have you providing economic information directly to them. The advertising section actually arranged in practical terms advertising. The information section was primarily involved in producing a weekly report to the nation which took the form of quite a large advertisement in most of the national newspapers on particular firms who'd done well - they'd increased their exports, increased productivity generally, to encourage people to increase industrial production in the aftermath of the war and the fairly tough times that the country was going through in the immediate post-war years.

JH: That's very interesting and I must confess that I don't remember it from that time which probably shows that as a student I didn't read daily newspapers very much. And how would you compare that sort of information work with what you have just begun to tell us you were doing in the Foreign Office in the Information Research Department?

HT: Well, I think basically the economic information unit was addressing itself to the public at large and exhorting and encouraging in the economic sphere. The Information Research Department was talking only to (we like to think of them as) a select few leaders of opinion be they ministers, politicians, MPs, academics and so on, and this gradually evolved over the years. At the beginning of the Information Research Department its main audience, if such it could be called, were ministers and MPs who were in a position to use the facts and information that IRD provided for them. They were almost, in Lenin's classic phrase, 'transmission belts'. I think this was the big difference. And, of course, while the economic information unit spoke publicly as an arm of government, the Information Research Department preferred its information to be non-attributable. In other words an MP who received it and used it was asked not to say 'This is material provided by the Foreign Office or HM Government' but to use it, if you like, as his own material. Within that sole restriction, he could do what he wanted with the material. But it did mean that we had to be factually accurate and we had to be sober, dignified, and what have you. The Information Research Department has come in for a lot of criticism over the years. It has been accused of all sorts of sinister methods, of waging black propaganda, of misleading people and so on, all of which - and I can speak of this as an insider - are false. It was an information department providing information based on good honest to goodness research.

JH: Yes, I see. I think at the Treasury you were giving people the good news, the kind that newspapers seem latterly not to print so much and at the Foreign Office you were giving opinion moulders, as they used to be called, some material with which to counter the bad news, the falsehoods and the bad, if not black, propaganda of Stalin's communism. Am I right?

HT: Yes, indeed. IRD started off in a very modest way. I was not there in the first two or three years but, certainly, when I joined the material we produced was primarily briefing and background research material. In other words if we had identified a particular aspect of Soviet policy that was, or could be, deemed inimical to British interests we researched it, we put it down on paper, we provided it to Ministers, we provided it to MPs, and we particularly provided it to the British/UK delegation to the United Nations where, of course, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were mounting a sustained and vicious attack on not only Britain but the Western democracies. As time went on we rather broadened our activities, partly I think (without wishing to be immodest) because of the success of what

we were doing. As we produced material information for leaders of opinion they then tended to come to us if they had any particular queries. For example, if they wanted any particular information for any projects they were involved in, any speeches they were going to make, any conferences they were attending. And so, we broadened from just research briefs. We started producing printed briefs, small booklets that went into a subject more deeply. We encouraged the production of commercial books by 'see-safe arrangements' ...

JH: By what kind of arrangements?

HT: See-safe. This is an old publishing ...

JH: S.E.E-S.A.F.E?

HT: Yes. This is an old publishing arrangement whereby provided there is a decent idea or decent manuscript, publishers are often prepared to publish and quite happy to publish if you take the risk out of their doing so. Basically it works like this - if you have an author who has a book in him, a publishing house will often agree to publish if someone takes the risk out of it for them by, for example, agreeing to buy, say, 15,000 copies of the book. The publisher is quite happy because that covers their costs and distribution and everything and anything above that is sheer profit for them. And so we had an arrangement - this was some time later - but we had an arrangement with (I don't think I'm giving any secrets away) with the Bodley Head under Max Reinhardt which published a series of what turned out to be a very popular, very widely-read series of books called 'background books' which dealt with subjects in which the IRD were interested. Our role, primarily, was to suggest authors, suggest themes and to buy the end product. We were not looking for 100% support or anything like that and quite a lot of well-known people wrote for the series, often not fully realising that, behind the scenes, there was this see-safe arrangement.

JH: So, what they wrote then would strictly be their own thoughts? What they would have written anyway?

HT: Oh, entirely their own thoughts. Indeed, there was no constraint on them, no steers given to them. All we did was identify an author who obviously we thought had views not dissimilar to our own - but who then took a subject and wrote about it as he would

normally. People like Vic Feather who was General Secretary of the TUC. He wrote a book on Soviet trade unions. Crossland wrote a book - there are lots of really quite well-known authors who wrote books for the background series and, as I say, it became a popular series, quite inexpensively priced. They were not too long, they were good clean handy format, and they sold well on the commercial market in addition to our buying 15,000 copies which we then distributed to Foreign Office posts around the world who wanted them and put an order in for them, we sent them out and they presented them to their local contacts and anyone who then thought would be interested in them.

JH: Yes, I see, and in fact I remember doing just that. Could I ask another question? You haven't mentioned that you might have been distributing some of this material to journalists on the same non-attributable basis. Did the target area broaden to include journalists?

HT: Oh very much so. Our audience gradually increased over the years in IRD starting off primarily with ministers, MPs, politicians, broadening out to journalists, academics, trade unionists and broadening further to people like university lecturers and the whole spectrum of what you would call leaders of opinion. Those who could use the material in whatever way they wished knowing that it was authentic: the research was soundly based and we were not pushing a line. I think the fact that it was distributed to all these people, that they were keen to accept it, that they did use it a lot gives the lie to the old black propaganda accusations that were levelled at IRD from time to time by such magazines as the old left wing, very left wing, *Ramparts*, the American magazine *Time Out* when it was somewhat less respectable than it is now, and similar publications.

JH: Yes, I myself came into direct touch with IRD and in fact met yourself, Tommy, in about 1970 when I was, in fact, posted in as Deputy Head where I found myself having barely got to know the department writing defensive briefs against the current waves of criticism, to some extent about its achievements but more about its size and cost. Would you like to comment on that? It did appear quite large to me who had known nothing much about it previously. Would you like to comment on that and say how it developed subsequently because I was not there for very long?

HT: Indeed, I think there is no doubt at all that it did become too big. It expanded too far and there did come a point when it needed trimming. I think everyone in the department

would recognise that and admit it. This was the result of very rapid growth in the 1960's when the department took on a lot of products for specific markets for the Middle East, for the Far East and so on. It had not outgrown its strengths but I think it had outgrown its effectiveness and that it did need slimming down. It might be worth here just to say a few words about the structure of the department. It was, in fact, and always had been and was until it closed, headed by a Foreign Office career diplomat. The deputy was also a career diplomat, and the heads of various sections within the department (Far East/South East Asian department/East European department/Soviet Department and so on) were all headed usually by First Secretaries from the Foreign Office mainstream who spent the statutory two years or three years in the job before going off. I think this was mainly to ensure that there was proper, as it were, political control of the various sections. Oddly the only section that didn't have a career diplomat at its head was my own which was the editorial section, but we cleared all our material before issuing with the relevant 'political officers', if you'd like to call them such, to ensure that policy was being adhered to, that we were not overstepping or understepping any marks. This worked very well. I think, on the whole, that the career diplomats that passed through IRD quite enjoyed it. Some very much so, some - a few - thought it was rather spending time and they wanted to be in and out as quickly as possible because information work was not their forte, and they didn't see any great career step in knowing about information work.

JH: Just speaking of fortes I think it is right to say that you were, in fact, the head of the editorial section?

HT: Yes, I was. We produced all the material that the research desks provided to us in the variety of forms that we had worked out that were the most acceptable to the various recipients, or groups of recipients that we supplied it to. And the list of people that came to rely upon IRD a great deal for their background research material was really quite large, headed, I suppose, by Victor Zorza, the *Guardian* (*Manchester Guardian*) Sovietologist who became a by-word for his columns on the Soviet Union, on Communism in Eastern Europe and by Bob Conquest who was in the department for a time and then left to write and to go to an American university. People like that did use the department almost as a library and asked for material which we provided and used it in their own writings and speeches.

(SIDE TWO)

During the life of IRD it did not, of course, entirely deal with Communism and Soviet Communism in Eastern Europe although that was, of course, its bread and butter. We were given other jobs to do during the Suez Crisis of 1956. We were the London end of the Voice of Britain. This was a station that was set up in the aftermath of the bombing of the Voice of the Arabs at the start of the Suez campaign and it was our job to provide scripts in Arabic and in English to the relay station in Cyprus that was then run by Donald Maitland, later better known as the guru at 10 Downing Street. We were heavily involved in this for, I suppose, about six months even after the withdrawal of British troops from the Suez. We still ran Voice of Britain providing general information, general talks to whoever was in fact listening (I suspect not all that many people). We also were given a role in what became known as the approach to Europe. This was obtaining House of Commons approval for our entry into the European Economic Community and we devoted quite a lot of time to providing facts and figures on the EEC, the possible effects it would have on the UK if we joined and all the arguments. Indeed, we provided a lot of information to MPs, these were the primary targets, of course, because they were the ones who were going to vote on it. This, it might be thought, was verging on the party political but, in fact, factual/non-biased in so far as one could make it so and I think contributed quite a lot to the debate on our entry into Europe. This was in 1970 and it was in the aftermath of this that beady eyes came to be focussed on both the size and the cost of IRD. IRD was originally (way back in 1948) on the open vote and it remained on the open vote for a very short time until it was realised that it could not properly operate effectively unless it was on the secret vote - and so it was transferred to the secret vote and remained on the secret vote until it closed in 1976/77 under David Owen. There was no doubt that it was too big and it was, therefore, costing more than it should have done and the powers that be decided, quite rightly, that it needed cutting down to size both in terms of manpower and in terms of the money devoted to it, though our money had always been closely supervised and audited, if you like, by Burke Trend who was the Cabinet Secretary. We had two sessions a year with Burke Trend who went through our budget, our staffing, how much we were spending, what we were spending it on and so on. So we were not profligate in the sense that we were not under control. We were under control. But we were spending more and more and so we were cut down, quite rightly. I think that was the beginning of the end of IRD because once you have an organisation that is operating effectively and, in its own terms, efficiently, where do you cut? Do you cut down areas of work and does this distort the whole pattern of your activity? Do you cut down the money? In absolute terms it didn't cost all that much money.

But not a clean sweep but a very sharp axe was taken to IRD, and it was more than halved in size in a period of two to three years. And the decision was also taken that the staff of the department (apart from the career people) should be transferred to the Foreign Office list and this was done. Some of the IRD people went to the Foreign Office Research Department, others went to various bits of the Foreign Office and a rump of it, if it can be so called, remained, which was there until the department was closed, I think (I was not in London at the time) in 1976/77 when David Owen decided that the time for it had passed.

JH: So when did you yourself leave London then and what happened next in your career?

HT: I was posted to Canberra in September/October 1974 as Counsellor of Information and Director of British Information Services in Australia. This came about as a result of the transfer of most of IRD to the open vote and because, I don't know, I think it was thought that I might like a spell of duty abroad.

JH: I suspect it was partly because they thought you would be rather good at that particular job. Tell us more about it.

HT: Well, be that as it may. Actually, my posting to Australia coincided with some really quite interesting events there. I was there when John Stonehouse was arrested in Melbourne and about the same time Hurricane Tracy devastated the Diplomatic Wireless relay station in Darwin.

JH: The British station?

HT: Yes. And when John Kerr, the Governor General, sacked Gough Whitlam the Labour Prime Minister. So these were quite momentous times and it was also a time when the Australians were going through one of their periodic bouts of 'pommie bashing'. They tend to do this, but they have their ups and downs, and my being in Australia for two to three years rather coincided with their wanting to get at the Poms for whatever reason, so the criticism of our, particularly economic, performance was quite persistent and we had to deal with that. I was there first under Maurice James who was the High Commissioner and then he was succeeded by Donald Tebbit. All in all it was a very interesting time. John Stonehouse we were much involved with and he was held in Melbourne initially because

they thought he was involved in money laundering. This was one of those odd coincidences that one cannot legislate against. John Stonehouse was going into a bank in Melbourne and the manager was coming out of the bank with another person and they hailed each other and as they carried on the two people, the bank manager and his friend, his friend said "What did you call that man"? and the bank manager said "Oh Mr X - he's just opened quite a large bank account with us." "That's funny," said his friend, "I know him as Mr Y and he's opened quite a large account with us here." They reported this, thinking it was money laundering. He was arrested by the police who at first thought he was Lord Lucan. They established that he was, in fact, John Stonehouse and he, as luck would have it, appeared in court on Christmas Day, 1974. We wanted to obviously send the result of the court case back to London but when we tried to raise Darwin we couldn't. It was generally assumed that they'd had a pretty heavy Christmas Eve and we kept on trying, and it was not for another two hours before it became known that Darwin had been devastated, literally devastated, flattened by Hurricane Tracy and so we were then in the situation of having to evacuate, or arrange the evacuation of, people from Darwin. John Stonehouse was remanded on bail and about two weeks later he suddenly arrived in Canberra. He telephoned me at the house because I was one of the few people in the telephone book from the High Commission and he asked to meet me in the car park of a hotel in Canberra, which I said I would. He asked how long it would take to get there. I was not to tell anyone and how would he recognise me? And we met in the car park. He was in the car with his wife and he asked that a letter he had written to the Leader of the House should be sent in code that night. And we sent it off that night. Essentially it was his resignation from the House of Commons. He hadn't realised at that time, though he realised within two days, that when he resigned as an MP that altered his whole position in Australia, so he retracted his letter and decided to remain as an MP. The case rather dragged on. He came back to this country - the Australians really had nothing against him and that particular rather messy episode closed. The other really dramatic episode was, of course, John Kerr firing Gough Whitlam, the Labour Prime Minister, which was, for Australia, a very traumatic event and led to candlelight vigils outside Parliament House and much, much bitterness amongst Labour supporters. We, obviously, were not directly involved in this.

JH: While you were in charge of British Information Services in Australia what were the main things about which you wanted to persuade Australian public opinion? Or did you find yourself mainly defending Great Britain against misunderstanding and/or pommie

bashing? What were the main subjects you had to deal with?

HT: It was mainly a question of defending our position at home. We were not in a very good patch at home at that time and the Australians were taking delight in rubbishing (a favourite word now) our economic performance and our general ability to cope with the economics of modern life. You might think that it doesn't really matter what the Aussies think of us, but it does have an effect on commercial relations between the two countries and so we did what we could to overcome their particular attitude at that time. We really went into bat very hard when one or two ministers started echoing one or two of the more strident newspapers and began to talk about the British disease and all the rest of it. I think we were really rather successful in countering the attack, particularly by a chap called Sinclair who seemed to have it in for the UK. We did various releases, special briefings of the press and radio commentators and I think we countered his criticism pretty effectively. But the extent to which, as it were, anti-British feeling was engendering anti-Australian feeling amongst the Brits I think was epitomised by a radio programme on one of the Canberra and Sydney stations. It was a chat show by some character and he made very various disparaging remarks about British cleanliness and the British not liking baths or showers and what have you and being generally pretty dirty. And one passed this by as someone wanting to stir up trouble and thinking it would all go away. But, in fact, I had an enormous number of telephone calls from aggrieved Brits saying couldn't I do something about this? Could he be stopped? Well, of course, one couldn't stop them. So one devised a way of getting back because one obviously at this point had to take it seriously and so I walked around to the *Canberra Times* and I said to the editor, "You haven't yet asked me what my reaction to all this is but, on the assumption that you're going to, here is my reaction." And I had done a brief press release about the British not being obsessed with water and it was a joke piece but I think it sufficiently defused the situation and we all had a good laugh - it even made the *Evening Standard* back in London. But we had bitten back at the Aussies and made our point. But (and this is a trivial example) it was just an illustration of how, if one does let things go, they can develop out of their intrinsic importance.

JH: Yes, they can acquire momentum. And did you enjoy Australia?

HT: Oh yes. I did very much indeed. And another thing of course we were there during the trials for Concorde. The idea being British Airways should have a Concorde service into

Melbourne. And these were proving flights and British Airways ran four or five trips on Concorde from Melbourne to Singapore overnight and back. And we organised everyone of importance from Prime Minister downwards to go on a trip and again that was very successful. It was just unfortunate that British Airways didn't have the pilots when the Australians said 'fine, you can come into Melbourne' and so it all petered out, which was terribly sad because if any route is made for Concorde it is the London-Australia route. We succeeded and yet failed at the same time.

JH: And after Australia?

HT: After Australia I went in early 1979 to Vancouver as Consul General. I had been going to Ankara but that was put off for a whole variety of reasons and so I went to Vancouver where, of course, the job was almost entirely different. It was pretty well fully commercial in the sense that it was British commercial interest that one was primarily concerned with. Some information work was involved but only as part of the general commercial effort, and I was there in Vancouver for four years. I think it was fairly uneventful. I think most things west of the Rockies are fairly uneventful, it's a whole different lifestyle, fairly laid back but it was an interesting time. One felt sometimes a bit end-of-the-line (which of course one was) but all-in-all interesting and, I think, productive.

I was there four years, left Vancouver in 1983 and was re-called to London at very short notice (rather unsatisfactorily) to a new job called Disarmament and Arms Control Information Coordinator. This was a job that I resisted strenuously because I established that there were to be no great resources put into the job and, from my past experience, I knew that without resources it would be almost a non-job. However, this was at a time when CND was having a field day. And as I had been involved with Douglas Hurd and Francis Pym, who was then Foreign Secretary, in the approach to Europe way back in 1970 I think my name came up at some meeting and Douglas Hurd asked for me to be brought back to London to take charge of an information effort. As I say I resisted this strenuously. I asked if I could retire early rather than take the job. The reply was that I had been asked for by the Minister, they could hardly then go back to the Minister and say 'well this chap is redundant to requirements' so I agreed to do it for one year and we'd review the situation and indeed it turned out as I had predicted. There were no special funds, there was no real staff, it was a bit of an elastoplast job. Luckily the General Election came and the Tories

were returned and somehow the real teeth were taken out of CND. And so after a year I said would they now review my early retirement and they said yes they would. And I retired early in 1984.

JH: With that we're obviously drawing near the close now. But I would like to ask you for any reflections on your career. Certainly times have changed since the heyday of IRD which I thought at the time, and do now, did a good and necessary job. But I'd like to ask you to reflect on that which seems to have been the main portion of your career but anything else about the career and anything which struck you about some of the personalities you've mentioned such as Douglas Hurd or indeed anyone else which you think throw an interesting light.

HT: Yes, my time in IRD I found enjoyable. I found it worthwhile and I thought I was doing a useful job. I can say that quite sincerely because my aim, when I joined IRD, was to spend perhaps two to three years there as part of my general journalistic experience and then return to journalism. Indeed, I did have an offer from the *Economist* but I decided that, in fact, I enjoyed it. I was dealing with all aspects of the media, be it television, radio, the printed word, daily/weekly books and so on. I had contact with a whole range of people who thought the same as me. It's easy now to sit back and think, "Oh gosh all this is way in the past and was it all worthwhile, was it necessary"? I think one forgets the context in which we were working. The Soviet threat was a very real threat in the 1950's and 1960's not only through the general propagation of Communism - the force used in various incidences (the takeover of Czechoslovakia and so on) but the insidious influence of some of the Communist front organizations that Moscow set up basically to undermine the will of the West to resist what they thought was the inevitable victory of Communism. My only sadness I think, and it remains so, is that information work has always been regarded as something of a marginal activity and I think this is a great pity. One hears so often that people are failing to communicate whether it's good news, bad news or whatever. It is as if you can turn on information at the drop of a hat, turn it off when the immediate crisis has passed. It's not like a detergent production line - you can't stop it and start again three months later where you left off. The world moves on and I think many things could have perhaps been if not changed at least better understood if there had been a proper appreciation of the role good information has or can play. I think possibly of all the politicians I know, people like Tony Royle (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State)

understood the role of information and was very supportive. Douglas Hurd I think understood it, though he rather thought it was, I got the feeling, a bit beyond his ken. Francis Pym I don't think was at all interested; in fact he rather glazed over when one talked about an information effort required to counteract this or the other. Burke Trend, the Cabinet Secretary who was in charge of basically the IRD's finances and operations for many years I think understood it. He had a sharp mind, an incisive mind and he realised that what IRD was then doing was really an important part of British government foreign policy and indeed home policy; that the enemy has to be resisted and indeed the battle has to be taken to the enemy if one is to succeed and protect the interests of not only Britain but the West as a whole.

JH: Can I just say there we are talking about Burke Trend, Cabinet Secretary, that is to say the head of the whole civil service and it is remarkable that such a man did devote his personal attention to an information subsection of another government department.