

BDOHP Biographical Details and Interview Index

MADDOCKS, Arthur Frederick (born 20 May 1922)

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British Diplomatic Oral History Programme

Recollections of Arthur Maddocks CMG, recorded and transcribed by Martin Lamport 16 February 2018

Early Life

ML: Thank you Arthur for agreeing to take part in this. We know you were in the Office at some very interesting times and no doubt have some fascinating reflections. Just to kick off, if you wouldn't mind telling us how you came into the Office. What was the path, the kind of royal Oxbridge route? You were in the forces during the war I believe.

AM: Yes, in 1945 I was in the army. I trained in the Armoured Corps and I was commissioned in the Armoured Corps in April 1943. I joined the 110th Regiment RAC which was in fact a mechanised battalion of the Manchester Regiment. By the time I got there they had already been reduced to a kind of holding regiment. I was simply about to be transferred to Italy or North Africa when I fell sick and ended up in the Armoured Corps depot in Catterick and then it was obvious that we were all going to be transferred to the infantry. When I had been at Oxford I had been selected to go to Bletchley and the Armoured Corps had got there first. But by the time I got to the Catterick depot the Armoured Corps were only too happy to see me go and so I moved over to Bletchley and I worked in Bletchley for 1944 – 45. At the end of the German war I moved over to a thing called No 5 Formation College, where we were giving anyone leaving the army a month's training in anything from carpentry to Russian. I was there to teach economics.

If one entered the Government Service one got out of the army pretty smartly so I decided to apply for the Government Service. For some reason I put myself down only for the Foreign Office. I thought the Home Civil service was likely to be too boring. I didn't believe for a moment that the 1943 Foreign Service Act was really going to change anything and I didn't believe that I, the product of Manchester and Manchester Grammar School, would have any chance of being accepted. And that view was confirmed when, in the first exam after the war the examiners totally rejected a friend of mine who had a very similar background, coming from a North Country grammar school and having read economics like me at Corpus Christi, Oxford. Technically it was PPE, but I did all the economics that was possible. So I went into the exam totally relaxed, knowing for certain that I was not going to get accepted and just enjoying it as a little change from army life. So I was totally amazed when they did accept

me. I was further amazed when I went to see Roddy Barclay, the Head of the Personnel department, who said they would rather like to send me immediately to Washington to join the Economic Section there, because I was the only person who had read economics in the group of entrants they had.

Roddy Barclay was further surprised when I said to him, “should I take my wife?” I think I was probably the first person to enter the Foreign Service already married. He said, “Oh yes. Although we think of you going for only six months, it’s quite likely to turn out to be longer.” And of course it did turn out to be two and a half years.

We set sail from Liverpool in May 1946, on the very day when bread rationing was first introduced into Britain, and we arrived in Washington. My wife was six months pregnant, which was quite a surprise to Mrs Jackling who met us at the Union Station.

Washington 1946-1948

So I entered the Economic section of the embassy and we had quite a lot of interesting questions there. What struck me especially was that, just before I had arrived we had negotiated the American loan and then just after I arrived we had to amalgamate our zone in Germany with the Americans because we could no longer afford to finance the imports into Germany. Soon after that we had to abandon our economic aid to Greece and Turkey, leading to the, so called, Truman doctrine, when the Americans took on that responsibility. And soon afterwards we had the Marshall Aid programme. And so my introduction to the Foreign Service was a series of demonstrations of our economic weakness. At the same time as we were acting in establishing NATO, establishing the OEEC and negotiating with the Russians. So in all the political aspects of life we were acting, as though we were indeed, a major participant in World affairs. That contrast struck me as being a fundamental aspect of our foreign affairs. It was not as widely understood as it should have been.

ML: Throughout our lives I fear that has been the case, hasn't it.

AM: Yes.

ML: So you started out under the Labour government in 1946. The Foreign Minister was?

AM: Ernie Bevin.

ML: Did you find there was much difference in foreign policy between Labour and Conservative?

AM: No. When it came to dealing with the Russians for example, Ernie Bevin took a very tough line, hardly different from the views of Anthony Eden, who succeeded him. One interesting thing, when I arrived in Washington the acting Head of Chancery was Donald Maclean. I had a bit of contact with him as he was looking after everything to do with atomic energy and at one time I was asked to produce reports on what the American press were saying on atomic energy. As I didn't see any of the telegrams on that subject I don't think my press reports were very much use. Apart from that, at the time Donald Maclean seemed to me the perfect ideal of a diplomat. His behaviour was impeccable, he was charming, he was friendly, he was amusing. He played tennis with me and we used to go to his parties. He just struck me as being absolutely the model for what I could aim to be.

Apart from that I was struck by the fantastic amount of talent there was in the embassy in Washington. My immediate boss was Roger Jackling. The Commercial Minister was John Magowan and Roger Jackling's next boss was the Minister for economics, Roger Makins. The exception to this was the Ambassador, Lord Inverchapel, formerly Sir Archibald Clark Kerr¹, who'd been a great success with Chiang Kai Shek in Chongqing and Stalin in Moscow, but in Washington he was really out of his depth because he was quite unused to having important contacts with journalists and politicians and so forth. The other thing that struck me was that they were all so very friendly and helpful. I had come straight out of the army where I was given commands and it took me a bit of time to realise that if Roger Makins said to me, "Oh, by the way Arthur, could you possibly do so and so," that was the equivalent of an order. So I was very impressed and very proud to have been admitted to this special circle.

ML: I imagine relations with the Americans were very friendly too, given we had just won the war together.

AM: Absolutely incredible, looking back. For example there was no security in the State Dept. I would simply walk into the State Dept. I might, as a matter of courtesy, have made

¹ Archibald Clark Kerr, 1st Baron Inverchapel GCMG PC (17 March 1882, Australia – 5 July 1951), known as Sir Archibald Clark Kerr between 1935 and 1946, was a British diplomat. He served as Ambassador to the Soviet Union between 1942 and 1946 and to the United States between 1946 and 1948.

an arrangement to call on one particular official, but having seen him I would quite likely and quite frequently walk along the corridors and knock on somebody's door and possibly enter there and have a totally informal discussion with him. At the time of the Berlin Airlift for example we were not terribly well briefed about what was going on, so I would call upon the head of the German Section there, a man called Jake Bean and he was extremely tolerant. He would suddenly find a diplomat asking him what the hell was going on in Berlin; because the details of the Berlin Airlift were organised in London in a meeting between the Head of the German section and the American and French Ambassadors. We in Washington were only on the margins of that. Plainly the State Department were fully informed, whilst we in the embassy were rather less informed. So I was pumping Jake Bean to provide me with information, which could have very well been got in London. This was just one example of the extremely informal and friendly nature of our contacts with Americans.

ML: Good, well that has continued, certainly at official level. You mentioned the World Food Board conference. What was that about?

AM: Well, the first director of the FAO, Sir John Boyd-Orr², who was a distinguished Scottish scientist made a speech in which he said that it was an absolute scandal that people were starving in some parts of the world, whilst in other parts of the world food was rotting away because too much was being produced. What we needed was a World Food Board, which would buy up the surplus food and give it to the starving multitudes. So a conference had to be called in Washington to discuss this. It was absolutely obvious from the beginning that nothing would come out of it because it is quite difficult to arrange to give away free food without disturbing the existing production and commercial system. On top of that, in 1946 no government had the money to provide for this sort of thing, apart from the Americans of course. Everybody else was busy rebuilding their countries and restoring war damage and improving education and so on. So we had this conference and we were represented by Harold Wilson, who at that time, I think, was the Parliamentary Secretary for the Office of Works. You could hardly find a more junior minister. He came supported by

² John Boyd Orr, 1st Baron Boyd-Orr of Brechin Mearns CH, DSO, MC, FRS, FRSE [1] (23 September 1880 – 25 June 1971), styled as Sir John Boyd Orr from 1935 to 1949, was a Scottish teacher, doctor, biologist and politician who received the Nobel Peace Prize for his scientific research into nutrition and his work as the first Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). He was the co-founder and the first President (1960–1971) of the World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS).

an expert from the Bank of England, who kept him fully and clearly briefed on why we could never agree to anything significant. On the diplomatic side he was advised by John Magowan, our Commercial Minister. What particularly struck me was Harold Wilson and I had quite a lot in common. We both came from North Country grammar schools, we both read economics at Oxford, we both married fairly young and had young children and Wilson was only six years older than I am and I had also, of course, been sympathetic to the Labour Party and voted for them in the 1945 election. But in spite of that there was absolutely no personal rapport between me and Wilson. Fortunately I think for me, because if I had been swept up in the Wilson regime later it would not have helped my career. But Wilson was determined to do a good job as the head of our delegation, so he was ready to take advice from the Bank of England expert and John Magowan on the diplomatic side and he really worked very hard and conscientiously and effectively.

ML: Well he got a double First didn't he? He was very very bright at Oxford.

AM: Yes.

M: And in the end nothing came of it?

AM: Nothing could come of it. Everybody had to pay lip service to the principle, but when it came down to actually doing something, nobody was prepared to do anything.

ML: There was a lot of hoarding and black marketeering of food in that period in parts of the world. Then you mentioned the economic troubles. We had to amalgamate the zones in Germany. I didn't know that bit of history at all.

AM: In 1945 Germany was divided into three occupation zones. We and the Americans agreed to give the French a zone, so there were four, three western and one soviet. The theory in 1945 was that the occupying power would be responsible for their own zone, but by 1946 it was quite clear that we simply did not have the dollars to spend on Germany and Germany did need imports of food and other raw materials, Germany being in an extremely broken down situation.

ML: And we had the northern bit, didn't we, which being industrial had presumably been absolutely flattened by the bombing. The Americans were down in Munich which had been bombed but not quite so badly.

AM: Yes, so we simply applied to the Americans and the formula was that the zones were amalgamated. That meant the Americans were producing the dollars to finance the imports to the British zone of Germany. I had nothing to do with that negotiation, but it was happening in the Economic section of which I was a member. That was the first of these rather dramatic demonstrations that we simply couldn't pay our way. That was followed by a similar sort of thing where we had been providing economic aid and military occupation in Greece and Turkey and we could not afford that. That occurred in early 1947 and shortly after that we had Marshall's famous speech at Harvard which led to the development of Marshall Aid.

ML: There was a very bitter civil war going on in Greece wasn't there, with the Communists trying to take over?

AM: Yes.

ML: Any other reflections of life in Washington. After the hardships in England during the war it must have been rather wonderful to escape.

AM: Absolutely. One of my main occupations was sending food parcels to my friends and relations in Britain. The other thing which might be of interest was the Berlin airlift, which began in the summer of 1948 and I finally left Washington in November 1948 and during that brief period I was responsible in chancery for German affairs. As I have already explained, the real organisation of the Berlin airlift was taking place in London and we were very much on the margin of it, but on one occasion the cipher room rang me up and said a most immediate telegram was coming in for the Ambassador on the Berlin airlift and would I like to read it. So I went off to the cipher room and read it as it came off the machine. Then I tore along the corridor to the Ambassador's office and was ushered into his office. This was of course Oliver Franks by this time. As I entered the office he was talking on the telephone to one of his children and there was not a paper or file of any kind on his desk. He finished the conversation with his child and took the telegram from me. Then he sat down on the sofa with me and read it carefully. And then he thought about it and then he read it carefully again and then he turned to me and said, "What do you think I should do?" The telegram, personal from Ernie Bevin to the Ambassador, said the American Ambassador in London had taken some view, I've forgotten what it was now, which Ernie Bevin didn't like and he was instructing the Ambassador to go and see Mr Marshall, the Secretary of State, and persuade him to change the instructions to the American ambassador. I had only rapidly glanced

through this telegram and I realised that Oliver Franks had already considered it rather more carefully than I had, so I simply said, “it seems to me you have got to go and see Mr Marshall as soon as you can and persuade him to change his opinion.”

Oliver Franks said, “Mr Marshall likes to go riding at four o’clock and if I prevent him from doing that he is not going to be in a very receptive frame of mind. And I think it is quite possible that Ernie might change his view anyway, so I think we might just leave it until tomorrow morning and see what happens.” Of course by the next morning Ernie had changed his mind and this brought home to me that, unlike the army, where if you get a command you tend to act upon it, in the Diplomatic Service it was quite possible for even humble members of the Service, quite apart from ambassadors, to take a somewhat independent view.

ML: “Masterly inactivity” is what I have heard it described as.

AM: The other thing that was amusing about Washington was the Presidential election of 1948. Everybody knew that the next President was going to be Thomas E Dewey and the only people I knew who had another view were our Labour Attaché and a friend of mine who worked for the Democrat National Committee. Everybody else knew for certain that it was Dewey and I think the demonstration of that was that we had a visit a few days before the voting from Denis Brogan, probably the leading academic expert in Britain on the United States. He gave us a talk in the embassy and said he had been on the campaign trains of both Dewey and Truman and he wasn’t going to talk about the campaign, because that was all settled and wasn’t of any interest. He spent his time describing what the Dewey administration would look like; who would be the Secretary of State and who would be the Secretary of the Treasury and what their policies would look like and so on. He gave an absolutely brilliant account of what we were going to be dealing with in the next four years. Two or three days later of course when the voting took place it was clear that we were misinformed. Truman got elected in 1948 to everybody’s surprise, except Truman’s.

Dewey was the Governor of New York. He had had a great success in the 1930s putting down gangsters in New York. He was a very cold blooded sort of man and didn’t have any kind of appeal, whilst Truman was totally different. He was a thoroughly natural and human person; quite apart from the difference in policy of course. The Republicans were identified with capitalism and anti trade unions: particularly anti trade unions. There had been an important bill called the Taft-Hartley bill, which restricted the rights of unions. That was one

reason why our Labour Attaché, being in touch with the unions, had formed this view that the Republicans were in disgrace with a large number of people.

ML: American unions were very vicious at the time weren't they, almost criminal?

AM: Well, I don't know, they were fighting for rights against pretty strong organisations. But they were much more numerous than they are nowadays and therefore quite important.

ML: Were there any other details or incidents about Washington?

AM: Tom Bromley was one of the colleagues, of course. His wife Diana later, I think ten years later, murdered her two sons and tried to commit suicide, which was quite a shocking thing for the Diplomatic Service.

ML: It was depression, presumably.

AM: Yes, she and my wife were quite friendly in the sense that I think they were both pregnant at the same time and I remember them sitting there and watching me and other people playing tennis.

ML: Gosh, that must have been a terrible shock for your wife.

AM: Yes, at that time there was very little help for the wives. No sort of organised help of any kind. It was simply assumed that, first of all members of the Service were not married until they were getting on towards the age of thirty or so and secondly that in any case they were sufficiently well provided for to look after themselves, which in most cases was reasonable, but there were exceptions and I think one of the problems for Diana Bromley was that she was partly Indian and I think that no doubt in Washington, which was still extremely colour prejudiced she might have suffered. But it was not in Washington that she committed these dreadful acts. It was I think ten years later when she was in London.

ML: So from there you were posted back to London. Travelling by sea?

Northern Department 1948 -1951

AM: We came back on a little Cunard ship called the Parthia. I joined the Northern Department. At that time it concerned Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. I was involved in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Both countries were, of course, by that time ruled by Stalinist governments. Relations therefore were pretty sticky, but in both cases we were trying to

negotiate agreements for compensation for British property holders who had lost their property through nationalisation or confiscation. In the case of Poland we made no progress at all because Poland could offer bacon and eggs and other agricultural products. The Ministry of Food was desperate to have these non-dollar sources of supply so we had really no influence at all on the Polish government. Czechoslovakia was a much easier case for us because the Czechs could only offer things like Christmas tree ornaments and Bohemian glassware and a few other things, so we did manage to achieve an agreement. What particularly interests me about that is the negotiations were really run by my immediate boss, Peter Wilkinson, who was a First Secretary. He had instructions from the Cabinet so, as far as I can remember, we could agree to accept £6,000,000 for the settlement and there came a time in the negotiations when the Czechoslovak delegation said, "well we have just received instructions and we can raise our offer to £6,000,000, but if you don't accept it today we shall have to go back to our original offer", which was something less. So Peter Wilkinson said, "That is totally unacceptable. We really must have £10,000,000," which is what we had come down to in the negotiations. "We cannot accept anything less than that." That was how the meeting broke up and when we left I said to Peter, "Don't you remember that the Cabinet authorised us to accept £6,000,000?" He said, "Yes, of course I do. I just have a feeling that if we hang out a bit we'll get a bit more." I think that this might have been helped by the fact that Peter understood the Czech language, and he hadn't revealed that to the Czechs. He may have picked up something listening to them. Sure enough, after that meeting the Czechs came back with an offer of £8,000,000 and we settled for that. All that was up to Peter's judgement and initiative.

Then we had the pleasure, quite unusual in the Foreign Office of seeing an Act of Parliament through the House of Commons. We got this promise of £8,000,000 from the Czechs and Southern Department had got a similar promise of some compensation from Yugoslavia. So we needed to set up a "Foreign Compensation Commission", by Act of Parliament, which would handle these claims. So when the draft bill was going through Parliament, I had the quite unusual experience in the FO of sitting in the House of Commons, in the officials' box, ready to brief Sir Hartley Shawcross, the Attorney General, if he needed any advice. I was extremely impressed that Hartley Shawcross conducted the whole exercise with extreme skill and without any sort of help from the officials' box.

Japan Peace Treaty

I went into the office in October 1950, thinking I was to continue to work on Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Head of Department called me in and said, “they’ve decided to split the Far East Department into the Japan Department and the China Department because we are about to negotiate a peace treaty with Japan and they want you to join it.” I said, “When?” He said, “Now”. So I walked along the corridor and joined the Japan Department. There were only four of us. It was quite extraordinary in 1951 when we were in the midst of negotiation, the Foreign Office was plainly very short of staff and the department was responsible not only for Japan and everything to do with Japan, but also for the Philippines and theoretically for the South Pacific, or the Pacific Ocean I should say. Fortunately most of the Pacific was colonial and really didn’t give us very much attention. But the Japanese peace treaty was a fairly substantial bit of work. It was essentially a negotiation with the Americans because the Americans, with the Korean War, which started in the summer of 1950, had suddenly realised that Japan was a friend, not an enemy and the sooner we made a proper peace settlement, the better. And so they took the initiative, but of course there were strong opinions on the part of the Australians and the Dutch and the British and the French, as well as various other important countries. On top of that there were forty or fifty other countries that were technically at war with Japan, having declared war in most cases just before the fighting ended. One of the main considerations for Britain was that we wanted to bring the Indians in. At that time of course India, governed by Nehru and recently independent, was taking a very “third country” line and wanting to get away from any hint of colonialism. In those days of course India was not a concern of the Foreign Office, it was a concern of the Commonwealth Relations Office. The other problem was the anti-Japanese feeling really that remained in Britain, understandably considering how some of our prisoners of war had been treated.

One interesting aspect of that was I remember we received a visit from Lord Hankey³; that was the original Lord Hankey, the one who had created the Cabinet Secretariat. For some reason he came to see me. We were so short of staff there was absolutely nobody to receive this distinguished member of the House of Lords except me, a mere second secretary at that

³ Maurice Pascal Alers Hankey, 1st Baron Hankey, GCB, GCMG, GCVO, PC, FRS was a British civil servant who gained prominence as the first Cabinet Secretary and who later made the rare transition from the civil service to ministerial office.

time. What Hankey had to say was, “for Heaven’s sake, don’t repeat the mistakes we made in the Treaty of Versailles. Don’t think of blaming the Japanese for the war, don’t think of imposing reparations. Make peace; look forward to the future, not to the past” which was in fact pretty much in line with the view in the Foreign Office.

One of the great strengths of our presentation was that the Deputy Secretary was Rob Scott, who had been in Singapore at the time the Japanese had taken over Singapore and the Japanese regarded Rob Scott as having been the Head of British Intelligence, which was in fact not at all what he had been. It was Rob Scott’s recommendations that we really needed to make peace without too many anti-Japanese provisions that must have been fairly persuasive in the Cabinet. The other dominating factor was that the Americans were going to make peace and they were not at all happy to impose too many restrictions on the Japanese and that placed a limit on what we might expect to achieve, not unexpectedly.

ML: And what form did the treaty eventually take? Presumably it limited them militarily and on things like atomic energy. In fact they didn’t want atomic energy anyway did they?

AM: I can’t remember exactly, but I think the restrictions were quite few. One of the main things we were pressing for was some sort of commercial obligation on the Japanese. I think in the end they were mostly obligations on their part to behave properly that is to accept the terms of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT. There may have been some other minor, temporary restrictions. There were also I think some provisions about compensation, but I can’t remember honestly.

ML: We didn’t seek any compensation for our prisoners of war did we? And that came up much later.

AM: I dare say. I don’t remember the details I’m afraid. One amusing incident I do remember was the American negotiators were headed by Dulles and there was an occasion when I attended a meeting with Dulles in the Foreign Secretary’s office. The Foreign Secretary at that time was Herbert Morrison and at the time a really large portrait in the Foreign Secretary’s office was of George III. Herbert Morrison tried to make a joke referring to this portrait and saying if it had not been for his stupidity we might not be negotiating with the Americans. Dulles had no sort of sense of humour and didn’t regard this as a serious remark at all. I don’t think it did us any good.

Germany 1951 -1955

ML: So then after the statutory three years in London you moved on to Bonn.

AM: Yes. The official headquarters were at Wahnerheide when I first went there. That was basically a Luftwaffe airfield, about fifteen miles to the east of Bonn. During my time there we did move into Bonn, so it's easier to refer to it as Bonn. The whole of the time I was there we were technically the occupying power. I was again part of the Economic section. The head of that was Humphrey Trevelyan, an absolutely excellent character. He decided that if I was to learn anything about the German economy, the best way of doing it was to take part in the de-concentration of the iron and steel industry and IG Farben, the chemical organisation. My immediate boss on the de-concentration side was a man called Brigadier Oxborough, who had joined the occupation forces in the days when it was expected it would continue for a very long time. He was very much of the old school, that the way to deal with the Germans was to keep them under and restrict them. By the time I got there in 1951 the whole attitude was changing of course. The deutschmark had been introduced, the Adenauer government was established and was seeking to negotiate the Bonn conventions to restore sovereignty to Germany and Oxborough was therefore totally out of sympathy with the whole thing. And he was not a very well man and after a bit he finally retired. But pretty well from the beginning he allowed me to in effect do all the serious work on the de-concentration programme. This was really interesting because I was just turning thirty years of age and I was negotiating with the State Secretary and the senior official from the Department of Economics and attending meetings with Erhard the Minister of Economics and Schiller the Minister of Finance and Seebom⁴, Minister of Transport. So I was having a really fascinating time and thoroughly enjoying myself.

ML: Did you have to learn German to conduct these negotiations?

AM: Yes. Well, I had done German at school, so I had some German and then I'd been on the German side at Bletchley so I had a bit more German. In 1951/52 when I was beginning there were very few Germans who spoke English, because during the Nazi regime the emphasis had been on the German language. Germany was going to dominate and spread a

⁴ Hans-Christoph Seebom (4 August 1903 – 17 September 1967) was a German politician of the national conservative German Party (Deutsche Partei, DP) and after 1960 the Christian Democratic Union (CDU).[1] He was Federal Minister of Transport for 17 years and the fourth Vice-Chancellor of West Germany in 1966.

higher language. Foreign languages were not really approved of, so the people in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spoke excellent English and there was the occasional official, who might have been educated in Britain, or travelled there and knew English, but the vast majority of officials I met, and I was dealing with economics, finance and transport basically, only spoke German; and this was an excellent way for me to learn German. Our main interlocutor on the German side was a Deputy Secretary, who came from Westphalia, which is where they speak clearer German than some other parts of the country and he was a lawyer. We had consecutive translations, so he would set out the German position in beautifully clear, well-argued German and that would be followed by an excellent interpretation into English by a young lady on the German side, who had learned her English from some Scottish regiment and spoke a superb mixture of Scottish English and German and so that really helped me a great deal to become really proficient in German.

ML: What exactly did “de-concentration” imply?

AM: Well, the problem was the German iron and steel magnates in the 1920s and 1930s had been important financial supporters of Hitler. They were so terrified of Communism that they thought Hitler was a good safeguard that they could employ for a time and later on get rid of him in effect. The other very important point was that something like half the entire German steel industry was in the hands of one particular company, Vereinigte Stahlwerke. Not only did they have something like half the German steel industry in their hands, but they also had a very large holding in the coal industry too, so it was a very significant dominating monopoly really. There were four or five other important steel producers and so before I arrived in 1951 there had been an allied commission law that took over the ownership of all these steel properties and organised them into, I think it was 20 odd, steel enterprises. The question was essentially, “what are we going to do with these 20 odd enterprises?” We still had the occupying powers to do what we liked. But with the Adenauer government in place, we obviously had to do it in agreement with the Germans, because it was accepted on all sides that the Higher Authority for coal and steel, which was created in 1950 or 51 was going to take over and we would then bring the de-concentration to an end and any further decisions on iron and steel would be entirely up to the Higher Authority in Luxembourg.

ML: This was the first of the European treaties, wasn't it? The European Coal and Steel Community.

AM: Yes. The theory was the so called Higher Authority, would have a supra national power and would be able to give orders to Germany or Belgium. It didn't happen of course, because when they tried to issue an order in Belgium, the Belgian government simply ignored it and that was the end of the supra nationalism really. But the theory was we would do our job in agreement with the German government and then the whole thing would be handed to Luxembourg.

There were different views on the Allied side. The Americans were represented by the Anti-Trust department of the Ministry of Justice and their whole view was that cartels are a bad thing, competition is essential; we must ensure proper competition inside the German industry. The French view originally had been, we want to do as much damage to Germany as we possibly can, but by the time we got to 1951 they had accepted that this was no longer feasible and that they really had to come up with an amicable arrangement and that would be done in Luxembourg. On the British side it was, well, we just don't care really. We think the Americans are a bit mad with their belief in their anti-trust affairs. In theory we quite liked the idea of competition, but in practice we had some doubts. The one thing that does bother us is Krupp, because Krupp is a word that everybody in England knows. He has after all been condemned as a war criminal and sentenced to the loss of his entire property. Before 1951 the American Commander-in-Chief in Germany had decided to simply abolish that judgement and so from then Krupp was the owner of iron and steel and coal and other enterprises. And it was plain that when we finally published our de-concentration plan it would be clear to everybody in Britain that Krupp was still a millionaire and we had done nothing to reduce his fortune. In fact by de-concentration we had actually improved it, because, under the American system if you compel someone to do something under the de-concentration law, you can't at the same time charge him a tax. And so this meant that Krupp could move certain assets to members of his family without paying any transfer tax. We were really fortunate, because by the time we did publish the Krupp de-concentration plan in March of 1953, it happened to coincide with the news that Stalin was dying. So if the headline was Stalin on his death bed, the second headline was that Krupp was a millionaire, if not a billionaire. So the negotiations were really led by the Americans, with the British and the French following along, but we still had to agree on the details.

ML: You can look back on that with hindsight and think that it was all pretty successful; at least from the German point of view. They did very well by the 1960s and 1970s, whereas we floundered along in our usual way.

AM: The whole thing was based on a misconception. The theory was, and this was of course why the Higher Authority in Luxembourg was created, the theory was that coal and steel were the “Commanding Heights of the Economy” I think was the phrase at the time, but it was absolutely plain that if you wanted to make a good investment in 1950 you’d be well advised to get out of coal and steel and into almost anything else. The one person that did that was Mr Flick. There was another big enterprise in the iron and steel business, run by a wealthy man called Flick and he sold out and went into modern technologies.

The de-concentration of IG Farben was also quite hotly disputed. It was of course an extremely big, powerful concentration in the chemical industry. Amazingly, more than half its assets were in the Soviet zone or Poland, at least not in the western zones. But even so, out of the IG Farben assets in the west we created three big companies. One was Bayer at Leverkusen, just outside Cologne: one was Höchst, just outside Frankfurt and BASF, [Badische Anilin und Soda-Fabrik was founded on 6 April 1865 in Mannheim, Baden by Friedrich Engelhorn.] The main dispute with the Germans was what other assets we would add to each of these three companies. There was for example the Agfa camera works. Were they to be added to one of these three companies, or were they to be established separately? Another was Chemische Werke Hüls [The Hüls company began as Chemische Werke Hüls GmbH on May 9, 1938, in Marl]. Were they to be added to these companies or not? Another was Degussa [German market leader for trade in precious metals.] In all cases, of course the Americans, supported by the French and the British wanted to establish those companies separately and in all cases the Germans wanted to put them together. In the end some kind of agreement was reached, I’ve forgotten exactly what. I do remember that the final session took place in the offices of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Economics, a man called Westrick, who during the war had been the boss of the aluminium business in Germany. We sat in his office throughout a very hot summer’s day provided with sandwiches at the appropriate time, until eventually we reached some sort of settlement. The result was that we liquidated IG Farben as a company and established these different ones, viz Höchst, Bayer and BASF as separate companies, which have flourished extremely in Germany since then.

We also, apart from de-concentration, had a de-cartelisation operation. In other words Germany had really invented the whole business of cartels, where what were supposed to be independent companies get together and regulate prices or conditions of supply and other restrictive practices and the American view, of course, was that these practices were to be

condemned. So we had the authority to investigate companies. It happened that I, as a young man in the Diplomatic Service, had the power to order any German company to supply me with any information about their activities that I required for my de-cartelisation activities. In practice by the time I got to Germany in 1951, the whole operation was coming to a grinding halt: we were not taking de-cartelisation really seriously. But we still did attempt to de-cartelise the odd activity. I remember we had one that was concerned with paper bags for example. Another one was concerned with furniture removal; that sort of thing, but I wouldn't say they were particularly effective.

Then another thing I was involved in was the Berlin stockpile. After the Berlin air lift of 1948/49 it was decided that in order to forestall another attempt of the same kind by the Soviets it would be advisable to have at least a six months' stockpile in Berlin. So a great supply of food and fuel was financed by the German government and we, as the occupying powers, had a committee in Bonn which supervised this and maintained it. I wouldn't say that it was a particularly onerous part of my duties, but it was quite an interesting one.

Then, towards the end of my time, after all this work that was in the Economic section, Charles Johnston, who was Head of Chancery, decided it was high time I moved over to something more interesting and so he got me involved in the 1954 conference in Berlin. We had a four power conference meeting the Soviets, together with the French and the Americans and the British of course. This was one of those series of meetings that took place at four power level with the theory that we would agree on the continued administration of Germany. In practice it was obvious by 1954, if not much sooner, that we were never going to reach any agreement with the Russians. So although we had a very distinguished collection of ministers and officials at this conference, nothing came out of it except an agreement that we would negotiate a peace treaty with Austria. That was, as far as I know the only useful conclusion from that meeting.

ML: It must have been a fascinating time; the start of the cold war, all the intelligence gathering, people being swapped across the border. How did you find Germany? My parents were there at a similar time and were horrified at the destruction. Of course there was destruction in Britain, but nothing like in Germany.

AM: Yes it was, it was very dramatic. For example if one drove from Bonn down south towards Munich, every time you came to a river valley the bridge would have been destroyed and so the motorway would come to an end and you would have to go on minor roads to

some sort of primitive river crossing and then up the other side to join the motorway again. So in those days if we went skiing, as we did, near Garmisch Partenkirchen, there was no prospect of driving there from Bonn in a day. We would stay usually at Ulm, which was just short of Garmisch because of all the delays. And if one went to places like Dusseldorf and Cologne the destruction was quite extraordinary.

On the other hand it was difficult to maintain any anti-German feelings at that time. One met a whole lot of Germans, some of whom had undoubtedly been working in various ways for the Nazis, either as enthusiastic Nazis or just going along because there was not much option and it was quite difficult to feel any antagonism. In most cases one could only feel sympathy for the sufferings they had endured, particularly after the war and admiration, of course, for the hard work they were putting in to rebuild Germany.

When I got there in 1951 it was not at all clear that Germany was going to be a success. It was only I think in 1949 or 1950 that Germany had encountered a serious balance of payments problem and had to be refinanced by other countries. The economic wonder was only just beginning. The graphs they had in the Ministry of Economics were only just beginning to move upwards. There were a whole lot of problems. It was not obvious what their iron and steel industry was going to look like: it was not obvious how their coal industry was organised, let alone their chemical works. So there were a whole lot of doubts about whether this was going to be a success. And there were also political problems. It was not plain that Nazism had really been got rid of. Kirkpatrick, our first High Commissioner had used his powers as the occupying force to impose restrictions on what he understood to be Nazi type political groups. On top there were a good many German refugees from Eastern Europe, from Silesia, who were still yearning to go back to the territories they had lost. The Minister of Transport, for example, Seebohm, had in his outer office maps of the lost territories of Silesia and other areas, which of course were then Polish. And there was a whole political party, of the refugees and those who had lost their homeland. So there were a whole lot of uncertainties about the future of Germany.

ML: When did the mandate end?

AM: This was basically the Bonn Conventions. That is another really quite complicated story. When I got to Germany in 1951 we were busy negotiating the Bonn Conventions, which it was intended would restore sovereignty to Western Germany as far as that was possible. The problem here was that in order to maintain ourselves in Berlin, we had to

maintain the fiction that we were still running an occupation regime. Otherwise the Soviets would say there is no reason for you to be here because you have transferred all your powers to the Germans. At the same time we wanted in effect to say to the Adenauer government, get on with it, it's yours now. I remember a very important discussion took place in Paris in the NATO headquarters, which at that time was in the Palais de Chaillot, temporary buildings just below the Trocadero, where it was left to ministers to decide how we could find a formula to cover these two opposite views. At one point it was Dulles who produced some form of words and everybody agreed that was it. So we then adjourned for dinner and it was left to officials to come back after dinner and put this down into appropriate treaty language. We returned about 10 o'clock at night and all looked at each other and said, "now what exactly did Dulles say?" Of course nobody had taken a note of it. Fortunately the NATO secretariat said, "we've got a recording". So they produced this recording and whatever the wording was it was either transcribed literally or slightly amended and it appeared in the treaty which somehow manages to transfer essential responsibilities to the Bonn government without prejudicing our status in Berlin.

Then the other aspect of the Bonn conventions is that the original discussions that took place in 1950/51/52 were based on the assumption that the European Defence Community would come into force. This was the next proposition after the Coal and Steel Community. But it must have been in 1953 or 1954, I've forgotten which, that the French assembly finally decided not to ratify this thing. So we then in the autumn of that year had a desperate renegotiation and it was that crisis that compelled the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden to undertake that we would commit a certain number of troops to be stationed continuously in Germany. Now that provided the adequate guarantees for it to go ahead, but we still had to revise in certain respects the Bonn Conventions, which had been dependent upon the European Defence Community.

ML: That was in addition to NATO, because NATO had already been set up by then hadn't it?

AM: Yes. I can't remember exactly why, but it was simply in the text of the original draft that there must have been some references [to the European Defence Community] and it also meant that if we were going to get these conventions finally drafted and presented, we had to tie up all the other loose ends. I remember there was a whole section of Bonn Conventions that related to de-concentration and I was very much involved in negotiating all that

stuff. We had a frantic two or three weeks of negotiation, it must have been in November of that year. Eventually we did achieve that. I was flown over to London with the draft we had agreed and then to Paris, where we signed the agreements in the Quai d'Orsay.

ML: Even though they were known as the Bonn Conventions, they were signed in Paris.

AM: That's right. But they came into force only after I left Germany. I left Germany in April 1955, certainly '55 and so they must have come into force after then 1955 or '56; whilst the original intention was that they would come into force as early as 1952 I think: that was the hope. Because of all these delays and complications, largely because of the French, before the French finally vetoed the defence community there had been long delays. It was only once Mendes-France⁵ became Prime Minister that the French Assembly was presented with the final question, Yes or No.

ML: Can you remember what in principle was the French objection? Because they are still talking about European defence cooperation aren't they in the EU context, so it has never gone away entirely.

AM: I think it was simply the old feeling that it is not very long since we fought against these Germans, we really can't have a combined army; it's too far.

ML: So after that you were sent off to Bangkok to decompress.

Bangkok – ECAFE 1955-1958

AM: Well, again my main job was on the economic side. I was representing us on a thing called the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, usually abbreviated to ECAFE.

ML: This was essentially trying to reconstruct that region?

AM: Yes, it was an organisation that included everybody from Japan to Pakistan. It did not include Iran, it did not include China except insofar as Taiwan represented China as part of the United Nations. It was an organisation staffed largely by Indians and Chinese, with a fair

⁵ Pierre Isaac Isidore Mendès-France, known as PMF, was a French politician who served as President of the Council of Ministers for eight months from 1954 to 1955. He represented the Radical Party, and his government had the support of the Communist party. His main priority was ending the war in Indochina, which had already cost 92,000 dead, 114,000 wounded and 28,000 captured on the French side.

mixture of other countries, Dutch, Americans, Australians and so on. We had conferences in Japan and India and various places, so for me it was an education in the whole area. I had never been east of Germany before, so it was quite instructive.

The main issue was basically economic development and we had all kinds of economic experts who would come and discuss these problems, so again professionally it was interesting to me. I don't know that we ever achieved anything very much.

Apart from the ECAFE there were also other UN organisations in Bangkok. There was the Food and Agricultural organisation, the regional headquarters of UNICEF, I think there were various other ones, but I don't think they gave me very much work to do. Apart from that we were also running a very small aid programme along with the Colombo plan. It was so tiny, especially compared with the American aid programme it was hardly worth anything at all. We also had SEATO based in Bangkok and there was an economic committee of SEATO which I would attend now and again. The South East Asia Treaty Organisation was an American idea of Mr Dulles that, just as we had NATO guaranteeing the security in Europe, we ought to have one in Asia, but the only Asian countries that joined it were Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines. India, of course would not; Malaysia at that time was a colony anyway, China was out of the question and the French territories did not accept the idea. We had the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand as members and there were only three Asian countries, so it was a pretty ridiculous organisation. I had nothing to do with the military side of it. The economic side of it was even more ridiculous because the ECAFE was a much wider much better organised economic organisation for serious discussion anyway, whilst the SEATO economic committee was a total farce. It consisted mainly of the Pakistan delegate demanding more aid for Pakistan and this was happily diagnosed by my Australian colleague who realised the Pakistan delegate was very much more interested in visiting the Thai sexual activities than he was in anything else. So the Australian, who was himself an expert in these matters, organised a series of expeditions and dinners for the Pakistani, which meant that by the time we got into the meetings the next day, the Pakistani, who was sat next to me in the organisation would simply pass me his brief and say, "tell me Arthur, can you make head or tail of this?" The Pakistani brief would be inches deep. The headquarters in Karachi simply included every document on every subject they could think of and handed it to the poor representative to work out what he was to say, so economic committee meetings were just a total waste of time.

ML: My dates are a bit hazy, but this must have been just after the French had packed up in Vietnam and the Americans were getting involved, so did you see that disaster in the early stages?

AM: No, I was there in that peaceful interval. The French had got out of the countries that were now theoretically independent. They had still left behind a whole lot of French officials, fortunately. But the civil war had not started in Vietnam. The North were not fighting at that time. It was possible for us to simply drive across the Cambodian border into Angkor Wat and the rest of it.

ML: That's interesting. I didn't realise there had been a peaceful interval.

AM: I was there from 1955 to 1958, three years.

ML: It must have been a marvellous time to travel around that part of the world.

AM: It was. There was nobody in Angkor Wat.

ML: So after that less intense period you came back to the OECD, what was it called then?

Organisation for European Economic Cooperation 1958 - 1960

AM: The Organisation for European Economic Cooperation, OEEC. What had happened was when the Americans launched Marshall Aid, they said we are prepared to help Europe, but only if Europe comes together. Part of the getting together was this organisation for economic cooperation in Paris. It was very much an Anglo-French organisation. The headquarters were in Paris, but the permanent chairman of the Council was a British ambassador. That's what it was when I arrived there. By the time I arrived the organisation had really fulfilled its purpose. Marshall Aid was coming to an end. European cooperation had been very much strengthened and the European payments system had been established to allow the European countries to trade with each other without bothering with the dollar and a lot else had been improved and really the work had been completed. So the time had come for the organisation to cease, but the Americans said no, we want to keep it going because it is the only organisation where we the Americans can meet all these European countries, so we want to reorganise it. Under the old system the Americans were simply observers, outside, but under the new system which was called the OECD the Americans and other non-European countries were allowed to become full members. So part of my work during the

two years I was there was taking part in the negotiations to convert the OEEC into the OECD, admitting the Americans.

The other thing was, “we’ve finished with Marshall Aid, what the hell are we going to do in this new organisation?” We could obviously go on discussing economic policy, that was plainly the centre of the work, but apart from that it was decided that science was going to be the great thing. We were going to make a real big thing of encouraging scientific research and we had a very enthusiastic man called Alexander King, who came from the DSIR, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. He believed a lot could be done on the science side, so science became a major target. By the time I got to the OECD in 1977 it was absolutely plain that this had been a poor idea. Science was gradually fading away because scientists always know who their opposite numbers are. If the man happens to be in Osaka or Vancouver, no problem, you communicate with him. You do not need the OECD in Paris to put you in touch.

The other great thing whilst I was in Paris was the admission of Spain. This was also quite interesting because Franco had been in charge for 20 years by then and he ran a very authoritarian regime with virtually nothing in the way of rights for union organisations and all kinds of restrictive practices everywhere. The idea of admitting Spain to the OECD was quite revolutionary. It was the first step to admitting that Spain had any claim on being treated as a decent country. So it was quite controversial and quite difficult on the actual negotiations. If you were trying to impose on Spain what we in the West would regard as normal rights for citizens to organise themselves you were coming up with strong opposition from Madrid. It was also uncertain whether the Franco government would observe these requests and demands if they were admitted, so the whole thing was regarded with suspicion on many sides. When it was all settled I produced a draft despatch for the Foreign Office, describing it all in which I expressed these doubts and suspicions. It went up to the head of the delegation, Sir Hugh Ellis Rees, who was himself a Roman Catholic and had served in Madrid during the war I think as the Treasury representative. He threw away my draft and produced a totally different one along the lines of, “Spain is one of the essential parts of European civilisation. It only makes sense for the organisation that claims to represent Europe if it has Spain as a major member, so here we are, we have at last achieved this great thing” with hardly a mention of any suspicions or doubts. Of course he was right. It turned out that this was a very important step in Spain’s reform after the Franco takeover.

ML: By this time your family must have been growing up and Paris was a great place to be I should think?

AM: I was working at the delegation to the OEEC. I did start out at the Embassy because my original appointment there was to deal with a thing called COCOM, the Coordinating Committee, which was designed to impose restrictions on exports to the Soviet Block. But that proved to be a fairly small job, so I moved over into the delegation proper and did these other jobs. When I first arrived I had an office in the embassy but then I moved over to the delegation, which was in offices just across the road from the embassy. As far as my family were concerned, my kids when we were in Paris were in their teens and they thought Paris was a dreadful place. It was very difficult to go swimming or kicking a football or anything of that sort. They were just beginning to think it might be of some interest when we were transferred back to London.

ML: Then you came back to the FCO, Personnel and Security Departments. You said you were not going to say very much about that.

AM: I am quite happy to.

ML: Well anything on the internal workings of the Office in those days, or any particular incidents. Wasn't that the time of the great spy scandals?

FO Personnel and Security Departments 1960-1964

AM: Very much so. I think I spent about a year in the Personnel Department, then I was transferred to the Security Department. That was very much because of spying and security problems with personnel. Because it was revealed, I can't remember which enquiry, that the positive vetting system, which had been introduced some time in the 1950s, middle '50s I suppose after Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess disappeared, had not been properly completed in the Foreign Office. There were I think several hundred cases that had not been settled. So I was transferred to the Security Dept, mainly to look after this and do something about it. That was quite interesting because of the large number of cases that had not been settled, a large part of them were that the file had been left because some further inquiry had to be made or somebody's signature had been required, but it had not been available and the file had been put away, all kinds of trivial things that did not really involve a security question, so those could be settled. Then there were a whole lot of others that did involve serious problems. There was a question of a man who had been convicted of bigamy for

example. This had been discovered only during the positive vetting, so he had to be got rid of. And other similar cases where the decision was quite plain what it should be and it had not been taken. And then there were a whole lot of other really difficult uncertain cases, where it was a matter of deciding whether further enquiries could be made and whether any further enquiries would help. You were still left with an uncertainty: should you throw somebody out of the Service because of suspicion, or was that grossly unfair to him? There were a lot of quite difficult cases of that kind. We also had entirely other cases. I was at this time the Assistant, the No 2 in the Dept. We had an MI5 Officer who was a member of the Dept. He was extremely good at interrogations, which were all done by him in a very gentle sort of way. He was a very subtle sort of interrogator and he was a very good adviser of course on what we should be doing and how MI5 could, or could not help.

Apart from that we had other questions. For example, whilst I was there, we had a problem in Djakarta where for some reason the Indonesian forces had broken into the embassy and taken it over. As the Indonesians had entered the premises, the people in the cipher room and the registry had managed to close the strong room door and turn the combination lock. When we got back into the building, I think it was three weeks later, or something like that, the question was had they managed to open the strong room door? The combination lock was an approved lock that had been designed by the locksmiths that we had in the Foreign Office. There was no sign on the lock whether it had been opened or not. It was a matter of judgement. MI6 of course had doubts about the security of our lock and were convinced that the Indonesians, with a bit of Russian help, must have fiddled it and got into the strong room. Our own locksmiths, who had of course designed the lock themselves, naturally took the opposite view. So in effect it was left to me to make the judgement whether they had in effect got in or been kept out. I decided that they had not got in. I based that on the fact that the Ambassador at the time was Andrew Gilchrist. He was a very outspoken forthright Scot. In his secretary's office the Indonesians had found in his out tray one of his telegrams describing Sukarno or Suharto, I always forget which was which, anyway the behaviour of the boss in Indonesia which Andrew had described in his usual blistering language. [Probably Suharto, given the date] The Indonesian press had publicised this letter, showing the extraordinary prejudice and misunderstanding of the British Ambassador there. It seemed to me that if they had managed to get into the strong room they must have found all kinds of other letters by Andrew and other documents which would be equally worth publishing in the press as far as they were concerned. And they had not done

so, so I took that for as good proof as one could really get that they had not in fact got inside. That was typical of the kind of question that I had to judge the whole time. They were questions to which the answers were quite uncertain, yet something had to be decided. Are we going to send Martin Lamport to Moscow on this transfer despite the fact that we have got all this dreadful evidence against him? Or shall we deny him that chance. He wants to go to Moscow, he has got excellent Russian and so forth. There must be literally hundreds of documents in the archive which say, yes, there is no security objection to the transfer of Mr So and So to Moscow or Warsaw or Prague or somewhere and no doubt a certain fraction of those must have turned out to be in fact incorrect.

ML: Was the, I think it was called the XQV 50, reporting system operating? Whereby once a year or so you were required to write a security assessment of people working for you, which obviously went confidentially to Security Department and was not seen by the individual, so that you could, if you had serious concerns about somebody, put them down on paper in the knowledge that they were not going to be ever read by the individual concerned.

AM: No, there was no such requirement. You did have confidential reports of course, which were not read by the subject. There was no obligation to tell the person you were reporting on what was in the report. I think there was almost certainly somewhere a sort of vague obligation that if you had suspicions about someone then you should report it.

ML: Was the performance report confidential still in those days?

AM: As far as I remember; there was a requirement to report each year on the officer's performance; I don't think there was any obligation to tell him what was on it. There may have been, but I do not think there was any specific security reporting. It was all quite primitive in those days. Another thing that struck me was the variability and the talent of ambassadors in this activity. All kinds of distinguished ambassadors, who obviously did their job very well indeed, were in fact pretty helpless when it came to judging characters and writing about them. Some of them took their duties seriously and wrote sensible reports, others didn't seem to know what they were doing at all.

ML: Ambassadors were quite distant from most of their staff, particularly their junior staff in those days. There was not a particularly warm or cosy esprit de corps in the Foreign Office.

AM: The further you got down in the hierarchy the more difficult it became. When I was working for Con O'Neill for example, all the diplomatic staff were absolutely devoted to Con

O'Neill: we thought he was just excellent and we thoroughly enjoyed him. I spoke to my secretary and mentioned our view. She revealed that she had a totally different view because he never ... Well typical of Con, I was his deputy in Brussels and on Christmas Eve he came into my office about four o'clock and said "well, I suppose I had better go and wish the staff a Merry Christmas, hadn't I?" I said, "I am afraid they'll have all gone home by now". That was typical of Con, he was so much admired by all of us for his talents, but when it came to the personal contact with the registry clerk or the porter he was quite deficient, or if he spoke to them he was likely to quote them Wittgenstein in German or something.

ML: Were there any particular personnel issues? Were you involved in senior appointments?

AM: No. Well there was this question of personal vetting. The actual vetting certificate was signed by the Head of Department, but it was up to me to advise him and see that the necessary enquiries had been made.

ML: Was that actual process being carried out by Security Department? Nowadays it is a separate organisation.

AM: Yes, there were these vetting enquirers who did the enquiry work. They were largely retired army officers and RAF officers. In my view they were in many cases quite unsuited to the work because they regarded anybody with any sort of political views, ranging from the Liberal party left, as pretty suspicious.

ML: And they probably turned a blind eye to heavy drinking and sexual misdemeanours?

AM: They could understand heavy drinking but when it came to subtle shades of political opinion they were at a bit of a loss, or some of them were, especially if they had spent a lot of time abroad of course; many of them had in the services. We certainly saw that throughout the whole security world. We had Whitehall meetings of security committees and I remember being quite shocked when the security man from GCHQ said at one of these meetings, "what do you mean by the word 'transvestite'?" It seemed to me that for somebody in the security world not to understand that word indicated a certain lack.

We did have various spy enquiries. There was the Vassal case which involved the embassy in Moscow. He was the Naval Attaché's clerk. We had another amusing case. It was the practice, I think on a Tuesday, for us to give security lectures to people going to Moscow and Warsaw and the rest of it. Eric Battersby would take part in that and I would do some sort of

a lecture as well. There was one occasion when there was a chancery guard, who attended the lecture on a Tuesday, went off to Moscow and by Friday of that week he was in bed with his so-called female servant. On the Saturday he had the good sense, as advised by us on the Tuesday, to go and tell his boss what had happened. On Sunday he was on the plane home and the next Tuesday he was in front of Eric Battersby again explaining himself. Eric said, “did you not take in what I said last Tuesday?” and this character said, “Oh yes, I just didn’t think it would happen to me.” That was the sort of problem we were up against. In those days, I don’t know what it is like now, we were quite content to simply allow such a person to retire into private life without any further consequences. At least it encouraged the word to get round that if you were sensible enough to come clean that was the best thing you could do.

Brussels 1964-1968

ML: From there you moved to Brussels. Was it known as UK Rep in those days?

AM: It was a Delegation.

ML: Of course, because we were not a member. What was your role?

AM: I was the number two, but by the time I went there Con O’Neill was the Head and John Robinson was the First Secretary and I was between these two. They were both experts. John Robinson had been in the Ted Heath negotiations. He was a very good French speaker. He had a French speaking Swiss wife. He knew everybody, so after I had been there a few months I went to Con and said, “Look, between you and John there is really nothing left for me to do. It would be a good thing if you got me transferred.” He said, “Just wait a bit, it’ll be alright”. What he knew and I didn’t was that Con himself was about to be transferred and he was replaced by James Marjoribanks, who was totally incompetent. He may have been a good operator previously, but by the time he got to Brussels he really had no memory and everything in the Brussels Delegation was incredibly complicated and technical and you really had to remember a whole lot of fantastical stuff. He was absolutely hopeless at this. He looked an ambassador, he was what you would want on a film or a television programme about ambassadors. He was an excellent linguist and had a quite remarkable command of all kinds of languages, but when it came to the actual work he was totally hopeless. I think when he was transferred there it was thought, no doubt the judgement was made in 1964, that the job in Brussels was not of any particular importance. At that time we had a Labour

government, which had been opposed to the Ted Heath negotiations. They converted themselves quite shortly to join the Common Market. But when Marjoribanks was appointed it seemed quite unlikely that the Delegation would be at all important for quite some time and he, with his background that had been to some extent economic, would be a suitable appointment. By the time our application to join became active in 1967 it was widely understood in the Foreign Office that he was absolutely hopeless and when we actually got down to real negotiations in 1969 or 1970 he was pushed to one side and instructed to have nothing at all to do with it. So from having nothing useful to do I was in fact pretty well running the Delegation at that time. But one has to be fairly modest about this. We were after all outside the Community and the Community itself was dead in the water. De Gaulle was in power. Nothing much was happening; a bit here and there. Our job was essentially picking up information and that was not difficult. Our Dutch friends were at that time very much in favour of Britain joining the Community and were only too happy to keep us informed. The only problem was that they were remarkably busy. It was not difficult, but if you made an appointment with your Dutch colleague in order to extract information from him you were imposing something on him, which you had to do at intervals rather than continuously. The whole business of the Delegation was picking up information and one that was not easy; one that I did not find particularly easy either. Others plainly did it far better than I did.

As I had this background in personnel and security everything on the personnel side and security side and admin side for that matter was left to me. Which was fine, we moved offices, we had inspections, we had personnel problems. So with one thing and another I kept active, but it was the post I least enjoyed and felt least suited to really.

ML: I suppose when the negotiations got going there must have been an awful lot decided in London and ministers coming out so the Delegation's role became a bit of a glorified travel agent. That is often the role isn't it?

AM: Well what happened, I think it was either in April or May of 1967, was that we actually applied to join the Community; this was of course a Wilson/George Brown, initiative, it was I and Marjoribanks who went and presented this letter to Jean Rey, who was Foreign Affairs Commissioner in April 1967 and then it was in October 1967, only six months later, that De Gaulle gave us the veto. During that six months the government in London appointed Chalfont, a really quite surprising choice, because he had been a defence correspondent of the

Times and been a military officer before that, to head the delegation and the negotiating team that was to take us into the community. I was appointed to be the secretary of that delegation, so if we had not had the De Gaulle veto and if we had had the actual negotiation I would have been in the Brussels negotiating team and as I did not particularly enjoy my time in Brussels I was all in favour of De Gaulle and his veto.

ML: I see. He did not veto as a result of the negotiations failing. The negotiations never really got going in the first place.

AM: That's exactly it. He took the view that we were not destined to become a member of the union; that our interests were outside the union. I think he gave the veto in one of his, so called, press conferences. He invited certain chosen journalists to come to the Elyseé and one of them would say to him, "would you kindly tell us, Mr President, what your views are on the British application to join the European Community?" And then De Gaulle would speak for fifteen or twenty minutes without interruption, explaining his views in some prepared form with beautifully chosen phrases. I remember when he spoke about the British he said they were always drawn towards "les grands larges", the open seas rather than European affairs. That was his view. The fact was that we were still claiming to have a reserve currency, sterling was something separate, rather like the dollar. Then of course in November 1967 we had the devaluation, which confirmed that our pretensions were a bit of a nonsense.

Because I was allocated to be the secretary of this team I was separated from the Delegation, so when the veto came I was totally unemployed till my transfer the following April. I had absolutely nothing to do and it was plain I had to be transferred. So I was very much available and when this vacancy arose in Hong Kong, they should really have had a Chinese specialist, but I was available and I was in it.

Political adviser Hong Kong

AM: I was interviewed about Hong Kong by a Hong Kong Chinese, I think his name was Steve Tsang. He later wrote an excellent history of Hong Kong, round about 1985. I had a transcript of it I was trying to lay hands on, but I didn't seem to find it lately. I went to Hong Kong in May of 1968 and it was a funny sort of job. As political adviser I was handed over to the government of Hong Kong and my loyalty was to the Governor, but of course I remained a member of the Diplomatic Service and was paid as though I was a Diplomatic

Service representative in Hong Kong, with all the various perquisites and the rest of it. The Hong Kong government simply paid London whatever that happened to be. And of course after a few years I was returning to the Diplomatic Service.

The job of a political adviser was to give the Governor advice on his external affairs. The political adviser had no powers of his own. He was simply a member of what was then called the Colonial Secretariat and I had one assistant, another member of the Diplomatic Service and each of us had a secretary and that was the whole of our office.

The Governor was Sir David Trench. He was a long standing member of the Colonial Service, who had served mainly in the South Pacific and his view of his duties were to look after the interests of Hong Kong and to apply himself to Hong Kong affairs. He didn't want to be troubled by any outside influences, whether London or Peking. He didn't really want to hear about China, but he accepted that he had to. I was the instrument through which he was told about China and possible complications. I was not a China specialist, but I did have an assistant who was and that was originally Robin McLaren, who later became ambassador in Peking and was an excellent character. He was succeeded by another Chinese specialist, Chris Howells.

ML: This was at the time of the great Cultural Revolution wasn't it?

AM: Certainly; the height of it had been the previous year in 1967, when the so called communists, who represented very likely less than one percent of the Hong Kong population decided to riot and throw bombs and generally misbehave. The Hong Kong police managed to keep control of the situation, but the result of that was that literally hundreds of rioters were arrested and charged and convicted in Hong Kong courts for offences such as riot and carrying fire arms, attempted murder, assault and so forth. Back in August 1967, before I ever got to Hong Kong the Chinese government in Peking organised an attack on the British embassy there where some of our people were injured. Nobody actually lost their lives, but they had a pretty horrible experience. After that they were pretty well confined to Peking and not in many cases allowed to leave China until about 12 months later in the summer of 1968, Donald Hopson the Chargé d' Affaires was allowed out.

At the same time I think it was in August 1967 the Chinese confined Anthony Grey, the Reuters correspondent, the only British journalist in China. They confined him to his house. Chinese soldiers came and occupied the house, cut off all communication, television,

newspapers, mail, he was totally isolated. By the time I got to Hong Kong in May of 1968 he was still entirely isolated, we didn't know anything about his conditions. At that time, soon after I got to Hong Kong the New China News Agency, the Peking government's official information department, which had a branch in Hong Kong, which was regarded by many people as a kind of Chinese embassy in Hong Kong, they put out a demand that the Hong Kong government should allow them, the NCNA to have a Mao indoctrination session with the, so called, "news workers" who were confined in the Hong Kong prison. It was not clear to us who these news workers were. They were not journalists so much as the people who handled the newsprint and delivered the stuff; labourers more than journalists. It was quite obvious we could not allow them to have an indoctrination session with a whole lot of them grouped together, but Robin McLaren and I went to see the Governor and we argued that at least we should enter into negotiations with the NCNA, because we might discover who these workers were, which would help and we might agree on some sort of visits, because the Hong Kong prison regulations were quite similar to the ones in Britain, they were quite generous. In other words it was quite open for the prisoners to receive visits and to receive communist propaganda and other material. The Governor was really very reluctant to allow us to enter these negotiations, partly because the previous August the NCNA in Peking had put out a public statement which in translation read something like, "under the inspired leadership of our great leader, great teacher, great helmsman (there was a fourth great I've forgotten) the Chinese people will never give up their struggle until the British imperialists, temporarily administering the Chinese territory of Hong Kong, have liberated the news workers unjustly imprisoned there." Robin McLaren my assistant said to the Governor, "this plainly indicates that until we release the news workers we are not going to get Anthony Grey released." The Governor said, "I don't believe a word of that. There is no reference to Anthony Grey in the statement. There is no reason why there should be any connection between what they do in Peking and what we are doing in Hong Kong. It's just a lot of nonsensical propaganda, which you can't really take seriously at all." But Robin maintained his position and he and I went on arguing that at least we should meet the NCNA and see if there were any chance we could get anything out of them. So in the end the Governor agreed, on the conditions that we did not give anything away, we did not accept any amendment to the prison regulations or Hong Kong law and that anything we did agree would be subject to his approval. On that basis we had a series of meetings which took place in a Chinese restaurant, because we wouldn't go to the NCNA offices and they would not come to ours; a Chinese restaurant run by the Peking government through one of their

companies. We met out of hours at a typical round table with a cup of tea and so forth. The two NCNA representatives, who were both Hong Kong Chinese and had Cantonese as their mother tongue, but spoke quite reasonable English as most Hong Kong people did, had to speak Mandarin as they were representing Peking. Robin, who was of course a Mandarin expert, had to translate their rather badly accented Mandarin into English for my benefit. I would then reply in English and fortunately they did not require a translation of that. We had several sessions and we did in the end get out of them a list of who these news workers were. We also got agreement from them that instead of a Mao indoctrination session they would visit the prisoners individually in the prison and hand over whatever material they chose to take. The Governor accepted that, so these visits went ahead and then for the first time John Denson, our Chargé d'Affaires in Peking was allowed to visit Anthony Grey in his house, just a few days after these visits took place, which proved what Robin McLaren had been saying ever since August 1967.

And then it became plain that Anthony Grey was not going to get out of his confinement until we had released the last of these prisoners. I think as far as I can remember the news workers numbered something like fifteen, twenty or twenty five, something like that. One at least of them had been convicted of attempted murder and was in for quite a few years. What then happened was that we had an extremely intelligent Attorney General called Denis Roberts, who attended all our meetings with the Governor and anything of a security nature. One didn't have to tip a wink to Denis Roberts, he was the sort of person who could see things immediately for himself. One of the existing arrangements in Hong Kong was that there was some kind of sentence review board, I've forgotten what it was called, something like the Parole Board in Britain. It consisted of the Attorney General and a couple of senior Chinese advisers or members. I don't know quite how, but over the next couple of years Denis Roberts managed to bring before this tribunal the cases of these news workers, especially those that were sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. I should say that after 1967 we had no more trouble of that sort in Hong Kong, or at least nothing particularly connected with the communists. So the whole thing had quietened down. It was therefore quite reasonable for the tribunal to decide to reduce these sentences. Then whenever the last such news worker was released, I think it must have been 1970, after another couple of years, within a few days Anthony Grey was released and allowed to leave China. I do not know how much of that ever became public, except of course his final release.

ML: When these chaps were released could you put them over the border into China or did you have to keep them in Hong Kong?

AM: They would be mostly Hong Kong Chinese so they were allowed to stay in Hong Kong. I don't think we deported them. I don't think we had any such arrangements with China.

We had other security questions. A typical one was arising out of the Hong Kong education system. Basically anybody could run a school in Hong Kong provided they satisfied basic health and security arrangements about the premises and so forth and provided they had authorised teachers with proper teaching certificates. The Roman Catholic Church and other churches, private enterprise and commercial organisations and the Communist party all ran schools. The Communist party, representing as I have indicated, less than one percent of the population, was running something between five and ten percent of the schools. And they were really quite popular, because unlike most of the other schools they had discipline. So the children were properly behaved and were taught something. So even if you were not a Communist parent that might have been perfectly acceptable. But of course, so far as the Governor was concerned, the more we could reduce the Communist schools the better. So whenever it was possible to find something wrong with the school; the health and safety arrangements were not satisfactory or they'd got a teacher who was not certified, the Governor chose to intervene. It might involve arresting the Headmaster, or something of that kind.

We had a weekly meeting with the Governor when everybody concerned with security would be there including the Colonial Secretary, as he was then called, the number two, the Chief of Police, the Head of the British Armed Forces, the Attorney General, the Director of Education, the Defence Secretary and me and maybe a few other people. Once a week we would discuss anything related to political and security matters. You can imagine the Chief of Police and the Head of Special Branch and the Director of Education and the Governor himself would be all in favour of arresting the Headmaster of some school, so it would be decided that that would be what we would do. At this point I would say to the Governor, "do you mind if I report this matter to the Foreign Office before we actually take action?" And he'd say, "Yes please do so." I would say, "do you want me simply to send a telegram, or would you like to see it yourself?" and he might say yes or no to that proposition. So off would go a telegram to the Foreign Office, copied to Peking, which would say at 8.00 AM

tomorrow, Hong Kong time I propose to arrest so and so, the Headmaster of school number so and so, because he has breached such and such a regulation. And almost before the telegram had been sent, back would come a beautifully organised telegram, written by Percy Cradock in Peking. Percy was an absolute genius, he had proper legal training and remarkable talent for expressing himself effectively, which would gently remind the Governor that the last time we did something of that kind the embassy had almost been burnt down and his staff brutalised and so forth, making the case against. That would immediately be followed by one from London, saying before you take action as in your telegram number so and so, please await my further advice. So in some cases the whole operation in Hong Kong would be cancelled. In other cases, where it was not quite so provocative to the Chinese, it would go ahead.

That was a large part of my duties, to go on reminding the Governor of the Chinese complications. Considering how much I did to oppose his real wishes, I was really embarrassed when on his retirement from Hong Kong he sent me the most charming letter, thanking me for all the help I had given him. I was really quite surprised. Although he was in my view a rather limited man, who really didn't want to know about affairs outside Hong Kong, he did basically have some sort of decent understanding of the problem.

ML: It was very good in a way that the Chinese were patient enough not to demand Hong Kong back before the treaty expired.

AM: At the time I was there we simply didn't bother talking about it because things were so totally disorganised in China and there was plainly no point in raising the question at all. It was also quite obvious that when the lease expired in 1997 it would be quite impossible to keep the little bit of Hong Kong that we had theoretically in perpetuity. So if the Chinese wanted it back they could easily have it. What was going to happen in the long run was something we never bothered to talk about.

ML: Was it economically advantageous to China to have Hong Kong there as a kind of gateway?

AM: Oh, it was absolutely vital because something like thirty percent of their foreign earnings were coming through Hong Kong. We were getting a large part of our water supply, most of our food, most of our building materials and of course it was an opening for China herself. In other words, China was earning Hong Kong dollars by exporting all this basic

material through Hong Kong and the Hong Kong dollars could be converted without any problems into any currency you wanted at very good rates. The Hong Kong banking system at that time was very well developed and very competitive. We had all the world's major banks there.

That brings me onto another subject. One of these people who advised the Chinese government on converting foreign currencies was a man called KC Jay, who worked on his own as a financial adviser. He had previously worked for the Bank of China, when it was a Chiang Kai Shek bank back in the 1930s and when it was a communist dominated bank in the 1949 period. At the time I was in Hong Kong, 1968-1972, we were extremely short of any information about China. Our diplomatic mission in China was not allowed outside Peking. They had virtually no contact with Chinese officials. I went to Peking and talked to John Denson, our Chargé d'Affairs. He said the best information he had about what was going on in Peking came from Hong Kong. But even in Hong Kong we were very short of information. The army were getting perfectly good information about military developments just over the border from intercepts. We had a whole lot of expert China watchers, journalists, academics and government officials. Hong Kong was the great China watching centre and that's where my assistants, Robin McLaren and Chris Howells came in very well. They would attend these meetings of the experts and come back with reports of what they thought was going on in China. But realistically nobody anywhere had any information about what was going on in the Peking government. Even if you were the Pakistan ambassador for example, who had favoured access in Peking, you were still in the dark.

So KC Jay, to go back to the banker in Hong Kong, did have some connections with important Chinese officials because they would come to him and say, "look, we need a few million deutschmarks next week. Do you think we should buy them this week or next week and what's your best rate and so forth." That was the kind of business he was doing and taking a tiny commission; tiny in percentage terms, but substantial in cash terms. So he did at least have some useful contacts and the proposition was put to us that we might organise a series of secret meetings with him.

The man appointed to have these meetings was Jack Cater. At the time I am speaking of he was not an employee of the Hong Kong government, he was running a thing called the Trade Development Council, which was an export promotion organisation financed by private enterprise in Hong Kong. He had been previously a Hong Kong official. For a Hong Kong

official he had a slightly unusual background. He had been an RAF officer in Hong Kong immediately after the Japanese war came to an end and he then stayed on and had been taken on by the Hong Kong government. Unlike most of his colleagues he did not have a university background. I think there were various other personal antipathies involved because he was plainly not terribly popular with a lot of people in Hong Kong. He was in fact in my view extremely intelligent and efficient and able and, when Murray MacLehose was the Governor, he was appointed head of anti-corruption and he was Chief Secretary and he would in my view have been an excellent Governor. But at the time he was slightly out of the run.

He was appointed to make these secret contacts with KC Jay. I would see these reports. I simply do not know whether they were worth anything. My memory of them was they were probably not worth very much because even if the information was accurate, it was uncertain to what extent we should place any confidence in them, because we did not know the source, not the Chinese source. The other point was Hong Kong Special Branch were strongly opposed to the whole operation, thinking that if anybody was going to get information about China it should be them and not separate organisations.

Apart from China I also had to look after other relations. We had one or two funny affairs. We had curious relations with the Philippines and Marcos's mistress came to Hong Kong. He wanted her to be sent back. We had another occasion when there were a couple of characters who flew in from South Korea by air and when they were in the Hong Kong airport they were attacked by a group from the Korean embassy. The Hong Kong police intervened and took the two visitors into custody. Then I was rung up by the South Korean Consul General to say that these two people who had come in were guilty of espionage and I do not know what else. At the same time they were ringing up the Chief of Police and saying they were guilty of rape and drug smuggling and I don't know what. Meanwhile the Hong Kong police had interviewed them and discovered that they had originally been defectors from North Korea to South Korea. That had taken place with a lot of publicity. They had decided they did not like South Korea and they were trying to get to Cambodia I think, which was under some sort of slightly left wing government. All they wanted to do was to be put on the next plane to Phnom Penh. The Attorney General was called in as usual and he said we had no authority under Hong Kong law to do anything about them. We couldn't arrest them or keep them or doing anything. They were free citizens, they could do what they liked. It was clear they had expressed to the police that they wanted nothing more

than to be put on the next flight. Meanwhile I was being bombarded by the South Korean Consul General, who said their Deputy Foreign Minister was arriving, would I see him? So of course I saw this Deputy Foreign Minister. He began by saying they had always respected British diplomacy, and had great respect for our efficiency and first Robin McLaren, then I realised that something had gone wrong as we had not done anything to justify all these thanks. When the Minister departed we discovered that the desire to be put on the next plane to Phnom Penh had been carried out, but that this plane had descended as scheduled en route at Saigon where the South Koreans had good relations with the local authorities as they had sent some troops to help fight the Viet Minh. Of course these two characters had been taken off the plane and returned to South Korea where they were eventually executed.

ML: Were they North Korean spies?

AM: No, they were North Koreans who had left North Korea. One of the rare defections, that had been very much publicised in South Korea and then they decided that South Korea was not a suitable place to live. This was at a time when South Korea was run by some autocratic President, whose name I have totally forgotten [Park Chung-hee]. It had not become a democratic country by our standards, so their second defection from South Korea was regarded as an insult.

ML: Did the ongoing horror of the Vietnam War have much impact on you in Hong Kong?

AM: Yes, it certainly did, it was raging at the time of course. One of our big activities was playing host to the American navy. We had an agreement with the Americans that no more than, I think it was, six ships could come into Hong Kong at the same time and no more than one aircraft carrier at a time and no nuclear powered vessels. There were various other restrictions. It did mean that at almost any time there would be six vessels in Hong Kong, some of them very large ones. The seamen didn't run riot, they were extremely well behaved. The word went round on every ship that if there is any trouble, instead of having your five days in Hong Kong the ship will sail immediately. We had US military police ashore and the Hong Kong police and the whole business of brothels and the rest of it was highly organised. It was all concentrated in one particular area and everybody knew what they were doing and there was really very little problem.

One of the amusing aspects was that the Royal Navy had a base in Hong Kong and the commander of it was a mere commodore, one rank above a naval captain. When we had a

partial renegotiation of this agreement with the Americans the chief American negotiator was the Commander of the Pacific. In other words his command extended from the shore of California to the eastern shore of Africa; you can imagine; half the world. He was of course a full admiral and I think he came with five or six admirals to hold his bags. One side of the table sat this extraordinary man. He happened to be quite an exceptional personality. I think his name was Zumwalt⁶. So on one side of the table was this man with his five or six admirals and on the other side were the commodore and me and my assistant and a couple of naval lieutenants. A slight imbalance of rank, but we were in command and could say what they could have and what they couldn't.

ML: Did you get to Macao, that funny Portuguese colony?

AM: Yes, that's another extraordinary story because in 1967 before I got there, the communists in Macao had started trouble before they started them seriously in Hong Kong. The Governor of Macao had immediately given in and made all the concessions they wanted, whatever they were. He made no resistance, so the Governor of Hong Kong regarded Macao as a pitiful sort of place. He didn't want to know anything about Macao.

Soon after I arrived the Governor of Macao had a problem. They invited me to go there and so I went and was entertained by the Governor. One of the problems they had was that they wanted to ship out a prisoner so that he could be held in Timor, which at that time was another Portuguese colony. In order to do that they were going to put him on a Portuguese ship that could come to Hong Kong, but could not go to Macao, because at that time the harbour facilities in Macao were insufficient for a ship of that size. So in order to do this they had to tranship the character in Hong Kong. The question arose if we do that, will he not suddenly be able to produce a habeas corpus or something and we might lose possession of this prisoner? Well the answer it turned out was that if the man was in Hong Kong waters under Hong Kong jurisdiction, there was no way we could interfere with a habeas corpus writ. Therefore it was possible that the prisoner could be liberated. But we pointed out that it was quite unlikely that anybody would have sufficient understanding of the law or know what was happening to this individual that any such writ would be issued during the time. So

⁶ Elmo Russell "Bud" Zumwalt Jr. (November 29, 1920 – January 2, 2000) was an American naval officer and the youngest man to serve as Chief of Naval Operations. As an admiral and later the 19th Chief of Naval Operations, Zumwalt played a major role in U.S. military history, especially during the Vietnam War.

looked at from the Portuguese point of view it was a fair risk that could be accepted and so it was. That was typical of the rather special sort of problems we had with Macao.

Apart from that of course, a very large part of the gambling business in Macao was in the hands of Hong Kong entrepreneurs. In particular there was a man called Stanley Ho, Hong Kong Chinese, who had a big part of the gambling activities in Macao, which was their main source of income at the time. The hydrofoil system which operated between Hong Kong and Macao at that time was again in the hands of Hong Kong. Macao was pretty dependent upon Hong Kong and therefore the whole attitude of the Macao government was to be helpful and to get the best they could out of relations with Hong Kong.

Ottawa 1972-1976

ML: You moved on to Ottawa. What post did you occupy there?

AM: I was the Deputy High Commissioner and the High Commissioner when I arrived was Peter Hayman. When I arrived in September 1972 there was a general election taking place in Canada and just before I arrived, Peter Hayman made a speech which had been publicised in the Canadian press saying that every sensible Canadian would of course be voting for the re-election of Trudeau. The leader of the opposition, I think his name was Stanfield⁷, put down a question in the House of Parliament about, “does the Government intend to take any action about the British High Commissioner’s interference in the Canadian election?” Our Head of Chancery was John Dunrossil, whose father had been Speaker of the House of Commons, his name was Morrison. [William Shepherd Morrison, 1st Viscount Dunrossil]. He was a very charming character, who had very good relations with these politicians including the Conservative leader. He went to see the Leader of the Opposition and said that if he persisted with the question it might lead to Peter Hayman’s recall and in any case he was due to retire in the ordinary way in a mere sixteen months. Stanfield, being a very decent, honest bloke, decided to withdraw the question; which I regarded then and later as a great misfortune. At that time I knew nothing about Hayman’s sexual misbehaviour. It was quite a surprise when that came out later, but he was a remarkably incompetent High Commissioner. He was a great bull shitter. He was a man who loved publicity and loved sucking up to

⁷ Robert L. Stanfield, in full Robert Lorne Stanfield, (born April 11, 1914, Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada—died December 16, 2003, Ottawa), Canadian politician who, as leader of the Progressive Conservative Association in Nova Scotia, served as that province's premier from 1956 to 1967.

important people, but he had no interest in the basic issues. He was totally irresponsible and a bit of a bully.

ML: He was not much liked by his staff.

AM: When it came to his farewell I obviously had to make a speech at his farewell party. It was quite obvious that he was terrified that I would say something disrespectful, because by then he had understood that I was entirely out of sympathy with him. So I chose to recall the previous head of mission, who on his recall had become Permanent Secretary and had been totally unknown to most of his staff; totally unknown, most of them would not have recognised him in the corridor. I said nobody could accuse Peter Hayman of that because everybody knew him, everybody enjoyed his hospitality. It was true, he was totally despised by all his senior staff, but regarded as quite a pleasant little joke by all the junior staff, because if he met somebody in the lift that he did not know he would certainly speak to them and joke with them. It was only when you got down to business that you found him to be lacking something. That's what he was like during the first sixteen months I was there.

Then he was succeeded by Jack Johnston, who was the exact opposite. He could not have been a more delightful serious character. In fact he went to the other extreme, he was so serious that everything he did had to be absolutely perfect, so therefore what he could get through was totally limited. Whatever he did produce you could be quite certain was excellent, but everything else had to be left to somebody else, which was fine because I was there in particular to supervise all the economic work and most heads of mission had no time for all that nonsense, so I had quite a good time.

The thing about Canada basically was that it was grossly overstuffed. Relations with Canada were so simple. For example, one afternoon I got a telegram from the Foreign Office which said, "we are about to negotiate a Civil Aviation agreement with China." This must have been about 1974/5 before the death of Chairman Mao. We were trying to negotiate a Civil Aviation agreement with them and the telegram said the Canadians had just negotiated such an agreement, "so could you get a bit of advice from them about the problems and could you in particular get an answer to the following questions." So I rang up a friend of mine in the Canadian Department of External Affairs, who looked after all the economic work. I told him about this telegram and he said, "Well the chap who really knows and did all the negotiations is so and so. Give him a ring and if you want any more come back to me." So I rang this other chap and he said fine, but he said, "The weather is absolutely filthy. You

don't want to come out in this weather. Couldn't we do it over the phone?" So I was able to read out the questions and in no time at all I had a detailed answer to the telegram. Imagine, the FCO had sent off the telegram at the end of their working day; it came to me half way through my working day. I sent my telegram at 6 pm, which was 11 pm in London, so by the time this character came back to his office he had all the answers. That's what diplomatic life could be like in Canada.

You did not need an enormous staff. In any case there were not many problems with the Canadians. If you had a problem you could easily find out the person you wanted to deal with. I don't say we had no problems, but compared to other countries the whole diplomatic business was extremely simple. On top of that we had consular posts in Vancouver, Regina, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, St Johns and Halifax. By the time I left we had closed in Regina and Halifax and St Johns and were thinking of closing in Winnipeg and Quebec.

In Ottawa we were grossly over staffed. There was a newly recruited female third secretary who had read astrophysics at Cambridge and she had basically nothing to do. I told her that Ottawa was not at all typical and in her next post with any luck she would find something to do but I do not think she had the patience to wait. She left the Service fairly soon afterwards. There was a certain amount of work for the Military Attachés. There was a hell of a lot of RAF and military activity and we were seriously trying to sell the Canadians a whole lot of military equipment, so they had proper work.

ML: What about the Quebec thing? [Kidnappings by the Quebec independence movement] That had all blown up in 1971 and I suppose it had died down a bit by then.

AM: Yes, it was dying down.

ML: So that was Ottawa; Trudeau did get in and then you finally went back as Head of Delegation to the OECD. What were the big issues then?

OECD 1977-1982

AM: Yes, when I arrived there was a great negotiation going on with the developing world. I have forgotten what it was called now. It was just coming to an end. Negotiations were going on in Geneva.

ML: Was this the round before the Doha round?

AM: It was not a trade negotiation, it was more an UNCTAD type thing saying the developed world has run the whole system for its own benefit and we the developing world need to get back some of the things you have denied us. We need concessions on trade, concessions on financing etc and it is up to you to start doing the decent thing instead of exploiting us all the time. That was the gist of their complaint and the OECD was the place where the developed world, at that time there were only 26 members of the OECD and they were all in the developed world, gathered to plot our concerted efforts against this thing. Again it was like the World Food Board. Everybody knew that nothing was going to come out of it, but at least we had to present a plausible case. It was therefore a matter of tactics. But I was not really involved in that, it was coming to an end before I got there really.

The essence of OECD at that time was that we had a whole series of expert discussions. The most interesting one was a thing with the simple title, Working Party No3, which meant that the Permanent Secretary at the Treasury and the Chief Economist of the Bank of England and similar senior people from Bonn and Washington came for a discussion which was closely controlled. Not too many people were allowed into the meeting room. In other words maybe two or three per delegation and the secretariat and translators; officials, not ministers, who were basically running the world's financial systems, discussing things like interest rate policy and employment rates and GDP development and so forth. You could have a serious and well backed discussion because the Economic Section of the Secretariat was extremely good. It had some very good people and was backed up by an excellent statistical organisation. It was when the Marshall aid had started in the 1940s, the essence of the American request that the European countries got together and did something. The European countries had had to agree on a common statistical basis so that the needs of the countries could be compared. That had continued in the OECD which went on maintaining this excellent statistical base for economic analysis. It is all frightfully boring to anybody who is not particularly interested in economics.

ML: Well, it is frightfully important isn't it? These are the much maligned experts.

AM: Well, Working Party 3 on the economic side was successful. Others on the science side less so, partly because of the quality of the people.

Apart from economics there was also quite a big activity on development aid. There were various committees that looked at aid from the donors' point of view and tried to organise common practices and standards and statistics. That was all fairly well developed. I

personally had rather little to do with that. There were a whole lot of other committees on agriculture and finance and education and all kinds of other things; quite a mixture of good work and work that was probably quite unnecessary and a certain amount of administration, but very little that had much demand on me because the essence of the better committees was to get the real experts from London.

ML: Do you think in the light of BREXIT that that mission is going to grow in importance, because that is presumably going to be one of the areas we expand.

AM: Yes, one would hope so, because it seems to me one of the great misfortunes of my career, my life really, was that the OEEC was not further developed. Instead of the OEEC we got the European Union. In other words the Six broke off. After the Iron and Steel Community had basically failed and after the Defence Community had been vetoed by the French Assembly the next thing that came along was a proposal for a European Economic Community, which turned out to be successful of course. But it did mean the Six then put all their effort into that and the alternative would have been for more cooperation to go on on a Europe wide basis in the OEEC and it would not have involved any exclusion or any talk about ever closer union or supra nationalism. That it seems to me has been a major tragedy for Europe. If by chance the OECD became a better centre for cooperation in Europe it would certainly be a good thing. It is difficult to see how it can. In any case the OECD has now expanded to include Mexico and I think they have now got 36 members. So exactly how it works these days I simply do not know.

ML: Do you have any final reflections on your career? Anything you would like to record as a valedictory?

AM: I think I was very lucky to get into the Diplomatic Service. I thoroughly enjoyed it and it suited me fine. It did not suit my wife so much. She would have been much happier to have retired, as she thought we were going to, to some university town and cultivated the same patch of garden, but as far as I was concerned it was fine. I was very lucky in my postings because I have always had this interest in economic affairs and I did have mostly economic jobs. But in fact the one I enjoyed most was the one that was not economic in Hong Kong, which was essentially political, not entirely political.

ML: Thank you very much Arthur. I am sure that will make a very interesting transcript.