

BDOHP INTERVIEW

Sir Nicholas Henderson

CMG (1965), KCMG (1972), GCMG (1977). KCVO

The Interview includes comments on:

- the problems of confidentiality rules when he came to write his books, *The Private Office* and *Mandarin* (2-3);
- importance of officials being able to speak out (3-4 and 13-14);
- retirement plans he had in 1979 (4-5);
- his farewell despatch from Paris, and Washington appointment (5-8);
- farewell despatch from Washington (8);
- Thatcher and foreign policy-making (8-9);
- role of secret intelligence in foreign policy (9-11);
- value of the European single currency (11-12);
- Callaghan and EEC entry in 1974-5 (12-13);
- David Owen as Foreign Secretary (14-15);
- fisheries policy and the EEC (15);
- Thatcher and Germany (15-16).

This is Malcolm McBain interviewing Sir Nicholas Henderson in his office at Sotheby's in New Bond Street, London, on Thursday 24 September 1998.

Sir Nicholas, may I start off by referring to the two charming books that you have written which seem to me to be mainly concerned with the diplomatic service. May I ask you if in writing them you were constrained by the confidentiality rules, and, if so, did you leave much out?

NH: The first of the books you refer to, which was called *'The Private Office'*, which was about the life of private secretaries and the connection between the private secretaries and the Foreign Secretaries and the way they have a certain inter-relational importance, one for the other. In that I don't think I was subject to any self-censorial restraint, largely because I was writing about the considerable past. There were a lot of personal details in it, about Ernest Bevin for example, and Rab Butler, there may have been a few things I left out but I wouldn't say they were restrained by confidentiality. On the other hand, the much bigger book (*Mandarin: the diaries of an ambassador*) which was really a collection of my diaries, diaries I wrote of events I described during my time as ambassador in different countries, there I certainly, when I came to wanting to publish it, I ran immediately into difficulties on confidentiality because my text, which I submitted to the Foreign Office for approval before submitting to the publisher, was immediately banned. The whole thing was completely banned. I was told I couldn't publish it until 15 years after my retirement. There was some confusion about the date of my retirement because I left the service at the age of 60 in 1979 but then was kept on as Ambassador to Washington for another 3 years or so. Whether retirement age was when I was 60 or 63 was in some doubt, but anyhow, regardless of that, the Cabinet Office particularly Robin Butler, the Secretary of the Cabinet, to whom the FCO referred the text, were emphatic in trying to stop me publishing altogether. In the end I did publish but that was again picking up on my slightly complicated termination of my career. I then did so 15 years after I retired from Paris at the age of 60 but not 15 years after I retired from Washington. I don't think in fact that anything I wrote really breached the rules that were being applied against me, namely the Radcliffe rules, which are very narrowly defined. The nature of confidentiality that must not be disclosed either by officials or ministers is very tightly written and I personally, having studied it at great length, didn't think in fact that I had transgressed. I tried to find out what the sort of thing was where I

was infringing confidentiality. I got a very severe letter from Robin Butler saying that if I went ahead I would be carrying out one of the most deleterious acts of a public servant he could imagine. It was a very, very severe letter which I bitterly resented. I didn't particularly want a lesson from him on what the morals or principles of the public service should be. I asked what they objected to, what was I saying that could either cause trouble between ministers or trouble of any kind? The only example I ever had was that in that diary I had described at some length the tasks I had, at the time of the Falklands war, in the United States and a meeting I had attended at Chequers at the height of the Falklands war when decisions were taken about operations and I described Mrs Thatcher as 'looking tired', as she was and had no reason not to look, and it wasn't offensive. They seemed to be terrified that what I wrote would be regarded as somehow breaching some principle of confidentiality between ministers and officials. When I did publish my book, I did leave out quite a lot of things on my own account, for example some things to do with royalty, confidential talks with the Queen Mother, about the former King Edward VIII. I left it out because it was a very private talk. When I did finally publish I didn't make much of a fuss about this, either in the book itself, or in the attendant publicity, which I suppose I could have done. It seemed to me to be so absurd. I had thought of saying that this was a book which originally had been banned, which would have increased its sales, but someone pointed out to me that that was rather childish, and after all it was only a fleeting point, but what was curious was that nobody who read the book, or none of the reviewers, could begin to understand why it had ever been banned and this seemed particularly odd given the fact that ministers, Lawson and so many ministers, and Charles Powell too, were publishing or talking on the television and radio in a far more indiscreet and more frank way about ministers and their views and relations with officials than I had ever done.

MM: Thank you very much. Sir Nicholas, since the British Diplomatic Oral History Programme provides the opportunity to record thoughts and ideas not likely to have been passed for publication in book form in the bad old days, perhaps they are still considered sensitive, is there anything you would like to add to either book?

NH: I think the only thing that I would add, if I was writing now, would be something more like conclusions than anything I would have recorded at the time.

Conclusions or thoughts about people, the relevance of people rather than events, if you see what I mean, and I suppose personal things about who mattered and who didn't

matter. This is perhaps not quite answering your point. The Labour government that came to power in 1964 were very (I think I may have reflected this) very suspicious, not to say contemptuous, of officials. They thought officials were trying to oppose what they were doing. They, ministers, had the right to pronounce on what was the national interest and we were just functionaries and had no right to do so. I don't know whether I reflected that at the time but looking back on it, I resent that very much. I'm not sure whether I mentioned it ...

MM: Yes, you did, you mentioned it very clearly ...

NH: I find it particularly so now, long after I had been involved in active advice on policy. I'm frequently asked to comment, in the press, on television or radio, or write articles about current aspects of foreign policy, or Britain's role in the world, and I think I'm asked to comment, as are other people like me, because we are considered to have, and I hope have, a certain objective approach to the subject, such as you can hardly say political figures have, however distinguished they may be. I think increasingly you're going to want people who can comment on public affairs without bias of any kind, or try to. I think we have a role and responsibility in that which should be respected.

MM: Indeed, I couldn't agree more. And it is part of this oral history exercise to try to establish that. Thank you. Going back to your first retirement, can you tell me what your plans were when you first reached the actual retiring age?

NH: I hadn't thought much about it, to be quite honest. I don't know whether many people do. I really don't think I gave any thought to it at all except I somehow hoped I would write something, or have a chance of writing something. Again, I'm not sure whether I reflected this in something I wrote at the time in the diary but I remember very well when Harold MacMillan came to stay with me in Paris, which I suppose was during 1977 or 1978. I had known him a bit. He came over for a dinner occasion at a club called 'Les Miserables', an Anglo-French dinner at which distinguished French and British people spoke, and he stayed with me for that and he was a wonderful person for long conversations. He didn't like small-talk, he liked conversations, discussing things. I remember walking up and down the garden in Paris on a very beautiful day and him saying, 'I'm connected with my family firm Macmillans now and I would like to interest you and find out what you might like to be able to write, I've read some of the things

you have written and it would interest me and I hope you might apply yourself to writing something and we would certainly be interested in it.' I think I had letters from other publishers along the same lines and I was intending to do it but then I got posted to Washington, then came back and got caught up in various activities of which far and away the most important quite soon was the Channel tunnel, and somehow I rather wish I had embarked on a career as a writer. I think I've left it too late now to apply myself to research necessary to write something. The great game of foreign affairs concerns me enormously to this day with undiminished interest but I think I'm not particularly good at philosophical thought. I feel I'm more at home in analyzing a situation on the basis of facts. I don't like particularly speculating on something I know nothing about. I'm always being asked now about America and Clinton, and I just refuse to comment on it because ...

MM: Thank you. I was asking that question with malice aforethought because I wanted to lead into your farewell despatch from Paris which was seized upon by *The Economist* and created a great stir. It seems to me it was likely to be the reason why Mrs Thatcher said, 'Would you go to Washington?'. What I would really like to ask is, 'how did *The Economist* manage to get a copy of that document, which was, after all, classified confidential?'

NH: I've no idea. They told me they had several copies of it.

MM: So somebody in the Office must have ...

NH: Well, you remember the time that this was written, the beginning of 1979, Britain was in a very bad plight. And I think people in the Office were pretty fed up with Britain's role in the world. Just to correct something there, it wasn't Mrs Thatcher who appointed me to Washington, it was Peter Carrington. I don't say she disagreed with it, in fact she accepted it, but it was entirely Carrington, who was Foreign Secretary. The night of the election, May 6, I was attending some election party where he was, and he said, 'Nico, I shall be wanting, if it's going as I think it is, I shall be wanting to see you very soon.' It didn't occur to me what that would be about, it certainly didn't occur to me that he was going to send me to Washington, I thought he might want me to do something which I would have been very pleased to have done.

MM: When you receive that kind of appointment you are surely under quite separate terms

from normal civil servants. You are in effect a political appointee.

NH: It's very interesting that, because that was never discussed, oddly enough. Michael Palliser, who was Permanent Under Secretary at the FCO, rang me up and said, 'Nothing to do with us, but we are very pleased.' I never even bothered to ask, 'What about my pension?' In fact the government must have saved quite a lot of money.

MM: You should have received a second gratuity, and if you didn't you were robbed.

NH: Yes. How stupid of me. It never occurred to me. Nor did I think at all of the terms. All I said was, 'I want to be sure I can come back, once every four months or so, to keep in touch,' which would have happened anyway I suppose. I didn't even think of it, I don't think we did in those days.

MM: Well, Foreign Office people, I think on the whole, probably aren't into that kind of ...

NH: Well, if you started doing that it would be hopeless. If you start thinking in terms of grasping, after all you wouldn't go into it if you were thinking of making money. What is very odd is, looking back, in 1945-46 when I first joined, all my contemporaries wanted to join the public service in some way, nobody wanted to go into business. Perhaps they should have done, but they wanted public service. I don't think this is there any longer. Now whether this is because of Britain's decline, it may be partly to do with it, but I think it is also because the ethos of money making, which Maggie may have encouraged, is much more prevalent.

MM: I quite agree. This may be astonishing, but one of my academic contacts has expressed surprise to me that you were able to marshal so many facts and figures (in the farewell despatch from Paris published by *The Economist*) about Britain's relative decline compared with France and Germany over this period, 1954 to 1977, and he said, 'Where on earth could he have got those figures from?'

NH: Well, I'm surprised that he's surprised. Once you're in the machine you can get anything. I rang up the Statistical Office. There was no problem whatever. But that does remind me of a point. When I was still thinking of writing something about our role in Europe, or non-role in Europe, I did in fact get copies of a great many things, annual reports, you know posts abroad produce annual reports, and when I was thinking of

writing something of our adventures in Europe, I got something from the Office, copies of annual reports, I've still got them in some box somewhere. There's no problem, you can get everything when you're in government, but not afterwards. My God, that became true. When I came to write something they were frightfully stuffy. When I said that I could have seen anything two months ago ... there was no problem whatever getting that stuff. I suppose you might say it took a bit of trouble to get the material for my farewell despatch but ...

MM: A few telephone calls ...

NH: Well, not only that, I had brilliant people in my staff in Paris, for instance Nicholas Bayne, who is now UK High Commissioner in Canada?

MM: I think he has now retired.

NH: A clever, able man. This is another thing whilst we are on this subject, I think there is a tremendous lot of marvellous material available in Britain, in British public service, in Whitehall and posts abroad. It has been a tradition for us to accumulate such information when we were a great power. I think much of it is wasted, not used, now. MPs I suspect rarely bother, before making a speech, to find out the facts that they could by ringing up the desk officer in the FCO. If I want know to find out what is going on in Kosovo, or Indonesia, I would ring up a clever young man in the Foreign Office, and he tells me everything. That's what they are there for. They know. They are objective.

MM: Indeed, yes. I thought it was worth getting your clarification of that point because ...

NH: I took rather a lot of trouble with it because I got rather indignant ...

MM: Indeed, and it's a very telling selection of statistics in the despatch.

NH: I don't think the situation is all that much better now, well, it's a bit better ...

MM: Did you write a farewell despatch from Washington ..?

NH: Yes, I did.

MM: Well, that didn't get published.

NH: No, no. I suppose it wasn't as sensational as the Paris one. It was sort of critical of the government, Owen didn't like it at all. Owen was very cross. I did write one from Washington and I would show it to you if it were here. You can get it can't you, if you want it?

MM: I wonder ... Public Record office?

NH: Well. I mean, nothing confidential about it, a long time ago, over 15 years. No doubt what it was all about, it was all about Carter and Reagan, why Carter had taken, what my predecessor, Peter Jay, had described as the high road, and Reagan hadn't, yet Carter had turned out a complete flop and yet Reagan had ended in triumph, well, not ended when I left but later.

MM: May I ask you about your impression of Mrs Thatcher's part in directing UK foreign policy while you were a senior ambassador?

NH: The thing about Mrs Thatcher as far as I can judge it is she changed terrifically. Perhaps I could say when she was first made head of the Tory party her first visit abroad was to Bonn where I happened to be. She was a very different person then and very different in her attitude to the direction of foreign policy than she became later. As far as I can guess she wasn't remotely anti-European in those days. She was keen to know what was going on, in fact she liked my despatch theme which was that we ought to take more part in Europe. But then if you come to the time when I was involved which is only her first three years, Carrington was Foreign Secretary, later she became much more prominent or dominant, her policies were at cross purposes with Geoffrey Howe and practically everybody, particularly Geoffrey Howe I suppose. Pym, you see, she treated with contumely as I was able to observe. All Prime Ministers want to play in the world's game because that's where they can get a lot of limelight ...

MM: And I suppose that's a cumulative thing ...

NH: Yes. She wanted to make this particular relationship with Reagan which she did of course and with the American public. There's no doubt about it, she struck a note which the American public and American business world loved. She exploited that. When you say, 'directed foreign policy' ... the Falklands war, but that's a special case and I wasn't involved in Europe, that was important at the time, when she went to Dublin and talked

about 'my money', that sort of stuff. They didn't like that of course. She tried to correct it but I have no particular authority to talk about that.

MM: I see, well perhaps an unfair sort of question ...

NH: You see, again, Rhodesia, I didn't deal with Rhodesia which is another great issue then, and Gorbachev ...

MM: At the time of your departure from Washington what sort of view did the Americans take on the European question, on the European Union and our part in it?

NH: What they always took, that they couldn't understand why we were hesitating, that it was in our interests to get close to Europe and that it was in the interests of UK/US relations that we should play a big part in Europe and that our impact, our influence on Washington was in direct ratio to our role in Europe.

MM: Excellent. Now this is moving on to a slightly different area, and one which you may not feel able to comment on. I was wondering if you could throw any light on the role of the Secret Intelligence Service in the formulation of foreign policy decisions, if any?

NH: I think it is a difficult subject to generalise about and say that the SIS's stuff always had, or was likely to have an important bearing on the conduct or direction of policy. But that doesn't mean to say that there were occasions when a piece of intelligence of various kinds wasn't relevant. The case that comes to my mind most strongly is of a defector called Penkovsky, you probably know the name, at the time of the Cuba crisis in 1962. In my experience, although I am not an expert on this, though I spent a year in a liaison capacity with the SIS, he was incredible and produced a great deal of information about the state of Soviet defences, etc, and I think that helped the USA and ourselves at the time of Cuba.

As I mentioned to the Americans, I think there is a relevance here to our role in Washington. There's always the question, 'Is Britain which is much the weaker power, putting enough into the kitty to make the relationship worthwhile for the Americans?' And I think that intelligence is one of the realms in which we do,

because of GCHQ, and all that stuff is shared and we play a very important part in all that. I think generally the fact that the intelligence stuff they can discuss it with us, they probably can't with anybody else. But what happens is, what do you do with it, do you trust it or don't you, is it true or is it false, that is the problem. As we know from the war, neither Hitler nor Stalin ever believed any of it was worth having.

MM: However, the fact is, I suppose, the government, the Cabinet, receives information from secret sources then it's taken into consideration by them at the point where they decide on future foreign policy so ...

NH: Well, it's first of all decided in the JIC. I was very closely involved in the JIC at one time. We produced a report once a week and whenever anything happened we met people from the services, at all departments, to consider the subject and try to reach conclusions which are then immediately passed to ministers. So it forms part of the material which is relevant to the conduct of foreign policy, but it's only a part of it. Now with things like terrorists it may be a very important. I'm sure it would be there, no doubt in Ireland it's important. I think it is difficult to generalise and say that ... In my experience, all Prime Ministers love intelligence, because it's a sort of weapon that they have. The intelligence reports used to arrive in special little boxes and it gave them a belief that they had a direct line to something that no other ordinary departments have. They never did without it and they never minded spending money on intelligence in my experience.

MM: Interesting. Thank you very much ...

NH: But it often gets completely wrong ... I remember a piece of intelligence in the early fifties from Egypt, which said, 'One thing you can be sure of is King Farouk is solidly on the throne;' in a matter of one week he was overthrown.

MM: Yes, marvellous. Thank you. Can you ...

NH: I must just tell you another thing, this I wanted to put in my book and I wish I had, but I didn't because I got it from someone called Charles Johnson who was a very prominent member of the British diplomatic service, ended up as High Commissioner in Australia,

and a very distinguished man. He told me, and I don't know where he got it from, that there was a private secretary at No.10 in 1939, at the beginning of 1939, called Creswell, there was always a Foreign Office private secretary at No.10, who in those days filtered to the Prime Minister intelligence that he thought he ought to see, a lot of it would come in and he would decide what should go to the Prime Minister. A piece of intelligence came in from Germany about Hitler, this was within three or four months of Munich, it was talking about Chamberlain who still thought he had established a special relationship with him, and Hitler was reported to have talked about Chamberlain in derisory terms, calling him in German '*der alter Arschloch*', which is the '*old arsehole*' and Creswell, quite rightly, decided to show this to him, and it had a profound effect on Chamberlain, who said to himself, 'so that's what he really thinks I am!' It's little things like that which are rather fascinating.

MM: Very revealing ...

NH: Yes, it is rather ...

MM: Can you on the basis of your long experience of the working of UK foreign policy express any view on the advantages or disadvantages to Britain belonging to the European single currency ...

NH: I think it is part of the advantage, or disadvantage of being a fully fledged member of the European Union. I think it is very crucial in that context that we are in the absurd position of being half way in and half way out and now saying we will join when we know whether it's going to work or not. It's certainly going to work and it wouldn't help us if it didn't work, and we could help it to work. I've just been seeing various people dealing with Italian, Spanish, Portuguese finances, a meeting I went to of the investment trust that I belong to, and they all said that thank God we have signed up. If we hadn't been signed up for the European single currency we would have had a terrible financial position now. Because of the breadth and stability it gives us, its completely shored up our economy. But I'm a fanatical pro-European. I happen to know a bit about the single currency and I think it argues ... I wrote quite a long piece on it in *The Economist* about 18 months ago.

MM: I must look it up. Thank you. I think that probably covers any question I might have asked about the advantages or disadvantages to be had as a result of joining the Euro currency club!

NH: You see, we are complaining about the Queen not being on the euro, but the Queen never used to be on the pound years ago and it's only quite recently ... also we aren't in a position to complain about it. We aren't there. I think it is a tiny point.

MM: I'm now going back a bit to a point in your diaries where you say that the Labour Government of 1974 did not want to hear ambassadors expressing pro-European views because the election manifestos at that time was basically Euro-sceptic. What a dilemma for a dedicated public servant. Is a public servant not required to tell the truth as he sees it in the public interest?

NH: Yes, that's right, I said right at the beginning, didn't I? Yes, I feel very strongly that he is required to tell the truth in the public interest but of course politicians don't like it. Callaghan got frightfully cross. I would have reflected that more, incidentally. I think I did a bit but we had this awful meeting, I think I referred to it, but I didn't give full justice to it, but poor Eddie Tomkins, who was Ambassador then in Paris, I was in Germany, and we had this meeting with the Foreign Secretary and he asked, 'how do the French regard us'? Eddie Tomkins replied that the French Government were disappointed by the initial reaction of the Labour party to Europe and Callaghan reacted crossly and in rather a bullying manner said, 'how can you say that, its quite untrue, the British people - we're based upon pragmatism and we don't...!', he got frightfully cross. Eddie replied, 'Secretary, all I'm trying to tell you is how the French are reacting.' It was the same thing when he came to me. When he came to Germany he wasn't really rude to me. No, he wasn't to be quite honest, but I don't think he liked my views at all. At his first meeting in Germany, which was the first meeting no doubt when he came abroad, to talk about it, and the meeting in the daytime had been pretty depressing, and at the meeting after dinner with Scheel who was German Foreign Minister, I can't remember whether Willy Brandt was there or not, but anyhow it was a top meeting in the Chancellor's house and the Germans were talking about how the European Community was the way forward for all of us etc. and Callaghan just said, 'you tell me that what you are suggesting is good for the British housewife and I'll tell you whether I'm for it or not.' That sort of thing, just shouting it out. Conduct of

foreign policy? Ludicrous!

MM: But of course he changed very quickly.

NH: He didn't change then you know. He changed by the time he was PM you mean?

MM: Yes.

NH: He did, yes.

MM: And, I think, at the time of the referendum, which was early 1975? He had changed to the extent that they were prepared to go along with the result of the referendum. I thought he campaigned in favour?

NH: I don't think he campaigned at all. You were allowed to choose. The Labour Government, having launched the referendum, couldn't very well oppose it.

MM: No, that's true.

NH: He became much better then, and now talks and writes as if he was always a fanatical European. Bloody cheek, really. I did pull my punches there.

MM: It does pose a dilemma for public servants, doesn't it, if one is dealing with a Prime Minister or Secretary of State like that you ...

NH: Well, I think it depends upon the Ministers. They ought to want objective advice. I think most of them do, God knows what Cook wants, I've no idea. He may be more difficult but on the whole I think they should want ... The line most foreign ministers took was, 'you tell me what you think is in the British national interest in the conduct of foreign policy, I'll tell you what the politics are that make it possible', which is perfectly reasonable. I think on the whole it depends more on Ministers, officials must not ... I think, by the way, at the end of Maggie's time, the end of the Tory Government's time, until last year I think the Foreign Office had got a bit brainwashed and started to ... I went to an awful conference, I thought the Foreign Office people there were awful on Europe, saying things because they thought it was what the government wanted them to say, I thought it was awful.

MM: That's bad, if that happens.

NH: It certainly did happen under ... they got so brainwashed I think.

MM: I noticed in your diaries (*Mandarin: the diaries of an ambassador*), when I glanced through them again in the train this morning, that when David Owen first went to Paris as Foreign Secretary in about 1977 you found him slightly changeable but on the whole very charming and impressive.

NH: Yes.

MM: At the time he was giving you that impression he must have been plotting the downfall of Peter Ramsbotham in Washington, either then or shortly after and replacing him with Callaghan's son-in-law. What are your views about that? I suppose I really ought to try to interview Sir Peter Ramsbotham.

NH: Yes. I don't suppose he would know that. I think Owen rather felt that, and of course this became increasingly his view, he may have nourished it always, that somehow the Foreign Office people were fuddyduddy, old fashioned, out of date sort of people and that Jay was the sort of man he wanted with Carter there. I don't know whether he had ever met Ramsbotham, I just don't know that. Yes, he was. When Owen first came to Paris he was extremely impressive, considering he was very young and new to it, very impressive. He didn't seem at all hostile to us then, he became increasingly hostile to me, I think, actually later. Because I was pro-European. One of my troubles there, I didn't reveal this of course, was that he was already very jealous of Roy Jenkins, who went to the Commission, was in the Commission and he'd been a great disciple of Roy's in a way and I was a great friend of Roy Jenkins. Owen knew that. He liked some officials, I believe that his private secretaries went on seeing him after for a long time. But they became slightly brainwashed. I got annoyed with one of them who, before he came to Paris he used to ring up and say, 'Secretary of State will be there tomorrow night, don't forget he doesn't want scented soap in the bathroom or any flowers on the table,' that sort of nonsense.

MM: Quaint, isn't it?

NH: Yes, it is.

MM: I saw also in the diaries that in 1978, I'm asking an almost impossible question here, but you said in the diary that you'd done an article about fish for *Le Monde* and I'm just wondering what sort of interest there was in the fish question at that date?

NH: I think it was beginning to be rather important. It was one of the things that were highly relevant to us, being surrounded by sea.

MM: And being restricted in some way, but my understanding was that we had got what was seen to be a perfectly reasonable deal on fish at the time of negotiation of EC entry and we weren't much interested in it because we had lost the cod war and British fishermen weren't really interested in fishing UK waters.

NH: Well, don't forget Crosland, who was Foreign Secretary, was MP for Grimsby.

MM: It's probably not reasonable to ask about an article after 20 years ...

NH: Well, I really don't remember writing about that.

MM: It was just a small point really.

NH: But I doubt I'd have written it if it hadn't been quite important.

MM: Yes, exactly. It must have taken a fair bit of research I suppose.

NH: But again, research is easy when you are in the machine, you just ring up Ministry of Fish and ask them everything. It's hardly research actually.

MM: Do you have any observations to make on Mrs Thatcher's attitude to German reunification, I think it was in 1991.

NH: I think it was ludicrous.

MM: This was after your time ...

NH: I think she has been increasingly irrational on foreign policy, totally irrational,

wrong, misleading and ...

MM: Can you see any reasons for that, or is it a question of 'burnout', I suppose bearing that burden ..?

NH: People give all sorts of reasons why she became fanatically anti-German, one of which, I don't know whether it's true, is that her constituency was Finchley and it's full of Jews. That may have had something to do with it. Another explanation is more humorous really, but her home was in Lincolnshire, where she was brought up during the war, and many of the bombing crews who were bombing Germany used to take off from airfields in that area and she was very conscious of the important role they played in bombing Germany, these gallant men were doing a good job ..., I don't know. When she first came to Germany which was 1975, soon after she had been made party leader she wasn't anti-German, far from it.

MM: And for a long time she went along with a very sensible policy, well calculated and under the influence of advice from her officials.

NH: Yes, and Carrington, he was very pro-European.

MM: Although he didn't last very long, unfortunately. Well, I don't think I've got any more ...

NH: No. I'm sorry I haven't got more to tell you.

MM: Not at all, I'm most grateful for your time.