

Sir Donald Arthur Logan

Joined the Foreign Service, December 1945	pp 33-6
Foreign Office, 1945-1947	p 36
HM Embassy, Tehran [Iran], 1947-1951	pp 36-43
Foreign Office, 1951-1953	pp 44-48
Assistant Political Agent, Kuwait, 1953-1955	pp 48-52
Assistant Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [John Selwyn-Lloyd], 1956-1958	pp 52-68
(Suez Crisis)	pp 54-68
HM Embassy, Washington, 1958-1960	pp 69-71
HM Ambassador to Guinea, 1960-1962	pp 71-77
Foreign Office, 1962-1964	p 78
Information Counsellor, British Embassy, Paris [France] 1964-1970	pp 78-91
Ambassador to Bulgaria, 1970-1973	pp 91-95
Deputy Permanent UK Representative to NATO, 1973-1975	pp 95-98
Ambassador and Permanent Leader, UK Delegation to UN Conference on Law of the Sea, 1976-1977	pp 98-99
Leader, UK delegation to Conference on Marine Living Resources of Antarctica, Buenos Aires [Argentina] and Canberra [Australia], 1978-1980.	pp 106-108

Also includes thoughts on open diplomacy in the Falklands War and Suez (pp 100-103)

Book Three

A Diplomatic Career

1945 – 1977

*'The management of international relations
by negotiation'*

Harold Nicolson

'Diplomacy'

Home University Library 1939

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It was the war that brought about this change¹. I embarked upon it in the dark. If I knew anything about diplomacy, it was no more than the popular quip that 'An Ambassador is an man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country', though I would probably have recalled it in its more pejorative version², and would not have known that its author, Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639) coined it as a 'merriment' in his host's visitors book at Augsburg, which was quoted in 1611 in a diatribe against James I who then recalled him from his post in Venice, although Wotton had attempted to defuse the problem by adding that an ambassador, to be serviceable to his country, should always speak the truth.

It is a profession likely to be forever much maligned. In a Foreign Affairs debate in the House of Commons in about 1957, William Yates, referred to the '*make-believe world of duty free drinks and cigarettes*'. I found this a cruel travesty of contemporary diplomacy.

Before the war, overseas representation was divided into five separate services, Diplomatic, Consular, Commercial Diplomatic, Levant and Colonial. After the war, the Diplomatic Service was renamed the Foreign Service, absorbing the others, the Colonial Service changing its name to Commonwealth Service on the way.

Qualifications for entry had been high, but they were widened for post-war entry in recognition of the interruption in education that had been caused. They became: a university degree in any subject

¹ But see Col. Muirhead's tip on page 25

² '...sent abroad to lie for his country'

of at least second class standard; failing that two year's study at a university, and failing that 'satisfy the examiners that had you gone to a university you would have got a second class degree'. It was only this last that could apply to me. I wrote to ask how that might be demonstrated. The reply was: 'take the entrance examination without prejudice'.

The examination consisted of an assessment of personality, followed by a formal interview, the whole preceded by a qualifying written examination. The first applicants, of whom I was one, were told they would all pass the written, its purpose being in our case only to set the pass mark for the future.

It was for the personality assessment that I arrived at Stoke D'Abernon, the home of a former diplomat, Lord D'Abernon, and felt justified in not volunteering the real reason for my late arrival, foolishness at Celle station brought on by over-indulgence the night before in a mess farewell.

We were told that we would be ignored at breakfast, but under observation throughout the rest of the day, including meals. The regime had been refined at officer selection centres and has continued in use, though shortened in time. A diplomat, a psychologist, a psychiatrist, together with an assortment of academics held individual interviews. There were multiple answer questions, essay writing and analysis of texts. I recall choosing 'Immortality' as the only subject offered on which I could write anything which did not have a set answer, feeling that after arguing both for and against and finding I had no time left for an opinion might be regarded as diplomatic!

Undiplomatic was the verdict on a very military Colonel in our group of some 20. A team of eight of us was taken out to the lawn on which were several bits of rope, tarpaulin and metal bars and fittings. We were told to imagine ourselves as liberators of an occupied island having found this material believed to be a static water tank but with no instructions as to its construction. The team was to try to erect it. The Colonel seized the initiative, numbered us from right to left in army fashion and started to set us tasks. He was stopped, as the purpose of the exercise was to test co-operation, not discipline.

I also remember a bizarre series of psychological tests. We were shown pictures on a screen for say 30 seconds each and given some 10 seconds to write what we saw and our interpretation of it. This was to happen very rapidly. At the end, we would be shown only a blank screen, and were to write down what we saw there and our interpretation. I clearly 'saw' on the blank screen a scene in a park with a bench but have forgotten how I interpreted it – a pity.

There was also a language test at which the candidate was required to show an ability to learn a foreign language. The test was an oral conversation in a language of the candidate's choice. I offered German which I had studied instead of Latin at school, and had found its grammar easier, because more systematic, than French.

No one else offered German and I was told to meet the examiner after dinner. While in Germany, I had polished up some dozen phrases that I hoped would suffice, delivered parrot-fashion. The conversation began as we started to climb the main staircase, and by the time we reached his room all my phrases had been delivered. He switched to French to ask if I was any better at that. I showed I was not. He dismissed me with: *If you are returning to Germany, I would study French if I were you.* I did not know what to make of that.

I had not yet decided that a diplomatic career was what I wanted and was able to regard the ordeal of the 'country house' personality assessment free from the tense eagerness that more ambitious others showed. It was for the assessors to take me or not as they found me. I could always return to the world of insurance which I knew and in which I had all the relevant academic qualifications. This detachment may have been an advantage – none of the others with me at Stoke D'Abernon were successful.

Soon after my return to Germany I received a call to the formal interview. Seated at the short end of a long table in a grand room in Carlton House Terrace, confronted by fourteen of 'the great and the good' from academe, politics, journalism, trade unions and such like, and with a notice before him: 'Speak Up', the candidate fielded questions for half an hour. In responding in turn round the table, I suppose I ventured to indicate what a diplomat might achieve for a better world, until I faced the last questioner who asked: *'And when you were in Washington in the Army, did you think the Embassy was doing any good at all.'* As he spoke, I recognised him as having been there at the time. I remember my confusion rather than my response³.

Again back in Germany, I received a pass list on which I was placed fifth among about fifteen. But it was stamped: 'Without prejudice to eligibility'. So I asked again how I might qualify. 'Come into the office without prejudice to eligibility, and we'll see.' They never did say what in the end they did see, but somewhat later I received my appointment as second secretary – unqualified by any reservation.

³ It was Roddy Barclay, Private Secretary to Ernest Bevin, who had just become Foreign Secretary. The Private Secretary at that time was in charge of appointments

So, assisted by a good measure of chance and of luck, my post war career was set for thirty-two years without regret. The family were very supportive throughout.

On arrival in the F.O. early in 1946 I was posted to the North American Department where my job in the 'third room' was to receive all but the highest-level communications and recommend what I thought the Foreign Secretary should do about it. That was the theory on which the Office worked, 'from the bottom up' but hardly appropriate for a 'without prejudice' new boy. I remember picking out from a news summary the item reporting a rumour that the US general George Marshall might become US Secretary of State. I marked this for the Head of the Department's attention and for the Economic Department to see afterwards. The Head of Department wrote; 'I think this most unlikely', to which a new boy in the Economic Dept added 'Ha Ha!' as by that time the announcement had been made. Presumably this exposure of a rather stuffy pre-war diplomat is now in the public archives!

At about this time I was sent on a French language course with half a dozen others at a crammer, Davies, well known at the time, and run in a house in Vicarage Gate by a Monsieur and Madame Cerceau and a Mademoiselle Rossignol.

My chief activity was to deal with the problems of GI. Brides, British girls who had been deserted by their US Servicemen husbands. There were then 46 American states, each with its own divorce laws, two, I think, with none, and such advice and help as we could give depended on where the man was domiciled. Many of them had left no trace. There was much correspondence with the Washington Embassy and I can still see the signature 'D.D.Maclean', then Head of Chancery there, who defected to Moscow

Tehran

My first positing abroad came after eighteen months, to Tehran as Second Secretary, Commercial. Letters from there between July 1947 and June 1949, my first term there, were preserved.

Commercial air travel was still in its infancy and I went there by ship, boat, taxi and bus. In the old Diplomatic Service, officers were left to organise their own travel, and it was said that the post rarely knew when a new man would arrive, as it was customary to stay with friends across Europe on the way and at their tolerance. Post-war conditions made such leisurely progress difficult, and I was given passage on a troop ship, the ss *Ascania*, which normally had been a Cunard liner plying from Britain to Halifax, Nova Scotia. It was carrying reinforcements and recruits to the Army and

Police Force in Palestine where Jewish resistance to the British administration had begun. Its first call was at Gibraltar, then Malta and Algiers, but disembarkation was at Port Said. From there it was up to me to find my way to Cairo, by train, where I spent half a day being shown the sights by a venerable Englishwoman of the expatriate community, a Mrs Williamson?, who specialised in tours for the military and other officers seated with her in her horse-drawn carriage, parasol in hand.

To Alexandria by train, from where the Embassy had arranged for me to go by boat to Beirut. The 'Horizonte Azul' proved to be little more than a launch and its engines broke down an hour or two out. The sea was rough and the journey very uncomfortable. From Beirut I took a taxi to Damascus where I obtained a seat on the 'Nairn Bus'. Well known at the time in the Middle East.

Nairn was an enterprising company that had designed a well-sprung, air-conditioned coach to drive straight across the desert from Damascus to Baghdad by night. The one stop at an oasis under the stars, and with a camel train passing, was most romantic.

Nigel Bruce, who had been one of the early post-war entrants was at the Damascus Embassy and put me up. I had known him in the FO as a fellow new boy, and Irène, (whom I had not then met) had met him three years earlier when he was with the Welsh Guards in Brussels. Her friendship with his sister Rosalind Haywood, née Bruce, dates from this time. So does our marriage, as it was Nigel who invited me to the Bruce skiing parties in the mid '50s.

The letters describe the journey on to Tehran by local bus, not free from the hazards that even now are to be expected on such a journey⁴. I arrived at the Embassy on the fourth of July to find a note left for me from the Counsellor and his wife inviting me to stay with them, and to join them at the American Embassy's Independence Day reception, but travel stains made it more appropriate to take advantage of their bathroom.

Until recalling my arrival in Tehran fifty years later, I had regarded my departure for the United States in 1942 as a turning point in my life. It was the beginning of something, but what that something was remained unclear to us all. Now I think perhaps the arrival in Tehran was the more decisive. Just what the future held could never be clear, but I had by an uncharted route arrived in a career of which I still knew little, and in a milieu more varied and more different compared with anything I had known or contemplated before the war

⁴ Contrasting sharply with the Nairn, a rickety vehicle, full of local families and sick children

I shall not be able to attempt to chronicle what followed from that. Up to now, I have had two series of letters to jog my memory of events and experiences that now seem to me significant. The Tehran letters go no further than 1949, and such letters as I sent in later years were much less regular and in any case are now unavailable. Events moved more slowly, through postings in one place for two or three years at least at a time. Diplomatic life and experience became more continuous and less surprising, and adaptation to it less conscious.

Had I gone to the US National Day party on arrival, it is certain that, as at all similar occasions in Tehran at that time, the gossip would have been about the Soviet threat.

Earlier in that year of 1947, the Soviet Union had been obliged to withdraw their troops from the Iranian northwestern province, Azerbaijan, that they had occupied after the 1939-45 war by incursion from their region of the same name.

Iran, - its old name Persia – has always been at the crossroads between east and west and between north and south. The Indian Empire took the threat from Russia very seriously, the 'Great Game'. This concern had been reflected in the stance of the Embassy in Tehran. Indian Political Officers manned the Consulate at Meshed in the east, and when I arrived, a senior from that service, Sir Clarmont Skrine, was on the staff to facilitate in issues arising from the transfer of power in India in 1948.

Germany had also presented a threat through Iran (then Persia) in the 1914-1918 war and Britain at that time raised the South Persia Rifles in the south under British officers to tackle a similar force under a German commander.

At various times attempts were made to lower tension through Anglo/Russian arrangements, the long-term effect of which was overshadowed when, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Britain and Russia became partners in the war against Hitler. The allied powers sent aid to the Soviet Union by ship to the Gulf⁵. and thence overland across Iran. For this, the co-operation of the Iranian authorities was essential, and it fell to the British Minister at Tehran, Sir Reader Bullard, to obtain this. As his memoirs show, - letters published in the 1990s - he had no faith in their reliability and kept the supply running by enforcing a personal authority over everything. German influence had to be kept at bay and when the Shah, Reza Pahlavi, had shown

⁵ Generally known at that time as the Persian Gulf, but the adjective was dropped in face of objection from the Arab states on the opposite shore

signs of responding to it, the allies removed him to Mauritius and then to Johannesburg, putting his young son Muhammad Reza in his place.

Remembering the influence the Indian Empire had always tried to exert, this development convinced the Iranians that the British were behind everything that happened, or did not happen, in their country.

Bullard, now Ambassador, retired in 1946, only a year or so before I arrived. The Ambassador then was Sir Ian Le Rougetel, a very different type. It was not for him to follow Bullard's autocracy even if he had been so inclined, which he was not. He tried to put the relationship on a more normal footing.

The Soviet Embassy compound was next to ours in Tehran, a forbidding affair behind closed gates. Its aim seems to be to develop a presence in Iran's oil industry, and as it happened it was a three-sided struggle over that issue that was dominant during my spell there. The Russians had obtained a concession for oil exploration in northern Iran in return for withdrawal from Azerbaijan province but the Iranian Parliament, the Majlis, refused to ratify it.

Their success in thwarting this move without incurring retaliation led them to turn their attention to the existing 1906 Concession of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (A.I.O.C.), whose production of oil in South Persia in the province of Fars was at that time one of the main sources of non-American oil for the West, the fields across the Gulf being then latent.

The Majlis demanded that the AIOC concession be renegotiated to give greater revenues to Iran. The Company accepted this as inevitable but were reluctant to contemplate major revision of the basis of calculation of these revenues that in their case was a royalty of 3 cents on each barrel of crude oil raised.

Across the Gulf, the American company Aramco were developing the Saudi Arabian field and had concluded a concession that gave Saudi Arabia 50% of profits by introducing the notion of a local tax that in the end fell on the US Treasury rather than on the Company.

AIOC came to recognise that formula as one they might have to follow, but would the UK Treasury accept the validity of the tax as an offset against AIOC's tax liability? And what was meant by profit? Though the Company's refinery in Abadan was the biggest in the world at that time, it bought and sold oil elsewhere – was the profit on that to be included? If it were to be 50% of the

value of oil exported from Iran, how was that value to be fixed? And would products from the refinery be included to which Iran had contributed only crude oil?

In the Embassy, we urged London to persuade AIOC to come up with a generous offer, but Whitehall was reluctant to endorse 50-50 as a formula for mining concessions generally, and the Attlee Government (Bevin as Foreign Secretary) had limited scope in handling such a large company.

Iranian Prime Ministers came and went as the Majlis continually rejected the Company's proposals. The Shah chose a strong military man, General Razmara, to make progress. Nationalist groups fomented unrest and two months after I left Razmara was murdered and the Nationalist leader Musaddiq was made Prime Minister. He soon succeeded in nationalising AIOC.

I do not pretend to have played any personal role in all this. As Commercial Secretary, I was at times involved in making the Embassy's facilities available in the negotiations that were conducted by the Chairman of AIOC, Sir William Fraser, out from London, accompanied by the Ambassador and the Commercial Counsellor.

The chief function of the Commercial Section (the Counsellor, me and a local Market Officer) was to develop British exports to Iran as fast as possible. Iran received the oil revenues in sterling. Sterling was an important reserve currency at that time which meant that UK gold reserves were the backing for sterling held by others. To discourage Iran from asking for payment in dollars, or eyeing the gold, we had to get her to buy as much as possible for sterling in the UK.

One curious result of the war in which I did play some routine part was the supply of sugar to Iran. During the war, all sugar supplies, mostly from the Caribbean, were commandeered and rationed by the British Government to its allies and friendly neutrals. The administration of this was entrusted to a London firm of brokers with the intriguing name of Golodetz and Chernikov. Iran still depended on that arrangement for its sugar and I was involved in those gentlemen's negotiations with the Iranians.

The Shah

Until 1925, Iran had since the end of the eighteenth century been ruled by the Qajar family, and before that by a succession of monarchs from time immemorial. The last Qajar preferred to live in Paris and was deposed in favour of a Persian general, Reza Khan Pahlavi. It was he who was

removed by the allies in 1941 and replaced by his son, Muhammad Reza, aged 22 and educated at Rozay in Switzerland.

Civil administration in Iran was rudimentary. Landowners, often absent, held much power. Other forces were the army and the mullahs, the latter having strong influence in the bazaars. Two large tribes based in the south, the Qashqai and the Bakhtiari, had their power considerably reduced by Reza Shah, but were still to be reckoned with, particularly in the south.

The Majlis, more or less elected but reflecting these self-interests, could not be expected to give a lead. In these circumstances, far from rare in the world, sovereignty needed to be exercised by the one person in whose office it had for the whole of Persian history been recognised. But Muhammad Reza, probably resenting the departure of his father and shy and hesitant by nature, was reluctant to exercise it.

As immediate successor to Reader Bullard, the British Ambassador had a role to play in building stability. The American Government were ready to play a part they had not accepted before, and were led to do so by their fear that the country would fall to Communism. The personalities of the actors in the roles were crucial.

As Counsellor and second in command of the British Embassy, (Valentine) Nicholas Lawford was a capable and personable man, and an extrovert bachelor with time on his hands. He was soon invited by the Shah to ride with him each morning, and the affairs of the nation came to be discussed. By this unusual means, together with the Ambassador's requested audiences with the Shah, the British Embassy attempted to stiffen his resolve and encourage him to tackle the country's problems. The parallel with a sixteenth century court was close.

As one of three young bachelor secretaries at the Embassy, I was often bidden to attend some of the Shah's social entertainment as well as his formal receptions of the diplomatic community in the ornate Golestan Palace before the Peacock Throne.⁶ My recollection of these social occasions, in the Shah's modern palace in the north of the city, is of vast rooms of white marble, lit by glaring light from ugly lamp fittings, the floors laid with modern carpets of gigantic size, the whole atmosphere chilly and stiff.

6. There were two of them, one upright as usual and the other a flat platform raised on four legs. It is not clear which was plundered from the Red Fort in Delhi by Nadir Shah when he was forced out of the Mogul Empire in the mid eighteenth century. In the vaults of the National Bank were piles of diamonds and pearls accumulated by successive rulers, and forming backing for the currency. The Koh-I-Nur diamond had been among them, brought from Delhi by Nadir Shah, before being acquired by the East India Company in compensation for Persian participation in the Sikh wars and presented to Queen Victoria.

The Shah's effectiveness varied with the character of his Minister of Court, a member of the government and a difficult job subject to the pressures of all the factions.

After about fifteen years on the throne and in his mid thirties, the Shah decided to advance his position by associating himself with the Old Testament rulers Darius and Xerxes, and staging an elaborate 2500th anniversary celebration at Persepolis.

From being the hesitant ruler, he sought to transform himself at a stroke into a supreme potentate. Now enjoying enhanced revenues from the reformed oil industry, he spent lavishly on arms for his army, mostly from the USA. He never succeeded, and perhaps never consciously tried, to establish contact or base with any group of the country he was supposed to rule, though many, including King Hussein of Jordan, urged him to do so. In the end, the mullahs rose against him for his modernising methods and his army deserted him. A sad figure.

Life outside the office

Indian independence took place a month or so after my arrival. We still retained guards at the gate in uniforms of Indian *sawars* who, before the war, rode out as escort to the Ambassador whenever he went out. For another year, the India Office met half the Embassy's expenditure and maintained an officer of the Indian Political Service as Counsellor for Indian Affairs, Sir Clarmont Skrine, who had held posts on the North West Frontier.

It was he who encouraged the more adventurous of us to make full use of the trappings of Empire that still remained in the Embassy, in particular splendidly decorated large tents designed to house the *sahibs* comfortably on expeditions. We bachelors soon used them to establish a camp in the grounds of the Embassy's summer compound at Gulhek to which we moved with furniture and equipment to escape the heat in summer in our town house.

Iran is a good country for expeditions. It is mountainous almost throughout, like an upturned saucer, and the Caspian shore is a day's run from Tehran across the Elburz range, through which there is a tunnel. The conical Mount Demavend, 10,000ft, is a fine sight from Tehran.

I took part in frequent trips to the Caspian, and longer expeditions up towards the steppes of Asia and Turkoman country beyond Gurgan to a remarkable eleventh century mausoleum at Gunbad-i-Kavus, and to Hamadan, Dizful and Ahwaz, and to Isfahan and Shiraz many times. Every August,

the Embassy pitched a recreation camp in a remote valley of the Elburz, the Lar Valley, where the Iranian cavalry pastured their horses, which we were allowed to use. The only other inhabitants of the valley were a few local shepherds with their flocks. It could be reached only by hiring mules, at which Clarmont Skrine was fully experienced. Sadly, this Shangri-la has for long been threatened with inundation to create a vast reservoir. I hope never to hear that it has happened.

An elderly Iranian I met soon after arrival had been an officer in the South Persia Rifles and much admired British ways he had learnt then. He invited me to his farm outside Tehran and insisted I should ride regularly 'to keep healthy'. He sent one of his horses to the Embassy for me to ride. Before long he died in a London hospital, and Raksh stayed in the Embassy stables for the rest of his life. The groom gave that name after the horse of the Persian folk-hero Rostam. I rode him regularly and owe this unique experience to that South Persia Rifles officer.

In the more general sense, we had a glimpse of the upheaval that has acquired the title 'End of Empire'. British diplomatic action in forcing Iran to allow and support the supply line to the Soviet Union during the war was consistent with pre-war assumptions of strategic power. Some of us post-war diplomats in the late 1940s, while not condemning their predecessors to the extent that has now become fashionable, nevertheless tried to establish relations with individuals on a more equal and personal basis. This was not always easy, as many Persians were hesitant to reciprocate.

A lowly Persian Embassy employee was to receive a decoration from the Ambassador. Some of us conceived that he would be more at ease and enjoy the occasion more if the 'investiture' were free of stiffness and pomposity. Our outline suggestion never reached the Ambassador; it was returned to us with the verdict: 'No. After all this is a matter of some solemnity'.

We were probably naïve. Even fifty years later, embassies are widely assumed to be formal. And in Tehran then my own activity was mostly with expatriates, in theatricals and sport – rugby, music conducting the Toy Symphony at a soirée of Princess Asraf, (the Shah's twin sister), producing 'The Midsummer Nights Dream' with Persian rustics, mid-European lovers and me as a clumsy Oberon who fell on his face loudly at first entrance, and learning but never realising the male role in Dido and Aeneas in fulfilment of the wish of the Greek Ambassadress!

It must be obvious that I enjoyed Tehran in 1947 to 1951. I had invited my sister Dorothy to come out as secretary to the Ambassador for the last two years. She too enjoyed it and stayed on when I left, living with Charles and Peggy Inness, the Air Attaché. She came home with them when British subjects were advised to leave after the nationalisation of the oil company

Eastern Department, Foreign Office, 1951 - 1953

Posted back to the F.O in 1951, I was put in this department, which dealt with Iran. I lived first at home in Sidcup (49, Rectory Lane) until I was invited to become a Resident Clerk with Alan Rothnie and John Ford.

On the day I left Tehran the University was closed because the students had taken to the streets. I left thinking they were doing this to avoid some difficult exam. My political antennae were weak – they had begun the campaign for the nationalisation of AIOC; that was announced a few weeks after my arrival in London.

The consequence dominated Eastern Department from then on, but as in all crises in the F.O., the lowest level on the Third Desk (i.e. below Head of Department and Deputy Head) did not become involved in planning, which took place at the level of the Assistant Under Secretary working straight to Ministers. Alan Rothnie and I, sharing a room together, kept abreast as far as we could by keeping high-level papers in order after their use and monitoring external information that might be relevant.

But when nationalisation was announced, I was called as one recently in Iran to the initial meeting of senior officials. No one seemed to know what to do and I was taken aback at being asked for suggestions. All I could think of, with no experience of such a situation whatever, was to send a strong note of protest which I thought the Iranian Government would expect and respect. This made little impression but was accepted as a preliminary. Use of force was mentioned but it seemed unlikely the Labour Government would be keen on this only six years after the Second World War. But the lives of British subjects in the oil industry in Iran would have to be protected. This consideration led eventually to the despatch of a warship to the Shatt-al-Arab off Khorramshah but it was not involved in military hostility. It ensured the evacuation of non-essential persons from the oilfield and elsewhere, including my sister Dorothy.

Herbert Morrison who was Foreign Secretary at the time called in the Iranian Ambassador to deliver a protest. I was called in to interpret from his French. Morrison, who had nationalised much of British industry in his time, told Soheili: *'If you want to nationalise you should have looked to me for advice on how to do it'*. With a warning about the safety of British citizens, that was about the measure of the protest.

One 'new boy' with a fertile brain, Peter Ramsbotham in Eastern Department, began to be involved in the crisis about this time and stayed with it throughout, becoming right hand man of all ministers involved in it.

I was the FO representative on a Treasury-led Working Group that began to construct a series of scenarios for possible solutions that became known as the Five (or was it Six?) Red Herrings. It was an interesting insight into how Whitehall chooses to work. The FO had little input because few there took much account of Iran's extreme ambitions. Neither did the rest of Whitehall. Representatives of the Ministry of Fuel and Power, the Board of Trade and of the oil companies met each week to contribute fresh ideas about how to get the Iranian oil industry back under UK control. My recollection was that the ultimate solution, Iranian ownership but international operation on behalf of Iran, was far more draconian than any Red Herring we devised. That model resulted from discussion with USA.

In February 1952 the FO felt that the Americans were pressing us too hard. Peter Ramsbotham, working with Roger Makins, suggested I should go over to Washington to 'mash and mull' over the problem with the objective of slowing down their planning. I was to keep talking to Paul Nitze, their super-active planner at the State Department. When I arrived, I learnt that we had crossed in the air as he went to London to increase the pressure. Bernard Burrows was the Head of Chancery. He tried to make some use of my visit without much success. Thus it was that in his house I learnt of the death of King George VI. I have always worn at memorial services since the knitted black tie I went out to buy in consequence.⁷

American involvement in what we saw as a British problem was an early sign of the major role in world affairs that the US has been determined to play since the 1939-45 war. Before that war, the US had opted for isolation within the borders of the American sub-continent based on the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 excluding foreign powers from that area, and this came to mean also that the US would not become involved in European 'colonial' problems. They did enter the 1914-18 war in 1917, and the 1939-45 war in 1941, when the Japanese attacked the US Fleet at Pearl Harbour. President Roosevelt played a leading role with Churchill in mounting and planning the strategy that defeated Germany and Japan with General Eisenhower at the head.

That American policy would remain involved in world affairs after the war was not expected in Whitehall, and was not welcomed. It was thought sufficient to send me to Washington to 'mash and mull' without any brief on how US concern over the nationalisation of Iranian oil could be

diminished. I was to keep talking about my view of the political and social situation in Iran. But the State Department simultaneously sent their bright planner to London with a whole quiver of ideas for a new arrangement for the oil industry.

There was another reason why this pressure was not welcome. The granting of independence to countries of the British Empire was regarded by some British with regret but by others with pride, particularly the granting of independence to India, and Whitehall saw it as the beginning of a new relationship to be expressed in the British Commonwealth. But the Americans, always proud of their achievement of independence, did not hesitate to adopt the ending of all 'colonialism' as a declared aim of their post-war foreign policy.

Signs of its application were not lacking. In Iran, US oil experts like Max Thornberg were offering their services as consultants to the Iranian Government from the beginning of the crisis, and were being supported by the US Embassy. It was hardly surprising that Whitehall was reluctant to bring American thinking into the search for a solution. US pressure continued, however, and influenced the shape of the new arrangement.

Five years later, the attempt to settle the problem of the nationalisation of the Suez Canal without US support rubbed home the lesson. The US is now in 1998 recognised as the sole super power. With hindsight, we can now see that was beginning in the Abadan oil crisis of 1951

Resident Clerk

At about this time, I began a spell as Resident Clerk. Three bachelors were given a bedroom and a common room on the top floor of the corner of the F.O building overlooking St James Park and the Horse Guards Parade. In turn they acted as duty officer out of office hours (then 9.30 to 5 or 6) and at weekends, which then meant on Saturday afternoon and Sunday – there was normal working on Saturday morning.

Selected telegrams were sent to the Resident Clerk by pneumatic tube for his decision on whether they called for immediate action. We had the home numbers of all FO senior staff. We were also the link out of hours between FO Ministers or the Prime Minister and the Office. The duties have now increased to the point where a much larger number are needed and permanent accommodation is no longer provided. In our time we employed a housekeeper who had her own room in the tower

⁷ In those days, officials and others at their discretion, observed mourning for royalty for a couple of weeks.

and who provided us with meals. While Ruthven Hall was dining with us one evening as Zaida his wife was in a nursing home, news came that Richard had been born.

A resident clerk can be called upon to handle all sorts of situations. At that time, passports often had to be produced to shops under the rationing system. More than once I had people asking for help, and would give them a piece of Foreign Office notepaper, impressively stamped, with the text: *The bearer came to me and said he had left his passport at Harrods and needs to go abroad urgently. The appropriate authorities are requested to give him all proper assistance.* There was of course no authority for this, but it echoed distantly the resounding wording then included in every British passport: *His Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Requests and requires in the name of His Majesty all those whom it may concern to allow the bearer to pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford the bearer such assistance and protection as may be necessary.* I was told my paper worked better than a passport.

A call was put through to me one weekend from Canada. The caller insisted on speaking to the Foreign Secretary to obtain a message of greeting from him to a celebration of the Queen's accession. I judged he was not available for this but promised to ring back with a message. This I drafted using phraseology much used in Private Offices: *Mr Eden would wish (i.e. if he ever knew) to convey to the gathering his congratulations on their initiative and to send his warm greetings to all those present on this important occasion.* Thanks to Eden came back to me later from Canada, and also from Eden himself!

There was often contact by telephone with Eden, always a 'hands on' Minister. During the final phase of the Canal negotiations he was on to me for news of progress every hour or so throughout the evening and until four in the morning. Next morning, after I had gone to a late bed, he was back again at seven, beginning with his customary effusiveness: *'Do tell me I have not woken you up!'* What a hope! – I could only remember Wotton and lie.

On another occasion, quick thinking was needed. One of our telephones had a long cord enabling us to carry it up to the roof of the Office where we could sunbathe. I was doing so on a fine and peaceful weekend with Eden abroad – probably in the Cato Clinic in Boston – Nutting, the Under Secretary away negotiating withdrawal from the Suez Canal Zone and Winston Churchill in charge of the Office. I was dozing when Churchill himself was on the line: - *what was the news?* I had of course brought with me all the important telegrams and was able to read to him one from Nutting. He interrupted to ask some other question when a gust of wind blew the telegram from my hand and carried it out of reach. I saw it likely to be blown by the next gust over the roof into Whitehall and

was desperate to retrieve it. Sure enough came the question: *'and what does the rest of that telegram say?* I could only make up the briefest summary from memory, and luckily escaped further questioning before rescuing the document just in time. Thereafter I always took up a paperweight.

The Coronation

Some ten days before the Queen's Coronation in 1952 I was nominated by the FO to be a Gentleman In Attendance on the Representative of Bolivia, the earlier nominee having fallen ill. There were two to each delegation, to shepherd them around during the week and to entertain them as may be necessary. It was the Lord Chamberlain's instruction that, as there would be room in the Abbey for only one Gentleman of each delegation, it was his wish that the younger of the two should have that experience since it was likely that the older would be familiar with such proceedings and it was hoped that it would be a long time before another Coronation. My partner was a much older man from Wiltshire, who lost no time in telling me that he had never had such an experience and certainly intended to accompany the delegation in the Abbey. I with the rest of the delegation was given seats on a stand in the grounds of Marlborough House to watch the procession.

We were to wear diplomatic uniform, a rare event in this country. One evening driving to a reception at Buckingham Palace the chauffeurs of the official cars had put the internal lights on. Hernan Silez Zuazo, Vice-President of Bolivia and leader of the delegation, beside me in drab mufti, seemed embarrassed by the cheers of the crowds in the Mall as we passed, and said to me: *'They think you are me and I am you – better no lights'*.

Kuwait as Assistant Political Officer, August 1954 – 1955

Posts in the (Persian) Gulf had been taken over by the FO in 1948 from the Indian Government that had established them throughout history as a means of protecting its western flank. Just as officers of the Indian Political Service had exerted that government's influence over the local rulers of the Indian States, so Political Agents from that service were accredited to the rulers, many of them tribal chiefs, along the Gulf. As most of the trade was with India, this had advantage to the local rulers who were by and large content to leave external matters to the Political Agents, who thus came to have control of foreign affairs and the behaviour of non-Muslims living in the State. A Senior Officer came to be appointed as Political Resident at Bahrain with responsibility for relations

of the States with Iran` (initially stationed at Bushire) and who had thus oversight of all Political Agents in the Gulf. This continued under the FO until independence in 1961.

When I arrived in Kuwait, the State was beginning to enjoy the wealth of a newly created oil industry owned jointly by British Petroleum and Gulf Oil. The original tribal base, clustered around the Ruler's Palace with the Political Agent's house beside it, and the old port, was still surrounded by a town wall of mud with two gates, one to the east and one to the west, with wooden doors to be closed at night. This was not an ancient construction, having been thrown up hastily in the face of a threat from Saudi Arabia in the early 1920s.

The atmosphere of this walled town had hardly changed by the time I arrived, though the doors of the gates were no longer closed and all traffic drove through them. But incongruously there were a couple of schools and a hospital of highly advanced design built by British architects and constructional contractors with proceeds from oil production. Bizarre attempts had been made to combine modern with local traditional by the lavish use of coloured tiles.

The Ruler, Sheikh Abdulla Salim headed a family of sheikhs, the Al Sabah, who had all power in their hands. He was a shrewd, even a wise, man whose main philosophy seemed to be 'never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you'. Noel Pelly the Political Agent, with long service in the Gulf, seemed happy to go along with this. It was the basis on which the Gulf had been run for generations. Tribal tradition was still to be seen. Beyond the wall, young sheikhs hunted deer and bustard ('hubara'), albeit in jeeps, among the black tents of the desert bedouin, and as Assistant Political Agent I was occasionally presented with a freshly shot hare or hubara. One of Pelly's predecessors, Col. Dickson, still lived in a house on the waterfront built for him by the ruling family and held court as a legendary figure on Arab customs. When I called on him, his advice was: *'always remember the bedu'*, the desert tribesman.

This was of little help in application to the two main problems which we faced, the future of the oil industry and the monopoly that the British contractors had exercised. The latter was the most pressing. They had been able to corner all the contracts for development, the awarding of which were in the hands of a Director of Development, a retired British military engineer. The Five British Contractors, Costain, Laing, William Press, Halcrow and McAlpine, found their monopoly challenged by some of the younger sheikhs who saw the prospect of getting for themselves a larger share of oil revenues if contracts could be awarded outside the consortium, usually to non-British, often Lebanese contractors. The position was untenable. The Director's time came to an end and a more liberal system was introduced to the extreme annoyance of the five who expected the British

Agency to adopt a narrow interpretation of British interests. And it has to be said that the opening up of planning did result in delays and to inefficiency that the five claimed they would have avoided. But insistence in preserving an essentially colonial system was impracticable in the face of claims for its reform.⁸

Meanwhile, the introduction of the 50:50 split of profits on oil in Saudi Arabia, and nationalisation in Iran had put pressure on the British company, Kuwait Oil, for revision of their agreement and British Petroleum, partners with Gulf Oil in Kuwait extraction, were involved in negotiation with the Ruler himself, who relied on the Saudis for advice, in which no doubt the Americans had input. Max Thornburg was reported in the area, and while acting as Political Agent in Pelly's absence on leave, I was asked to receive a courtesy call from John Paul Getty. Reported to be the richest man in the world at that time, I found him taciturn, cautious and generally unimpressive.

These and similar matters were discussed at regular meetings between the Ruler and Pelly at each other's request. They spoke Arabic, which Pelly knew well, and the Ruler had no English. I was occasionally present, and Pelly was always accompanied by the Agency interpreter of long service and known incongruously as Israel by all. The tone was always gentle and cautious, rather like two MCC members discussing the prospects of the next test match. Occasionally, Bernard Burrows, the Political Resident, would come from Bahrain and apply pressure on the Ruler to take a decision, but this rarely proved productive. 'Allah is great and He will decide'.

Pelly retired in 1955 and was replaced by Gawain Bell, with experience from the Sudan Service and Cairo, and as Governor of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria. He was a younger man and a more subtly effective operator, who was able to make somewhat quicker progress on matters the importance of which the Ruler could not ignore, leading ultimately to independence in 1961.

John Moberly as Political Officer, Peter Reilly of the UK Treasury (watching their interests in view of the importance of Kuwait's membership of the Sterling Area) and I were aware of the need to have contact with the younger sheikhs and with the few others who aspired to influence affairs. In particular we struck up a certain friendship with Sabah al Salim, a wily and amusing Chief of Police at the time and destined as things turned out to succeed the Ruler. We cannot claim prescience for this, nor for getting to know at the same time Salim's successor Jabr al Ahmad, the ruler throughout the 90s. We promoted a visit to the UK for him, and when he returned in 1955 with a skin-diving outfit he asked John and me to his seaside Palace to show him how to use it. As neither of us had

⁸ The French have however managed to preserve much of similar advantage in their colonial empire in Africa. In France, the colonial record is not seen by the public as anything to regret, or if it is the government is not moved.

any experience, we confined ourselves to reading the instructions and showing we could put our heads under water and survive. I would be surprised if he ever used it.

We were aware that Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser was encouraging Arab nationalism in the Gulf including Kuwait. Teachers were sent to the schools. Egyptian radio was strident and much listened to. Some of the younger sheikhs were interested in the concept of an Arab identity; the older saw threat to the family's position. More volatile was the large Palestinian population who, as refugees from Palestine after the creation of Israel in 1948, had settled in Kuwait and, with a smaller Indian element, filled all the administrative and skilled jobs but were given no hope of permanent citizenship, reserved for native-born Kuwaitis. No Palestinian could hope for any position of responsibility.

There was an exception at the top of the Ministry of Education where, under an elderly member of the family who acted only as nominal head, a young Kuwaiti showed great ability and with him we were able to discuss things freely. Otherwise, all our contacts were with the al Sabah family.

Capitulations applied, that is the Political Agent had jurisdiction over all non-Muslims in Kuwait. Pelly, Moberly and I were judges in the Agency Court. We were advised by a qualified judge, Judge Haines, in Bahrain who also devised rules of procedure. We were concerned mostly with births marriages and deaths, though there were minor cases of offences by Indians or Iranians. Though I had a vocabulary limited to food, I was considered the Persian speaker. I was alarmed when a Lebanese Christian whose marriage I had conducted was later found to have as a Muslim married the same bride in Kuwait. The penalty for purporting to exercise jurisdiction over a Muslim was four years in a Kuwait prison. The man recognised that he also was in jeopardy and the truth was never revealed.

The Agency had a launch with a boatman that we were able to use for trips in the Gulf, to the Ruler's island Failakah and for marvellous snorkelling⁹.

John Moberly and I went north by vehicle to see how the frontier with Iraq was defined. In about 1910 a British engineer had established it as lying "200 yards to the north of the last palm tree beyond the settlement of Safwan". We found no marking, and the 1910 definition had made no allowance for subsequent building or seeding. Bedouin tribes have never accepted that boundaries

⁹ I am convinced I saw a dozen young cuttle fish scurry for protection under their mother as I swam over them. But do fish brood?

should separate them from their grazing grounds established by tradition, and Arab states know what trouble well defined state boundaries can cause. *'Don't forget the bedu'*.

We visited Bahrain, and I made a short visit to Tehran and the Caspian, and with John to Jerusalem at Easter 1955. I took two week's leave in 1954 to visit my wartime friends, Anne and Paul Peatling, in Kenya where they were farming coffee. This was towards the end of the Mau Mau terrorism revolt.

I have never returned to Kuwait and could scarcely believe that it had become the sprawling agglomeration invaded by Iraq in 1960.

Assistant Private Secretary, FO, 1956-1958

This was an appointment packed with interest, and one I least expected or even contemplated.

The four members of the Diplomatic Service appointed to the Private Office form together a permanent link between the Foreign Secretary and the rest of the Office at all levels. They are the Principal Private Secretary,¹⁰ two assistants (of whom I was the senior) and the Diary Secretary. They handle the flow of papers to and from the Minister, arrange his appointments and take records. They have no personal responsibility for policy, though as they spend a great deal of time with the Minister they can find themselves expected to respond when the Minister needs someone to sharpen his thoughts and the appropriate official is not at hand. The Principal Private secretary is usually a promising young officer of around 40, often with experience in what was called 'the inner circle', the more important embassies.

I was appointed at the end of 1955 while Harold Macmillan was the Minister, but by the time I reached London he had moved to be Chancellor of the Exchequer and Selwyn Lloyd had taken his place. He was a protégé of Anthony Eden and always recognised that his appointment meant that Eden intended to run his own foreign policy with Lloyd as his agent. Lloyd often said that he was promoted before his time.

Lloyd was very different from Macmillan and I probably got on better with him than I would have done with his predecessor, the archetype patrician. Lloyd came from a Methodist family from the Wirral, was faithful to his upbringing and hesitant in personal relationships. As a boy, he enjoyed using his large collection of lead soldiers to re-enact historic battles, which must have contributed to

his success as a Brigadier, General Staff, under Montgomery. He trained as a barrister but had become interested in politics since his time at Magdalen, Cambridge, first as a Liberal.

His biographer has recorded that when on a midnight bathe with other young in Wales, one of them enthused: *'Isn't this romantic, swimming in the ocean by moonlight'* to which Selwyn instantly replied *'You are five feet off Criccieth seafront and it's a street lamp'*. He was embarrassed by pretension or pomp and even when dressed up as Speaker he referred to his robes as his Little Lord Fauntleroy suit.

As he was not given to show appreciation freely, FO officials found him boorish, in contrast to their experience of the suave Macmillan and the effusive if highly strung Eden. As officials must necessarily exercise some restraint in deference to the authority of Ministers, a gulf arises if Ministers are not fully at ease with them.

The importance of this in the context of the Private Office soon was apparent. The Principal Private Secretary, a highly sophisticated and able diplomat was thoroughly in tune with Macmillan but could never come to terms with Lloyd's manner. Nor could Lloyd understand him. Three months into Lloyd's tenure I was asked my opinion and had to say that chalk and cheese could never work together in this position. The enquiry came from the Deputy Under Secretary and I do not believe Lloyd instigated it. A change was made to no-one's detriment. Soon after Selwyn volunteered that he was happy with me as a Private Secretary but was not entirely sure about my judgment. I had no hesitation in replying that I understood that and had had no expectation of getting the top job. I could only conclude that this had been proposed to him and that he felt he had to offer me an explanation. I had certainly not aspired to the job.

I got on well with him and being the one bachelor among the three I became more involved than the others in his personal affairs.

The crisis over the nationalisation of the Suez Canal was to dominate 1956. I have little recollection of other matters that kept us busy. There were State visits of the King of Iraq and of the King of the Belgians, when it fell to the Private Secretaries to stage manage the traditional reception given by the Foreign Secretary attended by the Queen and other members of the Royal Family in Lancaster House. This and other matters involved us in contact with the Private Secretaries at Buckingham Palace. Often we had to be on hand in the Foreign Secretary's room and sometimes the Prime Minister's room in the House of Commons, and during Foreign Affairs debates in the officials' box

¹⁰ The 'PPS', Parliamentary Private Secretary, is a back bench MP acting as a Minister's link with MPs

in the Commons behind the Chair on the Government side. As Eden had no intention of using Chequers, it was made available to Lloyd, and we became familiar with it.

I have a vivid memory of waiting for Lloyd in his car at the main entrance to the Palace when the only other presence in the Quadrangle was a State coach and horses, and grooms all in traditional livery – a magnificent and otherworldly sight.

I accompanied Selwyn on a visit to the Pope. Selwyn thought my bow was very Presbyterian. With Lloyd on a visit to Washington, I also spent a weekend at Camp David, the US President's country seat.

Suez crisis

Concern about the policies of Gamal Abdel Nasser led Lloyd to get Eden to approve an attempt to make his own assessment of Nasser and the prospects of an accommodation with him. This began with a visit to Washington to compare notes with the US, and then a tour of the Middle East early in March. After a stopover in Rome, we visited Egypt, Bahrain, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Israel and Libya, ten countries in nineteen days. It was while Lloyd was dining with Nasser that news came of the dismissal of General Glubb, the British adviser to King Hussein in Jordan and regarded as the pivot of British influence there. There was now no hope that Eden would tolerate Nasser whom he and many others blamed, not necessarily correctly, for this blow. To inform Lloyd would certainly distract him from his purpose at the dinner, but not to do so could have been damaging to the trust he had in us, so we sent a copy of the telegram to the Deputy Under Secretary who was already at table with Selwyn and Nasser, and who put it in his pocket until they were on the way back to the Embassy.¹¹

The set-back in Jordan conditioned Eden's handling of the crisis resulting from the nationalisation of the Suez Canal five months later and it was this that dominated our activity. From the Private Office we could see how Eden relied on a chosen group of Ministers including Lloyd but ignoring FO advice which he knew would be sympathetic to the broad Arab cause (which he had supported earlier in his career). It is all well documented, particularly by Keith Kyle,¹²

¹¹ It was on this hectic trip that Selwyn asked me in Tehran to pack his bags for him. In Baghdad at four in the following morning in a house in the outskirts of Baghdad where I was lodged, the phone rang persistently and in the end I felt I had to answer it. Selwyn was on the line – *where are my keys?* They were in my pocket. My apologies next morning were heard with a frown of mild and forgotten inconvenience

¹² 'Suez 1956', Keith Kyle, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991 is the definitive study. Also of interest is 'Whitehall and the Suez Crisis', ISBN 0 7146 5018 8 published by Frank Cass for *Contemporary British History*, 1999, though it is exceedingly generous about my role.

It happened that uniquely I was privy to one aspect of this affair that came to be known as 'collusion' and led, together with his health, to Eden's downfall. To conform to Civil Service rules, I kept it to myself for thirty years, and on the thirtieth anniversary sat down and wrote the following account.

SUEZ

MEETINGS AT SEVRES

22 - 25 OCTOBER 1956

NARRATIVE

DONALD LOGAN

(24 October 1986)¹³

I was appointed Assistant Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs late in 1955, and took up the post in January 1956, a few weeks after Selwyn Lloyd had become Foreign Secretary. It is an appointment that provides a close view of British Ministers at work on international problems, without much involvement in their substance since the main function of the Private Office is to serve the Minister by relieving him of routine work. As I was a bachelor at that time, Selwyn tended to call me for help with his personal affairs and in this way I got to know him and his personality well. I left the Private Office in 1958 on posting to Washington, after which I saw him only occasionally until in 1976 he asked me to help him in his research in preparation for his book "Suez 1956". I was allowed to accompany him to the Foreign Office Library to consult the records of the period. He wrote the book himself, completing it just

¹³ Original text retyped 2002 with slight grammatical changes and some additional footnotes

before becoming fatally ill, and before he died he asked me to deliver the text to the publishers and see it through printing.

In the Foreign Office Records Department was a room in which all Selwyn Lloyd's copies of his official papers were available to us. We worked mainly on these but also had access to the main Foreign Office archives of the period. After his death I asked the Department to arrange for his collection to be examined and to incorporate in the archives any of his papers not already in them - I doubted there would be many - and to dispose of the remainder.

Selwyn Lloyd was a great collector of papers. His garage at his home at Hoylake in the Wirral was full of boxes and files of personal correspondence, speeches, bills. He asked me to assist in disposing of them on his death. I went through them to trace any official papers that may have found their way there. I found perhaps a dozen, not all related to the Suez affair and returned these to the FCO. The remainder were I understand sent to Churchill College by his family.

On taking office, Selwyn Lloyd asked Anthony Eden, the Prime Minister, to allow him to make an extended tour of the Middle East, including a visit to Gamal Abdul Nasser, President of Egypt, to see whether there was a possibility of coming to terms with him. While he was at dinner with Nasser a telegram arrived at the Cairo Embassy with the news of the dismissal of General Glubb, the British Commander of the Arab Legion in Jordan. The Principal Private Secretary, Patrick Hancock, and I thought for a moment of keeping this to ourselves until the morning to give Lloyd the opportunity to size Nasser up without having to assess this development at the same time, but we then remembered that the Prime Minister would already have read the telegram and would be most unlikely to accept Selwyn's assessment if it were made in ignorance of Glubb's dismissal. So we sent a copy of the telegram to the Palace for him. In the event they were already at table and it got no further than Harold Caccia who was with Selwyn until the meal was over. It was not a fortunate tour. In Bahrain a few

stones were thrown at us in a demonstration that certainly had some domestic origin but which was attributed to the effect of Egyptian propaganda.

In April came the unprecedented visit to Britain of top Soviet leaders, Bulganin and Khrushchev, and I accompanied Selwyn Lloyd when he took them on a visit to Oxford, and when at the end he escorted them on board the Soviet cruiser Ordjonikhidze at Portsmouth. It was noticeable that whereas during the visit Khrushchev the Party Secretary and Bulganin the President seemed to treat each other as equal, as soon as they were on board their own ship Khrushchev immediately assumed precedence. The atmosphere was correct rather than friendly; the previous day the Evening Standard had headlined that Commander Crabbe was missing after what appeared to be a submarine intelligence operation against the cruiser.

All the time the main concern was over the Middle East. Nasser's propaganda led Britain and the US to let the International Bank project for aid in building the Aswan Dam 'wither on the vine'. They were discussing how to intimate this to the Egyptians when the State Department felt they had to announce the decision immediately on 19 July.

The 26 July was an eventful day. The Italian liner Andrea Doria, on which Selwyn had booked a holiday cruise, sank. His dog was ill. Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal. I spent most of the day with the vet. My direct involvement in the ensuing Suez crisis was confined to the period from 22 to 25 October 1956. Before that I had accompanied Lloyd to conference in London and to New York but not as an adviser. After that period I was a close observer of the parliamentary debates that continued to the end of the year.

On 20 October 1956, Selwyn Lloyd had a speaking engagement in Liverpool and asked me to accompany him to handle any official communications that might arise during the weekend. Around the

middle of the day on Sunday 21 October he received a telephone call from the Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, as a result of which we returned immediately to London. Selwyn asked me to prepare to accompany him secretly to Paris next day and to make my own private car available for the journey to the airport.

On Monday 22 October at around 10am I drove him to Hendon airfield where an RAF aircraft was ready to take us to Villacoublay military airfield near Paris. On the way he told me that we were to meet French and Israeli Ministers to discuss military action against Egypt. I already knew that French emissaries, Albert Gazier and General Challe, had met the Prime Minister at Chequers on 14 October but knew nothing of their purpose, nor of the substance of the meeting between British and French Ministers in Paris on 16 October.

On arrival at Villacoublay we were met by a French officer who drove us at some speed to a villa in Sèvres, on the way just missing another car at a cross-roads and setting me thinking how the secrecy of our mission could be preserved if at the next turning we were less lucky. I reminded Selwyn of this when he was writing his book; it certainly had no effect on his attitude at the meeting. The villa was in rue Emanuel Girot and belonged, as it still does - to the Bonnier de la Chapelle family, a young member of which had shot Amiral Darlan in Algiers in 1942 and was summarily executed. The villa had been used by Maurice Bourges Manoury as a Resistance base.

We arrived at the villa at about 4pm. Christian Pineau, the French Foreign Minister, received us and briefed us shortly on what he had been discussing with Israeli Ministers earlier in the day. We then went straight in to meet them. There was no question of having to be persuaded to do so, as has once been suggested.

I remember meeting in the room Guy Mollet, the French Premier, Maurice Bourges Manoury, French Minister of Defence, David Ben-

Gurion, the Israeli Prime Minister, General Moshe Dayan, Chief of Staff and Shimon Perez, Director General of the Israeli Minister of Defence. At some time I must have met Abdel Thomas of the French Ministry of Defence and possibly also General Challe, but I cannot now recall whether they were present at the discussions. My recollection is that there were only about eight or ten people present and I felt some surprise at finding myself, a fairly junior official, swept into such a gathering.

The discussion proceeded in English. I took no notes and neither did Selwyn Lloyd. Subsequently, as various accounts have appeared, I have noted what seemed to my recollection to be accurate and also what seemed to me erroneous. It is my belief that everything that happened can be found in what has already been published if one knows where to look and what to discard.

I remember Ben-Gurion proposing that the three governments ought to concert their policies to form some sort of grand design for the Middle East. It was then only some eight years since Britain had been forced by the Zionist campaign for statehood to abandon Palestine and withdraw British forces with difficulty, and with Britain still having close ties with Arab states strongly opposed to Israel such a proposition was audacious indeed. Selwyn Lloyd ignored it. He explained that he had come to discuss the actions each of the three governments might take if Israel attacked Egypt. He recalled that only a little more than a week before he had worked with the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Fawzi, and the UN Secretary General, Hammarskjold, and had seemed to make progress towards a solution of the problem of the Canal except on international control. Important sections of public opinion in Britain, in some Commonwealth countries and in particular in Scandinavia set much store by a peaceful solution. Military action against Egypt by the three powers would be opposed at the UN.

But there might be no solution the problem of the Canal without the use of force to restore international control. British forces

had been mobilised for this purpose and could not be held in a state of alert much longer. If Israel were to open an attack against Egypt, British forces would, as had been suggested, take the opportunity with the French to seize the Canal, but the basis of their action must be to intervene to separate the forces and thus avert a threat which Israeli actions would pose to the Canal, its installations and the traffic through it. Egypt and Israel would be called upon to cease hostilities within twenty-four hours. Israel would have no difficulty in complying, but if Nasser did so his position would be weakened. In any case, British-French forces would regain the Canal. Britain no longer felt any obligation to Egypt under the Tripartite Declaration. But Britain would honour her obligations to Jordan if she were to be attacked by Israel

Ben-Gurion did not like this reasoning. Israel was being asked to solve Britain's and France's problems by accepting the opprobrium of aggression followed by the ignominy of accepting an ultimatum. Responsibility should be shared equally. I think it may have been the French who suggested that the word ultimatum should be dropped; thereafter it was called an 'appel' or call. When Lloyd again rejected a joint attack on Egypt, this time mentioning the damage it would do to relations with Arab countries such as Jordan and Iraq, Ben-Gurion's concern seemed to switch to practical matters. He greatly feared that the Egyptian Air Force equipped with Soviet aircraft would bomb Tel Aviv within hours of an attack and before British French forces were in action. There would be panic in Israel and it might not be possible to sustain the action. This led to a discussion, in which Dayan and the French joined, of the timing of the "appel" to the two forces and of action to immobilise the Egyptian bombers by the RAF who were best placed to do so. It seemed to have been assumed in earlier discussions that the RAF would accept this task but would not act until forty-eight or even seventy-two hours after the outbreak of hostilities. Lloyd was pressed to reduce the delay to thirty-six hours. There was then discussion of how quickly the Israeli attack would develop to constitute a sufficient threat to the

Canal to justify the call to cease-fire, after which some time must be given before it could be assumed that it had been rejected and before the RAF could act. Dayan refused to describe the scale of the attack he had in mind, and said merely that we need not worry on that score. Ben-Gurion looked depressed. The French tried to keep the talk going.

There was a break for dinner, and when alone for a moment Lloyd asked me what I thought of it all. I had just returned from a posting in Kuwait - how would the Arabs react? I replied that they would be astonished at what we were proposing to do, but they might come to accept it provided we got it over quickly. The established régimes in the Gulf and elsewhere would be secretly pleased if we managed to topple Nasser. I sensed from his question and from the way he had spoken at the meeting that he disliked the plan and the role that he had been called upon to play in it. I was not proud of my response but I was under no illusion that any other would have made any difference. It had become apparent to me that much of the detail had already been discussed between the French and the Israelis and between French and British Ministers.

Throughout the dinner Selwyn was thoughtful and I had to carry much of the British side of the conversation, which - if only for that reason - did not address the substance. I was invited to explain the role of the Private Secretary - the Israelis may have thought that the title was a cover for something different. Dayan in his book "The Story of my Life"¹⁴ quotes me as warning against any Israeli intention to occupy Sinai permanently. I have no recollection of that but it would have reflected suspicion of Israeli expansionism at the time. I certainly had no idea that anything I said could have been useful to him in persuading Ben Gurion towards his plan in the way he describes.

¹⁴ Moshe Dayan, 'Story of My Life' Weidenfeld and Nicholson, p150

After dinner, the talks resumed to go over much the same ground as before. Lloyd could not agree that night to advance the attack on the Egyptian Air Force but he undertook to report to Cabinet and would hope to reply the next day. We left close on midnight to return to London.

Next morning, 23 October, it became clear that it would not be possible to give a definite reply from Cabinet that day and about mid-morning Lloyd instructed me to return alone to explain. I telephoned to Abel Thomas at the French Ministry of Defence to inform him of my flight, again by RAF, but on arrival at Villacoublay there was no-one to meet me and as the Embassy knew nothing of the meetings I was stranded for several hours before I was collected and taken to Pineau's office in the Quai d'Orsay. He told me he was about to leave for London to see the Prime Minister. I got the impression that he felt that he would get an answer more quickly by discussion with Anthony Eden than through the intermediary of Selwyn Lloyd.¹⁵ He suggested I should return with him and after releasing my aircraft still at Villacoublay I did, but there was clearly a problem ahead at London Airport if I were to be seen arriving in his company. Fortunately it was already dark and I was able to avoid the flash cameras by keeping close behind the Principal Private Secretary, Denis Laskey, who had come to meet Pineau, and then merging with the welcoming party. I accompanied Pineau to meet Lloyd at 2 Carlton Gardens and then left them. They dined together and went to see the Prime Minister later that evening.

Next morning, 24 October, Patrick Dean, Assistant Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office was called early to No 10 Downing Street where he was instructed by the Prime Minister to go to Paris to continue the discussion. In a briefing of about fifteen minutes Eden said that the French and the Israelis shared his opinion that Nasser intended to inflict great damage in the Middle East and it might be necessary for the three countries to take action if the

Canal were further threatened by Nasser or as a result of hostilities between Israel and Egypt. British forces might have to intervene but only if there was a clear military threat to the Canal and Israeli forces advanced towards the Canal. After a public warning British and French forces would then intervene between the Israelis and the Egyptians to ensure the safety of the Canal. Discussions had taken place on these lines and it must now be made absolutely clear before final decisions were taken that British forces would not move unless the Israelis had advanced beyond their frontiers against Egypt and there was a clear military threat to the Canal.¹⁶

Patrick Dean at that point knew nothing of the contacts earlier in the week. He was not involved in the detailed planning mechanism. He knew that French and British Ministers had met in Paris on 16 October but nothing of the substance of their discussion. The scenario Eden had sketched out was new to him. He went first to see the Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, who while showing little enthusiasm said Dean must carry on the mission with which he had been charged, but should first see the Foreign Secretary. This he did and Lloyd told him I was to accompany him.

We left soon after 10am for Hendon airfield and on the way I told him what had taken place on the two previous days. We were met at Villacoublay by General Challe and taken to lunch in a restaurant on the way to Sèvres where we arrived at about 4pm. There we met the same French and Israeli teams. Dean handed over a letter from Lloyd emphasising that Britain had not asked the Israelis to take any action: it was merely a question of stating what reactions would be if certain things happened.

I cannot recall that the time that would elapse before RAF action was raised on this occasion, and it seems probable that Pineau had

¹⁵ Dayan, *ibid* says (p.28) that he took with him the framework of the plan, which Dayan had drawn up. Mordechai Bar-On told the author in November 1995 that this was the base for the document to emerge from these meetings.

¹⁶ Taken with permission from the personal record of Patrick Dean

obtained a satisfactory answer from the Prime Minister. It did not figure in our brief. We pressed Dayan hard for assurance that the Israelis understood that unless their military action posed a threat to the Canal, British forces would not act. It did not come easily. The Israelis did not conceal that their main objective would be Sharm es-Shaikh on the Straits of Tiran to enable them to maintain passage for their ships to the port of Aqaba. We emphasised that a move in that direction would not pose a threat to the Canal. Eventually sketch-maps were made and we were assured that there would be military activity in the region of the Mitla Pass. More than that we could not get, but the Mitla Pass being reasonably close to the Canal we concluded that the Israelis sufficiently understood the British position though they remained suspicious of our intentions.

There followed a somewhat desultory recapitulation of issues already discussed during the week that did not clarify the intentions of the three parties any further and raised no new issues. Then the French introduced a document in three identical copies on plain paper that had just been typed in French in the neighbouring room. It summarised the actions and reactions of the three states as they had been discussed during the week. It began by saying that the Israelis would launch a large-scale attack on 29 October with the intention of reaching the Canal the following day. This seemed to confirm that the Israelis had understood what would be necessary before British forces became involved. The nature and timing of the "appel" to be issued was set out in the terms discussed. It was noted that Israel would proceed to occupy the west coast of the Gulf of Aqaba and the islands of Tiran and Sanafir. Israel would not attack Jordan during the hostilities but if Jordan attacked Israel at that time Britain would not come to her aid.

We were asked to sign each copy of the document. This was the first time that any mention had been made of setting down what had been discussed. Patrick Dean asked me whether it was in order to sign. I said the document seemed to me accurate, and also useful

in recording the precision which we had been sent to obtain, and could be signed as such. To refuse to sign a summary to which we could not take exception would increase suspicion of our intentions in an exploit to which the Prime minister seemed wedded. Dean signed, making clear tht he did so *ad referendum*. The other two delegations also signed, and we each retained one copy. I think champagne was produced but there was little sparkle in the atmosphere and Patrick and I soon took our leave to return via Villacoublay. In the air the stars shone as brightly as I have ever seen them. It seemed wholly incongruous

Dean reported to the Prime Minister at about 10.30 that evening. When the document was handed to him, Eden seemed taken aback. Though he was satisfied with its contents, he had not expected a written record and seemed to think we should have realised this.

On the following day, 25 October, we were instructed by the Prime Minister to return to Paris to ask the French to destroy their copy of the document. At the Quai d'Orsay we presented the Prime Minister's request to Pineau who received it rather coldly and questioned the need and the advisability of such action. He pointed out that the Israelis had returned to Israel with their copy the previous evening. He would give us a full answer later. We were then taken to what ten years later I was to know as the Quai's grand reception suite of rooms and left on our own. Later we found that the doors had been locked - an unpleasant discovery, but perhaps justified to prevent our presence becoming accidentally known to diplomats at the Quai. We stayed there for several hours without any lunch and with nothing to drink. Eventually at about 4pm we were taken to see Pineau again. The French Government would not accept the Prime Minister's proposal, partly because the Israelis had their copy with them and partly because the French saw no reason to destroy it. We returned to London and Dean reported to the Prime Minister. Next day the Private Office at the Foreign Office were told by 10 Downing Street to send over all copies of the document and of the translation that they had made. This was done.

The Prime Minister's dismay at the production of the document would seem to indicate that he intended that no records of the talks with the French and the Israelis should be made. We were not aware of this though we knew that he had for some time kept his thinking on a solution of the Suez problem to a small group of like-thinking people. I believe that he chose to proceed by oral discussion only. Yet Dayan in his book ¹⁷ says that just before the Sèvres meeting the Israelis received via the French a written declaration signed by Eden which from Dayan's description could not have been very different from the document Dean signed later.

Addition 1997

For years I have been unable to reconcile this with Eden's anxiety to have the document destroyed.

In May 1987 in preparation for the book Keith Kyle was to write ¹⁸ I sought to locate the French and Israeli copies of the document, believing that it should be made public and that neither the version in Dayan's book nor that in Pineau's¹⁹ were complete. The Ambassador in Paris was told by the Director of the French National Archives that no document relative to the Sèvres meetings could be found there or in the archives of the Quai d'Orsay. Accordingly I wrote to Pineau, who replied merely that 'he could never understand how Selwyn Lloyd (*sic - it was Eden on 20 December who came close to this*) could deny in the House of Commons that no treaty existed, when the Israeli press were hardly being discreet'. I turned to the Israelis who confirmed that their copy is in the Ben Gurion archives in the university bearing his name in the Negev, and I was welcome to see it as a participant at the meeting. They added that the Israeli Government objected to the publication of the text - I suspect in deference for Ben Gurion's respect for Eden's wishes at the time

¹⁷ Dayan *ibid* p.174

¹⁸ Keith Kyke, 'Suez', Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1991

¹⁹ Christian Pineau 'Suez 1956', Robert Laffont, Paris, 1976

though both were now dead. They would send a copy to their Embassy in London for my perusal on this understanding. I made use of this facility to help Kyle produce an English text based on Dayan's and Pineau's versions.

In 1996 a British television company traced a copy in the hands of a retired Israeli general which they filmed and screened. Simultaneously, the text was released to the Israeli press.²⁰

At about this time a French journalist, Vincent Jauvert, writing for *Nouvel Observateur*, approached me. He told me that Madame Pineau had shown him her late husband's papers. While he had seen nothing there of the Sèvres document, he had spotted a letter signed by Eden on 10 Downing Street paper and with a date after the middle of October 1956 in which he confirmed his agreement to his outlines of the later document. He was quite specific about the details and was aware of the significance of his discovery. Evidently Dayan's account of Eden's agreement is accurate. Eden must have sent the letter by private or secret means and not through the Foreign Office.

A minute dated 18 October by Selwyn Lloyd in the Public Record Office gives an account of discussions Eden and he had with the French and Israelis in Paris on 16 October (with no officials present) which were evidently the genesis of the plan, and shows that Eden did confirm his agreement to Mollet on the following day. It must have been his hope that he could acquiesce in the French/Israeli plan and give the British military assistance demanded, yet always be able to maintain that the Israeli incursion was unexpected and that the British involvement was genuinely to 'separate the combatants'. His disappointment on seeing the document in Foreign Office hands must have brought home to him the difficulty he faced with public and parliamentary opinion, and indeed with history.

²⁰ The company presented me with a framed photographic copy of the document

Had Lloyd conducted the Sèvres talks personally throughout, he might have seen the danger of the document. I do not think two unbriefed diplomats, professionally conditioned to get international negotiations expressed to written form, could have been expected to foresee Eden's intentions, and it is to his credit that Eden never suggested to us that we should have done. It is now evident that the document did no more than flesh out what Eden had already agreed to and it did make clear, as he had wished, that there would be hostilities threatening the Canal. To refuse to sign a record of agreement still open to the three governments to confirm ('*ad referendum*') could by increasing suspicion of British reliability have prejudiced the operation to which Eden attached such importance.

In any case, the existence of the document was not to be significant: within a week of the attack, it was widely known in Paris that the three countries had concerted it.

The Foreign Office had approved of my action, and the substance of this account appeared in the supplement to the Financial Times early in November 1985. The whole has since been lodged with the major archives.

Marriage

Irène and I had met in 1953 while on a skiing holiday at Klosters with a group of friends organised by Nigel Bruce and his sister Rosalind. The others were good skiers. Irène and I were the only ones who felt the need for caution on the slopes and so found ourselves together most of the time, to the extent that I earned the tag of 'Tigger'.

We met again after my return from Kuwait at Rosalind's wedding in September 1956, and from then other occasions followed in Brussels and in London until our engagement on 15 March 1957, again while skiing at Klosters.

We married on 8th July 1957 at the mairie of St Gilles in Brussels at a civil ceremony at which Sir George Labouchère, the Ambassador, was my witness and my host.

As Irène's mother was registered as Greek Orthodox, I favoured a ceremony by that rite on 9 July. A priest came down from Antwerp for the purpose and used the Order of Service prepared for the earlier marriage of Prince George and Princess Marina, who was Greek. Reading literally, he called me George throughout. John Moberly was my witness.

The Anglican ceremony was on 10 July. The British Consul attended to furnish a UK marriage certificate, the fourth recording of the event. Our honeymoon was spent touring in Irene's 'bumpy' car, a Volkswagen of the People's Car type to which she was devoted, through the Ardennes, staying at the Moulin Hideux, to Luxembourg, France, Switzerland (the Chateau Rougemont), Italy, San Marino, Austria. A video cassette was made (1976) from 8mm film taken on the journey.

We had been lent for several months a house in Victoria Square, No 15, belonging to Toinon Untermeyer, whose son, Geoffrey de Bellaigue occupied the top floor with David Windlesham. Following that, Denis Laskey who had been Principal Private Secretary but was abroad again, lent us his house at 9 Bathurst Street. For a while we were lent a small but luxurious flat in Kingston House, Princes Gate. Then at the end of 1958, I was posted to Washington.

First Secretary, Chancery, Washington, 1959-60

Until the 1939-45 War the Principal Private Secretary had decided all postings, and a slight suspicion lingered on that a spell in the Private Office would be followed by a good posting abroad. I did nothing to influence my next post. Washington was certainly considered a plum job and I think it possible that Selwyn Lloyd had a hand in the decision. The Service as whole had disapproved of the Government's handling of the Suez crisis, and it would have been typical of him to have made sure I did not suffer from my part in it.

My best memory of my time in the Washington Embassy is that it was while there that we began parenthood with the birth of Claire in the George Washington Hospital, while living at 2649(?) Loughboro Road. Shortly afterwards we were asked to entertain Philip de Zulueta and Anthony Barber (later to become Chancellor of the Exchequer) who were in Washington with the Prime Minister, Macmillan, and we invited Philip to be her godfather. I had known him as a Resident Clerk and it was at his suggestion that I had joined the skiing party at which Irène and I had first met. At the christening, Michael Ware stood in for Philip.

I was never entirely happy in my work at the Embassy. There was never a better Ambassador with whom to work than Harold Caccia. He brought all his skill and enthusiasm to the task of re-

establishing relations with the Americans after the blow they had delivered that caused the abandonment of the attempt to re-take the Canal. Eisenhower was still President – on a visit to the White House I saw him practicing golf swings on the lawn. Christian Herter was Secretary of State and it was with the State Department that we had most contact.

My job was to work with them on the development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, NATO, set up a few years earlier with headquarters in France. I had not known much of the development when in the Private Office and felt I lacked background and briefing to discuss its problems with the State Department people or even to follow their thinking. In fact this hardly mattered as Lord ('Sammy') Hood, the Minister, was available with skill and high contacts to cover all NATO matters.

There was however one rewarding project. The American Armed Forces were in the first stage of developing and testing rocket-propelled missiles and establishing a testing range in the Caribbean. They needed test bases in British colonies and this being a defence project it was part of my job to liaise over this. The bases had mostly been established already but I accompanied an American team on an annual visit at the best time of the year and at their expense. We started at Cape Canaveral (later re-named Cape Kennedy) in Florida, which was to become the launch site for US Space Exploration and from which the early missiles were launched. Turks and Caicos islands, and St Kitts were two of the British territories on which tracking stations were set up to monitor test flights as these first missiles were fired at a comparatively low altitude into the Caribbean.

By the kindness of Hallam and Hilda Tuck, who had lent us their chateau at Rougemont during our honeymoon, we were able to enjoy the swimming pool and tennis court at their house 'Perrywood' across the border in Maryland with its erstwhile tobacco plantation, and to invite friends from the Embassy to enjoy time there at weekends. Among these were Katharine Holland (later Harvey and to become Joya's godmother) and the Cicienowskis. Stash C. had a son of Claire's age and they are photographed on a rug together.

I travelled much less in the States than I had done during the War, and in the event spent only eighteen months in this posting.

When in the late summer of 1960 I heard that I was to be posted I had no great regret on that account, and to be Ambassador was far from what I could have expected. Few knew where Guinea was; most guessed it was not far from Australia. It was going to be very different from the

diplomatic round in Washington. The idea of taking a very young daughter to what had often been called 'the white man's grave' worried me.

We returned to England by the same ship by which we went out, the Cunard liner Queen Mary, in which, and also in her sister ship Queen Elizabeth, I had crossed during the War. This time we travelled first class as I had been promoted Counsellor.

Ambassador, Conakry, Guinea, 1960-1962.

General Charles de Gaulle, who had been head of the Free French Forces in the 1939-45 war, had become President of France. He proposed that French possessions in Africa should be formed into a French Community, somewhat on the lines of the recently formed British Commonwealth. He offered a referendum to obtain the agreement of each colony. All voted '*oui*' except one, Guinea, which returned a firm '*non*', as desired by its left leaning President Sekou Touré. De Gaulle vowed that Guinea should be punished for this refusal, and withdrew immediately all French support, including personnel and even the telephone system.

His intention was to show the value of the French support, but in the eyes of others this was seen as a hazardous move in the context of geo-politics in Africa. Sekou Touré was held to be a Marxist and the withdrawal of Guinea's economic infrastructure seemed to leave the country open to Soviet influence as they were looking for client countries in Africa. Conakry had a useful airport to serve as a communication centre. In a very short time Daniel Solod was appointed Soviet ambassador at Conakry – he had been a successful ambassador at Cairo when the Soviets supplied Czech arms to Egypt. Fears were confirmed.

British diplomatic representation had been at the level of Chargé d'Affaires. It was decided to raise this to a resident ambassador. At that time I was the youngest British Ambassador to be appointed. One newspaper made a feature of an article on the clutch of new appointments in the French ex-colonies in Africa.

The Americans decided similarly, and chose as their ambassador a coloured man, another first. That choice, when racial equality still had a long way to go, was regarded as naïve by much of US opinion, and his term was not a long one.

It proved no easier to learn about the place in London. The Chargé had already left and in a telephone conversation said very little. A wife who had recently returned told Irène she could think

of nothing favourable to say about life there. So we prepared in the dark. Claire was eighteen months old, so Irène searched for a nanny and found a German girl, Roswitha, prepared for the unknown. Joya was expected, and Irène would have to return to England next spring for that. Meanwhile I had to get there as quickly as possible, leaving the family to follow.

Arriving with no idea of what to expect gave me a deep shock. I was alarmed at the prospect of bringing the family to a town that, while it had no doubt been adequately run under the French, was now lacking in even the most essential services. Shops were empty, European food was unavailable and African food very scarce. Hospitals had hardly any staff, no medicines and patients had to rely on relatives for food. These perils were the subject of European social conversations. The Embassy was housed in one corner of an ex-French bank, shared with two others. The Chargé had obtained the lease of a pleasant villa a little out of town built by a Lebanese trader. A Wendy House in the garden listed as a feature either had a reputation as a shelter for snakes, or suggested itself to me as being one. I quickly went down with a violent stomach upset. The lone French doctor in town came out to see me but could do no more than assure me it would pass. Wondering how the family could be expected to survive this, I walked down to the beach below the garden, and as I did so an iguana over a meter long crawled out to the sea. What was I doing going ahead with this?

I telegraphed Irène to report this and urge her to stay in England. I would stay long enough to allow for a replacement to be found and if necessary I would resign from the service.

Irène soon replied that she was resolved to come and could not believe that conditions were as bad as I had found. That was a very brave decision for which I have been eternally grateful. The picture I had painted was not exaggerated, but together we could face it.

The solution was to be self-sufficient relying on supplies from Dakar, Freetown and France. There was a deep freeze at the Residence and Irène ordered meat supplies for a whole month for the seven members of the staff brought monthly from France by a ship of Chargeurs Réunis. Medicines could be brought by airline pilots or by the Queen's Messenger from Dakar, if we knew what to ask for, and if Dakar had them. Towards the end of our stay, rice, the staple diet of the locals was unavailable, as supplies from China on which the Government were relying, had not arrived. For the benefit of our local staff I sent a Land Rover 100 miles over rough country to Freetown for enough sacks of rice to last them a month. I made it available on that basis. They were grateful, but were back next morning asking for more and explaining that by African custom they had had to share it with their extended families and their village and it had all gone.

Freetown was a source and haven for us. Sierra Leone was still being run as a British colony and the Governor Sir Maurice Dorman and his wife were an enormous help to us personally. Government House, where we stayed with them, was a Shangri-la. Sierra Leone seemed to be a model administration. It was ironic that when in 1996, after thirty-five years of independence, the state collapsed and the British High Commissioner took refuge in the Hotel de France in Conakry in which I had spent my first night.

Not long after my arrival the time came for me to present the 'Letters of Recall of my predecessor (who had in title been the ambassador in Dakar) and of my appointment' to the President, Sekou Touré. I was fascinated by its archaic wording:

'Greetings. We have thought it fit to appoint our trusty and well-beloved Donald Arthur Logan to be our Ambassador... and request You to believe everything he shall say to you in my name.'

The somewhat gratuitous advice of the Embassy staff (or rather of one who had had a naval career) was that as the only source of power and influence in Guinea was the President himself, it was most important to make a good impression on him at this ceremony. I would be accorded military honours and should wear diplomatic uniform. I wondered about this, as it seemed to me that Guinea had dramatically rejected colonialism. But when the date was fixed some weeks later and my luggage had still not been cleared through Customs I asked the Protocol Department to have it cleared in time. It had not arrived at the Residence on the morning of the day and I dressed in civilian clothes thinking that this might be no bad thing.

Before leaving London, I had been advised to make much of our desire for a more fruitful relationship with Guinea epitomised by the decision to raise our representation to the level of resident ambassador. I drafted out a short speech on those lines to be made at the ceremony and in accordance with general protocol gave a copy of my letters and this draft to the Protocol Department. They did not seem to know what to do with this, but they thanked me.

The Head of Protocol arrived at the Residence to conduct me in a large open car of the kind seen in the 1920s' photographs. We made polite conversation. He was keen to tell me he had cleared my luggage from Customs as I had requested. I am not sure I had time to thank him for this (unproductive) effort when the 'head boy' burst in with the news that a truck carrying my luggage had just arrived but had become stuck in the drive by overhanging trees. The drive was the only way out for us in the Protocol car, and it was blocked. Now the Protocol man had to make his last

effort to deliver my luggage and the van, having demolished a tree, drew up in front of the house as we moved off.

On the way he told me there would be a military guard of honour in the courtyard of the Presidential Residence, ex Governor's Palace, for me to inspect when we arrived. But he added: 'By the way (though we were of course speaking French) you are coming as what? we haven't understood, Ambassador, Chargé, Consul or what?'

When we reached the Palace, there was no guard of honour. Never mind, he said, let's go in. At the top of the main staircase he was clearly perplexed (though I was near to a giggle) to find a pair of imposing double doors firmly closed. He knocked with his knuckles and after a while a door opened somewhat and a head, on shoulders in shirtsleeves, asked: '*Qu'est-ce que c'est?*' It was Sekou Touré himself. Disturbed at his work, he nevertheless invited me in, into a small closet where he appeared to be working, and we sat down side by side on a wooden bench along one wall. When my purpose was explained, it seemed up to me to get going. But it seemed awkward to make a formal speech and to deliver The Queen's letter bearing her personal signature to someone sitting beside me, both facing a blank wall.

He received the letter upside down, gave it to the Protocol man and as I started to deliver the account of our new esteem for Guinea, he began fumbling in his pockets unsuccessfully, and sent Protocol man out to get him cigarettes.

Feeling particularly awkward talking to the air, I finished all I had to say. As Sekou Touré had nothing to say, the moment had come to leave.

Back at our Embassy, the ex-naval member of staff²¹ was underlining the comparison with the full honours given to the Chinese Ambassador the previous day. I was not sorry that he stayed on the staff for only a few weeks more.

This inauspicious beginning did not depress me for long. The Chinese Ambassador, having come – went. Those who stayed, of the 'West' American, German, Italian, Israeli, a French Consul General, had little to do except to keep their staffs, all small, and themselves, fed and happy. We were invited to party conferences once or twice a year, in such inland places as Labé, Kankan and Kissidougou, to hear a speech by Sekou Touré – provincial towns set in natural rain forest but no more equipped than Conakry. Periodically he would make a speech in Conakry that we were

expected to attend though the starting time was never clear. He had a fine presence that with the importance of woman in mind in African community life he enhanced by wearing in public the most colourful robes of African design. He spoke fluently in French and always for an hour or more. His theme was always Africa for Africans, leaving no room for outside help or influence. Occasionally I had the impression that among all the diatribe about colonial oppression there might have been a slight opening but on reading the text later this proved mistaken.

The Western Diplomatic Corps looked after each other as well as themselves. The President of Germany came on an official visit. So did Castro of Cuba and Brezhnev, then a Soviet Central Committee member, and ambassadors dressed the stage for Sekou Touré's reception for each of them.

For the Federal German Republic's President, his embassy could find no local supplies for the reception he was to give in return for Sekou Touré, no servants to provide the atmosphere he would expect, nor any help in that direction from the Guinean authorities. The Ambassador sought our help in placing extra orders for champagne to augment his stock, and the help of our wives in making canapés when the day arrived. Like my uniform, his order had arrived in the port but was not cleared in time. Frantically involved in the visit, he asked me to help by lending my stock which I did willingly to assist an ally in demonstrating Western interest.

On the day fixed for the German reception, much of which the Ambassador had counted on spending supervising the organisation in his residence, Touré changed the programme and took his guest and the Ambassador off for a day's trip up country. I was asked to take over the reception arrangements. And so it was that when the Presidents arrived, accompanied by an anxious Ambassador, they were served my champagne, and sandwiches delicately prepared by Irène and the wives of the American and Israeli Ambassadors. Such was the unique nature of Western representation in Guinea.

We had to seek amusement where we might find it. A French business representative organised a performance in the Italian Ambassador's garden of Giraudoux's 'La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu'. I was given the part of the Surveyor from Syracuse brought in to resolve issues between Hector, Andromeda and Co, by advancing equally weighty arguments on both sides. In that role, an English accent need not seem amiss.

²¹ It was his wife who had given such discouraging a report to Irène in London. At least she was frank!

An opportunity arose for diplomatic mischief. Four pieces of engineering equipment were seen in the port, held up for much longer than my luggage. They looked like snowploughs, and I used an instrument of the Cold War to alert the BBC to the idiocy of the Soviet Union in sending such things to Africa. It was the standing joke for quite a while. A Canadian agricultural engineer came on a visit and I asked him to assess them – could they be used to shift sand in the Mali desert to the north? No, came the answer, the scoop is too deep for sand. I thought I know Solod, the Soviet Ambassador, well enough by now to try this out on him – 'too bad this joke about snow ploughs, I suppose you have some use for them. 'No', he replied, 'one place in Soviet Union send aid abroad. Don't know no snow in Africa'.

There being no list of diplomats, we had agreed to my suggestion that between us we should compile one, he to list those on his side of the ideological divide and I should do the West. We put it together and asked the Protocol Department to tell us of any omissions or errors. When I pressed for an answer, it was that there were many, but we could not be told!

A strike was reported in the local telephone system. Sekou Touré had been Secretary General of the Posts, Telephones and Telegraph Union and was incensed that he should be embarrassed by his successor. After several days of tension, high drama took place before the diplomatic corps assembled in the port to welcome the arrival of Abubakar Balewa, Prime Minister of Nigeria. A junior from the Protocol Department approached Solod and told him he was not wanted there, he must go home. The Soviet Ambassador, rightly or wrongly, was held responsible for the strike.

It continued for some days. The Queen was to visit Sierra Leone and Irène and I had been invited to the State dinner in Freetown. A circular from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was received. First paragraph read:- all diplomats require a permit to leave Conakry. Second paragraph:- all applications to leave Conakry will be systematically refused²². We used the diplomatic channel to send greetings as the Royal Yacht passed, and received acknowledgment.

The wretched Solod was confined to his residence for ten days, unable to communicate with his staff. His place was outside the town, with the American ambassador on one side and the German on the other. We three swam out at midday – the houses were on the coast – to meet Solod, who did the same, and tell him what was going on in town. He was clearly more frustrated in his mission than we were.

²² Guineans cared nothing for diplomatic immunity

All ambassadors were called to a reception at the President's Residence on Sunday evening. While we stood chatting but observing out of the corner of our eyes, Sekou Touré sat majestically on a sofa with a Soviet visitor beside him. This was Anatole Mikoyan, elder statesman who had survived the Stalin era and become their trouble-shooter. He had arrived from Moscow two days earlier and evidently had been given little time by Sekou Touré as in front of us all he was using the occasion to plead his case. We could see he was getting nowhere, receiving only the occasional and perfunctory monosyllabic replies. He left next morning, taking Solod with him and leaving one of his aides behind in his place.

So much for the Soviet threat. Sekou' Touré's dream of purely African solutions to all his problems proved proof against whatever threat there might have been. On the day I left, driving to the airport, I saw that the snow ploughs had at last been moved out of the port and had been dumped at the roadside where the creeping vegetation of the jungle was engulfing them – the epitome of foreign concern for the interests of Guinea.

My successor stuck it out for two years, after which we maintained no permanent post there, accrediting ambassadors from Mali and from Senegal as we had before 1960.

Sekou Touré went on with his dream for some twenty years more, dying with the country increasingly stagnant. Internal order gradually deteriorated; a German Consul General was murdered.

We had arrived in Conakry with Claire aged eighteen months, and we left with Joya and Ian.

Joya was born in Queen Charlotte's Hospital in London, Irène having gone home to stay with my parents for the purpose. She had arranged this as it seemed impossible to give birth in Conakry! But for Ian, Irène opted for the French-run hospital in Dakar, which proved to be her best experience. Michael Palliser lent us his house to cover the period.

On her way back from London after Joya' birth, she went to Brussels to show Claire and Joya to her mother, Mamina. She never saw Ian.

Head of Information Executive Department, Foreign Office, 1962-1963

This was a functional or administrative department responsible for the Foreign Office role in support of information work abroad, that is the projection of Britain, not the gathering of information or intelligence. Its members took on specialist fields: films, publications, exhibitions.

Its main occupation was the application of funds provided by the Treasury which each year in the Public Spending Statement set a total for Overseas Information Services, the 'Information Ceiling'. The Department was left to allocate it to not only the Foreign Service's own activity including operating expenses of information offices at embassies, but also the British Council and the Overseas Services of the BBC. These two ran, as they still do, a powerful lobby in Parliament and the Press, and made much of their essentially long-term commitments and their importance. A Treasury ceiling implies a squeeze, and it was always the Foreign Office information activity that had to suffer. I found this frustrating but my later experience suggests that given the need for financial limit, the Service information activities cannot have the clout that the others possess.

Counsellor (Information), Embassy, Paris 1964-1970

Paris is a much sought after post, the plum of the inner circle élite high-flyers, and throughout history an important centre of international affairs. I have no doubt that many colleagues were convinced I had wangled the appointment myself, particularly as it followed a career information weekend at an Oxford college attended by the Head of Personnel, David Muirhead.

It is true that the appointment was mentioned to me as a decision already taken while walking in the College grounds during a break. It came as a total surprise and I was miserable at the prospect. We had just a few months earlier moved into 6 Thurloe Street, our first house in London, and were greatly enjoying getting it as we wanted. To be leaving it was to be a wrench. In fact we were not to occupy it again for eleven years.²³

We arrived in Paris towards the end of Macmillan's attempt to take Britain into what was then the European Economic Community, 'The Common Market'. (The British saw it as an economic initiative; for other Europeans it was to lead inexorably to some form of political union.) The line for information purposes was that the British people were determined to join. But the French President, de Gaulle, was opposed to that and terminated the negotiations in Brussels, at which we

were led by Pierson Dixon, concurrently Ambassador in Paris. He left a month or so after our arrival.

De Gaulle's opposition to our entry, indeed his distrust of the Brussels institutions, which he publicly branded as the Areopagus,²⁴ was widely known, and as he was highly popular for his resolution in politics as well as his wartime role, he had support from press and public. Dialogue was conducted through press and parliaments. The gap could not be bridged by briefing, however subtle. I was limited to scanning the French press each morning – bed sheets became very dirty – for signs of favourable opinion. So were most of the others in the Embassy engaged

But as Public Relations Officer at the Embassy, a variety of unusual experiences came my way. One of the weirdest was participation in the annual civic manifestation in Rouen in memory of the burning of Joan of Arc, when in dinner jacket and decorations the British representative paid 'penance' by joining the town's magnates in procession through the town.

Royal matters

These tended to come my way. The Queen had entered her horse Hopeful Venture for the Prix de Diane, towards the end of the season at Longchamps. The French racing fraternity were excited and sent an invitation to the British Embassy that came to me. I had been to a racecourse only once in my life before – to Aintree for the Grand National in 1956 when the Queen Mother's horse Devon Lock (which I had backed!) collapsed at the head of the field a few yards from the post.

This time, Hopeful Venture came in first to great jubilation until an ominous bell brought rejoicing to silence, and the British Embassy representative was called to the Steward's box. It had been objected that Hopeful Venture did not run-in straight to the finish and so obstructed the horse that came second.

This was explained to me and I was invited to see the filmed record. I declined on the grounds that I was not competent to judge, and offered my opinion that the Queen was likely to take the view that a decision was one for the Stewards, and on that basis she would accept it whatever they decided.

²³ We let it to the American Embassy, and the revaluation of the dollar in the early 1970s was negotiated between the US Financial Minister and the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England in secret in our dining room over lunch on successive Tuesdays.

²⁴ A hill in Athens where high courts sat, so a remote authority

When Hopeful Venture was disqualified, breaths were held and there was an air of foreboding in the stands. That evening, I informed the Private Secretary at the Palace by telegram: it drew no reaction.

The Prix de Diane is followed a week later by the Arc de Triomphe, as important in the racing world as the Derby. Every year on the eve of the race, the French equivalent of the Jockey Club, cumbersomely entitled 'Société Pour L'Encouragement de l'Elevage de la Race des Chevaux', organises a dinner at Maxims, given by Marcel Dassaux for the leading French and English owners. For years the reply to the toast of the 'Jockey Club' had been made – repetitively it was said – by Lord Willoughby de Broke, its chairman.

In that year he cried off two days before the event, and the Société prevailed on me to take his place, turning aside all protest of incompetence. So surrounded by people of whom I knew nothing nor they of me, I could only rise to the occasion with a few platitudes ending: *Et pour demain, je souhaite, pas seulement que le meilleur gagne, mais surtout qu'il va tout droit jusqu'au bout*!. Tumultuous applause greeted this, and I was told it entitled me to a box at Longchamps for life! Sure enough, I received complementary tickets for the rest of the season.

The following summer, the Queen made a private visit to the breeding stables of Normandy. With the Ambassador's Private secretary, Christopher Makins²⁵, I was deputed to handle arrangements, particularly to protect her from excessive press intrusion. I arranged a photo call and led some fifty cars to an unannounced location. After that, armed with my rolled umbrella I was occupied in frustrating Paris Match paparazzi and such like from taking ambush in the rhododendron bushes in the grounds of the Duc d'Audiffret Pacquier's chateau where she stayed.

A week or so before the visit, the Private Secretaries at the Palace asked the Embassy to provide material by which the Queen could brush up her knowledge of French terms in horse breeding. That too came to me. My contact at the Société advised that it had published a text book on the subject but doubted whether it was quite what I wanted. I saw what he meant. It was a breeder's practical manual fully illustrated with explicit line drawings. All the terms were certainly there. I sent it to the Private Secretaries at the Palace with all reserve, and heard no more.

At the end of her visit, the Queen called in individually all who had been involved in the organisation. After she had given me cufflinks, she reached behind and produced the book, saying with a twinkle in her eye: *I believe you found this – thank you. I found it most useful*.

In about 1965, Prince Charles and Princess Anne were sent *incognito* to ski in Switzerland, he being about 17 and she 15. I was asked to arrange for them to have dinner in 'a typical animated Parisian bistro' while they broke their journey. What is a typical bistro, and how to arrange that two young British Royals could dine there *incognito* in an animated atmosphere as early as 7.30 pm?

Christopher Makins and I hit upon 'Au Vieux Paris', near Nôtre Dame. It had two advantages, ignoring that it was not a typical bistro but a modish restaurant – table cloths on tables no sawdust, on floor. It was the least well known of two establishments of that name, and it had a narrow spiral staircase leading up to the dining room.

It seated only about sixty, so we booked the whole place for the first part of the evening. Christopher put it about among his young Parisian friends that if they chose to dine there and contribute to the gaiety of the place from 7.30 on the day in question, they might find it interesting. Of course the press learnt of the visit and I was pressed for details. I let it be known that the place would be announced at 6pm, calculating that the other and better known Au Vieux Paris was a good half hour away in the evening traffic. When the young Royals arrived at the chosen one, all was agreeably animated and no press were seen. But when I went down the spiral staircase to check with the co-operative manager (well disposed from good early evening business rather than from love of royalty) I found John Ellison, the enterprising Daily Express correspondent, just about to come up. He had guessed that we would have been unlikely to choose the other one. But he had not reckoned on the strategic position which the top of the spiral stair gave me, and he had to settle for a drink downstairs and a brief 'pop upstairs' to pay respects to Irène! I gave him that.

²⁵ later 2nd Lord Sherfield

It was considered part of the duties of the Information Counsellor to maintain contact with the Private Secretary of the Duke of Windsor, who lived with his wife in Paris. In 1936 he had abdicated as King Edward VIII because it had been considered unacceptable that he should marry Wallis Warfield, an American who had been twice divorced. We were invited whenever they came to dinner at the Embassy. On one occasion we were invited to their mansion in the Bois de Bologne to a very formal dinner. I enquired of the Duke's Private Secretary whether an invitation from us would be welcome and was encouraged to extend one to both. In the event, she cried off, which was not unexpected, but he came to our flat in Avenue Charles Floquet on the Champs de Mars. The evening was memorable only from the history of the main guest.

Cannes Film Festival

A couple of self-appointed tasks awaited me on arrival at the Embassy. In London, I had received requests from the British Film Federation for a show of support from the British Government for British films at the Cannes Film Festival, the major event for establishing the commercial potential of a film. I had asked the Paris embassy to include this in their export promotion activity, and found when I arrived there that this had fallen to the Information Counsellor.

Each nation entering a film is required to appoint an Official Delegate who is then invited with his wife to spend ten days at the Festival as guests (not an unusual perquisite in France²⁶). To avoid the hurly burly of the Croisette, we chose to stay at a charming old-fashioned hotel, the Montfleury. Each film was shown twice, in the afternoon and in the evening of the same day, the international jury of film personalities being expected to attend one or other showing. We were free to attend these showings also, together with those on the 'commercial circuit' in the town cinemas

It soon became apparent that this was not a true market where films were judged on their artistic merit. The producer of a film expecting success for it would not enter it for Cannes lest failure to receive the Prix d'Or should prejudice its chances in the film world. Where a film's success was more speculative, its appearance at Cannes might bring it publicity, often from its own sensational character or that of the behaviour of its participants at the festival. Publicity was and is its theme, never mind how shocking. This governs the behaviour of the many aspiring performers who flock there also. Not an edifying experience, but I hope sufficient of my parents' chapel influence and my Protestant upbringing saw that I remained uncorrupted.

The first year we went, 1965, the official British film entered by the industry as a whole was 'The Hill', which featured Sean Connery as a brutal commander of a British Army correction centre. The local British residents raised loud protests and attempted to persuade the jury to dismiss it. Industry representatives seemed unperturbed at this, but Rex Harrison,²⁷ member of the jury was troubled by their protests and invited us to join him for lunch on his yacht. I could only advise him that the jury should not allow their judgment to be influenced. Whether it did or not I do not know, but the Prix d'Or was given to another British entry, 'The Knack', that I had not seen and which, though original and amusing, as I subsequently discovered, had made no ripples on the Cannes scene. Indeed all associated with the film had already left before the result was announced, so the British Official Delegate was called upon to receive the prize. We were given reserved seats, among all the 'lurvies' as they are now called, in the overcrowded Palais du Festival' and I went up to get it from the chair of the jury, Diana Dors I think, clad as far as I could tell as we embraced (thinking hard of England and duty) only in a large white fur. Returning to the floor, I found my seat usurped by an undislodgable hitherto bystander, and there being no other vacant seat I found myself outside in the street for the rest of the show, clutching the Prix d'Or.

What to do with it? Back at the Embassy, I conscientiously (and with my tongue at least touching my cheek!) compiled a dispatch to the Foreign Office reporting success and enclosing the parchment. I did not know who the producer was and could only hope he received it.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Festival occurred a year or two later, and I was under pressure from the excited French Secretary General to arrange impressive recognition. Princess Margaret was to pay an official visit to Nice at the same time and I asked whether she would come on to Cannes to be present at the showing of the British entry for that year, 'Modesty Blaise', with Dirk Bogarde present. She agreed. I was disappointed that the Secretary General did not seem to welcome what seemed to me to be a *coup*, implying that an add-on to a visit to Cannes neighbour and bitter rival Nice did the Festival little honour. I was to see what he meant.

The showing was to begin at 2.30. The festival authorities overdid the respect for royalty by requiring all seats to be occupied by 1.45. It was a hot day.

²⁶ The Paris Press Club invited both of us to join their members for a week skiing in Courchevel. But when on my first arrival I was sent two cases of wine by a journalist I had never met, I returned them though the advice of the local staff was that this could cause offence.

²⁷ *Matinée idol*, and later star of the film 'My Fair Lady'

Princess Margaret , accompanied by her husband the Earl of Snowdon, was to arrive at 2.30 to be received by the Secretary General and the stars of the film. At 2.30 they had not arrived from Nice. I telephoned to her equerry with her in Nice (I think Lord Napier). Lunch with Jacques Médécin (the notoriously unscrupulous Mayor of Nice) had begun late and was only now finishing, after which the Mayor had arranged an exchange of presents and farewells. He could see no way of speeding departure, but motor cycle escorts were standing by.

They arrived at 3.20. Presentations took their time. When Margaret took her place in the box, the audience having waited for nearly two hours in discomfort from the heat, booed no less loudly than they applauded.

Ten minutes into the film, believe it or not, came the line: Royalty is never late! The audience roared with laughter.

Snowdon suggested I should complain. 'The Princess had been upset by the booing'. I could only point out to him that the laughter had probably restored the atmosphere and that to protest would be likely to revive the issue. No more was heard of it.

Another year, Irène and I decided to spend a short holiday in Spain on the way to Cannes.

Driving through Marseilles, we saw the headline 'Drama at Cannes Festival – British Representative Awaited'. When we got there, I saw no sign of concern among the British contingent but I was asked to meet the President and the Secretary General of the Festival next morning.

They told me that the afternoon showing of 'Ulysses', made into a film years after the James Joyce's novel that had been barred before the War, had been interrupted by protest from the audience. The Secretary General had seized the film in the projection room and had intended to remove the offending scenes. The producer had objected. The rule said that any dispute could be discussed only with the Official Representative.

I said I could understand the producer's objection to the proposed mutilation of his work. The Secretary General insisted he could not be responsible for the public disorder which could follow at a second showing. The film was immoral (as he must have known when accepting it and not much more offensive than what is implicit in much that is seen at Cannes). He pressed me to see it. I declined as I was not prepared to assume the role of judge of public decency in such circumstances. He must come to his own decision. If he was not prepared to show the uncut film a second time, he

could agree to allow the producer to withdraw it from competition. He replied that the rules forbade that, otherwise any film thought unlikely to win a prize could be withdrawn to escape damage to its reputation.

It was a casuistical argument on my part that won the day. The solution was not to be found in the rules. Nothing there permitted censorship. If nevertheless this were to be done between the two showings of the film it could be deprived of a fair assessment. Those members of the jury seeing it in the evening would be forming their opinion on a different version from that which their colleagues had seen in the afternoon. They would be unable to decide on the acceptability or otherwise of the missing scenes. The producer was entitled to have his work judged as a whole. No precedent of withdrawal need be set so long as the Festival did not interfere between showings. 'Ulysses' should be allowed to withdraw. It was. I heard nothing from the producer, and assume he was pleased with the publicity - grist to his mill.

Other British films that figured at Cannes in my time (nationality being largely decided by that of the director) included 'Goldfinger', 'The Ipcress File', 'Alfie' and 'If'. They would not have been my choice of instrument with which to persuade a sceptical Europe of the moral and cultural leadership that British entry into the new European arrangement might bring.

Each year the British Film Federation issued in my name invitations to all and sundry at the Festival to the British Reception, at which the stars of our films and their makers appeared. I came to think that what lay behind the original request from the industry to me back in London may have been largely related to this event. In five years there had been no appreciation of my response to their request, no recognition of my negotiation on their behalf. Their hope may have been for a personality able to stand out amid all the glitter and brashness of the film advertising world, and ready to associate themselves with their particular production and propaganda. If so, I was not their man, and even Irène in her full elegance could not be on the same wavelength as scantily dressed starlets.

Nevertheless I enjoyed the experience and felt that we had responded as far as we could be expected. I advised my successor to form his own judgment on the value of the exercise that I had set up in the first place. I do not know his decision but shall be surprised if the British Representative at Cannes is still a diplomat.

International Exhibitions Bureau

Britain was a founder member of this Convention, concluded in 1923 to regulate these events. The first ever, the 1851 International Exhibition in Hyde Park, had set a popular precedent that by the 1920s had become expensive for the major countries who found themselves under pressure to participate in all of them. The Convention established rules about frequency, duration and conditions of participation, administered by an office in Paris manned by a General Secretary. By the 1960s the FO and the Central Office of Information wanted to see these rules strengthened, and as the costs fell under the Information Ceiling for which my Information Executive Department was responsible. I asked the Paris Embassy to play an active role. So again I was setting myself a task once I arrived at the Embassy.

I took on representation on the twice a year meetings of the Council, the British Representative being *ex officio* Vice President and Chairman of the main committee. The President was an ex-Vichy Minister, now advanced in age but hanging on for prestige. The General Secretary was also French, one René Chalon, with ill-disguised contempt for the President, and he turned to the Vice-President for support. He also professed admiration for British practicality and pragmatism and he and I became great friends. (He gave me on my departure the van der Velde copy that has ever since hung in our bathroom). Together we drafted in English and French amendments to the Convention and negotiated them with the other national representatives. A member of the FO Department, Tom Wykeley, who had been Consul General in Jerusalem and was then responsible for financing exhibitions, came out for the meetings, and also became a close friend.

During my time, two major exhibitions took place. It was the custom of organisers to show gratitude for registration by inviting the Council to attend a 'ground cutting' celebration when work began. At the invitations were from Government to Government, the issue over bribery did not arise. The French President hated 'abroad' and always declined, leaving these delegations to be led by the Vice-President.

Thus I found myself called upon to welcome the preparations for the Montreal Exposition at the podium in the City hall in Montreal from which de Gaulle had earlier made his inflammatory statement to French Canadians seeking independence: *Je vous écoute*.

When in 1968 completion was near, I was invited to give the order to begin construction to the organising team in Montreal from my office in the Paris Embassy by the newly developed satellite telephone link.

After this public exposure in Canada including radio and television interviews in both languages, the Canadian representative on the Bureau offered me the job of international commentator on the Canadian TV. He was a high-powered public relations operator appointed to get the exposition approved. I think his offer was probably serious but I had no hesitation in declining. I hope the family will not regret rejection of the opportunity to have been brought up in Canada. There could have been worse fates.

The other major exhibition was in Osaka with the ground cutting in 1968. I planned for Irène to join me (this at our own expense) and for us to return round the world by visiting Angkor Wat, the ancient ruined temples in the jungle of Cambodia, and also the Taj Mahal in India. But just before I left, the serious student riots broke out in Paris making it necessary that Irène should stay there with the children and that I should return as soon as I could. A pity. Soon afterwards, the spread of the Vietnam War put Angkor Wat out of reach where it has remained at the mercy of the jungle until very recently.

I cannot pretend that this activity merits recording in the history of international relations, but if it had any conceivable significance, maybe it led to my subsequent involvement in international organisations of more a serious nature, NATO, UN and Antarctica.

The Soames affair

Patrick Reilly who had succeeded Bob Dixon as Ambassador in Paris in 1964 was succeeded in 1968 by Christopher Soames. Conservative MP, married to Winston Churchill's daughter Mary, but appointed by a Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, a surprising but inspired appointment in the context of the British candidature to join the European Economic Community, as it was still called. Patrick Reilly was a very experienced and loyal diplomat, and had tried hard to persuade the French to take seriously the British Government's determination to join the Community. He had frequently been sniped at by anti-European MPs. Soames was known in the House as a fervent pro-European, and as Churchill's son-in law no-one was surprised that he spoke his mind.

Very soon after his arrival, he was due to make a speech in Lille. He showed me his text. It contained the phrase: Quant au Marché Commun, pour les Anglais la décision est prise. I told him that a month or so earlier Patrick Reilly had used just that phrase, also in Lille, and MPs had demanded of the Foreign Secretary to know on what authority a diplomat had said such a thing. Soames replied to me that nevertheless he would say it – everyone knew he had always said that.

He did say it, and there was never a murmur. Unless an Ambassador is a known public figure, he is not expected to speak without instructions²⁸. Soames could make full use of this licence, and did.

Not long after that speech, he was delighted to be invited with his wife to a private lunch with President and Madame de Gaulle on 4 February 1969. The President's opposition to British membership was our obstacle. This was seen as a real opportunity for straight talking. He returned well pleased, and called in his senior staff. De Gaulle had been affability itself, and had suggested that France and Britain should with Germany devise a future for Europe.

This seemed to mean casting aside all that had followed from the beginning of economic collaboration in 1951 and the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Soames could hardly wait to get the Prime Minister on the 'phone, but the proposal seemed so unexpected that we urged him to discuss the proposition with us first. Did de Gaulle explain any further what he had in mind? What about Italy? Who was to start this process? What next?

Soames could add little except that de Gaulle had said that if London made such a proposal it would be welcomed in Paris. We warned against a typical de Gaulle trap: if the rest of Europe were to object, he could always say it was a British idea. We persuaded Soames to make a record of the conversation before informing London and to have that record checked with de Gaulle before it was acted upon.

In London, Wilson was delighted, though the Foreign Office was more cautious. The Prime Minister was to lunch in ten days time with the German Chancellor, Kiesinger, in Bonn. The Embassy warned that if anything was to be mentioned to the Germans about the Soames lunch, the French should be given notice: otherwise we risked once again being accused of perfidy.

Meanwhile, the Embassy asked the Elysée, the President's office, to confirm the record Soames had made. They said clearance must be sought at the Quai d'Orsay, the Foreign Ministry. Their reaction was slow in coming.

A day or so before Wilson left for Bonn, the Embassy pressed London to be told what Wilson intended to do, and to be allowed to inform the French. The reply was that the PM would not make up his mind on whether to mention the proposal until he saw how his talks before lunch in Bonn went.

²⁸ See the extract from my Letter of Credence to Conakry, p59, though that standard wording is now archaic in practice.

The Embassy felt a trap had been set. Did de Gaulle contemplate that Wilson might take credit for getting Germany interested? Would the French -- above all de Gaulle - be ready to share parentage of it? Would not the Germans be surprised that he had gone behind their back? Was it not likely that de Gaulle was trying out his vague idea on Soames for his own benefit, leaving Soames or Wilson to face the consequences of any rebuff? Did de Gaulle really mean it? We badly needed confirmation of the record Soames had made. On the advice of the Head of Chancery, Soames went to see the French Foreign Minister, Debré and asked: *'Is my record wrong in anyway'*? To this Debré replied: *'Non, juste le contraire'*. That was something.

The morning of Wilson's visit to Bonn came. And went without further news.

At about 1pm, the Paris Embassy telephoned the Embassy in Bonn. Has the PM decided? Yes, came the answer: he has told the Germans. It's all out and here it's leaking like a sieve.

Suspecting a British trap, the Quai d'Orsay denied the whole thing and put it out that Soames had got it all wrong.

British journalists in Paris were on to me in droves: another British blunder over Europe?

I invited them around for briefing. Half a dozen came immediately. 'What had gone wrong? How good was Soames' French?

When I assured them he had understood de Gaulle perfectly and that we had confirmation from the Quai d'Orsay, they asked from whom?

This was awkward. Enough blame was already flying around to suggest that it was preferable to avoid headlines: British spokesman points finger at Debré. Soames had still to do business with him. So I invited the correspondents to guess. Several suggestions were discouraged by negative head-shaking until one said: that only leaves Debré. They were so pleased to have guessed right. *Juste le contraire* satisfied them.

They were now clearly off to the Quai spokesman, Claude Lebel. So I rang him. As he probably had not yet been briefed by Debré's office, I told him Soames had been told: Inexact? Non, juste le contraire. I do not know what response the British journalists received from him, but I suspect they found him 'unavailable'.

There was another way to make the story stick.

Sam White ran a half-page 'Letter from Paris' in the Evening Standard on Wednesdays. Resident there since the end of the War, he earned Beaverbrook's²⁹ lifelong support for spotting in an obscure economic newsagency tape a report in 1963 that two senior British diplomats had gone over to Moscow, and for promptly alerting the Daily Express³⁰. This support led to the Standard feature for which Sam filed each week a waspish piece on French social and economic scandals, and on the incompetence of the British Embassy. He installed himself every day in the bar of the Hotel Crillon from midday where his informants could always find him. He never came to the Embassy.

I found him in the Crillon bar that afternoon and told him how we had obtained confirmation of Soames' account. He used it to good effect.

I am sorry to admit that this was the only time in six years as Press Counsellor that I ever directly influenced press coverage. Hard-nosed journalists are interested only in news and it is not often that an embassy can provide that.

The de Gaulle proposal was naïve and just possibly mischievous. The risk Wilson took generated the mischief and the consequence was that our relations with France were frozen in distrust so long as de Gaulle was President. But two and a half months later, de Gaulle lost a referendum on which he had staked his future, and he resigned.

Could the Soames lunch have been turned to our advantage? There is no doubt that Soames believed that his appointment had created an opening on the issue of Britain's relations with Europe. This was Wilson's hope. A diplomat rather than a politician as Ambassador would have been more sceptical and might have more insistently urged caution and on a broader front through his greater knowledge of the Whitehall hierarchy. The card might have been played more subtly.

But it is unlikely that de Gaulle's idea for a troika of France, Britain and Germany could at that stage have had a future. If his relations with Churchill during the War had been easier, he might have had more success with it then. In the subsequent twenty-five years, others – Schumann,

²⁹ Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook, Canadian proprietor of the Daily Express and the Evening Standard. Cabinet Minister in War.

³⁰ The Express rang the Foreign Office on a Saturday morning where as Resident Clerk I took the call while giving a party to watch the Trooping the Colour. The party was well advanced and I laughingly and in ignorance dismissed the story as absurd. The Express was not convinced and two days later the defection of Burgess and MacLean was admitted. I had known both vaguely

Monnet, Spaak among them – had made progress towards a concept of Western European Unity (in French always 'Union') that de Gaulle despised, but which it was too late to brush aside. In the referendum campaign he had been very erratic in his speeches. Possibly he had not given serious thought to his dramatic proposal.

Paris – the ambition of all Diplomats?

Few diplomats are fortunate to have spent nearly six years in Paris. I drew a lot from it. Save one element of the Soames/de Gaulle lunch story, I had made no personal contribution to history, no scar on the fortress of French opinion. I had come to know well Paris, but not to love it, and to see the springs of French foreign policy. I am unlikely to underestimate French influence or its methods of working.

But after more than five years, I was more than ready to leave. I felt that to remain there indefinitely, it would be necessary to embrace the Parisian way of life, its urgency, its competitiveness, and its insularity. It has a pattern that is wholly logical and consistent. To enjoy it to the full, it is necessary to conform to it. I was ready to leave.

Ambassador, Sofia, Bulgaria, 1970 to 1973

This proved to be one of our most enjoyable posts. It was a moral boost to be given a European embassy, particularly when the family, now being 11, 9 and 8, would have to be in boarding school wherever we were sent.

Bulgaria was in the final stage of socialism on the Marxist model. The state controlled everything though it had not abolished private ownership nor fully applied the maxim 'to each according to his needs, from each according to his talents'. The Bulgarians are inherently less apprehensive of the Russians than other Balkan people, and the Bulgarian Communist Party looked in all things to Moscow for a lead.

We diplomats hardly ever saw and never had any dealings with the Party hierarchy. We were confined to deal with the 'front office' of the State, the Government, usually the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or of Foreign Trade, and there was no hope of influencing them against the Party line they had to respect. The only personal contacts we could to some extent develop were with persons permitted to have contacts in the field of the arts. Professionally we could watch for signs that the first intimation of the demise of Marxism might appear in Bulgaria. Its economic failure was

evident in my time to the extent that change seemed inevitable, but the Bulgarian people, having had only a brief and unsatisfactory period of democracy at the turn of the century after five centuries of Turkish occupation, were unlikely to demand it. As it happened, change appeared unmistakably first in Russia and then dramatically in Poland and East Germany at the end of the decade.

Heads of Mission are (or were) expected to send their first impressions in the form of a despatch to the Foreign Office. I said that I found the face of Bulgaria naturally set for a smile, though ready to scowl at any intrusion into the Party's control of opinion, and ready to snarl when the Party felt challenged. I foresaw reluctant acceptance by the Bulgarian people of stagnation in economic and political matters with little resistance to the Party's grip. When I left three years later I could detect no significant change and chose not to send the usual 'final impressions'. It was clear that nothing was likely to be achieved under Communism.

We had to keep alert to the defence of our own security. Diplomats, especially heads of mission, were treated with respect but the Bulgarian Security Service was active. When the family went for a Sunday picnic with my Military Attaché, John Talbot, and his family, he was followed by one of their vehicles. When we stopped to picnic and to play football, so did they; when we made to move on, so did they. There was a narrow mountain road ahead and I arranged for John and his family to go off first, followed by my car, widely recognised as DT1, the Angliskiak Poslanik's car. The Secret Police were much exercised that John might elude them. They took alarming risks to overtake me and eventually succeeded. There was no point in resisting them at the risk of an accident. John was innocently engaged. But I had the opportunity to protest to the Head of Protocol against this intrusion into our privacy. After much prompting over several weeks, he offered the advice: 'if you travel less with your Military Attaché, you should have less trouble'

We had to assume that our conversation was 'bugged', and had to reserve any discussion of staff problems to walks in the mountains. We had to assume that the Security Police knew just whatever they wished to know about the private lives of all our UK staff, and could exploit any weakness.

I had a more direct experience of the Security Police's operations. We had in the Embassy a secure section to which access could be obtained only through a door with an electronic lock operated by a code. One morning as I was climbing the stairs to this office, a Bulgarian cleaner of the public part became noticeably agitated as I passed. Without uttering a word, she succeeded in drawing my attention to an iron security grille outside a window giving on to the staircase. It was apparent that one section of the grille had been painted in a very different colour. There was also a ladder outside

though this had gone when I brought the Head of Chancery and the Military Attaché to see. Security experts came quickly from London with a new grille and found that the painted section had recently been inserted and could be easily unscrewed. The irony was that, for all that, access would have been gained only to the public stair and the wrong side of the security door to the safe section.

Crossing the Iron Curtain

Before leaving Paris I had asked the Bulgarian Ambassador there to arrange for me to learn some Bulgarian. His Counsellor's wife undertook the task. We agreed that in the two weeks before my departure I could only pick up a few phrases. One I learnt while peddling around Paris on a bicycle (I can't think why) had a rhythm that seemed to fit the pedalling

Posvolete- mi da vi shte predstaviam, as sum Anglishiak Poslanik vf Sofia

(Allow me to present myself. I am the British Ambassador in Sofia)

'Useful when you arrive', she said. I saw myself attempting it with a click of heels, a bow, and probably a white glove. Austro-Hungarian social customs had left their mark well beyond their frontier.

The Iron Curtain dividing Communism from the democracies ran along the frontier between Bulgaria and Greece, along a wide river, the Struma, just north of the Kupel Pass. It was crossed by a long bridge carrying the road along which diplomats, but only diplomats, were allowed to bring food and supplies from Greece, or to go there for services.

Soon after our arrival in Sofia, Irène and I planned a victualling trip to Salonika where George at the Victoria Hotel was always helpful. While there it seemed wise to have our private car serviced. Of course, despite the well-meaning assurances of George, it was not ready in time for me to get back to Sofia for a necessary engagement, so I called for the official car to come south to the border to pick me up. Irène who was to follow when our own car was ready came with me north by taxi.

I left her at the Greek frontier post, no Greek taxi driver being allowed to pass it even should he have wished. This was NATO's frontier. Carrying my single but large piece of luggage I set off to walk along the bridge alone.

At the far end the Bulgarian flag was flying over a well-guarded barrier and lookout post. When I was halfway across, an armed soldier came out and called a challenge to me. I was about thirty yards away from him, presenting the unusual sight of a conventionally dressed man walking from democracy to Communism carrying a suitcase. I stopped and put my suitcase down. Now what?

Suddenly I remembered bicycling in Paris and the parrot in me called out;

Posvolete mi da vi

(Allow me to present myself. I am the British Ambassador in Sofia)

having no idea how to change the phrase either to be more military or more repentant. The ridiculousness of it made a strange contrast with the drama of the situation. The only response was a repeated challenge. I bawled out the whole thing again, and could do no other.

Beyond the barrier I could see – to my relief – my official car. It was a black Daimler, (from the Jaguar stable) the only one of its kind in Bulgaria and proud of its number plate DT1. It was thought by the populace to be a Rolls and was as such known throughout Bulgaria. Pointing at it as best I could at that distance, I was in desperation driven to yell: *Kolata-mi* (my car) *Kolata-mi*

Fortunately the fame of DT1 was known to the sentry. He dropped his guard and after a further wait in the middle of the bridge I was beckoned forward to the barrier where Vasil the chauffeur was able to identify me and I was allowed in.

My Bulgarian made little progress for lack of instruction and opportunity, but I remain grateful to the wife of the Counsellor in Paris, whom I met again when Margaret Thatcher as Minister of Education visited a school in which she was teaching English. I told the class her teaching could prove valuable.

Embassy routine

What made Sofia an agreeable post for us was the Residence itself. A 1910 construction for HM Minister and his whole staff, the Embassy had outgrown it, leaving it for the Ambassador and his family, with a fine garden and temperamental swimming pool that I was glad to make available to the staff and their friends, taking on the maintenance and cleanliness myself. With the house went butler, cook, chauffeur, gardener, and six assorted maids. The butler, Simo, was immensely efficient and ruled the roost imperiously. All were devoted to the house and what it represented as the life their parents had known and probably served in before the War. When needed, Simo would

call in others from other embassies, one of whom had been a valet to King Boris. No doubt the Bulgarian Government who tolerated this mafia was able to call upon it for its own purposes. I never had reason to think they had rendered anything significant.

In these circumstances, we entertained Michael Ramsay, Archbishop of Canterbury, with the Bulgarian Patriarch, and Margaret Thatcher among other visitors, the chauffeur's wife being called upon to wash Margaret Thatcher's hair.

On a visit in 1999, Claire wrote on Embassy notepaper that in our time the gates of the forecourt were wide open to the street, access being observed by one Bulgarian policeman huddled in a sentry box. When she wrote Communism was falling apart in Russia, and in Sofia the Embassy gates were firmly shut, operated electronically by a guard in a new shelter inside the forecourt while the pavement was patrolled by a pair of soldiers armed with extremely obvious rifles. *Glasnost* had arrived in Moscow; the Bulgarian security authorities had embraced electronics but, for a few months more, the Bulgarian Government did not know which way to turn.

In my time I once picked up a folder that had been thrown over those gates, probably at night, containing messages that the BBC were asked to use in support of a Bulgarian movement for democracy. I sent it on to them.

Minister and Deputy Permanent UK Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty organisation, 1993-1995

From deep inside the Iron Curtain to the organisation concerned with its western defence – where was I heading? Again the appointment surprised me. I had not got on top of NATO affairs when at Washington and had made no study of strategy. Was I regarded as a misfit or a plodding warhorse? I had at least been given a post previously occupied by evident high fliers and I had now been given the service rank of Assistant Under Secretary of State.

This was to be the first of three appointments in international organisations where increasingly international negotiations are now conducted. Bilateral diplomacy, except between the principal nations, was beginning to decrease in importance, or at least becoming simply a contribution to work at these international centres. I think I probably became involved in them, by pure chance: it is unlikely that my work at the International Exhibitions Bureau in Paris was noted in London.

The interplay of diplomats at different levels with different formations and from different traditions necessitates a hierarchical operation at these centres. At NATO the Permanent Representatives of in my day fifteen countries manned the Council at which all business was transacted, meeting at least once a week with military advisers and NATO permanent staff present. Unlike other bodies, these meetings were chaired not by a national representative but by the Secretary-General, head of the permanent staff, in my time the redoubtable Josef Luns who had been a Dutch Foreign Minister. Permanent Representatives could be accompanied by their own staff at these meetings for support but not to a weekly lunch in one of their residences at which the real work was tackled and deals planned.

Deputy Permanent Representatives formed the Senior Political Committee, supposedly to prepare the ground for the Council but having no equivalence of the weekly lunch and being more restricted by national instructions they had little scope to resolve issues. In my time, the only subject with which they were occupied was the long drawn out negotiations for Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions. Hideously complicated, and moving imperceptibly to the conclusion years later of the agreement on force levels in Europe and Russia that has replaced the Cold War. John Talbot was associated with this work as Defence Attaché in Vienna and secured for me an MBFR tie with the motive turning weapons into ploughshares.

There came a time in the summer of 1974 when talks between the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus broke down and the Turkish army invaded and occupied the northern part of the island. Greek forces engaged them. British forces from the sovereign bases there attempted to keep the forces apart. With Turkey and Greece at the Council table this erupted there. Ted, our Permanent Representative was away on leave climbing Kilimanjaro and replied to my telegram: 'you carry on. I am on leave and do not intend to return'. I admired him –and inwardly thanked him – for that. So throughout that crisis of several weeks, and with British troops defending strategic points and bases on the island, I was the UK Representative on the Council. It was gratifying to be fully accepted in that company and to be the representative of a country vitally involved in the dispute.

Council debates were tense, particularly when the Greek or the Turk was speaking on instructions. I was expected to provide information from our own forces on the ground. Inevitably I had to plead for a peaceful solution. I remember at the end of one morning session sounding a stern warning on my own initiative to the Turkish representative sitting beside me that once territory is occupied in this way, it is exceedingly difficult to get out. He pointedly replied that we should remember that in Northern Ireland. Deuce, and both countries are still there! Despite the tension in Council meetings, we all lunched together amicably once a week to advance business.

At about midnight a telegram arrived from the Ministry of Defence saying that Turkish troops were preparing to attack Nicosia Airport at dawn. British forces acting as peace-keepers were occupying the airport and would defend it if attacked. The Turkish authorities were to be warned of the consequences.

I telephoned the Turkish Representative and asked him to meet me at NATO headquarters at 2am. He came and I showed him the telegram and urged him to avert hostilities with our forces by warning Ankara. He agreed to do so. The attack did not take place. I do not know whether my action had been decisive, but the incident showed the advantage of having national representatives living and working together at international headquarters and able to exert personal powers of persuasion away from the limelight.

Communiqué drafting

A less satisfactory duty of the Deputies was to begin, about a month before the Ministerial meetings, to draft a communiqué to be issued at their end. It has become the universal practice in international institutions that the communiqué issued after the Ministerial meetings, ostensibly to give an account of their discussions, is in fact drafted by their officials during a period of one or even two months beforehand. Their officials work on the draft right through until the morning of the day of issue, usually ending in an all-night session.

At NATO this was an exercise in compromise among fifteen nations. It involved the Deputy Permanent Representatives, and usually they tried to include every subject the Ministers would be likely to discuss in terms with which everyone might be able to agree. Inevitably such communiqués are intended for public consumption and do not necessarily reflect the main substance of the meeting. With the civil war in Cyprus waging, the Ministerial communiqué after a meeting in Ottawa in 1974, which was certainly concerned with the war, said merely:

Ministers took note of the report of the Council in Permanent Session on the situation in the Mediterranean prepared on their instructions. They invited the Council in Permanent Session to continue to keep the situation under review and to report further.

No more explicit reference would have been acceptable to the two members in conflict.

At that meeting, a Declaration on Atlantic Relations was issued, intended as a boost for the Alliance. That text went through a similar preparation. I remember the draft in a final stage coming before the Council to try to resolve outstanding disagreements. As the time for lunch came and

went, we were stuck on the last sentence, where square brackets denoting disagreement surrounded equivalent words in the English and in the French texts. I cannot now remember the exact difficulty but it was probably about whether NATO should be described as 'having proved' or as 'being' or as 'promising to be' an essential element of peace.

Very tentatively, I suggested that the English text might say; 'continues to serve as', if that would help. This was accepted with relief, the Belgian representative, de Staerke, a man of considerable erudition in both languages, praised Monsieur Logan's ingenuity as inspired, and an example of the subtlety of the English language. We all went off happily for lunch.

This is a trivial matter worth mentioning only as demonstrating the complication of working in more than one language. The best example of the exploitation of the differences between English and French is Resolution 242 of the United Nations that is the origin of all efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Israel-Arab conflict. The Arabs insisted that Israel must withdraw from all the parts of Palestine they occupy. The Israelis could be brought to agree only to the principle of withdrawal.

All came to agree on an English text that reads; 'withdraw from occupied territories' which could mean some of them. That is sufficient to satisfy the Israelis. The French text could only say: 'se retirer des territoires occupés', i.e. all those occupied. The Arabs rely on the French text as having equal validity. That ambiguity being accepted by both sides has served to keep negotiations going for some twenty years.

And in discussion since the war of the organisation of Western Europe, Anglophones have been content to speak of 'Unity' while Francophones speak of 'Union' with its more concrete implications. 'Unity is strength' and 'Union fait la force' may be the same proverb but 'European Union' has gone much further than was implied by 'European Unity'.

Ambassador and UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, New York and Geneva, 1975-1977

It had been expected that I would serve out my time at NATO, but this conference had begun in 1973 and ran for longer than expected. In fact, it ran on for more than two years beyond my retirement. The appointment brought me to the rank of Deputy Under Secretary of State, as high as I could possibly expect to go, and probably higher than had ever been reached by someone who lacked formal higher education.

The conference aimed to codify maritime law – rights of passage, territorial waters, environmental matters, fishing rights and also as part of a call by the Third World for a New International Economic Order, to establish the remaining unexploited resources of the world as 'the common heritage of mankind. This latter focussed on the deep-sea bed and established a Deep Sea Authority in Jamaica to grant licences to exploit minerals there. So far, industry has shown little interest. A court at The Hague has however been set up to resolve disputes in other areas, of which the legal adviser to my delegation is one of the first judges, nominated by the French!

The Minister responsible for the Law of the Sea Conference tried to get my retirement postponed, but that was never likely³¹. It fell to Michael Palliser, now Permanent Under Secretary of State to tell me of that decision, and I was able to tell him I never expected otherwise, and to thank him for any part he may have played in the news I had received that same morning that I was to receive KCMG in the Queen's Jubilee Honours that year.

I was in New York when the List was announced, but the Delegation had been informed and had responded to the occasion. We had warned the family that they might expect a change of name, and they were relieved that this did not mean we were contemplating divorce! Irène was able to attend the Jubilee Service at St Paul's.

The 30th of October 1977 was to be my last day in the Service. The Conference not being in session, the delegation was dispersed. There was no occasion to say goodbye. At 5pm I cleared my desk and walked out alone. It had all been a most surprising career.

³¹ Retirement at the age of 60 is automatic in the Diplomatic Service. It militates against embarrassment, encourages vigour at the top and provides opportunity for the younger. And the retired diplomat still has a chance of further satisfying activity

Book Four

Reflections

and

Epilogue

Having been afforded a glimpse of certain moments of history during my career, some thoughts might have relevance in the future.

Truth and the Civil Service, tactics versus history in the light of the Suez affair and the Falklands War. Open diplomacy?

I was one of perhaps a dozen people who knew that, as Prime Minister, Eden, concealed the truth from Parliament and the public, and I saw him driven under pressure to lie. The speech in which he did so proved to be his last in the House of Commons. Three weeks later he resigned in poor health and ended a career that had had such a promising beginning, being regarded after the Second World War as pre-eminent in foreign affairs. His health had not been robust for some years before the Suez crisis, but it is my belief that it was the complexity of his approach to the conflict with Nasser that was the immediate cause of his downfall, the tension arising from the state of his health and consequent medication being a contributory cause.

He was determined to topple Nasser. Public memories of losses in the two World Wars made open military confrontation unpopular, even if the military strength to do so had been available, ready and in place. He had to proceed cautiously, and having mobilised reservists and finding that he had either to use or to stand them down, he was mesmerised by the Franco-Israeli plot as offering his chance to escape the dilemma. This added to opposition to military action the concept of alliance with Israel that at that time was unacceptable to public opinion in Britain, and in the Arab world on which the country and many others relied for oil supplies. His cover story of '*separating the combatants*' was never credible, but he was stuck with it when public and

Parliamentary opinion demanded the truth. For seven weeks, it was withheld it by prevarication in the House, Selwyn Lloyd having to support this line while Eden took a rest in the Caribbean. Ultimately on return Eden under strong pressure from Aneurin Bevan gave the direct lie: '*there had been no foreknowledge*'. The Christmas break saved him from further pursuit but he realised he could not continue and announced his resignation on grounds of ill health.

Fortunately, it was not known that I was privy to the truth and I was not questioned. Some half a dozen civil servants in No 10 and the F.O. were in a similar position. I had no doubt that it was no business of mine to unmask the Prime Minister. That was not the job of civil servants who have a pledge of confidence imposed upon them, a particular relation of trust existing between a Minister and his private secretary. That was the received tradition of the Civil Service at that time. When Labour came to power in 1964 there was talk of a public inquiry, and I realised that I might be legally required to appear before it, in which predicament I would seek the advice of the Head of the Civil Service.

In 1982 a civil servant took a different view of the duty imposed upon him. During the action to recover the Falkland Islands from an Argentinian invasion, Clive Ponting let it be known that he considered Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister, had not told the truth when in Parliament she had said that the enemy warship, *Belgrano*, was a threat to the Islands as though she may have turned away when sunk she could have been merely repositioning herself for a new attack. Ponting was charged with breach of the Official Secrets Act and acquitted but the judge said that Ministers alone had the right to define the public interest.

The course of events behind this emerged during TV coverage of the twentieth anniversary. The Commander of a British submarine had had *Belgrano* in his sights as she approached the Islands. As his operational instructions did not authorise him to open fire unless attacked, he continued to follow while he cabled London for confirmation that he should dispose of the vessel that he considered posed a serious threat. It was given, but by this time, the *Belgrano* had turned round and was heading in the direction of Argentina when the submarine fired and sank her with large loss of life. This caused much opposition at home and the PM was severely criticised.

At about the time that instructions were sent to the submarine, an Argentinian message to their fleet was intercepted. It gave instructions to all ships to head back home. The submarine was not told of this. Ponting, employed in the Ministry of Defence knew of it. The PM must have been informed of it, though whether she had it in her mind when she said *Belgrano* still represented a threat is not clear. To reveal the truth at the time would have made clear to Argentina that her

internal messages were being read instantaneously with evident effect on the course of the War. Ponting's action carried a risk in that direction.

Following the Ponting judgment, the Head of the Civil Service, Sir Robert Armstrong, issued a memorandum *Duties and Responsibilities of Civil Servants in Relation to Ministers* in which he said

It is not acceptable for a serving or former civil servant to seek to frustrate policies or decisions of ministers by the disclosure outside of government, in breach of confidence, of information to which he or she has access.³²

Earlier in February 1987, *The New Statesman* carried an article by Peter Hennessy entitled *Suez and the Ponting factors*. It recorded the following recorded interview with me:

Hennessy asked Logan how he reacted to Eden's denial of collusion

Logan: I felt at that moment his attempt to justify his intervention to separate the forces simply exploded.

Hennessy: Did you feel at all that you should have done what Clive Ponting in another generation did?

Logan: In those days civil servants were not expected to betray their ministers and I certainly did not feel this, no.

Hennessy: You don't regard lying to the House of Commons as a cardinal sin on the part of an elected politician?

Logan: Whatever I may think, it is, I think, for ministers to decide their own conduct in the House of Commons and for the House of Commons and the public to judge ministers on their performance. I think the idea that a civil servant should get up and say 'The Minister is not telling you the truth' any time that this is likely to happen is a recipe for chaos and certainly for disloyalty.

The Logan line was taken by the other officials to whom I talked.

I wonder how much longer this position can be maintained. There is talk of a Civil Service Act to regulate the role and duties of civil servants but it seems unlikely that it would materially change this position. What is more likely to erode it is the increased involvement of the media and of single interest pressure groups in political affairs, a tendency that is encouraged by the recent use of focus groups by political parties in the formation of policy.

The more outside bodies get involved in the day-to-day-business of governing, the further we get from the traditional concept of democracy as a system whereby 'good men and trusted' are chosen to go to Parliament and set up a government to run the affairs of the State, the process being renewed every five or so years. That set out from the premise that government is too difficult a function for the masses to follow and is best left to a few of the chosen to handle in their mature wisdom. It is not surprising that this concept, already weakened with the emergence of strong political parties in the twentieth century, is breaking down when so many entities outside government feel justified in demanding access to information and free to monitor performance publicly. As ministers increasingly pay attention to opinion polls and attempt to control opinion by information policy and 'spinning,' they have less time to set a consistent course for the nation's good, and to stick to it.

Ministers are now more exposed to scrutiny and challenge than in the time of Eden or Thatcher. Attempts at manipulation of the media lead to challenge that statements made were less than truthful. Stephen Byers, Minister of Transport, in 2002 tried unsuccessfully to escape Parliamentary accusations of falsehood by saying that there had been a misunderstanding between himself and his Permanent Under Secretary who was given no opportunity to defend himself. This must have stretched to the limit the loyalty on which the 'Logan line' was based.

Another strong and perhaps irresistible threat to the 'Logan line' will arise as civil servants become no longer permanent as a result of interchange with the private sector.

As for 'open diplomacy', it was Woodrow Wilson who proposed at the Versailles conference after the 1914-18 War 'Open conventions openly arrived at'. They are, if the Law of the Sea Convention, or the Kyoto negotiations are examples. But alongside, if not behind the scenes, compromises are always being worked out to open the way to progress. A compromise involves sacrifices on each side and they are at risk if they become known before the deal is struck

³² He was himself called upon to testify before an Australian court as to the British Government's actions over the 'Spycatcher' book about the Secret Service, and under pressure denied, undoubtedly under instruction, that a lie had

Life in retirement

30th October 1987 was a little over two months beyond the compulsory retirement age of 60.

We were fortunate to be able to contemplate living in reasonable comfort, and were less daunted than we might have been by a harsh circumstance affecting my pension. The three years or so earlier had been a period of recession with interest rates climbing to 15%. All Civil Service salaries were frozen. Some three years on, salary scales were revised to catch up and were backdated for all still serving. I had retired six months earlier and did not benefit – had I done so my pension, being one half of final salary, could have been half as much again. Civil Service pensioners are fortunate in being automatically raised by the annual rate of inflation, so that would have also been the greater being based on the higher starting figure.

I was lucky in not being obliged to find further remunerative employment. The prospects for doing so were not good and the official 'Professional Employment Register' was bare. But being suddenly idle each day made me look around for some commitment, and early on I acted as a delivery driver at H.R.Owen at Melton Court where I was amused to drive Ferraris and such to their depots round London. For just two weeks at £30 a time.

Gradually a succession of interests came my way. A colleague Roger Jackling who had preceded me at the Law of the Sea Conference, invited me to succeed him as Chairman of the British Council for Aid to Refugees, then involved in receiving Vietnam boat people who had risked all to escape the Vietcong. It had responsibility for housing and educating the waves allowed in by Government and received finance for that purpose.

There was little for me to do as adequate staff were employed. Two other agencies were also on the same task, one called The Ockenden Venture and the other the Joint Immigration Advisory Committee concerned with immigrants in general. All three dealt simultaneously and severally with the Home Office. I was able to bring them closer together to form the British Refugee Council that I believe survives still to concern itself with the far greater problem of refugees and immigrants at the turn of the century.

It was probably the realisation that an enormous and intractable problem might be ahead that curbed my enthusiasm for this job. The status of refugees is governed by a UN Convention of

1957 establishing the definition as a person likely to be in fear of persecution in his own country. My inclination to seek to apply this in a restrictive sense was not at all welcome to those whose motives were purely humanitarian, and the Home Office officials who might have seen administrative advantage instead saw political difficulty. That difficulty multiplied over the next thirty years with the fall of Communism and the realisation throughout the underdeveloped world that prospects for education and prosperity were so much better in Western Europe.

So I was glad to be invited to become Director of the Great Britain East Europe Centre (later to become the British Association for Central and Eastern Europe) in succession to William Harpham who had been a popular Ambassador in Bulgaria before me until 1968 and who had the idea of setting up a body to find ways of developing contacts with Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary that might escape disapproval of the ideological controllers of public life in those countries. It was funded by the Foreign Office and the Director and staff of two were paid. We ran a programme of seminars and exchange visits in such fields as agriculture, industry, the environment, law, and the arts. Hungary was the most rewarding but we also had the satisfaction of showing a Czech sheep farmer from near Marienbad the advantage of fencing, not only to herd animals but also to manage grasslands. He continually stopped in the Welsh and Yorkshire uplands to photograph examples of fences. We also had British and Hungarian lawyers discussing penal policy on a visit to a prison there, a real one but no doubt chosen with care.

The purpose on our part was to give visitors, most of whom we chose ourselves with help from our embassies, a breath of fresh Western air'. Some at least of our choices were fortunate. One of the Hungarian lawyers became a minister after 1989 when the Communists fell. Romania was the most difficult to penetrate, but after 1989 a Romanian visitor emerged as Foreign Secretary and told me that by not spending all the subsistence we had allowed him he had bought a computer that had changed his prospects, and on which his son had become expert. Computers as well as such routine tools as copiers were anathema to Communist control of public opinion.

In my capacity at the Centre, I was a member of the Council of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at London University.

Soon after I took on this work I was asked at short notice to go to Canberra, Australia, for a negotiation about the living resources of Antarctica, as the subject was closely related to the Law of the Sea. That pleased me as on retirement I reckoned that Australasia was one of the few parts of the world I had not visited, the others being South America, South Africa, Russia and China.

The Canberra session resumed in Buenos Aires. I headed the delegation there just when Ian was arriving for his gap year. An issue arose between me and the Soviet delegate that I enthusiastically hoped I might resolve in Moscow, but I did not. I returned via Japan, round the world. The South African delegate invited me to lecture at the University of Cape Town. Only China remains unvisited. Irène must form our link there, having been born in Peking, as Beijing was known in the West until recently, leaving at the age of two, but retaining her parents' love of the country

The Convention on the Living Resources of Antarctica was concluded in Canberra, and a permanent office set up to administer it in Tasmania, whose task is to monitor scientific data on stocks and to set and regulate quotas for catches. The food chain in Antarctica is critical: the seas swarm with plankton and vast quantities of a shrimp called krill, the food of squid and of whales and seals. Over-fishing of either of the first two imperils the others, Russians, Poles, and Koreans were already fishing there based on factory ships in or around the Falkland Islands.

I also led a delegation to preliminary discussions in Buenos Aires on oil and mineral resources in Antarctica, but that was to run for some years and another took over.

Then, quite by chance, Antarctica loomed again, this time truly so. The National Environmental Research Council maintains scientific stations at a number of places on the Antarctic Peninsula, manned by young experts on two-year contracts. Fatalities had occurred and the Council wanted to be sure that they had fully discharged all reasonable responsibility for the health and safety of their employees. Antarctica being *sui generis*, it was not the opinion of experts in that matter in the UK that they wanted, but the view of someone with knowledge of the politics of Antarctica. Would I go south with the Director of the British Antarctic Survey in the SS Bransfield on its southern summer visit to the stations and make my own report on the causes of the accidents and the inherent risks. We set off in February, the austral midsummer, but I had to be kitted out in full polar clothing.

We joined Bransfield in Mar del Plata after a short stop in Buenos Aires where the diplomatic chatter was when the Argentinians would recover the Falkland Islands. In the harbour of Mar del Plata, crews of Bransfield and the Royal Navy patrol ship HMS Enterprise exchanged visits with three Argentinian submarines.

Argentina had for years claimed the Falkland Islands as their own as the 'Malvinas', and on leaving Mar del Plata in Bransfield we had as was usual declared our destination as London, otherwise we would have had to ask for their permission and recognise their claim. As the Argentinian pilot handed over, he said: 'You are set on course for London – enjoy yourselves in the Malvinas!'

We left on 17 February and sailed south to the Falklands and then to the stations on the Antarctic Peninsula, spending a few days at each. The scenery was breathtaking, fantastic shapes of ice of every shade of white, and with the blue sea reflected on it. Seals, penguins everywhere, the occasional whale spouting. Birds of every size including albatross following the ship. We attempted a thrust into the Weddel Sea, where Shackleton's vessel was crushed in the ice, but the build-up of ice floes in front of our ship forced us to abandon the attempt.

The inhospitability of the continent was ever evident. The sun was strong enough to cause severe burn and the air temperature of about midwinter average in UK was reduced by windchill to a level causing serious discomfort. The wind hardly ever ceased and full protective clothing was always essential. The sea was cold enough to chill a man fatally in three minutes. At many stations the ship could not approach near the shore and had to anchor off, maintaining constant watch day and night for icebergs. We were conveyed ashore by whaler, a small boat or by rubber dingy. I was sometimes allowed by the very thoughtful but responsible captain to sit in the whaler as it was lowered, but otherwise it was thought prudent that I should gain confidence in my ability to manage descent by rope ladder over the ship's side.

While engaged on these visits, the Director received a report from his station on South Georgia (which we had not visited) that an Argentinian party that had arrived ostensibly interested in the salvage of scrap metal left behind at deserted whaling stations there proved to be an advance party of a military unit sent to capture the Island. We were the link in reporting to London that the Argentinian invasion had begun. We were then not far from an Argentinian station manned by their navy, which according to the Antarctic Treaty could not be armed. All parties to the Treaty have the right to visit any station for inspection. We sailed up to this one, announced our intention to come ashore in exercise of that right and were received and entertained in the spirit of the Treaty. We had also visited American, Russian, Chilean and Polar bases in the same way. It has to be said that in such isolation, the arrival of anyone can be a welcome interlude.

HMS Endurance was sent to South Georgia but was ordered not to land. A British airborne force recovered the island.

Our tour was ending and we had to return via Santiago, Chile, rather than Argentina, which meant the stormy crossing to Cape Horn and the Magellan Straits to Punta Arenas, where we left Bransfield to fly to Santiago and home.

My report was to take into account accidents that had happened before my departure and also one or two since return. One tragedy arose when a snowmobile towing a sledge fell into a crevasse. The two men, contrary to well known instructions, had been riding together on the mobile against the cold instead of travelling separately as instructed to distribute the load to avoid danger when crossing unseen crevasses.

Another occurred when two had taken a boat to an outlying station and the sea began to freeze earlier than expected. They were advised by local radio by their station commander to stay put until either a thaw returned or the ice became solid enough for travel over it. The station where they were was well provisioned. They probably became impatient and without reporting their intention left to traverse the ice and were lost.

I had known the boatman of this pair when he had taken me skilfully to visit a 1920's hut used by the early explorer Wordie, where his provisions though exposed remained fresh after 60 years as if in a refrigerator and with no infection in this cold climate to contaminate them. The stations regularly reported that they caught colds only just after visitors from the north.

I told the Council that provided they selected only young men³³ who showed a spirit of adventure, their regulations seemed adequate to discourage rash action. Since the stations occupied little more than a large football field, and were surrounded by tantalisingly attractive landscape, it would be unreasonable to prohibit recreational travel off the station. Those interested in facing the risks involved in going south were just as likely at home to indulge in motorcycling or hang gliding with their attendant risks. It was important to choose sensible and well balanced men, and to explain adequately to them the risks involved, as I considered was being done.

My experience of Antarctica is still very vivid. I am grateful to Dr Richard Laws, Director of the British Antarctic Survey, and to John Heap, an earlier 'fid' as those who have 'been south' call themselves and the FCO expert on the Continent, for their support and encouragement

All this happened during my time with the Centre where I continued until I decided in 1988 to retire from that after seven years.

Other than the assignments involving Antarctica, and the East Europe Centre, none of these employments carried remuneration. I was also similarly involved in others that did not take up much of my time.

Michael Hamond-More and Hugh Wybrew, both successive chaplains to the Embassy in Sofia, (I had been with him to Mount Athos) suggested to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Derek Coggan, that I should be Chairman of the Nikaean Club, the purpose of which is to provide means whereby the Archbishop can entertain ecumenical churchmen. My predecessor had dominated the Club for twenty-five years. I revised the Constitution to limit the Chairman's term to three (or perhaps five) years only. That did not work: my successor is still in office twenty five years later. The post is not onerous. It led me to preside over a large dinner for those attending the Lambeth Conference in 1981 in Canterbury.

It was a fellow diplomat and contemporary of mine at Tehran who caused me to become Chairman of the Jerusalem and the East Mission Trust, administering important funds raised in the nineteenth century for the support of the Anglican Church in the Middle East through the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association. This was no sinecure: it was not easy to reconcile the needs and expectations of the four dioceses, Jerusalem, Egypt, Cyprus and the Gulf, and Iran, with resources available, often for defined uses only; and when Jerusalem for many reasons expected the lion's share.

In this role, I visited each of the dioceses except Iran, where evidence of external support could have led to further suspicion by the authorities. I was present at the enthronement of a bishop in Jerusalem and of two in Egypt. I accompanied the Bishop of London, Graham Leonard, to Jerusalem and on to Amman and Petra.

Susan Belgrave came with us on the Petra visit. We were awestruck by the grandeur of the site, the entrance through the defile called the suk, and the breathtaking view from the High Peak over the Wadi Halfa. There, probably reflecting on the evocative altar on the top, I put down and forgot binoculars that Susan had reason to value.

³³ Only men were employed at the time, but women have been sent since

Canon David Elliott of St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, was an enthusiastic and inspiring guide on these visits. He liked to conduct a short Eucharist in the open on rocks among fishing vessels at Tiberias where Peter and other fishermen may have been called to be disciples. He arranged for Joya to sing in the Cathedral at a festival service when she and Claire accompanied me on one occasion.

He could fix most things, but not the Israeli security service. Our party was held for a couple of hours when trying to return to Jerusalem from Jordan. Stuck on the Jordan side of the Allenby Bridge for several hours, I urged on the official in charge that the party merited VIP treatment since there was a Bishop among us. I was quite ineffective. Later the Bishop tried: he told us later that he had urged attention because there was an Ambassador in the party. Before Israeli security, all are equal.

Michael Graham Jones, also a Tehran contact, invited me to join the Christian Organisations Research and Advisory Trust, the creation of Charles March (now Duke of Richmond) to encourage business methods among the clergy. It achieved little beyond inventing an oven for making Communion wafers in the vestry. This is hardly surprising: I could find none of my colleagues able to keep the books. It eventually merged itself with a body whose mantra was 'networking', and I dropped out.

I found that many clerics can be reluctant to seize on a new idea until they feel it has the endorsement of the Spirit, and that discussion, however conclusive, is not followed up effectively without that and becomes pointless.

Irène and I were invited by Lady (Marie Noelle) Kelly to her eldest son's wedding and reception in Arundel Castle. During a brief encounter with her among 700 guests, she said: 'I want you to become a Governor of St Clare's at Oxford'. The idea seemed no more substantial than the froth on the champagne, but the following Tuesday she rang to tell me that the Governors expected me at their next meeting in Brown's Hotel. With no university experience and no knowledge of Oxford I could not imagine that this would prove appropriate.

I went, and stayed, and was appointed Chairman within a couple of years, and stayed on the board for 18 years. St Clare's is a private sixth form college preparatory for the International Baccalaureate, now accepted for entry to universities around the world. The admirable Anne Dreydel, a paraplegic since a wartime accident, founded it in a different form in 1951. She was on the verge of retirement, and had run everything herself. The Governor's choice of a successor

proved a mistake and caused a revolt among the staff. Reversing that appointment I found a Vice Principal of a university to become Senior Administrator and put that side in order, the Deputy Principal eventually taking the top academic post. Before long, the administrator was due for retirement; his replacement proved another mistake which needed reversal, but we then settled down with a staff which progressed with pleasing academic successes and with a major programme of acquisition of premises and building. One of the new developments was named the Anne Dreydel Resource Centre. I had early on invited new blood on the Governing Body and convened it at the College. It was they who marked my retirement as Chairman by naming a student residence in the Banbury Road Logan House.

This was the most rewarding of all my post-retirement activities and I am eternally grateful to colleague Governors and to the staff for their vital support and encouragement.

I became Treasurer and later Chairman of the Brompton Association concerned with the preservation of the character of the local area in London.

When the communist government in Bulgaria fell in 1989, I was asked to be Chairman of a newly formed charity, Friends of Bulgaria, to provide humanitarian aid.

Shortly after I retired from the Service, the FCO invited me to join the panel of Special Representatives of the Secretary of State. I remembered that Selwyn Lloyd, as Foreign Secretary, had found antiquated the custom of going himself or sending his secretary to greet arriving Heads of State and Foreign Ministers of other countries. He appointed Sir Neville Bland to deputise for him, a distinguished retired diplomat who came to be highly respected by the diplomatic corps and much sought after by them on social occasions.

By 1979, visits had become so frequent that that single post had become a panel of four, who took turns, month by month, to be available in principle to go to airports, Heathrow, Gatwick, Northolt and even Luton, or to feature prominently at memorial services.

It seemed to me that the gesture lacked significance unless the Representative appeared to be in some sense Special. It was a charade, played in the VIP lounge while baggage was being collected. To give the impression that we had some special connection with the Foreign Secretary, we had to act the part. By and large, I think this worked, but my bluff was called on one occasion when sent to greet an E.U. Foreign Minister: - 'Mr Hurd asked me to greet you on

his behalf – Thank you. How is he? – He's very well - .Oh, he had a bad cold when he had dinner with me last night in Brussels'.

I enjoyed this chore for sixteen years, meeting scores of personalities. Africans were the most difficult, either surrounding themselves with their own entourage, or being quite unable to maintain small talk. The most understanding and appreciative was King Hussein of Jordan, a frequent visitor, who even seemed to show recognition from one visit to another. He was a master of royal public relations.

The funeral of Lord Mountbatten provided the occasion to meet in this way nearly all European royalty. I remember following a Scandinavian king as he retreated into the corner of the VIP suite apparently to avoid the crowd of his retainers and others, and the unexpected Grand Duke of Luxembourg engaging me in a long conversation, reminiscing on the British social scene, and giving me little opportunity to pay attention to the Duchess of Kent for whom I was sent and in whose flight he had arranged a lift.

I was probably the first in this country to be taken aback by the prominent birthmark, blood red, on the forehead of Gorbachev as I greeted him at the bottom of the steps when he descended from his aircraft on his first visit. An Australian Prime Minister asked me to arrange for him to go to the men's room without his suite knowing he had done so. The Czech President wandered off on his own for the same purpose and could only find the chauffeurs' facility, without complaint. With his plane needing to depart or lose its air traffic slot, I had to get Jacques Delors out of the depths of similar faculties at Northolt.

Paul Keating, Prime Minister of Australia and in favour of abolishing the monarchy there, caused comment in the British press by putting his arm around the Queen on a visit to Australia. He came to London to justify his policy to the Queen at Balmoral accompanied by his wife. A Lord in Waiting was present on behalf of the Queen, and he led the Prime Minister from the aircraft to the VIP lounge while I accompanied Mrs Keating. A large crowd of photographers, mostly Australian, defied the protocol and tried to bring us to a halt. Reaching the foot of a flight of steps, they stumbled backwards up them in some confusion. It was difficult for us to retain our balance, and instinctively I put my arm around the shoulders of Mrs Keating to steady her. When doubts about propriety occurred to me, I felt confident Keating was in no position to complain. I shared this thought with Lord Long, the Lord in Waiting. Later he told me the Queen enjoyed the story when he related it to her and that she had heartily approved!

An amusing experience deeply recorded in my memory is bidding farewell to the young King of Nepal on a Saturday morning in the '80s. (He was brutally murdered by a nephew in 2001). He was returning in his own plane and was about to board to take off at 10am when his pilot reported that the air-conditioning was not working. The King told him to fix it. That meant losing his slot in air traffic control. There was a strike of controllers elsewhere in Europe and a new slot could not be obtained for some time. He was alone apart from junior staff hardly daring to come near his Presence, and I was stuck maintaining conversation for three hours until a slot was allocated at 1pm, fortunately solving the problem of how I might arrange lunch for him. I tried several conversational subjects, but the one that ran the longest – for nearly half an hour - was the 'economic problems of milk distribution in England'! I had read an article on that in The Economist the day before. Having been not long before at Eton, he could play his part in this.

A similar situation was sometimes threatened with the Sultan of Brunei whose staff always remained at a discreet distance until some five minutes after arrival when they all suddenly advanced to invite him to prayers for a safe arrival, in which sitting beside him I had uncomprehendingly to participate.

The arrival of successive US Presidents presented a complete contrast. The U.S. Embassy controlled everything. 'Airforce 1' drew up beside the Royal Suite that was not otherwise used. As soon as the steps were rolled out a hoard of security men flooded down to occupy the surrounding area, and the Special Representative was hard put to it to stand his ground at the bottom. After a routine handshake, the President was led to his waiting car and sped away.

This contrast served to emphasise the extent to which this custom may have become anachronistic. There is perhaps increasingly less room for the routine of traditional diplomatic practice. I enjoyed keeping it alive.

Epilogue

If a divinity has been at work 'shaping these ends', I have good reason to thank those who have 'at his bidding' – whether consciously or otherwise – given shape to my 'rough hewing':-

- The late Colonel Muirhead outside the Mayflower Hotel, Washington

- The unknown who allowed late entry at Stoke d'Abernon, a flimsy excuse concealing the discreditable real reason
- My parents who laid the foundation, but let me have my head
- My primary school form-master who gave me rather more than a nodding appreciation of English literature
- Whoever it was who set my role in the War of 1939-45
- Those in the Foreign Office who took a chance over qualification for admission

And, the course having been set, most particularly,

- Irène who despite her experience of diplomatic life in her family, nevertheless consented to marry me, and who has contributed and put up with so much, until after my retirement she was free to make her own contribution in the world of art and history, for which she had been well equipped by then influence of her mother. She has played a large part in getting these ramblings on paper.
- Our family who have managed find advantages in a diplomatic existence and to build on them.

To them all, this record may serve as a sincere and grateful tribute, as it reaches

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