

BDOHP Interview Index and Biographical Details

Sir Peter Marshall, KCMG 1983 (CMG 1974); CVO 2003

Biographical Details with (on right) relevant pages in the interview:

Entered Diplomatic Service, 1949	p 2
Economic Relations Department, Foreign Office, 1949-52	pp 2-8
British Embassy, Washington, 1952-56	pp 55-61
South East Asia Department, Foreign Office, 1956-59	pp 9-10
Personnel Department, Foreign Office, 1960	pp 10-13
British Embassy, Baghdad, 1961	pp 13-16, 19-20
British Embassy, Bangkok, 1962-64	pp 16-19
Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies, 1965-66	pp 21-22
UK Mission, Geneva, 1966-69	pp 22-24
British Embassy, Paris, 1969-71	pp 24-28
Financial Policy and Aid Department, later Financial Relations Department, Foreign Office, 1971-73 / Assistant Under-Secretary, Foreign Office, 1973-75	pp 28-33
UK Mission to the UN, New York, 1975-79	pp 33-38
UK Mission to the UN, Geneva, 1979-83	pp 38-53
[Commonwealth Secretariat, 1983 - 88]	-
Copy of a lecture by Sir Peter Marshall to the Pilgrims, 2012: <i>Churchill in No 10 and Eisenhower in the White House: a groundling's view, sixty years on</i>	pp 55-61

BRITISH DIPLOMATIC ORAL HISTORY PROGRAMME

RECOLLECTIONS OF SIR PETER MARSHALL KCMG CVO, RECORDED AND TRANSCRIBED BY SUZANNE RICKETTS

Economic Relations Department, Foreign Office, 1949-52

SR: It's September 18, 2017. This is Suzanne Ricketts recording Peter Marshall. Peter you joined the office in 1949. Can you tell me why you decided to go into the Foreign Office?

PM: Yes, the answer is natural human perversity or immaturity. What happened was that I came back to Corpus, I'd been there briefly during the war, in the Autumn of 1946 after I'd been demobilised, and made my number with the tutor whom I hadn't previously met and we discussed this and that. I was going to read Economics and at the end he said to me, "What do you want to do when you go down?" I thought it was a bit of a premature question as I was looking forward to three years studying Economics and I said well I thought I might have a crack at the Foreign Service, as it was then called. He said, "You realise you're aiming very high, don't you?" That settled the problem. I was determined to show him and I'm afraid that is why I joined the Diplomatic Service. To my shame, I never examined any other career.

SR: So what was it like? You were in Economic Relations Department. Can you give me a little flavour of what it was like? What was your daily routine?

PM: The economic departments were in horseboxes - the Locarno Suite was split up into little horseboxes where we all sat ... with stable doors. There was a corridor and little cubbyholes each side. It's so difficult to see now you're looking at the Locarno Room in all its splendour. There were two main departments on this side: the Mutual Aid Department which was discussing the whole question of the Marshall plan, European recovery and so on, and we were the general Economic Relations Department. Both were under the supervision of Roger Makins, the economic titan, Gladwyn Jebb was the political titan. The Permanent Under-Secretary was a doughty administrative scholar, William Strang. And of course the Foreign Secretary was a marvellous man, Ernie Bevin.

SR: And as a new entrant did you have much to do with these lofty figures?

PM: You see, because, when I arrived, I had been preceded by somebody called Jock Taylor who was later the Ambassador in Bonn. They were going to put him in the Economic Relations Department. He said no, no, no, there's a chap reading Economics who's coming in later, so you spare me that. So I was one of the very first people to come into the Economic Relations Department of the Foreign Office with a degree in Economics. And of course, it was about three or four weeks between my finals dealing with these issues as an academic and coming to them in reality, because three months after I joined, we devalued by 40%. 40%, an enormous upheaval. Now this actually turned the applecart upside down and there was enormous interest in the FCO, the Foreign Office as it then was, because of the foreign policy implications of all the complicated consequences of devaluation. And therefore, I was in clover. I couldn't believe my luck because you had all these interdepartmental meetings at which the other departments were represented by people of immense distinction and for the Foreign Office there was sprog Marshall! And Roger Makins used to want very carefully to see these interdepartmental records - they were all circulated. The Foreign Office in those days was always listed at the top, above the Treasury, and so he knew immediately who'd been from the Foreign Office. And if anybody hadn't, or I hadn't, he'd want to know why. And of course, as you can imagine, I got a completely unrepresentative view of what it was like to work in the Third Room. Marvellous. However, we were all penurious. You joined the Foreign Office ... my salary was a princely £9 a week! And we waited, you see, to be rescued from penury by being sent abroad. Well, I had a certain utility to the management. Of course it was not only Roger Makins. William Strang was extremely interested in it, and Ernie Bevin. I mean he was a power in the Cabinet, not only in foreign affairs, but also in the conduct of business generally. Attlee had an extremely high opinion of him, rightly, and of course he was wonderful. His handwriting was totally illegible. I think he held the pen like this [in his fist] and there were red squiggles all over the papers we submitted and the Private Secretaries had to decode them. Often it simply said *See me* but, I mean, that would be the Private Secretaries. I was never actually summoned to the presence. But that he had read what I had written, of that there was no doubt whatsoever. When he first joined, he was taken on a tour of the office and when he got back into his office he said to his Private Secretaries, "If we'd had to work in conditions like these in the old days, we'd have gone out on strike." And it was wonderful, when he reached the age of 70 we did something that had never been done in the Foreign Office before, that is everybody

clubbed together to give him a birthday present. And nobody was allowed to give more than sixpence. And I, with my great knowledge of industrial relations, said “we’ll call it the dockers’ tanner”. Anyway, that name stuck. Anyway, I’m straying a bit. From my own point of view, I was living at home. The family lived in Ashted in Surrey and I was therefore considered not as near bankruptcy as other new entrants. And anyway when it came up, three years and I still hadn’t been posted, I got a very large piece of blue crested notepaper and got the typist in the department to write *Mr P H R Marshall presents his compliments to the Personnel Department on the occasion of the completion of three years’ duty in the Economic Relations Department* and sent this off to them. And it came back, written *Happy Birthday to you from Robin Hooper in Personnel Department*. Anyway by that autumn I was posted. To Washington. And on the boat going over, I opened the *Cunard Times*: there was a headline and a picture, *Britain’s new Ambassador to the United States*, and underneath it a photograph of Roger Makins. You know you can put two and two together and make four and a quarter! But, I mean, the answer of course was, bankruptcy apart, it was the most marvellous experience, by no means typically diplomatic. Looking back on it, I suppose it probably coloured what happened to me afterwards.

SR: So was it what they call now on the job training? They just threw you into the deep end?

PM: When you joined, there was absolutely no training at all, except for language training. Now, this is a marvellous example, you see. I was told finally to report on the morning of June 27. They wanted me to come immediately, but I said I wanted a holiday. I didn’t know the difference then between Downing Street and Carlton House Terrace. Anyway, eventually after shuttling between the two, I found the person I was due to see in Carlton House Terrace who - I can’t remember his name now - anyway, he welcomed me courteously and said “I just want to make a telephone call”. So he made a call. I was sitting there. And it went something like this: “Oh is that you Oscar? Er, I’ve got Peter Marshall here”. And there was this long pause. “Yes, Peter Marshall. You remember we discussed”. Then another long pause. Then eventually he said “Well, you did say you wanted somebody in the Economic Relations Department, didn’t you?” There was no indication of objection at the other end. And I was then sent off to see Oscar Morland, a charming Japanese scholar, excellent cellist, who welcomed me warmly and, knowing I’d been in the RAF, said, “Whatever you do, don’t take the work of this Department seriously, otherwise you’ll go round the bend!” I then sat down at a desk and opposite me was dear Wynn Hugh Jones. I watched him and he let me accompany him when he went to a meeting of what was called the Overseas

Negotiating Committee, which was an interdepartmental group concerned with allocating, almost on a barter basis, scarce raw materials or finished materials in terms of what we wanted from other countries. The Overseas Negotiations Committee it was called. This man, I thought, I couldn't possibly do this. What an extraordinary expert he is. Of course, when you're flung in at the deep end, you learn quickly. The man who ran this was a marvellous man. Now we had the Treasury, the Economic section of the Cabinet Office, and the Central Economic Planning Staff - it was a command economy. All these people. Eventually I got to know him very well, Freddie Milner. We used to sit in the basement doing all this bartering, and he was a great smoker. He smoked cork tip cigarettes and, on one occasion, for some reason or other, he put a cigarette in his mouth with the cork tip not in his mouth but at the other end. He struck a match and was about to light the cork tip. And human nature being what it is, all the rest of us, we could all see this, none of us in our mischief would tip him off. And suddenly some sixth sense told him as he struck the match, he looked round and he said "You bastards!" Absolutely marvellous! You can see what the involvement of the Foreign Office would be in the economic management of the country. You see, you can't say that we can't be involved in it. But what you can say is, well, is it absolutely necessary to have a mastery of the substance as well as a sufficient grasp of the Foreign Office implications? In my case, I suppose I had both. I am absolutely convinced it is necessary to have both. It may be when you look at where we are now, with this that and the other, the basic expertise of the Diplomatic Service is knowledge of peoples and countries and tongues. But they've got to be able to produce that in London in a way which is useful to everybody else. That is the nub of the problem. I mean, it looks as if at the moment the Foreign Office, especially under a buffoon, is not able to connect with the other departments.

SR: Can you tell me a little bit about the mechanics, the office machinery? Did you have the distribution of telegrams three times a day?

PM: Yes, indeed. But it was all roneo-ed. And it was extremely efficient. The communications section were really very, very good. They filled the whole of what is now the Durbar Court. They had a system of regular distribution on certain patterns and also a system of advance copies where you got it like the stuff simply coming out of the machine. It was very good and they were very efficient in spite of it being pre-digital, I don't know when it went all digital - after my time. You see the last time I worked in the Foreign Office was 1975. It's been revolutionised since then and of course the concept of the transaction of business is that each department had a Head of Department, an Assistant, possibly two

Assistants and the idea was all the material came into the Third Room and filtered up, the so-called principle of the inverted sieve. Do you know this concept?

SR: Yes indeed, I was once a young diplomat myself.

PM: The inverted sieve works very well. It was invented by Eyre Crowe. He and Hardinge in the 1905 -1906 reforms. Prior to 1906, the Foreign Office had no organised advisory capacity whatsoever. The whole point of the Crowe-Hardinge reforms is that you start feeding in an advisory element. Now, the White Paper that came out in 1978 under Michael Palliser repeated the old and inaccurate position that foreign policy is about what to do and diplomacy is about how to do it. That's part of the story, but diplomacy is also about how to advise on what to do. Because you are very well able to judge the chances of success. If you look at the book on the Foreign Office that Strang wrote after he retired in 1953, called *The Foreign Office ...* He twigged that I wasn't the usual sort of Third Room person. I kept in touch with him after he retired and tried to persuade him to write a biography of Crowe and he also was kind enough to put me up for membership of Chatham House. And on one occasion when I was favouring him with my best ideas he said "How do you propose to translate that into administrative fact?" Isn't that a brilliant question? He had a grip of these procedures. He'd never been an Ambassador, he'd worked a lot of time in London. He had done this mission to Moscow in 1939, before the non-aggression pact with Molotov and Ribbentrop. All that part of the way in which the Foreign Office played its hand has gone. I instigated the Plowden Report when I was in Personnel Department – that's 1962 to 1964. But, you see, since then, both we've joined the European Union and we've been broke, more or less or very near broke. And the question is, to what extent... – and also we've become less and less of a command economy and more a laissez-faire economy – and that is bound to affect the balance of the way in which the Diplomatic Service and the Foreign Office works. This is what the historians should be on at. The man who's come nearest to understanding it is a man called Richard Wevill who wrote a biography of Roger Makins. He is Oxford-related. I've told them at Cambridge, it's a hundred years since you produced the Cambridge history of British foreign policy. We want something more, we haven't got it. No output from Cambridge. That's the reason partly why my papers are going to the Bodleian. I was the president of Queen Elizabeth House, an Oxford college for students from overseas. I got mixed up with them and had a lot to say to them then about the organisation of studies on international development cooperation. Now all of this is missing from British academic

output. And the more you can do with this programme to say to them, to suggest to them that what they're looking for, the anecdotes and things, isn't the whole story.

SR: Peter, before we finish off talking about your time as a new recruit in the Economic Relations Department, can you just tell me about your involvement with Schuman and the Coal and Steel Community?

PM: Well, that has come much later. The reason is – and this really belongs to my post-diplomatic service career – that I was already in the Economic Relations Department. The Schuman declaration was in 1950, May 1950 and it went down like a lead balloon in London because Bevan and Attlee took the view that having just nationalised the coal and steel in this country, they were not going to hand it over to international and they regarded it as a bit of a cartel anyway. The Americans were much more enthusiastic and said, “Why don't you join in?” I got all of this when I was in Washington. Monnet I met in Paris because when I arrived as the Head of Chancery in Paris in 1969, he was still around, but not very much about, if you see what I mean. He had an apartment in the Avenue Foch, but he used to come to lunch with Christopher Soames. He'd say, “Get into the EEC and reform it.” Well we got into the EEC and we didn't reform it. We surrendered to the view in Brussels, what I call the Anglo-Brussels orthodoxy and the John Kerrs and the David Hannays simply bought this proposition. Well they shouldn't have done. Not only that, but they rammed it down our throats. But you see, Monnet was presented as the father of Europe as if he was a federalist, well he was a supreme pragmatist who used to say “*Il faut faire quelque chose*”, in other words it was more important to do something than be somebody. That was his slogan, which Christopher Soames was much taken with. And when – extraordinary, these coincidences – I was in Geneva in 1981, they opened the Jean Monnet Foundation on the campus of the University of Lausanne and they invited Henri Rieben, the Director and Swiss academic who worked with Monnet for a long time, and Michael Palliser – he couldn't see any Brits involved immediately. And Michael Palliser passed this thing to me and said would you say I'm very sorry, I can't go. So I said “I'm going” and it was a most fascinating occasion because all the top brass was there from France. Symbolically on the 24 October i.e. UN Day, not French National Day or the EU or anything like that. There was no Brit other than me and a lot of Americans, because of course in the Monnet archive, there are the archives of Eric Drummond who was his boss in the League of Nations, Robert Triffin, the people doing the Marshall Plan. Anyway, I kept in touch with Henri Rieben ever since. But the most interesting people to talk to were his secretaries. There were four of them, each succeeded

the other and Monnet was quite autocratic on this. Each one treated her predecessor with the utmost deference. The life story of the eldest one was hysterically funny. She was the daughter of the manager of the Banque de l'Indochine when it opened its branch in London. When Monnet started up this great business of coordination of the Anglo-French war effort and he advertised for somebody who could do both French and English, imagining he would get some society girl who would just manage in French. Well, the aforementioned daughter said, "I'll have a crack at this". So, much to the misgiving of the manager, who accompanied her to the interview, she went to see Monnet and, of course, was exactly what he wanted, couldn't have been better. She was his key secretary and enormously simplified his job. At the end of the war, she decided she wanted to get married. Monnet objected very strongly, like in *The Red Shoes*. Then, each retiring secretary chose her successor. They were a fascinating bunch. Each one treated her predecessor with the utmost deference – I wish I'd had a recorder!

Anyway, at the opening of the Foundation, everyone was there. I was particularly pleased to meet Emil Noël, legendary first Secretary General of the Commission, a supreme pragmatist who kept the thing going. Now, the Commission is just a collection of people without imagination, I mean they are just pathetic, none more so than Juncker. But there's this other man, Martin Selmayr who is a German Nietzsche-ist who is the chief of staff to Juncker, kicking people around and saying the British decision is stupid and so on. I'd like 15 minutes with him! And the same with Barnier.

SR: That would be the subject of a whole other recording, I think!

British Embassy, Washington, 1952 - 56

SR: Now, let's move on to Washington where you were posted in 1952. You have written quite extensively about this, so I wondered if there was anything you wanted to add, because I think we might put your speech to the Pilgrims (Churchill in No 10 and Eisenhower in the White House: a groundling's view, sixty years on, a talk to the Pilgrims on 14 November 2012) as an annex to this transcription?

PR: Yes, Churchill College were very interested obviously in what I was saying about Churchill's second premiership and the catastrophic switch from Churchill to Eden. So the answer your question is to take that as read, yes.

South East Asia Department, Foreign Office, 1956-59

SR: So let's move on then to South East Asia Department. You came back from Washington in 1956. Had the office moved on by then?

PM: Yes, by '56 we were still thinking in geographical terms. I had the general desk. SEATO was one of the most unloved international organisations I have ever dealt with. The only reason why we were in it was because Dulles wouldn't sign up to the Geneva accords to bring peace to Indochina, negotiated by Eden and Molotov – it was Molotov, in 1954 – unless there were some sort of defence arrangement. And so the Brits and French said we'd go along with SEATO. I had mottoes and for SEATO it was in Latin *bis dat qui cito dat* [he gives twice, who gives promptly]! The second year: SEATO, well is it a household detergent like Foam or Daz? And the third year: is your treaty really necessary? Anyway, the point about it was, it was much more a function of relations with the Americans than the real defence of south-east Asia because of course the Thais ... the American theory was the domino theory: if one of the three in Laos, Cambodia or Vietnam went ... Anyway, all of this went on, clearly of very limited utility, we were just playing along with the Americans. It did interest me because each year there was an annual Council meeting in the area. The first year was Canberra, the second Manila, and the third was Wellington so it was very useful for me travelling. As a serious element in British policy, nyet! You know, Satan finds work for idle hands to do, so I became a Resident Clerk. I also circulated around a sort of manual of Third Room technique. Using the upward sieve principle, you apply a number of tests: would the national interest suffer if nobody else saw this paper; the second is would the national interest suffer if another department saw this paper; third, would the national interest suffer if no other government department saw this paper; fourth was how much does it cost; fifth was does it make trouble for ministers. You then process it accordingly, like a series of litmus tests. This document started to circulate around the office. Paul Gore-Booth, a deputy Under-Secretary, said, "One of the things I missed in this was how to have a private conversation with your girlfriend in a room full of other people!"

SR: One final point before we move on. In your outline, Peter, you refer to the Manila Zoo. What was that all about?

PM: Under the Third Room distribution of labour, I was responsible *inter alia* for South East Asia general. In this capacity I received one day a letter from the Chancery in the Manila

Embassy a letter from the Mayor, reporting that the Manila Zoo had suffered considerably during WWII, and was anxious to extend the range of its residents. Could the UK supply some animals from the Commonwealth?

Well, under the principles set forth in my “Manual of Third Room Technique”, this was a communication to be put away without troubling anyone else. But I thought the Mayor had a point. The question was what to do about it. Julian Huxley was at that time doing some work at the London Zoo. So I rang his office and said, “This is not a practical joke”. I then explained the situation. Some time later a splendid Zoo functionary rang and said, “As it happens, we do have a spare lion. The trouble is he’s a bit bad-tempered”. We agreed that this particular king of the jungle might not be an ideal Commonwealth ambassador.

Emphasising that the question was purely hypothetical, I then asked how one would go about procuring such an animal. The answer was, “You should write to Big Bill Campbell (or some such), c/o Barclays Bank, Nairobi.” Again stressing the hypothetical nature of my inquiry, I asked how much, say, a giraffe would cost. The reply - this was before the age of serious inflation – was “about £750”. It was made clear that this would be the ex-jungle price, Nairobi delivery. At this point I reluctantly concluded that South East Asia Department could not do anything further for the Mayor.

Personnel Department, Foreign Office, 1960

But John Henniker, head of Personnel Department, said “Look, will you come and work in Personnel Department?” That’s how I came to Personnel Department, with some ideas. He knew I was a rather bubbly type and not really given to serious matters. Michael Butler was also in South East Asia Department and we used to discuss things. We were watching some battle in which Department 1 had done a second strike after a riposte from Department 2 and he simply said 30 – 15! Anyway I came to Personnel Department and there I started to say we had to do something about training. We were recruiting and suffered disastrously because of the Suez crisis.

SR: May I just stop you a moment? You were a resident clerk and I’m interested to know what it was like.

PM: The deal was that you were in charge of the office outside normal working hours, from six evening till eight – or was it nine – o’clock the following morning and weekends. There

were four of us. We had luxurious quarters in the top of that corner of the Foreign Office above the PUS's office.

SR: Luxurious, really?

PM: It was luxurious, but in a sort of broken down way, genteel poverty. But of course it was very interesting. All sorts of things would happen to you. The whole thing was so deliciously amateurish.

SR: It gave you a wonderful view of what the office was doing.

PM: You're quite right. That is simply probably what you can't get now. It must be extremely difficult sitting on the top of an ant heap like that now! I had some wonderful tales and probably the best one to tell you is about a girl who rang up on Friday evening who said, "I want my passport, I've come to collect my passport and it isn't ready. What do I do about it?" She said, "I'm going to Tunis tomorrow." Some gentleman was going to meet her and take her there. So I said, "Wait a moment. Think. Have you ever met this man before? Just go away and think about this. Are you being had for a mug?" Anyway, at breakfast time the following morning, a policeman outside the Passport Office rang and said there was a young lady creating hell who said she had spoken to me. I said, "Officer, go through the story with her and tell her to get lost" and I never heard any more, but I am sure I saved that girl from the white slave trade!

SR: So you were mostly working on the telephone when you were dealing with Resident Clerk problems?

PM: A whole flood of boxes used to come in and then you had to look and see whether there was any emergency and therefore who to bother. You did a lot of work on the telephone with other departments and, very convenient, the Army and Navy had a of sort resident clerk whom you could ring up and order groceries from. At one time we had a housekeeper who lived in conditions so terrible, that when she was fired by an idiot called Robert Stretton, nobody else would take the job on! So we all did for ourselves. The cleaners came round, but we did for ourselves otherwise. But going back to Personnel, really the way I operated, I was what was called a group observer in the Civil Service Selection Board. I also started to go all round the redbrick universities, saying the Foreign Office is not reserved for Eton and Harrow and Oxford and Cambridge alone. But of course a lot of the dons in these places said "Don't bother to try with that – you will never get in". There was a particular man called Mr

Handel Morgan in Swansea. One of the people I spotted in Swansea with Donald Anderson. I told him he should have a crack at this as it would suit him down to the ground. I knew perfectly well it wouldn't, he was obviously a politician. But I thought he could get into the Diplomatic Service and once he was in it he could see and become an MP, which is what happened. He is now the Lord Anderson of Swansea! I've been following his career ever since. On top of that, what I spent real time analysing in the Personnel Department – by this time John had gone – and Tony Rundall was the Chief Clerk ... we had in the 1943 reforms what I call an indiv charter: everyone is going to have a square deal now with the amalgamation of the service and so on. What you've not got is the follow-through to make that possible because there's still the bankruptcy factor. What we've got to do is to organise an enquiry into what you want out of the diplomatic service in the post-war conditions and what you want by way of people and what you need to enable them to do the job. And added to it, what is the relationship between the Foreign Office and the rest of Whitehall? The one thing that stood out like a sore thumb was the Commonwealth Relations Office, a fifth wheel – it really was. A mistake ever to have started it. They had to do something with the old India Office. So they joined it up with the Dominions Office. This amalgam was a fifth wheel. But it took me a year to persuade the management to persuade the Secretary of State to put this to the Prime Minister. It took me the whole of 1960. At the end of 1960, I was posted to Baghdad. John had by then gone off to Amman, he was Ambassador in Jordan, that's right. But Denis Allen had taken over and he did eventually put this and the thing was set up eventually in 1962. But you see how long these things take. With Donald Tebbit as the Secretary, but the Treasury wouldn't agree unless there was a Treasury joint secretary and that was John Annand. Between '62 and '64 of course Alec Douglas Hume went from being Foreign Secretary to Prime Minister, so that as Prime Minister he was able to agree what he had started off as Foreign Secretary. That report is by far the most thorough report on the role of the Diplomatic Service that's ever been made. That is now 50 years old and we're back to this question of the digital age and everything else. What relevance is it? What I've been saying is you now need – and again the historians don't begin to understand this – is another Plowden. There have occasionally been forays by the Foreign Affairs Committee, well-meaning but they're simply not nearly detailed enough. But, on the other hand, nobody's got any money for training. What Plowden did was to give us a hell of a lot more money, including a 10% margin like the Services have. But when you have a buffoon in charge there is not the slightest chance of us getting there.

SR: Were you involved at all in posting people when you were in Personnel?

PM: No, I had nothing to do with that side. Training and public relations. It was a combination of the job of observer, recruitment, training and public relations.

British Embassy, Baghdad, 1961

SR: So then you went to Baghdad in 1961. Did you ask to go there?

PM: I don't know how I was chosen. I'd been in the Service 11 years. London, Washington, London. Totally, but totally unrepresentative. On the other hand, I was in the mainstream in the sense that I had been the Private Secretary in Washington and been in a political department and a Residence Clerk. So they sent me off as Head of Chancery in Baghdad.

SR: But you weren't an Arabist, you didn't speak the language?

PM: No, I used to go around saying I'm a member of the Occidental Secretariat.

SR: So you were in Baghdad, one of the least attractive posts in the Service?

PM: Quite right, yes. That's what the Post report said.

SR: Normally when you come out of Personnel, you manage to get a good posting.

PM: It just shows I wasn't being careful enough about my own interests. I don't know whether they thought, "That'll put the lid on him". Humphrey Trevelyan invited me to lunch in a club and as we were coming out, somebody said "Best of luck! Are you going to learn Arabic?" And before I could answer, Humphrey said, "He won't have time". He was exactly right. You cannot learn Arabic ... you have to spend two years. Patricia and I went to the language school above Beirut, called Shemlan, where there were courses for the Occidentals as opposed to the Orientals. It was extremely interesting because at the time Abdul Karim Qasim ... His Excellency the Faithful Leader of the Ba'ath people with the Sunnis temporarily running the show. The Sunni-Shia element wasn't really relevant but the Kurds were. The main crisis that occurred was when our treaty of alliance with Kuwait was renewed – this was about the end of June 1961 – Qasim held a press conference on the Sunday saying that Kuwait was what was called the usurped cadre, the stolen county or region and they wanted it back. He had an enormous amount of armour and other hardware. Fortunately, it was all based in Baghdad and the question was how to find out whether it was

going to be moved down to Basra so that it could be deployed against Kuwait. We, meanwhile of course, had nothing. Fortunately the Ark Royal happened to be in the area. And, of all things, in the Kenya Highlands where there was an army training ground, one lot of people being trained was handing over to another so there was a double ration there as a result of which we were able to get something in the way of hardware into Kuwait much more quickly than would otherwise have been the case. What we did inside the Embassy ... the Assistant Military Attaché was rather good at Arabic and he and his driver dressed up as an inspector of drains and went round the restricted areas where they knew the hardware was stored. They were also watching what exactly happened on the railways for the flats you need to transport tanks on. Well, his luck ran out because eventually one morning he was doing his drains inspection and he heard, in Arabic, one policeman saying to another, "That's right. That's the number of the car they're using. This is them all right." So he was then revealed as the Assistant Military Attaché with diplomatic immunity and hauled up before the Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Baghdad. By this time, the date of the revolution had passed and we hadn't actually got hostilities. But there was still a real risk they would break off diplomatic relations with us. We went in fear and trembling. So he was hauled up before this chap who was an Air Marshal in the Iraqi Air Force who'd been at Cranwell. The Air Marshal said, "I hear you've been a naughty boy!" Hysterically funny. In the meantime, the Chief of Staff, General Abdi had been diagnosed with a certain medical illness, and insisted on being treated at the Royal Military Hospital on Millbank. This showed what the realities of the thing were. We duly organised this and on his departure he was surrounded by all the other generals. John Robey was the Chargé d'Affaires then and he and I elbowed our way to the front of this rank of generals and John said, "We just wish you a very happy and speedy recovery, General". The point was one said to the people in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "If you are so stupid as to declare Humphrey Trevelyan persona non grata, you are getting rid of the most able man in the Service who was sent here deliberately to improve matters". And he said, "We realise that". This was still underneath all of this. My own particular concerns, you see, were that when I arrived as Head of Chancery, it was typical of an overstuffed British Embassy. There was an Ambassador, a Counsellor, Peter Hayman, an Oriental Counsellor, Sam Falle, and a Commercial Counsellor, Bill Combs and then Joe Soap. And the way that Personnel Department worked, they removed the Political Counsellor, they also posted Sam Falle the Oriental Counsellor who went off to Bergen with considerable gaps in both cases. But also the Oriental Secretary went on home leave so we had no Oriental expertise whatever. As far as I was concerned, the Iraq Petroleum Company when reporting

to the headquarters in London used to use our cipher facilities. Everybody else, all my predecessors, they never looked at these telegrams. The one thing that matters in this country is oil. I worked out that what Qasim was doing was negotiating with the Iraq Petroleum Company pretending that he was going to do a deal, but what he would do eventually was simply seize whatever he thought was the most that the Iraq Petroleum Company could live with. That is what happened in the autumn but, in the meantime, when this crisis came, Humphrey had to rely not upon his Oriental Counsellor, his political Counsellor, or the Oriental Secretary, but on your humble servant and the marvellous man, Alan Urwick. The point was that the advice to keep Humphrey was not concerned with the expertise of Iraqi politics, the answer was really how to play London because immediately after this great press conference he went to see Hashim Jawad, the Foreign Minister, came back and started drafting a report. Alan and I were there. What he drafted, roughly speaking, would have been read in London as "I told you so". So I ran my finger around my collar and said, "The thing is, why don't you send an emergency telegram at 10 o'clock in the morning London – you've seen Hashim Jawad, you think he's trying to be helpful and you'll report later in the day when you've had some lunch to think about it". And Humphrey accepted this and later in the day we concocted a telegram which I thought would read much more readily in London, not that the Iraqis wouldn't like it but there wasn't actually anything else we could have done. What we had to do was to encourage a response, which consisted mainly in getting the Arab League on board and keeping the Americans happy. And eventually the Arab League did come in, in defence of their brother Kuwait against Iraq, because Iraq stinks in the rest of the nostrils of the Arabs. That took two or three weeks. We had this extraordinary situation of wondering whether Qasim could move but, mind you, in July, the temperature inside a tank was about 140°. They could only have fought at night. That was most hair raising. We didn't know. We burned the archive. We were expecting to be thrown out. No diplomatic career was complete in those days unless you had burned the archive, including of course bills from your tailor and demands for the rates whatever it was.

SR: How did you come to leave Baghdad after a year?

PM: It was unbelievable. They sent a circular round, a bit short on A7s, any ideas for saving them? So I said to Humphrey, "If you spend the whole summer of this howling crisis without both of your Counsellors, surely the right thing to do is to combine the post of Head of Chancery with one of them?" He said yes he agreed. We sent this off and they came back very quickly: we'd like to post Marshall. He can either be First Secretary Commercial in

Cairo or something else they had for me in Peru. Humphrey then said, "Can't you do a bit better than that? He's in fact been acting Counsellor." He then said to me, "Why don't I suggest that you become the Counsellor?" I thought they'd never agree to it in London as I was only 36 then. What they did give me was the pay. Humphrey said he didn't want this to happen until after he'd gone: he thought he would have gone before the new arrangement had taken place. Eventually they relented and made me Head of Chancery in Bangkok. But I got out of Baghdad on the basis of this extraordinary thing about saving A7s. Utter nonsense. But then you see, that's the whole trouble with the Foreign Office. The Counsellor in an embassy was someone who could take over when the Ambassador was on long leave, with voyages by sea taking their time. Of course the right thing to do is to fly to London and talk to them, but people didn't think in those days. You went to your post and there was no going back to London for consultation. No, you wait for your home leave, by sea.

SR: By sea?

PM: Oh yes. You could fiddle that, you see, you could get extra leave, an extra 10 or 20 days if you organise your trips by sea. Eventually, of course, the penny dropped and they wouldn't let you do that, but that wasn't until probably the 70s. It was unthinkable going any other way.

British Embassy, Bangkok, 1962 - 64

SR: Let's move on to Bangkok. There you are in a very different setting from Baghdad, again Head of Chancery. That must have come as a relief?

PM: It was. The main thing was that in Bangkok there was only one Counsellor, Alec Adams, a former member of the Thai Consular Service. The Ambassador was a dear man, Dermot MacDermot, who'd been Ambassador in Indonesia and he'd been my Under-Secretary in London. He and his wife were a sweet pair, but they were basically consular minded. The idea did not exist of making any policy or recommendations, or making an impact on anybody and I don't think Alec Adams understood the policy of what we were doing, and it was all left to me. My predecessor was this idiot, John Galsworthy, who had got across the Thais. There were frosty relations. The first thing I found was the Private Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was a marvellous man called Anand Panyarachun, educated at Dulwich and Trinity College Cambridge, from a tremendously Anglophile and Anglo familiar family. The father had been the editor of an English-language

newspaper and I think also had been at Dulwich. Anyway, I arrived in January. There was a compound and we had a house there. As long as you didn't mind the mosquitoes the humidity and the heat, it was a lovely place to be! The Thais are marvellous people. We had already got many friends because the man who was Thai Ambassador in London when I had been in South East Asia Department ... through them and people in the Embassy. There he was doing something not very energetic in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and I remember that his wife said to me in 1961, "Peter, we live in an over-communicated age!" Then, this great crisis blew up. It was something to do with chaos in Laos or one of the other countries. Anyway, it was decided that the military threat to Thailand was such that SEATO should be called into being ... it was obvious nonsense. Of course the air forces were so close together, that they didn't bother about diplomatic niceties, and before we knew where we were, a squadron of RAF Typhoons had arrived from Singapore in Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand, in the middle of the teak forests, where there was a splendid little consulate. Anand said to me, "Look, where are we diplomatically?" And I said "I think in London they think you've been asking for this." So, on a Sunday morning, I padded over to Anand's house with the London papers and said, "This is what they think in London you see." I took my shoes off in the appropriate way and everything. I said, "What is it you'd like us to do to regularise this?" And he said, "Well you ought to make a formal offer." So I said, "All right." So I sent a telegram to London and back came a telegram telling us what they wanted us to do. So I rang up Anand. And Dermot, in the middle of this howling crisis, had arranged to go on holiday in Hong Kong and he buggered off, leaving us. He didn't want anything serious like holidays to be interrupted because of a crisis! Dear old Alec didn't know one end of this from the other, you see, so we arranged that I'd draft a letter and Alec would come and present it – I was sitting next to him. I said to Anand, "I think we can forecast with some accuracy the outcome of this meeting", and he replied, "I've already written the record!" Then, about a fortnight later, after Dermot had come back from his happy holidays and the thing had somewhat subsided, some other formality had to be arranged. This time, Dermot was back, so I said, "I should trudge along with you". The Thai Foreign Minister, Thanat Khuman, was educated in Paris so he was neutral between Oxford and Cambridge, said, "Thank you very much. Mr Marshall came along with Mr Adams" making it quite clear that he knew what had been going on. Anyway, the point was, he chose as successor to Anand Panyarachun a man who had been educated at Oxford. You see, you could win over the Thais provided you showed you understood and respected them. You could do business. You could never do

this with the French! But you could do it with the Germans, I think. But the Thais were quite wonderful!

The other thing that happened was Prince William of Gloucester had been in Japan and he'd been great friends with Tipi, the daughter of the Thai Ambassador in London, who by then had become the Head of Protocol in Bangkok. Tipi had got married and she suggested the Prince should drop off in Bangkok on his way home. So there we got a letter from St James's Palace saying that Prince William wouldn't require any assistance but they'd be grateful if we could pass him some mail. That was the biggest understatement, because of course Tipi's father was going to make something out of this and arranged it so that when Prince William arrived, he was the Queen's guest and he was given the Queen's Cadillac and a suite in attendance. Tipi's father explained all this to me and asked, "Who's going to be in attendance on Prince William?" So I took a deep breath and said, "I will." So I became a quasi-courtier. William had no idea this was going to happen to him and I had no idea what was going to happen next! His principal aide was a Captain in the Thai navy and somebody else who was a great poker player. We had an absolutely marvellous time! Each evening, the Thai captain would say, "Any special arrangements ..?" to which I, as the moral keeper of Prince William of Gloucester, said, "I think not!" And at the end of the visit the King and Queen gave a party for Prince William to which Dermot, Alec and your humble servant were invited. The King was a jazz buff. He was an expert on the saxophone. And the Cabinet, if they knew what was good for them, also became effectively jazz buffs. So there was the picture of the King, with the Cabinet around him, puffing away at various instruments, you see. I was surplus to requirements. The Queen, Sirikit, a powerful lady, came to talk to me because I was not part of the proceedings. I had to keep my head down beneath hers. She was an absolute charmer. It was sort of make-believe. Then, I had a terrible problem with presents, you see. William had a signet ring. We grabbed it off him and made all sorts of lovely photographs and I got some firm to put his arms on bios which we dished out. And the other thing was, he had arrived Tourist class and was flying Tourist home with Qantas. So the Thais made it quite clear to Qantas that it would be quite improper for him, a guest of the Royal family, to be seen getting on with the hoi polloi. So the Qantas plane was at the standard place at the airport with everybody getting on and then taxied along, about half a mile, to a VIP port and went through all the rigmarole again and we ushered Prince William on. I got back to the Embassy and slept for about 24 hours! In the meantime, my work as

Head of Chancery had suffered slightly. This is the richness of diplomatic life, that is what separates us out in the end from the home civil service, doesn't it?

SR: Peter, I think that's a very good note on which to end this session. Thank you very much indeed.

SR: Good morning. This is Suzanne Ricketts recording Peter Marshall on 9 October 2017. Now, Peter, we finished our last session with your time in Bangkok, but I think there were some other things you wanted to talk about before we move on to the next chronological stage in your career?

PM: Yes. There are three things. The first was in Washington. It occurred to me that I didn't deal specifically with what I regard as the ultra-typical example of Anglo-American understanding that has come my way. That is the Coronation Service in Washington Cathedral on the day itself, because the organist, Paul Callaway was great friends with William McKie, the organist at Westminster Abbey. And McKie bless him, sent through the bag – quite illegally – copies of Vaughan Williams's setting of the Old Hundredth, which was the opening when the Queen comes in in the Coronation service, scored for brass, choir and timpani. And we gave it its second performance, six hours after the first. William McKie also sent Paul Walton's Orb and Sceptre, as a special organ piece, but Paul said he didn't have the time to rehearse it to the degree he would have wanted.

Now the second thing I wanted to tell you, as I think you yourself mentioned that Baghdad was one of the least agreeable posts in the world according to the Post Report, and I attached a lot of importance to the morale of the staff. You couldn't get out of Baghdad without permission from the local *gumba*, the Muta Sari, and so we used to organise parties to go out to Habaneer Lake and play rounders. They wanted to know what we were doing and I would say "Here I am with many ladies," ogling these idiotic guards. The people who hadn't got staff were the juniors – the girls –, so it was very important to look after them. The Ambassador, bless him, said everyone could use the Embassy swimming pool. This really was what I used to call the amenity of amenities.

The third thing I wanted to tell you was that in the middle of this crisis over Kuwait and just about leading up to July 14 in 1961 which was the third anniversary of the revolution which had brought Abdul Qasim to power. The Chief of Protocol rang me one morning and said,

“We’ve got a British MP here, Mr Bird. Please come and look after him.” I looked up in Vacher’s Parliamentary Companion, but there wasn’t any Bird. But Rafiq said, “I am telling you that there is a British MP in a Baghdad hotel. Come and look after him.” So down I went, and it was Mr John Baird, Labour MP for Wolverhampton. When I came up to him he said immediately, “I’ve no use for your sort! I’m here because I’m Chairman of the Hands Off Iraq Committee.” I thought, that’s fine. I said we were having a party the following evening in the garden and if he’d like to come that would be lovely. Well, he came, a Scotsman, a dentist, and so obviously a drunk. I hope he had given up dentistry by then! Anyway, he got on famously with Jean Crockett, a Scottish girl, and I said to him, “Would you like to see the Ambassador?” He said he would and came mid-morning. Humphrey said, “What would you like to drink?” and he replied “Brandy”. So Marshall had to ravage the Embassy to find some brandy. He said he was getting a little fed up with the personality cult, but it occurred to me that his Iraqi hosts might be getting just a bit fed up with him. He then said, “I think I’m going to cut short my visit and go on to Algeria.” This was 1961 and the whole thing collapsed in 1963, didn’t it? De Gaulle was still dealing with the *colons* in Algeria. He told me he had plans to get on some plane. I thought I had better go to the airport. Sure enough, his Iraqi hosts had abandoned him, so I shoved him all the way through the formalities and got him onto the plane. He wrote me a letter afterwards, saying “Although I remain implacably opposed to everything you stand for, you’re really not at all a bad chap.” And then he made a speech at some point in the House of Commons saying that there was a wonderful Embassy in Baghdad. What this shows is if you’ve got MPs, look after them. Most of the time, it’s a joy. I loved looking after them when they came and visited us. He’d not been best pleased because when he arrived in Beirut to catch a special flight to Baghdad, there was also an Australian lady. As the two were on this plane which arrived late at night, it was assumed they were man and wife and put in the same room in the hotel. Well she, in fact, was a collector of dolls and she’d written to Qasim asking for a doll and he had invited her to attend the celebrations. It’s the sort of thing you come across in diplomatic life. It’s very important. The reputation of a Diplomatic Service is after all very important.

SR: And it’s only as good as the last person you’ve looked after, really. You can’t rest on your laurels.

PM: Absolutely. Anyway, there we are.

Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies, 1965 – 66

SR: So, we move on to Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies. 1965.

PM: That's right. What happened was, I was minding my own business in Bangkok, and a telegram came from the Chief of the Economic Service, Alec Cairncross. *Dear Marshall, You may remember that we met. I'm passing through Bangkok, stopping briefly, and I wonder if we could have a chat?* So we talked about this and that, and chatted about matters economic with which I have some familiarity. The next thing that happened was there came a telegram from the Foreign Office, saying they wanted me to be the next Deputy Director of Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies which was the start up of the Civil Service College. Harold Wilson had come in with some slogans about a white hot technical revolution and he began by making the Treasury less a collection of generalists. There was a course for all new entrants into the home Civil Service and then diplomats got added. So they thought there had better be a diplomat on the staff who knows some economics. The choice was very simple, on the thumbs of one hand, and so that's where Marshall went! Max Beloff, who was the Professor of Government Administration at the time and a friend of mine, said "I object to the fact that the Treasury seem to regard economics as a synonym of administration or the other way round." I was seconded to the Treasury for this purpose. They had this view of what the white hot technical revolution would consist of – stuff about computers and so on. On the other hand, it developed into the Civil Service College after I'd gone. The British approach to training and especially training on the job is, on the whole, so antipathetic ... What happened to the Civil Service College? Where is it now, somewhere in the sticks?

SR: They do a lot of work with the Management College at Ashridge.

PM: You're absolutely right. What was interesting to me about this of course was another example of the interchangeability between at least one aspect of Diplomatic Service expertise and the expertise of the rest of the Service. But, that didn't mean it made any dent at all on the Office as a whole, because it didn't. I don't think I was succeeded by anyone from the Diplomatic Service, but then there wasn't anybody who knew economics!

SR: So you had to make it up as this was a new organisation?

PM: There were three of us. The cadre was the Director and two Deputy Directors, one from the Treasury and one your humble and also a very interesting businessman who enunciated to me as slogan which I have remembered ever since. What's the difference between an administrator and a manager? An administrator keeps things going but a manager makes things go. Now of course we have all the administrators we want in this country, but not nearly enough managers. That is true of the Diplomatic Service, as well as everybody else. Geoffrey Goatman his name was. Splendid fellow. But the impact of the Treasury Centre on the Diplomatic Service was zero. And then, in the middle of that, I was told that they wanted to send me to UKMis Geneva.

SR: We'll move on to that, but before we do, what about the Fulton Report?

PM: The Fulton Report was a report on the whole of the Civil Service, criticising it for being a lot of generalists. That was the origin of it. But as far as what you transcribe, I don't think it's of any great interest.

SR: So you didn't stay very long at the Treasury Centre? About a year?

PM: That was until about the spring of 1966.

SR: That was in London, was it?

PM: Yes, in Cambridge Gate. Lovely house in Regents Park. During the course, I organised liaison visits to Paris and the European Commission in Brussels. This is '65, two years after the De Gaulle veto, but we were still interested. Marshbanks was the Ambassador there. In Paris we were dealing with the OECD. In other words, we were looking at European organisations. Going back, Bevin was the one who had picked up the Marshall Plan offer much quicker than anybody else and the Brits were the leaders in what was called then the European Recovery Programme which later became the OEEC, then the OECD.

UK Mission, Geneva, 1966 – 69

SR: So you got promotion when you went to Geneva?

PM: Yes. The trouble was you see there were far too many of us of the same age coming after the war. When I went to Geneva, I was 41. Geoffrey Goatman was absolutely amazed I was only a First Secretary. You see, they got it all wrong: the intake after the war was based on the wastage experienced after the Great War and, as always, the one doesn't follow the

other. And after the merger [of the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices] they had this awful business of expelling the 30. Have you heard about that? I'll tell you when it comes. Simply too much top hamper. The Commonwealth Service's posts were cruelly overstaffed. They haven't got a clue what they were doing. One of the great things in the Plowden Report was not to recommend the amalgamation of the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices simply because it raised too many hackles and might stand in the way of things like getting better allowances for serving officers. But it was obvious that it was a fifth wheel from the start.

Now, going back to UKMis Geneva, it was a lovely example of the 19th-century merging into the 20th. Geneva, in the spring of 65, had two separate missions. One was the UK Mission to the UN structure in Geneva, because of course the League of Nations structure was based in Geneva and became the UN office in Geneva. A great deal was going on there. The other was the Delegation to EFTA and the GATT, it being assumed that the two could lead separate lives. There were even separate buildings. It then dawned on somebody that the invention of a UN organisation called UNCTAD - it was supposed to be a one-off conference but it was set up as a standing conference based in Geneva - and therefore whoever dealt with UNCTAD would logically have to deal with EFTA and GATT as well. But of course we don't proceed by logic. The UK Mission had an Ambassador at grade 2, a Counsellor looking after EFTA and GATT and a Counsellor looking after the UN including UNCTAD which was me. Naturally, the first thing I did was to get the two together. They even had a thought of producing an Under Secretary from the Board of Trade to be the second in command of this great big new structure. It was a man called Sidney Golt whom I knew, and I told him he'd be wasting his time if he came there, which he would have been. The whole thing was ridiculous! It took me a little bit of time. I made sure that I handled UNCTAD and GATT together. The rest of it wasn't nearly as interesting and important. The Red Cross and everything were dealt with, if at all, under the aegis of the Consulate General - unbelievable really! During this time - I was there for about three years - looking back, it was absolutely invaluable, because if you've got a conspectus of what is going on in Geneva and you can make a dent on it, you've got an advantage in Diplomatic Service operations which is really very considerable. I don't know whether there's very much to say about it as such, except that here was Geneva waking up to the modern realities. They seemed to think that the only way of handling things in Geneva was for experts to come from London and deal with the problem. And on exactly the same basis, of course, the experts used to come from the EEC on the GATT front, whereas I had the benefit of being able to deal with the GATT not as a

member of the EEC. When the time came later, when we were in the EC by then, they still used to come streaming in from Geneva. I was pals with the Director General of GATT who was a very good friend of mine and we dealt with the matter that way. It was a great laugh.

But I don't think Geneva is a very significant place to remember from the point of view of the operations of the Diplomatic Service as a whole.

SR: There's just one point you made in your notes, Peter. That's the *UK import deposit scheme (ugh!)*.

PM: Now what happened was we devalued in 1967 and there was an EFTA Council meeting in Vienna in 1968. Tony Crosland came from London and he said at the end of the formal proceedings that he wanted a quiet meeting with all his opposite numbers. And he then explained to them that we were about to introduce this so-called import deposit scheme which was a wheeze at getting round not making import restrictions on our allies. It was stupid scheme anyway and it outraged the rest of the EFTAs. And what was also so galling was that if they consulted us in advance, there was a way in which one could have organised the arrangement so that it would have been consistent with the GATT. But they consulted the legal advisers in London who didn't know anything about this and came up with this awful result. This is 1968. Heath came in in 1970 and I don't know how it was resolved, but it certainly hadn't been resolved by the time I left to go to Paris.

British Embassy, Paris, 1969 – 71

SR: So you then got a posting to Paris. How did that come about?

PM: A letter came to say I was wanted urgently for a job in London, and in the margin was marked *or elsewhere*. I don't know to this day, but clearly whoever was destined to be the Head of Chancery in Paris wasn't. And so they said we'll take this fellow. Now I don't know on what basis they chose me. I had a good record as someone who understands the middle of an Embassy from Washington. I went to see Alan Campbell, the present incumbent. The Head of Chancery's house, the former stables of the Residence, is now offices, isn't it?

SR: No, various people have lived there and currently the number two is there.

PM: Does he or she like that? You risk being trampled under the Ambassador's feet. I used to say there are only three people who have a private residence in the Rue du Faubourg St Honoré: the President of the Republic, *l'Ambassadeur de Sa Gracieuse Majesté* and myself. But, on the other hand, it is so unhealthy. The carbon monoxide exuded by the cars outside, especially when there's a traffic jam. I didn't really feel very well the whole time I was there. On the other hand, it's a glorious house. We loved it and there was a *grenier* at the top which was an ideal children's nursery.

SR: And your children went French school, did they?

PM: Yes. The *Ecole Active Bilingue*.

SR: Which is still going.

PM: Guy, aged four, stayed for lunch and had *crudités* and *saumon fumé*. Both Fiona and Guy were bilingual but they lost it relatively quickly when they came back to England.

SR: And where did you learn your French?

PM: I sort of picked it up. That's a very good question. I reproach myself because what I should have done was to learn it in Geneva, but there you can simply survive with English as some of my predecessors had.

SR: But in Paris you have to speak the language to do the job properly.

PM: When I came to Paris they said, "You speak French with a Swiss accent!" Not a compliment. But when you were summoned to the Quai d'Orsay you had to speak your best French to them and you knew that a good many of them spoke much better English. On the other hand, there was one particular chap whom I knew sufficiently well so that we could talk in English. But I think I made a mistake in not learning enough French in Geneva, but I never dreamt that I was going to be sent to Paris. *London or elsewhere...* I don't know what the job in London was! You have to laugh at the official machine, it mustn't be taken seriously. But Paris – and this is very important – is the post about which I feel guilty. The reason is this: firstly, I wasn't given enough time to prepare for the job; secondly, I didn't speak French well enough when I arrived; but thirdly, I took the view when I arrived as Head of Chancery that there were far too many people in the Embassy. With Christopher [Soames] and Michael [Palliser] doing everything, there wasn't anything for me to do at a real policy level. Then they had a zealot called John Galsworthy, whom I succeeded in Bangkok. He

was the Minister for European Affairs. And then there was a Counsellor for Financial Affairs. It began by being a man from the Treasury called John Anson and he was succeeded by Derek Thomas whose knowledge of financial affairs was slender at the time. And there were commercial counsellors ... everybody. All I was supposed to do, it seemed to me, was stop all these people banging into one other. And coordinating the Embassy, well coordination of what? I identified certain areas of the political work which weren't being done, particularly to do with south-east Asia and the United Nations. The *directeur* for the UN was a marvellous man called Stephane Hessel. He was my opposite number subsequently in Geneva. And the man who dealt with Asia had a double barrelled name and had a château in Normandy ... Henri Froment-Meurice. Discussing Indochina and other such problems with the French was basically a waste of time. But when Heath came in - which was in June 1970 - we had to do a job, as it were, of restoring Anglo-French relations, after the disappearance of the dreaded De Gaulle which had been just before I arrived in April or May of 1969. Now there was a possibility: we invited the various directors over to London and I accompanied Stephane and the Asia director. The other thing was, I got hold of Racine who was the Director of the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* and he asked me to come and lecture there as he knew that I had been in the Treasury Centre. But all this didn't amount to a job. On the other hand, I looked round and said to myself, "If this is the way they want to play it, I'm not sure if there's any point in my being here." I went to Derek Day, the Head of Personnel Department, and said, "Now look. Here am I, 45 years old doing a job with no content". He said that Alan Campbell had stayed until he was 50 when they promoted him to be Ambassador in Addis Ababa, I suppose a grade 3 or Under Secretary. He thought if I stayed for three or four years, I would also get promoted. I thought to myself, "Stuff that!" There was no point in my staying in Paris for that long. I'd do my nut! Stupidly, I didn't tell Michael Palliser that I was going to do this. Then De Gaulle died and we had the greatest working funeral ever. The British delegation, as they called it, consisted of the Prince of Wales, looked after by Christopher, Heath the Prime Minister looked after by Mary, Wilson and Macmillan as ex-Prime Ministers, and Anthony and Clarissa Eden. So I was sheepdog to this lot and I was sitting in the front of the Wilson-Macmillan car listening to Wilson saying to Macmillan what a good job Christopher was doing in Paris and that he was very proud he had appointed him. Of course, I'd seen the dreaded Eden in Washington. If he understood just what a clanger he had dropped over Suez, he gave no sign of it and Clarissa was a real virago - I wouldn't want to try conclusions with her! I will never forget, we carted them all off to a reception in the Elysée. The place was simply full of heads of government and stiff.

Ben-Gurion was there, it was unbelievable. The Quai had no time to organise it properly and it was the devil of a job to get the UK caravanserai into the waiting cars so we could cart them all away.

SR: They could have just walked down the Faubourg, couldn't they?

PM: Course they could. It would have been sensible, but that wasn't the way ... That was November of 1960. About Christmas time, there came a letter to Christopher saying they'd like to make Peter Marshall Head of the Financial Relations Department in London. So I had to fess up to Michael Palliser. He was ready to pick up the phone to put it all in reverse, but I said no because I decided that there simply wasn't a job for me.

SR: But wasn't it fun to be in Paris?

PM: Yes, but if you were the Head of Chancery, you never had time to call your own. Of course there were the children, and it was okay as a place to live in. From my point of view, quite cynically, a very very useful place to have been in, to look at the French *sur place*. People thought I was barmy. What else should I say about Paris?

SR: Just give me a flavour of what it was like when Christopher and Mary Soames were there.

PM: Well, they did a marvellous job. The idea of Churchill's son-in-law and Churchill's daughter ... Gladwyn – did you know Gladwyn Jebb? - he used to come and try and get cheap cartridges and petrol out of Christopher, you see. And Christopher would throw him out! I would come back to lunch and find Gladwyn in my study, sitting there and making himself at home, saying "Let's go out to lunch." Christopher had had enough of him so I was wonderful as the depository for people who were surplus to requirements in the big house. I remember one MP who was thrown out, he was Conservative for a South coast constituency and Christopher wanted him to give up so that he, Christopher, could go into the House of Commons. But he wouldn't agree, and had been thrown out. We entertained him. And the Archbishop of York, dear Donald Coggan, whom I had met in Geneva ... it was a sort of overspill from the Embassy. When this great delegation arrived for the funeral, Donald Maitland and Robert Armstrong from number 10 came and stayed with us. It was tremendous fun from that point of view, but not when you are 45 or 46 and want to do a real job. Being Head of Chancery is fine in your thirties.

SR: Are you a tennis player? Did you use the tennis court?

PM: No. Christopher kept the garden to himself. What he should have done is let the children use the garden, but that's not the way they worked. I don't know if he understood at all how things work. I think he regarded me as a sort of – not a valet or a groom – but a steward of the robes or a master of the household. He didn't understand what a Head of Chancery does. I gave up trying to influence him. He was very good at coming back after a session with Schuman at the Quai and debriefing us. Then you had Galsworthy running around the place and Michael making sense of it all. We thought that Mary Soames would have made a better Ambassador than Christopher. Michael was very good at dealing with them. Bless him. And of course Paris – the glamour of it. I used to say to Patricia she should put a bandage over her eyes every time she came up the Faubourg - all those wonderful shops!

SR: The food, culture ...

PM: Yes, but you see there was pressure. If you were a First Secretary, you could escape and enjoy all of that. But being right in the middle, especially on a Friday evening, when people put their heads round your door with some frightful boondoggle which you were required to deal with over the weekend. Did we work on Saturday mornings? I think we did. I look back with a certain amount of guilt because I didn't give the job the real support I should have done. But on the other hand, what happened over the next two years could be held as a justification of this.

Financial Policy and Aid Department, later Financial Relations Department, Foreign Office, 1971-73; Assistant Under Secretary, Foreign Office, 1973-75

SR: Yes. You hadn't spent much time in London up to this point.

PM: What I had done of course was, by the time I got back to London, I'd been the Head of Chancery in three different places, so I knew how the Service worked. And there was a fantastic difference between the chaotic conditions of Baghdad, then Paris where it counted and Bangkok where it obviously didn't count.

SR: So you were pleased to get back to London?

PM: Yes. By this time the FCO/CO merger had taken place and there had been a great big expansion of the Office. So in a previously simple concept like economic relations you had Financial Policy and Aid Department and something else and something else, so the first thing I did was grab the lot. Now let's get dates right. May 1971 I was back in London. Oh yes, the other thing. The American Ambassador in Paris used to say every time he sees me, Pompidou asks, "How's the dollar?" In other words, Pompidou realised the international financial situation was dicky. And the French also realised rather better than we did we were really in no position to deal with them on the basis of having a sound currency ourselves and this was far more important than basically inspiring confidence in Pompidou that we were worth admitting into the EEC. When we were admitted we were screwed. Really screwed. Because Heath said to Con O'Neill, "Just agree to whatever you can get." So in May 1971, I arrived in London and there is an incipient financial crisis. It was obvious that what was going to happen was the Americans were going to, in effect, float. I just watched this situation brew. We had a lovely family holiday in Cornwall and I arrived back from that in August. During the time I was away, there were reports from Catherine Pestell and Richard Burges Watson taking the line that we were going to have to float ourselves. Eventually, it was announced one night on August 15 on the radio and television that the President was going to make an important statement later that evening. I rang up Tony Rawlinson whom I'd dealt with mainly in the Treasury, "Look, something terrible is going to happen." He said, "No, I don't think so. We would have heard from our people in Washington if it was." I then rang the Resident Clerk and said, "If I'm any judge, you're going to get a stream of telegrams in the middle of the night. The first person to wake up is Rawlinson and the second is me." This was the suspension of the dollar's convertibility into gold, combined with measures to limit imports into the United States. Plainspoken, robust John Connally, US Secretary of the Treasury, Texan said, "We have a problem we're sharing with our friends. That's what friends are for." You see, the impact on Europe was absolutely dramatic. Fortunately, the whole of the apparatus in Brussels was on holiday. I got hold of Jimmy Mellon who was then holding the fort in UKRep and said, "Look, this is our big chance to get together with the Six." And within a few days, although we weren't yet members of the EEC, Tony Barber, the Chancellor, attended a meeting of the Six + 1 in Brussels. We became de facto members. And Roly Cromer, Ambassador in Washington, was on holiday on his farm in France, bouncing up and down. Christopher Soames came streaking over from Paris. Cromer got his orders from the American Department who didn't know anything about this at all. I left a message somewhere for him to say, "Look, if you want to know what's going on, I've got all

the telegrams.” He came and sat down in my office and read through them all. I then had a meeting: Denis Greenhill as the PUS, Cromer, Soames and your humble servant to decide what to do about this. The Treasury and the Bank of England went through the roof. We had to think through what the implications were. They set up a group called GEN57, consisting of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Treasury and the Bank of England. Trouble is it meant Marshall had to keep all the top FCO brass out although of course I was dealing with Permanent Secretaries. I kept my radio on France Inter and listened to it coming into the office. My department was in Great George Street with the Treasury. I had got it all fixed up so that all the advance copies of the telegrams went to the Treasury and people in the Bank of England, rather than to anybody in the Foreign Office. Alec Douglas Home was absolutely marvellous about this – the next Prime Minister, totally relaxed. And this is where I really got to know Robert Armstrong, then the Private Secretary at No.10. Matters were moving so fast, that it ended up by me drafting telegrams for the Chancellor rather than the Foreign Secretary. No diplomat has ever had anything like the influence in the Treasury that I had. After the shambles, they had a meeting in the Smithsonian in December to bring the whole thing in order and I enquired gently whether the Chancellor wanted me to come with him. He said that he wanted me to stay and deal with the consequences at this end. During all this time, the whole of the Brussels apparatus – Con O’Neill, John Robertson and so on – were not in this at all. We had a meeting of the Commonwealth Finance Ministers in the Bahamas. I arrived. I had all the papers, you see, because I used the Confidential bag. All the people from the Treasury arrived without the papers so I was rather valuable to them. So you can understand this was a situation that had never arisen before and has never arisen since. But the main thing from my point of view was that, having done more or less the same thing at the time of the devaluation in 1949, this was familiar territory. Thereafter, about a year later, they made me an Under Secretary. Oliver Wright said, “Look, this fellow is dealing with people two or three ranks above him. Let’s get realistic”. They wanted to clear the top hamper out in the shape of Bottomley. Dear Dick Turpin and Kent Gallagher - the Gallagher above me ... it was enough to make you weep! As a result of all this, I called my department Financial Relations Department and I used to write occasional memos for dear Alec Douglas Home. He wrote on the top of one, “I must send some boxes of matches to the G20.” Now, do you remember, he was twitted during the general election by Wilson for not knowing anything about economics. He said, “When I look at these things, I do it with boxes of matches.” Dear fellow – he knew what he didn’t know, and he wasn’t going to try and pretend! Heath, on the other hand, was deeply interested in all of this just as Bevin and

Attlee had been before him in the 1949 devaluation. The other point was this very quickly came into the immediate question of an enormous inflow of money – Arab oil money – and the extent to which the upheavals in the system meant that it couldn't be absorbed. This was an enormous issue, so we set up another group, called the Group on the Large Surpluses of the Oil Producers. Again, Bank of England, Treasury and Marshall, keeping the others out. I said, "Look. Why don't we call it the Vast Surpluses of the Oil Producers? That gives a much better idea of the problem and an infinitely better set of initials! The Treasury, bless them, agreed. We saw a plaintive minute from Heath saying, "I see we have to call this VSOP." He hadn't got very much of a sense of humour. The turmoil continued from December 71. In June of 72, I had come back after a peaceful lunch and had a message to go urgently to the Treasury. So off I went into Anthony Rawlinson's room where people were running around like flies and Tony Rawlinson said, "We're going to float". Then somebody else said, "You seem to have changed colour!" What we were doing by floating was we were wrecking three things in a system called the 'snake in the tunnel' for Europe, the whole of the Smithsonian settlement and the sterling area – all was going to go out of the window. For the rest of the day it was absolute turmoil because we had to decide to get everything ready before 5 o'clock the following morning. By this stage, we did bring in John Robinson and say, "You've got to tip off UKRep as to what they do about all this. That evening, as it happened, I was supposed to go out to dinner with the Counsellor at the Swiss Embassy. I knew I had to go because if I didn't, they'd smell a rat. Bank rate had been raised – this was a Thursday – to 15%. Fortunately, for some reason or other, the dinner broke up early. I went back to the Treasury, the front entrance in Whitehall about o'clock. At that very hour, Norman Macrae, the deputy editor of the Economist, was going round Parliament Square in a taxi he saw me and shouted out, though I didn't hear at the time, "Peter, are we going to float?" Because the Economist had gone to press saying no ... And then we worked on until 4 o'clock in the morning I walked home thinking about a great day's work. Now the next day was key day in the Watergate break-in and there was a recording of them in the White House, discussing what to do. And at the end Haldeman or Ehrlichman or one of them said, "By the way, the British have floated sterling." And Nixon was heard to grunt. Then somebody else asked, "Do you want a briefing?" And Nixon was heard to grunt. And someone else said, "The currency most likely to be affected is the Italian lira." Nixon: "I don't give an *expletive deleted* for the lira!" So that was the verdict on my night's work! I did think seriously of writing on this after the 30 year rule. The G20 and Jeremy Morse – he was the Chairman of the G20 committee - but the Treasury simply didn't make enough of their opportunities for

operating internationally. One other thing: while I was Head of the Financial Policy and Aid Department, UNCTAD 3 came up in Santiago in the spring of 1972. Bottomley, in his wisdom, decided that nobody need go from the Foreign Office and so a large delegation went from the Treasury, the Board of Trade and whatever it was called the DFID – the development people. It was called the Development Wing in those days. Anyway, there wafted over the mountains rumours that the British delegation were making a complete cock-up of it. Heath was very annoyed because in 1964 he in fact had saved UNCTAD 1 from falling apart. He was interested in the development and UNCTAD and so on. He decreed that Lady Tweedsmuir should go and sort matters out. Of course there was nobody in the Foreign Office who knew anything about UNCTAD except me so I went along to brief her and explained this, that and the other. She was looking extremely unhappy so I said, “Would you like me to come with you?” She said, “Oh yes please”. So off I went. Needless to say, the Delegation weren’t best pleased to see me. Poor old Bottomley said, “I was quite right not to send anybody.” It just showed that when anything serious happened, he was best left out of the proceedings. Anyway after this hysterically funny journey, we got back and by then the whole question of sterling – the oil surpluses and the VSOP – was really getting very serious. And, like everything else, it somehow resolved itself.

SR: It sounds as though you had the time of your life – a real job with real issues to deal with.

PM: That’s exactly right. Yes. Now where are we? 1972, no 73, I was the Under Secretary. And, deliciously, first of all, Bottomley went off, then they posted Dick Turpin, then Curtis Keeble went off to Iceland and there were no other Under Secretaries so I was the de facto Deputy Under Secretary Economic as well as being an Under Secretary for about a year. And then came the General Election of 1974 when Heath was thrown out. You remember, Heath called an election and lost it. So in ‘74, Donald Maitland who had been the UK Ambassador to the UN, was thrown out and replaced by Ivor Richard. He came back and was slotted in as the Economic DUS. The developing countries were feeling their oats because of the enormous increase in oil prices and their oil revenues and a genius called Boumedienne, the President of Algeria who was at that time President of the Non-Aligned Movement fomented a special session of the General Assembly. The Labour Government had just come in and David Ennals was the Minister of State, Callaghan was the Foreign Secretary and dear Judith Hart was in charge of the Development Wing and I was introduced to her. She said, “I’ve heard about you. Apparently you aren’t quite as awful as all the rest of them!” That is what the reputation of the Foreign Office was then. But going back, as a

result of all this hoo-hah in 1971, the speeding up of the Smithsonian settlement and all that, Cromer wanted me to come to Washington as Head of Chancery.

SR: Again?

PM: Yes, for a fourth time. Donald Tebbit had said it would be promotion. Patricia said, “Not on your nelly! We’ve done it three times, we’re not going to move yet again.” If I had been really ambitious, I would have said to Patricia, “Look this will be good for my career.” It would have been. God knows what would have happened if they’d made me the Head of Chancery then. It wasn’t as if I didn’t know anything about America and about economics. Anyway, she said, “Not on your nelly!” And, from my point of view, what I was doing in London was sufficiently worthwhile that I didn’t mind. There was a special session of the General Assembly in ‘74 where Boumedienne was the prophet, denouncing the extravagance of the West and so on, using the resources we hadn’t got etc. etc. and they set up this so-called New International Economic Order. A General Assembly Resolution, not binding of course. But it was a moral victory for the developed world against the developing world to add on to the pressure UNCTAD was exerting Geneva. Assessing this, I thought we simply had to set up a group in London to examine what it was the developing countries want out of us and what we can do about it, because this was not something that was going to go away. They had a rejig – the second one was in the autumn of 1975. That’s right. In the meantime, of course, Peter Shore who was violently anti EEC was the President of the Board of Trade and went to a chaotic meeting in the OECD. Again, I don’t think it matters from your point of view. Donald Maitland clearly didn’t think very much of what I was doing and didn’t think it really mattered. As a Heath appointee, he got to work his passage back with the Labour government and Wilson, as Prime Minister, was reverting to the idiotic scheme about commodities which he had launched as President of the Board of Trade aged 31, 20 years before.

UK Mission to the UN, New York, 1975-79

PM: And in December 1974, Donald Tebbit, by then the Chief Clerk, had summoned me and said, “It’s time for you to move. We’re going to make you the Minister Economic in UKMis New York. Completely out of the blue. I didn’t know what to make of it and I went to see Donald Maitland. What had happened was that he had decided he wanted to get rid of me. He had put in a report on me, without my knowing, that I was a disappointment and had not

made enough decisions. I then discovered – even better – that when I left Paris, Christopher Soames and Michael Palliser had put in a report on me again without telling me, saying that I was unsuited for political work and better on economic and social work or being an inspector. Just imagine!

SR: Without telling you. That's extraordinary. It wouldn't happen like that today.

PM: Unforgivable. Anyway, Donald Tebbit invited me to lunch afterwards and said, "There are two views of you. One is – which I share – that you are all right. The other is, you know ..., you're not all right". So I said, "Well, who says I'm not all right!" And Donald said - again moral cowardice of the first order – "Well, I'd rather not say. Just think of that as a reward for my efforts." But I had a split personality about it, rather like Brexit. I thought the UN would never be the same place again. People who understand what has happened in the General Assembly – this is going to be very important for Britain's future, international relations, whatever happens. I thought this was really rather interesting. The last thing Patricia wanted was to go to New York. On the other hand, the children ... the idea of skiing and everything ... So off I went. My predecessor, dear Archie Mackenzie, really was an expert on the UN. He was a moral disarmer, but he'd been in San Francisco and knew the score and I realised I was taking over from somebody who was worthwhile. Ivor Richard of course was idle as the day was long, but he let me get on with it. The other idiot was James Murray. The most contemptible member of the Diplomatic Service I've ever met! Completely out for himself. Everybody hated working for him.

SR: This is Suzanne Ricketts recording Peter Marshall on October 18, 2017. We left things when you were banished to New York. What was it like with a political appointee as Ambassador?

PM: His name was Ivor Richard. He was a Labour MP and had lost his seat. Callaghan offered him the post of Permanent Representative in New York, Donald Maitland being summarily kicked out – he had been put there inappropriately by Heath. Donald Maitland came back and was parachuted into the office as Deputy Under-Secretary Economic. His main concern was to work his passage back with the Labour government. He decided he didn't want me, so this was how they got rid of me. When Ivor heard about this he said, "Are you going to have it out with him?" Knowing how the Service works, there was no point

because, underneath it all, I realised that I was being asked to deal with all this whole range of issues which I knew mattered, even though the upper echelons simply hadn't recognised it. About two or three years into New York, I wrote a letter to Curtis Keeble who was then the Chief Clerk, saying, "I'm alive and well and living in New York. I deal with issues which are both important and interesting and I'm a quart in a pint pot." Keeble wrote back and said, "Lucky is the person who can say *a* and *b*. As regards *c* there's nothing we can do." I stayed there, languished there for four years. Now the team. Of course Ivor didn't know anything about these subjects and was anxious not to overexert himself and left the whole thing to me, so I didn't mind. What it meant in practice was that I dealt with the Ambassadors, simply because most of them were more interested in the economic and social issues which I dealt with and of which he knew nothing. The fifth wheel was James Murray who was out for himself and nothing else. Ivor made it absolutely clear that Murray and Marshall were equivalents. That's not the way Murray played it. At the Security Council, he said he was the Deputy Ambassador. In the middle of it all, he was awarded a KCMG. Patricia was absolutely furious. It was the greatest example of Palliser favouritism I have ever come across. Anyone less deserving ... it was simply grotesque. You can imagine how it went down in the mission. So that was the situation and two rather curious sequels to that. One is ... particularly the Canadian Ambassador and the German Ambassador – the French Ambassador was a marvellous man, Louis de Guirangaud - with all of these people, whenever there was a question of economics, I was in demand. But Rüdi von Wechmar, the German, became the President of the General Assembly, which could be regarded as purely honorific, but he wanted to make something of it so I and various others said he was absolutely right and we would help him. So we had a team around him next thing was, a few years later, he was appointed German Ambassador to London. By this time, I was in the Commonwealth Secretariat and I spent quite a lot of time briefing him about London. It just shows how these things happen. Now, what else? The Canadians had a small group to reform the UN of which I was a member. I regard the Canadian contribution to international peace and goodwill and everything else as grossly underestimated, just as their lend lease generosity as compared with the Americans is underestimated. I got to know them very well which, again, turned out to be extremely useful when the time came in the Commonwealth. The same thing happened with the charming Caribbeans whose company I have always enjoyed. You see we used to talk about these issues, although we disagreed on the floor. We'd say, "Let us look at the problems, rather than the New International Economic Order, which is being thrust down our throat." I got into the position where they knew that I knew as

much about the subject as they did. Eventually, I realised there was a way of blunting the edge of all of this by pointing out to them that concentration on intergovernmental economic issues was damaging the welfare of the individual, which was the primary object of the whole economic and social side of the UN. One wet Saturday morning, when we couldn't go off to our hideaway in Catskills in upstate New York, I suddenly realised I could draft a resolution which I would get the EEC to sponsor and put it forward. I've written an enormous account of whole North – South dialogue in a book called *The United Kingdom and the United Nations*. It all came out as if the EEC had made this great initiative. Anyway, that kept me from being bored to death! The other thing was there was a splendid organisation called the Stanley Foundation. This very interesting man was a machine tool maker based in Chicago, in Illinois and, having made his fortune, he decided he wanted to do something to help the UN. He set up this Foundation for looking at UN problems. It ran meetings and I was roped into some of them. I took rather an active part in the Stanley Foundation, simply as a means of fertilising the minds of all and sundry in the UN. The percentage of eggheads to delegates as a whole in any large organisation is quite small. In the end, you get down to a cadre of people and it doesn't matter which side they come from if they're the ones doing the thinking. This meant that, after four years, I had something of a reputation in the UN. When I was posted to Geneva, the reaction was "Thank God the Brits are sending somebody here who knows something about it!" My predecessors, including the egregious Murray and before him various people really hadn't got a clue and so I hit the ground running. There was no Permanent Members convention there and I started getting stuck in. Britain had no money – the idea of 0.7% ... we couldn't afford it. Callaghan would say keep your trap shut. In New York, there were four countries which regularly opposed the propositions of the Group of 77: the United States, of course; Japan, of course; the Federal Republic of Germany; and the UK. We were known as the Gang of Four. And Alexander York, the German, - a marvellous man - kept in touch for years afterwards. I would be instructed from London that I could oppose something as long as there was at least one other member of the EEC who did the same. And they would get similar instructions. My French opposite number, Michel Rouget, was from the Trésor, had glorious stories about the Quai d'Orsay and what went on there. Hilarious. He also became a lifelong friend. I must tell you one story. A French delegation was assembling for a huge meeting and they all gathered from various parts of the globe. When they arrived at the location, they hadn't got any instructions so they sent a telegram to the Quai d'Orsay asking what the line was. They got a telegram back saying the line would not be determined until the Minister's speech was drafted and that wouldn't be until just before

he leaves for the meeting. “So in the meantime, you have no instructions. You should maintain a low profile and confine yourself to criticising the secretariat”. The other thing was that young people joining the Quai d’Orsay were told only really to use question marks, never to use exclamation marks. *Cela veut dire que le service publique ne s’interroge peu et ne s’étonne jamais.* This is *Clochemerle!*

All of this helped to lighten the burden. Patricia loved all the amenities of New York and joined the Audubon Society for birdwatching and the children loved it for the skiing and everything else. The economic and social side organised itself well because it was mainly staffed by French people or Swiss, so we all agreed we’d have the summer session of ECOSOC in Geneva and then everyone would take their holidays in Europe in August. So it all meant we escaped the New York summer either in England or in various other places. The family used to come out and we would rent somewhere. I knew Geneva like the back of my hand having already been there before. And of course with the devastating originality they show in the Foreign Office, they thought the only thing to do was to send me to Geneva, which they did. I was there from ‘79 to ‘83. I think that’s all we need to say about New York, except for one thing. The Security Council. The total FCO concentration on the Security Council ... so when the miserable Murray left, they put in a man called Mansfield who knew nothing about the UN. And then Ivor, as the 1979 election approached, got busy to try and find himself a seat, and so was absent from New York. Added to the complications, Peter Ramsbotham had of course been heaved out of Washington to make room for the miserable Peter Jay. And before he left, Peter had been so stupid as to accept John Robinson as the Minister. Now, John Robinson and the Americans were oil and water. He might just have been hidden while Peter Ramsbotham was there, but he immediately fell out publicly with Jay. He was sidelined at the Embassy. We found him space to be in the Security Council in New York. Again, Michael Palliser should have thrown him out.

SR: What did they fall out about?

PM: John Robinson was a dunder-headed, Europe-obsessed man who had opinions on almost everything contrary to everyone else’s. Eventually, he was sent to Israel. And finally they threw him out. A man of the utmost obduracy, he was allowed free rein to get us into Europe. Terrible story. Anyway, the result of this was a certain dearth of people in the upper reaches in New York. So I dealt with the Security Council at the same time as I was dealing with everything else. It was perfectly obvious that you could combine the whole thing, as

Tony Parsons did afterwards. Apparently, I attended 10 various Security Council consultations or meetings, only two of which ended in formal sessions in the Grand Chamber. There's a little room at the side where you all gather for consultations before you come out in the open, because by the time you come out in the open everyone's script has been written, probably in our case by a Legal Adviser immediately behind you and a whole collection of legal eagles in London. What all this showed up was the utter futility of the priorities on which the UN Department in London existed. It was a doddle. The only thing was – very important – they called meetings in the middle of the night and the weekends and everything, whereas the economic and social side, being properly organised, we scarpered off to Europe in the summer.

UK Mission, Geneva, 1979 – 83

PM: So we now come on to Geneva. Murray was trying to stay on for as long as he could but eventually we kicked him out. I arrived just in time to greet the Duke of Kent, who was opening some radio or international telecommunications business. I got a lovely fruit dish out of that which I still have. The setup in Geneva was marvellous – lovely house in Coligny on the other side of the lake from Geneva, famous as Frankenstein's home town as that's where Mary Shelley wrote the book. It had been set up as a Grade 2 post, but when Jim Bottomley arrived it was lowered to Grade 3. He had been sent off to South Africa, where he was a complete failure and was withdrawn and put into Geneva. He decided there wasn't a job and threw his hand in. The Office immediately downgraded the post to Grade 3. But fortunately all the appurtenances of Grade 2 were there and I had the facilities to operate. Of course, I arrived on the same banished basis as I'd been sent to New York. Very early on, Waldheim paid an official visit to London for which Tony Parsons and Sheila were summoned from New York, and Patricia and I were summoned from Geneva and accommodated in great luxury at Claridge's. The Conservative government had come in: we are now talking about '79 – Mrs T came in in October '79. My appointment and a great many others hung fire during the election. That's right. Only after the election did the Foreign Office put all these appointments to Mrs T. So through the summer of 1979 it took some time to make the changeover and we had a little time in London. As a result, I had to go to Geneva where I was already accredited as the Ambassador as the ECOSOC representative in New York while the Number 2 was the Chargé d'Affaires. It shows they simply hadn't got a clue. It was perfectly obvious that not only they didn't have a clue, but

Ministers hadn't got a clue either. And the line being taken in the Foreign Office on North – South issues, as you can imagine under Mrs Thatcher and Douglas Hurd, was considerably unsympathetic. And in particular there was something called the Brandt Report. Willi Brandt got together an eminent group to try to establish harmony between North and South, under the aegis of the World Bank. I warned Michael Palliser in a letter, not long after arriving in Geneva, saying, "You must be careful because you are getting out of kilter. You really must understand there's a lot of steam behind this." And, on my initiative, I went to see Teddy Youde who had then combined the posts of Chief Clerk and Deputy PUS. He was already known as a little pedant and his work as Chief Clerk brought his worst aspects out. The idea of him combining that job with that of Deputy PUS was an absolute disaster, but for me it came to a point of absurdity. He said to me, "Your letter has gone down very badly. You must understand that Geneva has no resonance with ministers and that you have no resonance. There are certain people who aren't going to go any further in their career and you are one of them. I have had to explain this to quite a number of people. Grade 3 is the grade which most people can expect, but some of us float a little higher." Those were his exact words. I listened to this silly little pedant and thought, "Is it real?" As I left, I thanked him for his time.

The second thing was that by this time Patricia had been diagnosed with breast cancer so I had other things to think about. Now it so happened that the Foreign Affairs Committee had asked the Foreign Office for their views on the Brandt Report. They produced them, about a fortnight later. And they were absolutely demolished. The Sunday Times wondered how a government department could have produced so squalid and sordid a paper. This was, I'm afraid, very largely Douglas Hurd's fault. And Peter Carrington, who had the report in his in basket, felt it necessary to go and apologise to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Now that shows you the quality of the advice they were getting from the economic side of the Foreign Office. I don't know who it was, probably Tom Bridges, or Richard Evans who went off to be Ambassador in China. It is impossible to imagine anyone more unfitted for that job and who would be completely disregarded by the Treasury, the Bank and anyone who knew anything about economics. He was preceded by Norman Statham who was described by Ivor Richard (on whom there were no flies) as "a wheel horse." Somebody like this, actually supposed to represent Foreign Office interests in Whitehall ... As a result of all this, the Foreign Office has lost ground ever since Michael Palliser. You will never regain it unless you have somebody rather different from BoJo ... and never will. You can well say, in the

modern conditions, what you need out of a Foreign Office is not what you thought you needed 70 or 80 years ago. Anyway, so that was the situation: Marshall was under sentence of death within a year of arrival. As far as I was concerned – one more thing. On one occasion, the Indian Ambassador said to me, “Peter, do you think they have the slightest idea in London how valuable you are to them?” I replied, “Of course not, they neither know nor care.” This man went on to be Permanent Under-Secretary in Delhi and of course when I became the Commonwealth Deputy Secretary General we had this meeting as friends. This is interesting because it’s rather an example of how you can operate in Geneva. There was a terrible problem between Britain and India about virginity tests. Really, it was the most undignified and stupid thing. Terrible row. The High Commission in Delhi got nowhere. Well the President of the Rajya Sabha, the Indian upper house, passed through Geneva and I was asked to go and see him. This whole question of the virginity tests was going to be raised in the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, so I said, “When you raise it, what I’m going to do is to say we fully understand the problem, we respect the way in which it’s seen in India and I can assure the Council we are going to give the thing our most urgent attention.” And that settled everybody. I asked London if we could do this but they said no, they preferred to deal with it bilaterally. They tried in India and got nowhere. So without any instructions we just did this and that was the end of it. I used to call it bilateral-iasis. The FCO simply didn’t understand how to operate multilaterally.

What I think we’ll look at in Geneva comes under four headings: first, my operating not under the constraint of the Permanent Members Convention; secondly, relations with the French; thirdly, relations with the Americans; and fourthly, we come back to converting the Foreign Office.

First, the Permanent Members convention. There were five specialised agencies and a whole number of organisations, all of which were trying to get money out of us for one reason or another. And it was perfectly obvious the right thing to do was to get the representatives of the developed countries together in a group simply so they could discuss who was asking for money and why. There was already something called the Geneva Group which only dealt with the budgets of the specialised agencies of which the British and the Americans were the de facto chairmen. We used to go round and do the thing, both while the Geneva Group was meeting – people used to come from capitals – and in between. But I expanded this to something which I am afraid I called the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group or HULWoG, which was all the main donors. We discussed what we were being asked to do and looked at

all the priorities. It worked like a charm. The heads of the specialised agencies knew that when they were dealing with me, I had got a coordinated view among the donors. It was a discussion group, it wasn't a coordination group. I called it Liaison Group, because it wasn't an attempt to coordinate. Also Geneva was the only place outside Brussels where the Council of the EEC had offices as well as the Commission ... they had this huge place and there was an enormous amount of EEC coordination. On various crucial meetings we had EEC coordination, and whoever had the Presidency did the job. There was big international refugee conference early on in 1980 where the chief American delegate was Shirley Temple Black. Splendid creature. When I think of that tiny thing singing 'On The Good Ship Lollipop' ... Anyway, Ministers came from London and made their speeches and offers and at the end of the day they all departed. And the developed countries ... they had to have a communiqué. And the developing countries were saying that wasn't good enough. In this small contact group with Waldheim and Hartling who was the former Danish Prime Minister and Chairman of the refugee programme, the High Commissioner for Refugees at UNHCR, they were getting nowhere and we were sitting around. So eventually I said, "Perhaps I can come along with you?" I went in with the Dane and found this group with Waldheim and Hartling looking rather miserable and I found that the chief objector to all this was my Nigerian opposite number, Olu. I said to him in this group of about 12, "What is it you really want? What is it you really object to? Because if you are going to spurn ministers coming here, do you think they will ever come again?" As a result of which, we had a communiqué. Waldheim was highly complimentary and Hartling realised I was quite useful to him. Not long after that I became Chairman of his committee. This is the sort of thing you can do if you're not constrained. Cottafavi was the UN Secretary General in Geneva, a charming Italian who had been in a crack Italian regiment during the war and allowed himself to be taken prisoner – he knew who he approved of! I said to him that there was no proper coordination and nobody knew what was going on in Geneva and that he should organise a central daily programme just as they have in New York. He said it couldn't be done, as everyone had their own ideas. I thought it could be done as you have to think of the customers here. Eventually, we had something like a daily programme. The Irish Ambassador – we were of course at daggers drawn over Northern Ireland and Bobby Sands – used to ring me up in the morning to ask me which of the meetings he needed to go to! There is a way of operating in an international organisation which is far beyond your own national ethos. That's exactly what we don't have in Brussels and if we'd had it for 20 or 30 years, none of this would have occurred. You look at the sequence of Ambassadors in UKRep ...

who would ever warm to Michael Butler or David Hannay? Cold fish, who have no sympathy with anybody else. And there's no point in having any sympathy with them. As for John Kerr, he's the Artful Dodger at the moment, trying to forget that he was the idiot who was the Secretary General of the Convention and so, inter alia, responsible for drafting Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty.

That's Geneva and that's why, of course, when I left, I was described in a newspaper article as *un Ambassadeur pas comme les autres*.

The Falklands War - they wanted to hear what the British Ambassador was saying, especially as the Argentinian Ambassador wasn't ... on one occasion we were invited to debate in public on Swiss radio, but he ratted and wouldn't do it.

Now, Anglo-French. If you look at the Guide Michelin, Geneva is regarded as being part of France! The *Genevois* don't mind as it's good for trade. What it does indicate is that Geneva is regarded as a bit of an outhouse and so the French have never staffed their mission in the way that the Americans and the Germans would do. Or us or the Canadians. I was very fortunate in that Stephane Hessel was my opposite number. I'd known him as he'd been the *Directeur des Nations Unies* in the Quai d'Orsay when I had been in Paris. He was a UN expert and was very leftish. So when Mitterrand came in, he was summoned back to Paris to do some big job, the equivalent of something like the British Council and made an *Ambassadeur de France*. As a German Alsatian Jew, naturalised French, he really wasn't the usual round of the Quai d'Orsay. The French had a lovely old mission, *les Ormeaux*, outside Geneva, where there was a tradition of *théâtre de maison*. It was thought a good thing for the British Ambassador, if his/her French could stand up to it, to take part. So I was game for this. The first year they did *On ne badine pas avec l'amour*.

SR: Alfred de Musset, yes.

PM: I took the part of a dim French peasant. I said this was my contribution – my tribute – to the Common Agricultural Policy. And Patricia found the most marvellous pair of spectacles. We had two or three performances and one of my lines was *Il y a une joyeuse bombance ce soir aux Ormeaux* which became a sort of slogan! The next year we had a cabaret. Four of us dressed up in cassock and surplice and sang the English weather forecast to the tune of the Anglican chant. Mark Allen from disarmament was the bass. We then sang the Swiss *bulletin routier*: Geneva was absolutely entranced! When Stephane left, I said to his wife,

Vitya, (who always used to supply a magnificent buffet after rehearsals) that she should find out whether their successor would be interested in all of this or not. And the next time we meet at a reception, if he's interested you'll arrive waving a white handkerchief and, if not, a black handkerchief. Of course, I had completely forgotten I'd said that and at some reception, I saw Vitya advancing towards me waving a white hankie. She looked at me and realised I hadn't the slightest idea what she was doing. Everyone else wondered whether she was well. All she said was, "*Crétin!*" But what was much more important was that Stephane had a weekly group of all the Western correspondents - he gave them drinks on a Friday morning and briefed them about what was going on. He said, "Now that I'm leaving I'm handing you over to the British Ambassador." The French don't do this sort of thing in the ordinary way.

One year later, Stéphane's successor sent me a telex in London about the next production, *Les Femmes Savantes*. So I sent him a telegram on the day of the first performance saying simply *Mes hommages les plus respectueux et les plus chaleureux aux Femmes Savantes. Je ne me trompe pas, il y a encore une joyeuse bombance ce soir aux Ormeaux!* He read this out ... poor Anne Warburton who succeeded me ... all the performers knew this standard joke. It all helped. You never know what sort of dividends you're going to get from taking a little trouble like this.

But far more serious was the Anglo-American side of this. I was very great friends with Gerry Helman and his wife Dolly. He was pushed out to make way for a Reagan nominee, Geoffrey Swaebe. In the ordinary way of protocol they rang up and asked if he could come and call, but I invited him to lunch instead. So he came, we spent a couple of hours. He said, "I was responsible for fundraising for Reagan in California, who asked me if I'd like a job. There was one going at the UN in Geneva. We all know about the UN in New York, but the UN in Geneva is absolutely blank territory as far as I'm concerned." I said, "I understand exactly the situation and I'll tell you my advice to you. Just let it all wash over you for a year. It will make more sense the second time round. You've got a very good mission. They won't let you down. Anyway, if you want, if there's anything going on, you can always ring me." He said, "Do you know what they tell me in the mission? If you don't believe what we say, check it out with Ambassador Marshall." This was just at the time Patricia was desperately ill. After some time, I saw him again at a party in the UN building and he said, "I'm sorry you can't come to cocktails on Sunday." I looked at him blankly. "Yes, you're having the Archbishop of Canterbury to stay so you can't come." Angela Fowle, my

extremely efficient secretary, had told him what was happening. To cut a long story short, I got leave from Robert Runcie to go to the American Embassy. The reason Robert Runcie was there was that on becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, he was duty bound to pay a visit to the World Council of Churches, based just outside Geneva. Christopher Hill, his chaplain, came on a sort of proving visit and said that Runcie wanted to have a look round the UN at the same time as visiting this exhilarating World Council. So we arranged a marvellous programme for him. He had with him Christopher Hill, a large bearded gentleman I hadn't met before, Richard Chartres, and an even larger bearded gentleman whom I had met before, Terry Waite. And also the Chairman of the Anglican Communion, who was an Archbishop from Canada. So quite a collection of Reverends were staying in the house. So I disentangled myself from them and went off to the American Embassy. There was the most extraordinary gathering I have ever attended in my life. The gathering was to debrief Mr Charles Z Wick and his powerful wife Mary Lou. He was called something like the Director of Communications and had just been appointed by Reagan, and was eventually the Minister of Information. He'd visited the UK and other countries in Europe. Not least in the UK, and not least with Douglas Hurd, he had been extremely unimpressed with the assessment of the importance of disarmament and the Soviet threat. In earlier days he had been Charles Zwick, a bandleader in Cleveland, Ohio. At the meeting were Mary Lou, his powerful wife, Geoffrey and his wife and five American Ambassadors – the two Ambassadors to the GATT and three different Ambassadors to disarmament, among whom the principal one was Paul Nitze (they were non-resident most of them) who was a former Secretary of Defense. And he started explaining his position. I said, "You're absolutely right in principle." He wanted coordination of the anti-Soviet effort to take place in Geneva where all the Soviet spies were. But the point is that all this was supposed to be done in Brussels and NATO would be jumping up and down. I was the only Brit there, and obviously Geoffrey wouldn't have invited me there if he hadn't trusted me 100%. Earlier in the year, Haig had described Peter Carrington as a duplicitous bastard – do you remember that? This was January 1980. We never knew why. Anyway, I excused myself in order to rejoin His Grace. As Geoffrey escorted me to the door, he said, "Peter, we're prepared to drop the adjective!"

To continue with the Archbishop. Geneva was falling all over to see him: every door was open. We had a series of excellent visits. I gave a lunch for him in the UN and Cottafavi, from this famous mountain regiment, immediately hailed Robert Runcie as a 'three button man', you know as a Scots guardsman. He gave a great speech to a group called *Les*

Rencontres de Lundi. The whole visit was a colossal success. To me it was a godsend, so soon after Patricia's death. When he got back to London he wrote me a letter - the sort of letter that is really embarrassing. I am absolutely certain, although I cannot prove it, that he went to see Michael Palliser – another three button man. The UN Department, in their inimitable way, said just a letter from me would be quite enough as a report on the visit. But not on your nelly! I was going to write a dispatch about what I had done. And I know that Runcie saw the dispatch because he wrote me a letter afterwards saying he was most grateful for what I had said about his visit to Geneva. The crucial point was the impact that all of this had made on him. And he was, after all, in a relationship ... What they said about Mrs Thatcher: she disliked the Foreign Office, but liked some of the people in it. With the Church of England, it was the other way round. Because of Robert Runcie and the Falkland Islands

The most important follow-up was that Charles Z Wick said to me, "Look, I want to talk more about this with you when I come back." A fortnight later he did come back, so I dropped everything and gave him dinner. He arrived, did Charles Z Wick, in an enormous raincoat, it was a bullet-proof raincoat. Have you ever come across a garment like it that?

SR: Goodness, no! That must have been rather heavy.

PM: The point is, by the time he came back and we had this detailed dinner, the Falkland Islands had started so I had him to myself on the subject of the Falklands. After the first visit, I discussed with David Summerhayes – the British disarmament man – what had been said and I had to put it all in a rather guarded telegram to London, repeated to Washington. Then, a splendidly po-faced telegram went from London to Washington saying, "Are we right in thinking that Charles Wick is a man of no influence and can be disregarded?" Nico Henderson replied, "This man has the ear of the president!" Hysterically funny. You can see the Foreign Office at its worst on this. But what happened subsequently, you see ... The basis on which we could do deals with the Americans was established from that point. Geoffrey Swaebe got into his stride eventually and saw what the situation was. He realised he could operate and, on one occasion, there was some refugee crisis in the Middle East and the ICRC rang me in a convoluted way around breakfast time asking if there was something I could do. It wasn't quite clear what they wanted me to do, but I went about my normal business, sitting in some session. Geoffrey Swaebe arrived and summoned me out of the room. He said, "I want your help." There was some refugee issue on which they needed help with shipping. So

I went back to the Foreign Office and managed to track down exactly the right person in the Department of Shipping and told him what the problem was and just how important it was. I then rang Geoffrey and told him to get the Shipping Attaché in his Embassy to talk to him. We'd cut out about three days' worth of diplomacy by doing this. He was that sort of a man, a businessman. He used to say to me, "I don't know how much they'd pay you if you were in business. I should think several hundred thousand dollars!"

Then the time came when I had to leave Geneva. I wanted to pay a farewell call on him but he asked me to go at 8.30 in the morning. A bit odd. I went to see him and we sat on the sofa yattering. In came the Deputy Chief of Mission who said, "Would you like your meeting now, Ambassador?" He said yes and so I said I should go. "Oh no, you're staying!" And he made me address them – I was really bowled over. He said, "This man, when he arrived, he told me to let it all wash over me for a year. That's what I did." And I then said, "Look, what you've got to understand is you are the big boys. You are the only people who run these places. Because we used to do it, we understand what you're up against, we're ready to help you. We don't mind in the least not having to do it ourselves!" It's true.

The other thing is that Angela, my secretary, had come with her husband who was in the civil service. She'd worked in number 10. I had a farewell lunch for her. The principal guest was her American opposite number and, listening to these two, I realised that we had thought we had run the place, but they had. Angela was marvellous. I said to Geoffrey afterwards, "If we ever thought that we ran this town together, I've just learned differently." She was one of those people who could really get things done. You know if you've got somebody like that around you. When Mrs T came, Angela – having worked in number 10 – organised everything for the girls, including temporary membership of a swimming pool nearby. Seeing her operate showed the difference people can make. Anyway, after that, he became Ambassador to Belgium and he invited me to stay. They clearly had decided that I'd been some use to them. And then when I joined the Secretariat, I had a bibulous lunch with a few friends in the American Embassy. They said, "We used to think that the Commonwealth was an English-speaking non-aligned movement, but now that you're there, we admit it's different." You can imagine that I had rather an interesting time in Geneva, although it was overshadowed by Patricia's illness and death. The Swiss, especially when Mrs T came, realised there was somebody who understood them and their role, particularly the ICRC, in a way which nobody had ever bothered to before. This is what should have happened in Brussels.

The fourth part is converting London. Now, when I went back to London in January 82, after Robert Runcie's visit – I can't remember on what occasion, I went to see Michael Palliser who said, "I hear you've made Geneva your own." The difference! Then I went to see Peter Carrington. He said, "How are things?" I replied, "Very well." And he turned to Brian Fall, his Private Secretary, and said, "Did you hear that? Somebody has come here and things are going very well. Tell me why." And I said, "I'll tell you exactly why. You are unrivalled at chatting up people around the world bilaterally, but what I want you to do is to come and do it retail rather than wholesale and they'll be hanging from the rafters to listen to you. You know perfectly well that what goes on on the floor matters much less than what goes on outside. That's the point." He then said, "Are you telling me that I'm neglecting Geneva?" I replied, "Secretary of State, if you put it like that, yes." "I take your point," he said. And you see, six weeks later it's the Falkland Islands. Charles Z Wick. The Swiss telly asked me to go on and talk about the Falklands. We had to get permission from London and they said no. Then, about three hours later, they said they did want me to go on. So the penny started dropping. There was all the business of sanctions ... One or two of my fellow Ambassadors were asking me what the score was. The Canadian Ambassador, in particular, was far better briefed on what was going on in New York than I was. Eventually I was sent a load of 18 telegrams, all in a row. By then, the Thatcher visit was mooted, but Malcolm Rifkind had already arranged to come. They sent a telegram to Berne, copied to the Disarmament Delegation in Geneva, copied *saving* to UKMis Geneva, asking if Mr Rifkind's visit would interfere with the Thatcher visit. Obviously the people who sent this telegram didn't know that UKMis Geneva existed! That was the level of service you got. When Rifkind returned to London, he wrote a minute to Francis Pym, by then the Foreign Secretary: "We had no idea what was going on in Geneva. Mr Marshall is a bit of a juggler. We now understand how important the work of Geneva is." Francis Pym wrote "I agree." Did it have any effect? Not at all. The Office moves rather slowly on these things. It was interesting to see as a matter of history. But by then, the Personnel Department had got hold of the idea that we might be able to make a nomination for the post of Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth. The number of people qualified for the job, as before, could be numbered on the thumbs of one hand. When it was put to me, I thought they were trying to throw me out of Geneva. So I said no, unless they could inform me that Carrington personally wanted me to do it. I knew he'd said he would swim the Atlantic to prevent Sonny Ramphal from becoming the Secretary General of the UN. Anyway, with the disappearance of Carrington that situation there changed. The second thing that changed was that Sonny comes from Guyana which

happens to be a country, two thirds of which is claimed by Venezuela, so Sonny for the moment was flavour of the month. “This is not Britain’s problem alone,” he shrieked, “this is a problem for the UN! Everybody’s got to respect territorial integrity.” So we were we way down the line. I had met Sonny only once before because he had come with Heath – the two of them as a duo – to present the Brandt Report. I thought he was a very good egg and had heard a great deal about him. Little did I know that at the same time, Sonny Ramphal had had his eye on me and he said afterwards to somebody, “If they had said to me you can take the pick of anyone in the British public service as the Deputy Secretary General, I’d have Peter Marshall.” There we are. We had a marvellous time at the Commonwealth Secretariat, but that’s another story.

What I wanted was an interdepartmental committee on relations with developing countries – they set that up. And they soon stopped sending me instructions. They said, “We’d much rather you do what you think best rather than us trying to send you instructions.” That wasn’t the point. The point is to sensitise them. There was a GATT Council meeting, to which Peter Rees, the Minister of State at the Department of Trade, was appointed leader. I was appointed his deputy over the heads of all these Department of Trade people. It got to be rather embarrassing but, on the other hand, all of this was an example of what could happen if you take the economic work of the Foreign Office seriously. The case as set out in Plowden was that the Foreign Office ought to be on these things big time. One of the interesting things is, once Brexit has happened, is there going to be some amalgam of the Department of International Trade and various overseas aspects of other departments which will be alongside the FCO? Before the Foreign Office started, there was a Northern Department and a Southern Department each with a range of functions, internal and external. You could say that you could reproduce that in interdependent terms and it is possible that it would work. It would all depend on the characters of the Foreign Secretary and the Trade Secretary. A lot of other departments have already amalgamated. They’re called Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in Australia and Canada and that may be the way we go.

SR: I think there were just a few anecdotes about your time in Geneva that you wanted to add?

PM: Yes. The first one is about the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba. The Trade and Development Board was the interim board of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, based in Geneva and met occasionally from time to time between the sessions of conferences.

I was the first Brit ever to be the Chairman of the UNCTAD Board. One of the more controversial items on the agenda was that the Cubans, who were absolute anathema to the rest of the Group of 77, wanted the conference to be in Havana. They wouldn't take no for an answer and when this meeting of the Trade and Development Board came, the Cuban Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs came to make the case. He came and saw me beforehand. I arranged that the meeting at which he was to speak wouldn't start before 11 o'clock, so that if it was mayhem I could suspend the session for lunch. He duly made a thunderous speech which went down like a lead balloon. Gerry Helman, the American Ambassador, said, "You can see, Mr Chairman, why no words of mine about the unsuitability of the Havana idea bear a candle to an electric light in the case of what has been said by our colleagues in the Group of 77." So when the session came to its untimely end, he asked what he should do. So I told him that he should report to his government what had happened and ask them what they would like to do in the circumstances. About three days later, he got in touch with me and I went round. I said, "What do they say in Havana?" He replied, "They want to know what you think." So I said, "I'll tell you what I would do. I will call another meeting and you will say that you have reported the reactions to the government. The government's view is, rather than insist on the issue, the invitation should lie on the table, and leave it at that." He said that he would have to make another speech. He made another speech which, again, went down like a lead balloon and we closed the session. (Now that Cuba has been rehabilitated, maybe they can revive the invitation?) But the next thing that happened was that I received a large box of Cuban cigars. So I sent a telegram to London reporting on all of this and on the Cuban cigars, and added at the end, "I take it that it would be in accordance with Diplomatic Service Regulations if these cigars were burned under my personal supervision?" I was told that my assumption was correct!

Anyway that's the Cuban story. Much earlier on, after the Russians invaded Afghanistan in 1979, sometime in 1980 there was a meeting of the European Community in Venice, a summit meeting in the days when they used to be peripatetic rather than always being in Brussels. Some bright spark in the Foreign Office sent a telegram to Berne, copied saving to various people including UKMis Geneva, asking if there was any information about what the Mujahedeen, the resistance people, think because they were camped somewhere around the Lake. Of course the Embassy in Berne hadn't got a clue but, fortunately, my Pakistani opposite number, Jamsheed Marker, who was not only Ambassador to the GATT and Switzerland but also to a whole raft of other countries ... I rang him and said, "Look, this is

what they're asking. Is there anything you can tell me?" He said, "Well, actually, what you can do is to go round ... they've produced a bit of paper. What you could do is go and see them and get it from them." I drove around the Lake and came across these brigands ... I thought I might be shot. Anyway, I must have a look at exactly what happened in my diary, but I got this bit of paper, came back ... This was over a weekend, needless to say. I sent it off, post-haste to the Foreign Office. There was some attachment to it or some related document. I got a telegram back immediately asking me to get the related document. So I rang up my friend Marker again and he instructed his Counsellor to come into the Pakistan mission on this Sunday morning. I played football with his 11-year-old son while he got in, made a copy of this document and gave it me. By lunchtime, in other words, the British delegation was incomparably better briefed than any of the others. I wondered if I should cut my American and Canadian friends in on this, because they were the only two missions who could work fast enough. I decided it was too much trouble, but I did repeat the telegram around. I never heard another word from the Foreign Office, except some plaintive enquiry asking why I had repeated the telegram immediate to Washington when it could have been priority. I thought I would pick up my pen and write to Michael Palliser and ask if he could shake whoever concerned until their teeth rattled. But my deputy at the time thought this wasn't worth doing. He was wrong - I should have done! This was 1980. Again, nobody seemed to put two and two together that these things could be done in Geneva. Hopeless.

We had the Presidency of the EEC in the second half of 1981. Waldheim was running for re-election so when he was in Geneva for some ECOSOC problem, I arranged a lunch for him. He was a compulsive telephoner and, when he was in Europe, he used to telephone me from various places to discuss the weather and so on. If Tony Parsons was in New York, he'd ring him, but if he wasn't, he'd ring me which gave no pleasure at all to the rest of UKMis New York. There were two crises. One was over Poland, the introduction of martial law in Poland. The other was a GATT meeting at which there was some crisis ... hysterically funny. The Director General of GATT, a very good friend of mine, rang me and said, "Do you know what's going on? What are the EEC up to? How are they operating in the GATT Council?" Of course I didn't, it was what was called Community competence and all the people from Brussels were doing it. So I got hold of our GATT man and told him to say at the next meeting, "This comes from the Director General." Their jaws dropped. If we had been in on our own, we wouldn't have been in a mess like that. It's an example of having to hand over competence in something to people who are incompetent.

SR: What about the *Institut des Hautes Etudes*?

PM: This is the great think tank in Geneva. Jacques Frémont and his son Jean. They were switched on, not simply to what was going on in Geneva, but how Geneva related to the rest of the world. These were people after my own heart! They were *interlocuteurs valables* to understand what was going on in Geneva. It was a very high class outfit. This was an example of the Swiss, or the switched-on Swiss, understanding the potential of Geneva and having a very ready ear for the very few diplomats coming who grasped the point. Arnaud de Borchgrave, the Foreign News Editor of Newsweek – splendid man - said to me that I should just have somebody standing in the lobby of the Intercontinental Hotel to see who came in and out. It wasn't UN business at all, but people doing deals. The Swiss are extremely skilful at arranging these things. No government - except possibly the Saudis - would pay for that, but he had a point.

Now, the ICRC. It had been set up in the mid 19th century by Henry Dunant who had been bowled over by the suffering he had witnessed at the Battle of Solferino. He thought something must be done to relieve distress. Eventually it was set up in Geneva but then launched into a League, a whole union of national societies, quite a big international gathering. Quite rightly, the ICRC themselves and the Swiss government were determined it should keep strictly non-political and neutral. It was becoming more and more difficult for them because of the attitude of the Arabs towards Israel. I used to see quite a bit of them, and had done so in my first posting to Geneva, especially a magnificent man called Melchior Borsinger. His wife was English, but he came from a wonderful Swiss family where the eldest sons in successive generations were called Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar. The boss of the ICRC was Alexandre Hay, who in spite of his name was Swiss and didn't speak much English. They really trusted me and, on one particular occasion ... Northern Ireland ... you can imagine it was extremely tricky. I was talking to Alexandre Hay and Melchior was there. He seemed a bit *distract*. When I got back to the mission, I rang Melchior to say I wanted to ask him something extremely indiscreet. Had I been missing something when talking to Alexandre? If so, what was it? So Melchior went to ask him. He came back to say I hadn't missed anything. The important thing was, of course, that they knew that they could trust me. Eventually they were driven, just at the point I was leaving, to form a group of political experts for the first time ever, and I was one of them.

Now, Mrs T. I will eventually do a memo for Churchill College, but I'd like to just record here a few details about her visit. It began with a telegram to Berne, copied to the UK Disarmament Delegation in Geneva and saving to UKMis Geneva. Mrs Thatcher would like to visit Geneva at the beginning of annual holiday in the Alps with Lady Glover. She would like to visit the Red Cross and also CERN, which she had visited as a Minister. She would stay with Summerhayes, the disarmament Ambassador, or if that is not possible, put up at a hotel. So I entered the scene. I blasted the FCO. The great advantage was that it enabled me to deal with number 10 direct. It was extremely fortunate because Angela, my PA, had worked in number 10. The Private Secretary then was John Coles, but the Deputy Private Secretary was the son of someone called Denis Rickett who I had known in the Treasury and also in Washington. So we went through the possibilities. Would she like me to arrange a dinner with a few of the barons of the system in Geneva? Yes she would. She didn't want any publicity. The Swiss are absolute experts at arranging discreet visits, so I went to see Robert Vieux, the fixer of fixers. They were delighted to have a visit from *la dame de fer*. Mrs T also agreed to see the mission, but only wanted to spend a day in Geneva. So we worked it all out. I arranged secretly with the local hairdresser to come at 8 o'clock in the morning also I arranged a very discreet golf four for Denis in case he didn't want to join in the fun. In the event, neither contingency was called upon. I then sent, with my tongue well stuck in my cheek, a letter to the Private Secretary at number 10 saying that I didn't know what the Prime Minister would want while she was in Geneva, but enclosed a background brief on Britain's involvement and British interests in Geneva. I left it entirely up to him as to whether he showed it to Mrs T. In any case, preparing it was useful discipline in advance of such a visit.

She got on this little plane and landed in a discreet part of the airport where nobody knew anything. The Swiss had provided a bullet-proof car with a driver, a stiff and a whole collection of *motards*. I was ordered to sit with Mrs T who said to me, "That briefing – it's some of the best briefing I've ever had." As we went through the town, she said, "This place is prosperous, isn't it?" And I replied, "Prime Minister, they work for it."

For the dinner, we had two tables of 10. At one table, she had sitting on her right, this marvellous Frenchman, Francis Blanchard, who was the head of the International Labour Organisation, on her left Arthur Dunkel, the Director General of GATT. Round the table was Sadruddin Aga Khan, the refugee king, and also Herwig Schopper, the German physicist who was running CERN. Pestalozzi, then the Acting Head of the ICRC was there, along with

David and June Summerhayes. When they'd all gone, she said, "What are all these marvellous people doing in Geneva?" I said, "Prime Minister, if they were not doing what they are doing now, the world would be in an even bigger mess than it is." She took that point and then she said, "This job of yours with the Commonwealth Secretariat. I don't think much of that. Sonny's a prima donna. There are one or two good people like Lee Kuan Yew. But it isn't an entity." I listened to this and thought what the hell are the Foreign Office doing, badgering me to join it?

The following morning we had a family breakfast. Fiona and Guy were staying time. It was a beautiful day. Mont Blanc was shining up there. I had got all the British newspapers in early on. Mrs T had kindly agreed to come to the mission, so we set off. I was able to introduce her to everybody. We then went off to the ICRC where they received her with the red carpet rolled out. I had also arranged with my house staff to do something we had done when the Queen came. All the heads of the agencies who had not come to dinner the previous evening were assembled and when the ICRC formalities were complete, we had a Bucks Fizz party for the barons of the UN system. When she got into the car, she said, "I thought they did that beautifully."

Off we went to CERN where Herwig Schopper had arranged a wonderful alfresco lunch. Again, perfect weather. In the middle of it, apropos of nothing, the Mayor of Geneva leaned across the table and said to me, "Most people think William Tell only had one son. That's not the case. He had 10 sons. The other nine died during training!" Denis was sitting almost within earshot, so I translated this. When the meal was finished, Herwig Schopper got up and said, "Prime Minister, we have a book here, in which we keep records of visits by very distinguished personalities. We have a record here of your last visit. You were escorted round by an eminent British scientist. You must have given him rather a hard time because at the end he said 'That woman has the persistence to become Prime Minister one of these days!' " Everyone was absolutely convulsed. Mrs T said, "I wonder what prophesies will be made about my future career as a result of today's visit."

She wrote me the most extraordinary bread and butter letter that I have ever had. She said she had loved the house and everyone had had such a good time. The Treasury had been trying to get us to sell the house, but this put the lid on the plan.

I then asked the Foreign Office why they were pushing me to go to the Secretariat. I got a long po-faced letter back which said they had put the matter again to Mrs T who says that if

you do the job, you will have her full confidence. What they didn't tell me, the lying so-and-so's, was that she was dead against it. She didn't think it was good enough for me! And that's what she told me the first time she saw me at one of these Commonwealth meetings in Delhi. She said, "How's all that boring work of yours?" On another occasion, I told her that the Commonwealth was very grateful for all the UK was doing. She said, "I wish they'd thank us for it." I replied, "Prime Minister, gratitude doesn't play much part in politics!"

Thank you for nothing is the standard response of the EU to anything, isn't it? I think that takes care of Mrs T's visit.

SR: Yes, I think so.

Now just to look back on your career, Peter, it was very untypical in many ways, wasn't it? Head of Chancery three times, focus on economics, the multilateral work.

PM: Yes. That is why I have written an account, *Positive Diplomacy*, varnished rather than unvarnished. I don't know whether I'm just a freak of my time! Now it may be that the interdepartmental division of labour can embrace a different approach to the management of international affairs. It may be. But that division should not take place, as it were, in ignorance of the economic factor, but rather in cognizance of it. That would be my message. The other message, looking back, is that I'm afraid that the neglect of economics, the neglect of the Third World and the obsession with Europe which were such a feature of Michael Palliser's time as PUS, have been the main source of the decline in the influence of the Foreign Office. Nobody has had the strength to arrest this trend and to correct it. You need a really strong Foreign Secretary or, for that matter, a really strong Prime Minister. If somebody like Mrs T had come in 10 years later, she might have said, "All of you have your priorities wrong." John Major was an opter-out, rather than a grappler. And my description of our handling of EEC/EC/EU membership was, "Catch up, opt out, cop out." We've copped out. Now we can see it. We've let these people crawl over us with their treatment of Article 50. Maybe, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter? Who's to say?

SR: We shouldn't end on such a melancholy note! Peter, I think you wanted to add some concluding remarks?

PM: Yes indeed. I do congratulate you most sincerely on the way you have organised this and the way in which you are reviving what was rather a moribund exercise.

I think your point about making a difference is absolutely crucial. The whole question – of which you must be so conscious – is the management of the Service and the people in it. Responsibilities all around the world and getting the benefit of them back at headquarters. Not only for ourselves, but for the rest of the government. That is where my career is so utterly different from that of any of my contemporaries or indeed of anybody who has followed since. To what extent, in this modern interdependent world, the global village, is a knowledge of the substance of the relationships ... it's so interdependent, how is it going to be offered to the rest of the government, given that the primary task of a Diplomatic Service must be to have knowledge of peoples and tongues and countries and to think in terms of exporting UK goods and services to them. It seems to me that is the problem which the FAC might address. I think Tom Tugendhat has got enough up top to understand all that. But on the other hand, I go back to the thought that there is absolutely no comparison between anything that the FAC can do and the depth and the intensity of the Plowden Report which is by far the best survey of all of this. But of course, it's a child of its time. 1960s, post-war. Not the 2010s, post Brexit.

Finally, it's a wonderful career, and there are some wonderful people in it. It's definitely what you make it. I think the other thing is that the recipe for happiness is to like what you get, rather than trying to get what you like. Agreed?

SR: Absolutely! Very wise.

Annex

Churchill in No 10 and Eisenhower in the White House: a groundling's view, sixty years on

Talk to the Pilgrims by Sir Peter Marshall, 14/11/2012

Perhaps it was an historical necessity that the United States General who, during the Second World War, commanded the mightiest allied force ever assembled to liberate the continent of Europe from Nazi thrall, should subsequently become President, and so consolidate American leadership of the free world against the successor threat of Communist incursion and subversion.

Perhaps it was likewise an historical necessity that at the same time Britain's iconic wartime leader should have been returned to power, and thus be uniquely placed to pursue, under much changed, challenging, conditions, the unique Transatlantic partnership which had been vital to victory.

Perhaps, too, it was in the stars that there should be appointed to the key post of British Ambassador in Washington, the chief diplomatic channel between President and Prime Minister one of Britain's most illustrious public servants of the twentieth century, already well known to them both, and superbly qualified for discharging its exacting responsibilities.

What is not in doubt, to descend from the sublime to the ridiculous, is that the lowly figure appointed to be the Ambassador's bag carrier in these extraordinary circumstances has counted himself much blessed ever since. If what follows leads to accusations of hero-worship, I readily plead guilty as charged.

* * *

I arrived at the British Embassy in Washington early in October, 1952, to work in the Chancery on East/West and Cold War matters. The Presidential campaign which was to convey Eisenhower to the White House was in full swing. A prime Republican slogan was "We like Ike". This was featured on a large banner notice outside a party office on Main Street in a Mid-West town. The Democrats leased the premises next door and continued the banner "but we'll vote for Stevenson". Alas for the Democrats, the voters did not do so in sufficient numbers.

Roger took up his post on January 5, 1953. He arrived with Churchill, who was stopping off in Washington, on his way to a holiday in Jamaica, to say good-bye to his good friend,

shortly-to-be-ex-President Truman. Truman came to dinner at the Embassy. Roger had sent instructions in advance from London for the piano to be tuned.

The Set-up

Roger inherited a full-time Private Secretary. But the idea that he needed any help in shifting the great weight of paper which came his way was, of course, grotesque. I had crossed his path when I began my diplomatic life in the Foreign Office. On the scheduled departure of this full-time functionary, Roger instructed me to occupy the Private Secretary's office, bringing all my chancery work with me, as he would require me only for formal and liaison duties. My expectation that this arrangement would not cause time to hang heavy on my hands proved well-founded.

My most glamorous task was to decipher the flow of messages, which arrived telegraphically, from Churchill to Eisenhower, usually beginning with the words "My dear Friend". The pattern was familiar: I had devoured Churchill's six volume history of the Second World War. Hence history had, as it were, come alive. I would convey these distinctive missives, once typed up and presented by a covering note from Roger, in my workaday Plymouth to the President's offices in the East Wing of the White House. There I delivered them to a very pretty WAVE, i.e. Wren, officer. On return I would drop off a copy at the Office, staffed at a similar level of pulchritude, of the Secretary of State, the exceptionally able, but scarcely charismatic, John Foster Dulles.

The Embassy at Work

The Second World War was not long over when Roger began his term as Ambassador. Europe was starting to recover, but still had a very long way to go. Our own economic situation was dire. The Cold War was cold indeed. The Korean War was a reminder that its ramifications were world-wide. US leadership of "the free world" was spectacular and unchallenged. As a source of economic assistance the US was irreplaceable.

An enormous amount of UK national business was in consequence conducted with, or in, or through Washington. Roger's exceptional capacities, and his high standing in American

official and public opinion, strengthened this centripetal tendency. The list of UK visitors to Washington seemed at times to resemble the bulk of *Who's Who*.

Roger and Alice on the Social Scene

Hospitality is an essence – perhaps *the* essence - of the job. Roger and Alice were in their element in the social sphere. It was not even necessary for them to be host and hostess. Their presence was sufficient, it was said, for the Makins of a good party. The Lutyens Embassy was very well adapted to entertainment. Their parties were unforgettable.

Family Life

The social scene was greatly enlivened by the arrival of the twin Makins daughters, Mollie and Cynthia. They continued their education at an exclusive ladies' academy in Washington, whose graduates seemed almost without exception to obtain employment with the CIA. Following the general pattern, Mollie and Cynthia nearly ended up in the CIA before it was realised that their nationality made this unsuitable.

The Death of Stalin: the Cold War

Matters soon came alive. Stalin's death was announced on March 5, 1953. The immediate question arose of how to deal with the succession in the Soviet Union, the nature of which was uncertain for a time. Churchill naturally hankered after a meeting at the summit, of a sort which he had known during the war.

A tripartite gathering - with France - was mooted for the summer of 1953. In the meantime, Anthony Eden had entered a clinic in Boston, after complications arising from a botched operation in London. In his absence, Churchill had been promoted, as he put it in one of his messages to Eisenhower, to take charge of the Foreign Office.

Then came Churchill's stroke. The main practical consequence was that the tripartite summit would have to be postponed. With Eden still *hors de combat*, the suggestion was that Lord Salisbury, then Lord President of the Council, should come instead to Washington to maintain contact. The Salisbury visit itself went well, within its inevitable limits. But attention naturally turned to the postponed tripartite summit. This eventually took place

from December 4-8 in Bermuda, the venue already chosen for the purpose. The discussion centred mainly on international security.

The situation in Indo-China continued to deteriorate. By Easter, 1954, the question of US intervention had arisen. The US wanted the British involved as well. Churchill demurred. Dien Bien Phu fell to the Vietminh in early May. An international peace conference was convened in Geneva, under the joint chairmanship of Anthony Eden and the Soviet foreign minister Molotov.

The 1954 Visit

Meanwhile, considerations of a more cosmic nature had prompted Churchill to seek a personal meeting with Eisenhower, namely the publication in the United States of details about hydrogen bomb experiments, spurred by the news of Japanese fishermen being affected by radioactivity. The implications for British defence arrangements of these details were profound.

The bilateral was eventually fixed for June 25-29, 1954. It had been widely assumed on both sides of the Atlantic, perhaps in part on the basis of the unimpressive outcome of the Bermuda meeting, that its significance would be mainly symbolic, as an occasion for a final US tribute to Churchill before he stepped down.

On arrival by air on a Friday morning, Churchill said that he had come “to talk over a few family matters”. Ike and Mamie were on the steps of the White House to welcome him. Mamie asked him to choose which guestroom he would like. We all went to the White House cinema on the Sunday morning to see the film of The Queen’s extensive post-Coronation Commonwealth tour.

It had been decided that the two Foreign Ministers should be present. Over and above genial weekend hospitality, the amount of business transacted was phenomenal, in particular as regards East/West relations, the integration of Germany into Western defence arrangements, and peace and collective security in South East Asia. This was all in addition, naturally, to highly detailed discussions, within the limits set by US legislation, of the thermo-nuclear questions which had prompted Churchill to seek the visit in the first instance

Most significantly, Eisenhower suggested that, in addition to the normal communiqué, he and Churchill should issue an Anglo-American declaration, similar to the Atlantic Charter of 1941. Churchill professed himself thrilled by this idea, and immediately secured Cabinet agreement with minor amendment to the proposed text, in a manner similar to that which obtained in the case of its historic precedent.

The visit included only one public engagement: a lunchtime session, on his departure from the White House on Monday, June 28, at the National Press Club, the epicentre of the omnipresence and influence of the American media.

The pattern for these searching occasions was that the chairman would start by asking the speaker the most awkward, deflating, question he could devise. Hence “Mr Prime Minister, when you were in Montreal in 1944 you spoke of the “blaze of Anglo-American friendship. What is the temperature of that blaze now?” There was much merriment in the Ranks of Tuscany. Churchill seemed to pause for an agonising length of time, as if to suggest that it was all a bit too much for him. I was not alone in fearing there would be a lame response, forgivable in someone well stricken in years. How wrong we were. With sudden vigour and conviction, Churchill repeated “What is that temperature now? *Normal!*” Christopher Soames, at the nearby table we occupied as the retinue, said “I knew he was going to do that”. The old trouper had lost none of his art. From then on he had the gathering in the palm of his hand.

For the brief remainder of the visit Churchill stayed at the Embassy. Standing on the steps leading to the garden, he addressed the staff, assembled on the sloping lawn. Never before or since have I heard Anglo-American relations described in such inspiring language. No record survives of his exact words. He spoke off the cuff. If it was a touch euphoric, the thought of the imminent publication of the Washington Declaration he had just agreed with Eisenhower could be regarded as justification enough.

He was amply justified in saying in his report to the House of Commons on July 12 that “I have never had a more agreeable or fruitful visit than on this occasion”.

The Aftermath

Churchill retired - at last, it seemed - in April, 1955. Months of uncertainty about when he would actually hand over to Anthony Eden, combined with the turmoil which characterised

the latter's premiership in British foreign policy, culminating in the Suez crisis of 1956 and resignation, to ensure that the legacy of Churchill's second premiership would for the moment not receive the attention it merited. Sixty years on, we can, and should, see it differently.

Life in Washington could not but be thereafter something of an anti-climax. In its range and vigour, the "Makins Mission", as I think of it, was the same. But its character could not but change with the Eden occupancy of No 10. And its achievements were plunged into obscurity by Suez and what followed.

At bag-carrier level, all good things had to come to an end. At my last service as a choirman in Washington National Cathedral, the Dean made some very kind remarks. The organ postlude was "Rule, Britannia". By the time of my departure from Washington in August, matters in the four-year electoral cycle were approaching the stage at which I had arrived in 1952. The campaign for Eisenhower's re-election was gathering momentum. The President was smitten with ileitis, a rather obscure intestinal complaint. An unofficial campaign slogan was "We like Ike, but we hate his guts".

Thank you for your attention.