VOICE FILE NAME: COHP Moses Anafu (Part Three)

Key:
SO: Dr Sue Onslow (Interviewer)
MA: Dr Moses Anafu (Respondent)

Part Three:

SO: This is Dr Sue Onslow talking to Dr Moses Anafu in London on 19th November 2014. Dr Anafu, I would like to talk to you about your work in the Commonwealth Secretariat. Please, if you could begin by elaborating on the Zimbabwe side of the Commonwealth story, I would be very grateful.

MA: Okay. Well, when I joined the Secretariat in 1979, there was something called the Commonwealth Committee on Southern Africa. The committee was mandated to deal with the political situation in Southern Africa as a whole, but quite clearly Zimbabwe and South Africa were at the centre of it; they were the priorities. By then, the Zimbabwean liberation movement (ZANLA) was already operating from Mozambique and making incursions into those farms in Zimbabwe, closest to Mozambique.

SO: In Tete Province, yes.

MA: Tete was the name. And the Rhodesian army was making reprisals into Mozambique. The issue before the committee then was, first, to deal with the root cause of the problem, which was namely that there had been a minority regime established in 1965 in Rhodesia, which represented only a fraction of the people of Zimbabwe. The whole point was to bring about a legitimate, majority-elected government, freely chosen by the people of Zimbabwe. That was the Commonwealth's remit, and it hoped that by international pressure, including sanctions – although at that stage there had been no organised effort on the part of the Commonwealth to impose sanctions on the regime – a peaceful settlement could be reached.

SO: Excuse me Moses, but mandatory UN sanctions had been approved in 1966 and were made all-embracing in 1968. The British Parliament voted on sanctions every year, in November.

MA: Yes, that was at the level of the United Nations. I'm talking of a specific Commonwealth effort. Now, the Lancaster House Conference… If that had not resulted in agreement and a way forward – meaning a constitutional conference involving all the parties and leading to democratically-recognised elections – then there would have been, I'm sure, a separate Commonwealth effort to add to the international pressure which the UN had initiated, and that would have been different.

SO: In 1979, the incoming Thatcher government had suggested in their Conservative Party manifesto that they would recognise Bishop Abel Muzorewa's government of national unity. It was thus likely that the Conservative Party would vote to lift sanctions in the November of 1979. So, Britain would have found itself at odds with the Commonwealth.

MA: But Britain didn't lift the sanctions, did they?

SO: No, they didn't, because they went into all-party negotiations in September.

MA: Exactly.

SO: You joined the Secretariat in January of 1979. You've made reference to the fact that Rhodesia/Zimbabwe was of top priority in the Commonwealth at that particular time. South Africa was the bigger prize, but the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe was of immediate priority. What was your awareness and involvement in supporting the Patriotic Front delegations of ZANU and ZAPU in London in the autumn of 1979?

MA: What the Commonwealth did was to arrange for the Patriotic Front party, represented by the two leaders, to come in and brief Commonwealth High Commissioners. At the end of each session, the committee would meet – I think it was about once a week by then – to review what had been agreed or what hadn't been agreed and why, and what could be done. So, it was basically a facilitating role, but I think this focus [from] the Commonwealth sent out signals that it was following this process very closely, and that it would not allow the integrity of the process to be undermined. By integrity, I mean that the two wings of the Patriotic Front, representing the African majority there, were not to be driven out of the conference through some trick or provocation.

SO: I've done a fair amount of research on the Lancaster House discussions. I've looked at the documents on the High Commissioners committee meetings. I've also looked at it from the British government's side. I've interviewed all of Carrington's team who are alive and I've also talked at length to Sir Sonny Ramphal about his 'outer diplomacy'. My two interviews with him lasted, I think, a total of six hours.

MA: Did he come here or did you go there?

SO: I did these interviews when Sir Sonny was in London in 2006, for the Institute of Contemporary British History interview programme. But I'm curious to know the extent to which Sir Sonny was, in fact, holding his

part in the negotiations very close to his chest within the Office of the Secretary General, or whether Political Affairs was involved in any way?

MA: PAD was closely involved.

SO: Okay. In what way?

MA: Well, first of all, we serviced the meetings. We prepared briefs for him, the Secretary General, and the Deputy Secretary General, and we liaised with the Patriotic Front officials.

SO: When you say you 'liaised', were you talking through policy options? Were you helping to make counter-drafts during the discussions about the constitution…

MA: No.

SO: …particularly on land, discussions about transitional arrangements, discussions about the ceasefire?

MA: No, you're jumping ahead of the story. First of all, when they arrived in London, we relied on them to tell us the position on the ground. We had no way of knowing that. We needed to know from them what their concerns were – what was of particular concern to them, as a Patriotic Front delegation. Now, I don't know who took care of the Muzorewa lot, but they were not part of the people we liaised with.

SO: So, you were liaising with Joshua Nkomo's team and also, separately, with Robert Mugabe's team? But this was a nominally united political front, the Patriotic Front…

MA: Yeah, and it went there as one united front.

SO: The Patriotic Front went into the Lancaster House negotiations with two national liberation political leaders: Joshua Nkomo and his delegates, and Robert Mugabe and his team.

MA: That's right.

SO: And although this was a political front, they were fighting on two different military fronts, in the country and outside.

MA: Yes, one from the Zambian side, you mean, and the other from the Mozambique side. I don't know that the other side did much fighting, you know. [*Laughter*]

SO: ZIPRA? No, they didn't. They kept their best troops back in camps in Zambia.

MA: Yes.

SO: They did indeed. They had a different strategy, Operation Zero Hour, configured around conventional warfare.

MA: You could never get any news from them as to how the struggle was going on the ground.

SO: So, what did they tell you about the struggle on the ground when you first met them?

MA: No. When we met them, they told us about the common position, which was what was really of interest to us, as well. We did not want any fragmentation. It would have been disastrous. And on that they were at one. We worked for the Patriotic Front.

SO: What were your lasting impressions of the Patriotic Front delegation? It was not simply comprised of Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe: there was Josiah Tongogara…

MA: Josiah Chinamano.

SO: Okay, but there was also Josiah Tongogara, was there?

MA: He was there, but I never met him. But I remember Josiah very well.

SO: Josiah Chinamano left a lasting impression on you?

MA: Yes, well, Josiah was an old politician and his part in the struggle must have begun way [back] in the 1950s. The sort of people who came to Ghana were him, Nkomo… Mugabe was already in Ghana then, at the beginning of the 1960s, teaching. Right – that's where Mugabe met his wife, Sally. So, we knew basically where they stood, but the other ones, no.

SO: That you can recall, how well prepared did the Zimbabwean liberation leaders seem going into these discussions with the 'wily' British?

MA: Good question. Nkomo was very impressive, you know; very experienced.

SO: Yes. A former trade union leader.

MA: I didn't think they would be able to run any trick past him – this is me speaking, now. Also, he came with immense prestige from the rest of Africa. When Mugabe was still teaching in Ghana, we heard of Nkomo, and in fact, people came to associate the struggle more with Nkomo. Mugabe was a surprise figure.

SO: Yes, I've heard elsewhere that Nkomo was regarded – and regarded himself – as the father of the nation.

MA: Yes. Josiah Chinamano was in a different position. He was from Mugabe's tribe, and in their eyes [he had] defected to Nkomo's side, which is a different…I'm trying to remember the ethnic groups now. That's important. [*Pause*] Shona.

SO: He's Shona, but the Shona have sub-groups.

MA: Now, Mugabe is Shona, isn't he?

SO: Yes, he is. He is from the Zezuru clan.

MA: Now, what is Nkomo? I've forgotten.

SO: He's Ndebele.

MA: Ndebele – that's right. Zulu side. So, Josiah was seen by his people, the Shonas, as having defected to the enemy side.

SO: Really? That's ironic.

MA: Why? Not the Ian Smith side…!

SO: No, no.

MA: I'm talking about tribal politics.

SO: Absolutely. The communal, clan and generational tensions that existed within the liberation movements were important.

MA: You mentioned the Nkomo people earlier – Nkomo's group, the Ndebele. I hadn't realised how little they had lost of their Zulu background until I was in the plane with the man who became ceremonial president, and later went to prison.

SO: Canaan Banana?

MA: Canaan. He was speaking in his language, whatever it is – Ndebele – to Zulus in the plane. I was very surprised. So, after all, when did the Zulus come up into the land of Zimbabwe? In the 1820as, the 1830s? Something like that. But anyway, Nkomo did regard himself as the father of Zimbabwe.

SO: Indeed. So, you were impressed by him, particularly.

MA: I was impressed by his political skills. He had a lot of experience, [and it] was on display.

SO: Yes. Did you have the sense during those discussions that he was prepared to do a deal at any point that might isolate Mugabe?

MA: No. When they came to Marlborough House, it was usually Nkomo who spoke on behalf of the team, not Mugabe.

SO: Interesting.

MA: And I could understand that, looking back on everything. He had a greater facility with that kind of communication. Robert is an intellectual, and has all the usual inhibitions of somebody who is over-read – like you. [*Laughter*]

SO: I'm leaving now! [*Laughter*]

MA: You understand?

SO: I totally understand. He did not want to take a political position because there's always another side…

MA: That's right. On the one hand, Nkomo came prepared and was admirably fluent. He had plausibility – the word I use. He spoke in a way that revealed that this is someone who [had] been around. He's been around this track quite a few times. In the 1950s, he came to Ghana to represent Zimbabwe at the first All-African Conference. By that time, Robert was probably somewhere teaching.

SO: Yes, okay. So, as you say, Nkomo was a long-standing, nationalist liberation fighter. Mugabe didn't have quite the same standing, although…

MA: No, we didn't know Mugabe. He only began to appear in the 70s. Now, I haven't seen his…He's got an autobiography floating somewhere, hasn't he?

SO: I've seen many biographies on Mugabe; I haven't seen an autobiography.

MA: Well, what did they say? Did they [identify] a point when he got into this struggle?

SO: They often make reference to him becoming General Secretary of ZANU back in 1963.

MA: ZAPU or ZANU? The Sithole ZANU?

SO: Yes, [they say] that he was of that political side. But then, with the in-fighting that happened after the revolt in Zambia in the early 70s, after ZANLA moved down into Mozambique, Mugabe emerged in 1975-76 as the political leader – *not* the military leader, the political leader – of ZANU. But of course, there were ongoing tensions with ZANLA military commanders. The position was altogether different within ZANU/ZANLA from that within ZAPU/ZIPRA, but I don't know if that came across at all with you.

MA: No. The military side of things emerged later, [didn't] it? That came up much, much later. You see, it begins taking prominence really after Mozambique's independence. They could open a base and…

SO: Rear bases and military training camps, yes.

MA: Now, I always suspected Nkomo was a reluctant revolutionary.

SO: He did like the finer things in life, supported by Tiny Rowland and others.

MA: But beyond that, I think he was of the old school. His generation in West Africa and elsewhere – in Kenya and places – had negotiated successfully and got independence. I think that was his preference. If only he could make Ian Smith see that. The 'armed struggle' wasn't his thing.

SO: No, and in 1978, in fact, he nearly came to a deal with Smith and Muzorewa.

MA: We sensed that.

SO: Yes. It was the British Foreign Secretary's, David Owen's, secret diplomacy – to try to enlarge the internal settlement to include Nkomo.

MA: As what?

SO: That I don't know.

MA: You see, Nkomo would never – and this is now me speaking – he would never have accepted a position other than the Number One position. There's no way he could have been Smith's Number Two. That would have ruined him in the rest of Africa.

SO: Yes. And you know, during the Lancaster House Conference, there was an idea among Carrington's team that they would do a separate deal with Nkomo to split the Patriotic Front. Two ministers – Ian Gilmour and Richard Luce – said that they would resign if the British government tried to do that.

MA: It wouldn't have worked.

SO: It wouldn't have worked, but it's interesting that they said, "No, we will resign. We will go public. We don't approve of this."

MA: Do you think they could have carried it off?

SO: I don't think they could have, and it certainly wouldn't have meant the end of the war. That was the issue, because Robert Mugabe was determined to go on fighting in the belief that he could win or that ZANLA/ZANU would win.

Were you privy to any of the discussions around the land settlement in Political Affairs?

MA: Yes, it came up in the committee. What I remember, to cut it short, was that the message from Nyerere to the Patriotic Front was, "Look, land is important but it is not a constitutional issue. It's a policy issue. So, why don't you put that aside, negotiate the political settlement, and when you get your independence you can come and do whatever you want with the land?" That was what Nyerere told them. You must have heard this somewhere else, right?

SO: Yes, I have.

MA: And in a way, it saved the conference, in my view – that formula, that, "No, don't let this land issue block progress."

SO: Were you aware of Sir Sonny Ramphal's contacts with Kingman Brewster, the American Ambassador, to try to get the Americans to come forward with extra money…

MA: No.

SO: …for a land development fund?

MA: Did they agree to that? I don't know.

SO: President Carter and Secretary Cyrus Vance gave their agreement in principle, but they wouldn't give a specific figure for fear that they would 'frighten the socks off' Congress.

MA: I didn't know that. But, you see, the Southern African issues were quite distant to the Americans, weren't they?

SO: Not at that time, no. They…

MA: Because of the Cubans in Angola or what?

SO: No, no. Carter spent more time on Rhodesia while he was in the White House than he did on any other issue.

MA: Where's the evidence for that?

SO: In the Carter Library and in the archives in College Park. One of my colleagues, Professor Nancy Mitchell, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is writing on Jimmy Carter and race in Southern Africa. There is a phenomenal amount of material…

MA: Really?

SO: …in his papers, in the discussion points, in the mem-coms, and in Cyrus Vance's diary as well. Carter's preoccupation with what was going on in Southern Africa – also in Namibia, but primarily Rhodesia – at this particular time was really very striking.

MA: Hmm. It's news to me. But it didn't feed through into the Secretariat, unless the Private Office was handling this.

SO: Yes, well, Sir Sonny would have had a key understanding in that the American Ambassador, Kingman Brewster, was a friend of his, and the speed with which Carter said, "Okay, yes, I back the idea of a substantial development fund," building upon Kissinger's idea of the development fund, which had been US $10m… An integral part of the Owen/Vance proposal had also been a 'development fund', which Lord Owen described to me as a euphemism for financing land restitution.

MA: Would it have done the trick?

SO: Would it have done the trick? I don't know. The Reagan Administration then came in and the Republicans said that they wanted to be part of a more multilateral approach to development. So, when there was that Zimbabwe multilateral aid conference after independence – ZIMCORD – it was the Brits and the Canadians that were expressly saying, "We give

money for land restitution." The Americans didn't lock into that particular pattern of giving.

MA: How much were the Americans dependent on Canada for their knowledge of African issues?

SO: I think Carter was well-informed, but he certainly had Stephen Low as his designated point man in the area. Andrew Young made frequent visits before he was fired, and Carter, of course, was particularly beholden to Andrew Young because of the black vote within American politics. Carter himself made it his business to follow affairs in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe very closely. I can't quite say what the CIA sources or the State Department sources were other than those, but they genuinely made it their business to be much better informed than, say, the previous Ford administration, with Kissinger as Secretary of State. It's interesting that you had no sense of this.

MA: No. I'm not sure that they actually influenced the situation materially. Do you think they did?

SO: Influence it materially… I think coming up with, "We'll back a substantial sum for a land deal…" Sir Sonny believes that that was critical in helping to move the discussion on. The crisis over land was the first enormous hurdle in the conference in mid-October.

MA: No, but they didn't say to the parties that, "After an agreement and a settlement, we'll give you so much…"

SO: No, they didn't. They didn't want to make that political commitment to a fixed sum, quite deliberately. Also because Carter was facing in Congress a very vocal minority led by Senator Jesse Helms, which was arguing…

MA: Oh, I remember him.

SO: …for recognition – immediate recognition – of the Muzorewa settlement. And Muzorewa had gone to Washington in July of 1979 to argue that there should be…

MA: You mean somebody did the argument for him and he just sat there, or was he…?

SO: No, Muzorewa went himself. He met Carter.

MA: There is no 'self' to Muzorewa.

SO: What do you mean by that?

MA: This guy cannot speak to a Sunday crowd to save his life.

SO: He's a Methodist minister; he should have had experience with that.

MA: He should. He doesn't.

SO: Okay. So, you're saying he was a poor communicator, or that he had no opinions of his own?

MA: Not only a poor communicator… The world was strange to him. I don't think he even knew South Africa well, which you would expect to be his natural hunting ground given the sort of man he was. As for the rest of Africa, forget it. So, he just had no entry; no access. So, within the country, his constituency was Ian Smith's constituency, really. Wasn't it? The two had no black following to speak of.

SO: Unless people were voting for him because the Patriotic Front deliberately did *not* take part in that April 1979 election.

MA: You don't call that an election!

SO: What was it then?

MA: It was a joke! [*Laughter*] A practical joke. You're not going to write that there was an election, would you?

SO: Well, since I wasn't there, how can I say it was or wasn't an election?

MA: Now, how would you describe it?

SO: If the Patriotic Front chose not to take part in that election in 1979… This is what I don't know. Were they barred from participating? Or did they choose…

MA: Oh, the so-called internal settlement. That was the only election that Muzorewa…

SO: Yes, took part in. Or were you talking about the response to the Pearce Commission in 1974? Is that what you were talking about?

MA: Was there an election after Pearce…?

SO: No, there wasn't, but after the Pearce Commission, Bishop Muzorewa went around the country soliciting opinion and orchestrating opposition…

MA: He was out there; I remember him. I remember the opposition to it. But, you see, the oxygen for that came from the two leaders, especially Nkomo. Now, I don't think Muzorewa had a constituency to speak of.

SO: Well, that was your impression and that's important. There are those within Rhodesia – as it then was – that convinced themselves that he *did* [have a constituency] in 1979.

MA: I have spent time talking to the guy.

SO: He obviously didn't strike you as a charismatic politician.

MA: No. I don't even know how he preaches in his church, never mind politics. But this has been our problem in Africa: when the white man is looking for his stooge, he chooses the most stupid people – the people without credibility.

SO: Why? Because they're perceived to be malleable?

MA: You have to go and ask them that question. [*Laughter*] I don't know. But look, I went to Zululand – I get on extremely well with Nkosi Buthelezi. When we went there, he assembled his so-called cabinet in Ulundi to receive us. It was a laugh; it was *a laugh*. Then, later, I got to know them individually – when I was there leading the Commonwealth Observation Mission in Natal, today's KwaZulu-Natal.

SO: Not impressive?

MA: [*Sound of disapproval*]

SO: Just to go back to Lancaster House… You were servicing the committee of High Commissioners on Southern Africa.

MA: Well, the Commonwealth Committee on Southern Africa; that was it. But it sat informally.

SO: Please, could you comment on Fernando Honwana, the emissary from Samora Machel, President of Mozambique? I understand that he was of key importance. Sir Sonny indicated to me that he actually sat in on those meetings.

MA: No, he didn't. I would have known, because I would have seen him. I was there. Sonny's memory is probably…

SO: Well, I may be misremembering Sonny, so I don't want to blame him here! Do you recall meeting Honwara?

MA: No.

SO: Or having any dealings with him?

MA: No. Armando Panguene – who later became the first High Commissioner of Mozambique here – I got to know well, but that's after.

SO: Did you meet Kenneth Kaunda when he came up to London, because of his acute concern of how the discussions were going?

MA: No. He didn't come to any of the committees. He wasn't invited, as far as I know, to any of the committee meetings. I got to know him personally afterwards and in my own right.

SO: Okay. Were you surprised by the overall success or the outcome of the Lancaster House discussions?

MA: Yes, but only because it came close to breaking down on a number of occasions.

SO: Yes, it frequently looked as if it would breakdown.

MA: Yes. So, eventually, a settlement was reached. That was very, very pleasing and heartening.

SO: What was the view within the Secretariat of Carrington and his team's negotiating style during that conference?

MA: I'm not sure that there was a Secretariat view.

SO: I just wondered about the view 'within the Secretariat'. I didn't say it was a 'Secretariat view'. Those are two different things.

MA: Yeah, okay. Alright. You see, by then, those of us who were involved knew that he had advisors. He didn't necessarily say things that he himself believed in or knew independently. It comes back to the point I was making: why, in all of these things, when Britain has had so much experience, why [did] Lord Carrington seem to lean hard on the Patriotic Front?

SO: Why were you surprised by that?

MA: Because, as I say, Britain has had experience in decolonising other countries.

SO: Okay, but here is Britain as the decolonising power…

MA: Yeah.

SO: …but with no power – formal responsibility, but with little hard power – which is arbitrating between warring factions in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. So, Carrington was having to corral… Muzorewa was pressured into stepping down as Prime Minister.

MA: He should never have existed.

SO: But he did. And he was pressured into stepping down. That was a big thing.

MA: That didn't take too much doing…

SO: Well, that's your view. Carrington said that, in fact, that was a big thing for him to do.

MA: What was so difficult about it?

SO: What was so difficult about it? If Muzorewa believed that he had the hard power of the Rhodesian security forces behind him, he could have gone on fighting.

MA: Listen, you think these Rhodesian security forces would have resolved the problem?

SO: No, of course they wouldn't have.

MA: And Britain knew better than anybody else.

SO: This is why the South Africans were also intensely interested in the outcome of the Lancaster House discussions. They were backing the Rhodesian security forces to the tune of R$1 million a day. They also wanted peace, but they wanted Muzorewa to win. So, my point is that Carrington actually had to deal with a number of diplomatic actors in this hurting stalemate. He was hardly going to say to the Patriotic Front,

"You know what? You're absolutely right." What were the British trying to do? They were trying to hand [power] over – they believed – to a viable state that was going to keep white skills in the country, in terms of reconstructing a war economy into a peacetime economy. You need skill capacity for that.

MA: Hmm. But that skill capacity didn't depend on Muzorewa.

SO: No, it didn't depend on… Well, it was connected with Muzorewa.

MA: How?

SO: In terms of him being seen as a moderate, black, nationalist leader. I'm not saying that he was a successful one, in any way. I'm talking about perception and what purpose he served within elements of the economic elite – the economy was still very much in white hands – and also elements within the small white community.

MA: Look, let me ask you, how much of the running of Zimbabwe did Muzorewa know?

SO: I shouldn't think he knew very much at all, and that's the point. But if there was, in his view, a belief that a government of national unity would achieve the end of the war – which evidently it didn't, because the war accelerated in brutality in 1979, and it was a very bitter civil war, I know that – but if, also, the British government was thinking there needed to be a transition, a managed transition, to black majority rule and a transition from a war economy to a peacetime economy, and that it had to be successful because of the example that it set with the bigger prize of South Africa… All these elements were part of Carrington's calculations.

MA: Now, I think South Africa would have been a bigger consideration in Carrington's thinking than Muzorewa or what he thought or felt. Have you ever met Muzorewa?

SO: No, I haven't. Never.

MA: It's a shame, because there's nothing like seeing the real thing. I'm not surprised that they wanted a stooge, but you know, take a plausible stooge. This guy… No. It would never have worked – from day one.

SO: Okay. If the Patriotic Front had taken power through the barrel of a gun, the economic planning in their Manpower Planning Survey involved seizing the power of the state – its economic as well as political power. The MPS meant seizing the productive forces of the state: so, land, of course, was one, association with the agriculture sector two, manufacturing three, [and] finance four. This is the time of the Cold War, as well. So, if there was to be massive state nationalisation, this would not suit the Conservative government's ideological agenda, you could say, at home. And they certainly weren't going to encourage a socialist state in Southern Africa. I'm just wondering…You're just laughing at me!

MA: No, I'm not!

SO: [*Laughter*]

MA: I'm not! [*Laughter*] No, but you see, I think South Africa…

SO: Moses, you were coming at it from *such* a different perspective.

MA: Is it?

SO: Yes.

MA: Really? What is that perspective?

SO: That of a successful, confident, Ghanaian nationalist.

MA: No. You see, when you go to Southern Africa – especially Zimbabwe and South Africa – the scale of the dereliction is terrible. I mean, [the] social dereliction. Now the South Africans are busy doing something about their schools – okay.

SO: Finally.

MA: Finally. Now, look…

SO: The challenges facing Robert Mugabe when he became president were enormous: the need to address the gap in provision of healthcare, the gap in provision of education, the gap in provision of housing and access to land; the question of how to create jobs for returning fighters, how to keep an environment that was attractive to capital, how to rebuild an economy, while at the same time Zimbabwe was very much the frontline in the contest against racial injustice in South Africa.

MA: Uh-huh.

SO: It was an enormous challenge.

MA: The South African situation was always in the background. In fact, I will say that it shaped a lot of things. I mean, "If we do this, it will undermine future negotiations in South Africa." "If we scare the whites out of Zimbabwe, it will have a negative effect on South Africa." You know, South Africa was always in the background, and there [was] an enormous presence in the sense that, if South Africa went wrong, it would set back the rest of Africa – certainly sub-Saharan Africa. If not North Africa, [then] certainly sub-Sahara Africa – by a long way. Instability in South Africa would have affected the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. So, because of that, there was a wider interest – a heightened interest, even – in a peaceful settlement in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is smaller compared to South Africa, and if they don't get that right, what chance is there of getting the *real* issue right?

SO: No, I agree.

MA: And it concentrated minds, in a way. It also made for a positive outcome, because if…

SO: But you've just answered your question about why Britain didn't roll over and agree to everything, and why Carrington was so hard on the Patriotic Front.

MA: No, no. You see, it's not that. There are ways in which you can say something – you understand? – which will tell one side in a negotiation not to be unduly obstructive.

SO: So, it was Carrington's *style* of diplomacy that he didn't understand? Not the purpose of the diplomacy.

MA: No, the purpose – I'm very clear on that. *Style*.

SO: Okay. Because when you say, "He was very hard," I'm thinking, "Well, I can understand why he was hard…"

MA: Also, the whole of Africa would have been behind him – one hundred per cent – if the style had been different. If he had said things like, "This has been a long-running injustice and gross immorality: a scar on twentieth century civilisation; a scar on mankind's conscience…." If he had [said], "So, it's in our interest – all sides – to end it…" That kind of language. It wouldn't have cost him anything.

SO: I'm not disputing that that would have been effective, Mr. Africa…

MA: [*Laughter*]

SO: However, was there also – that you were aware of – a deadline? Because Carrington started negotiating in early September…

MA: Yes, and in December we were still at it.

SO: You were still at it in December, but sanctions were going to go to a vote in the House of Commons…

MA: In November.

SO: …in the November. So, he had a very short time frame.

MA: You could have postponed it. Sure. You could have gone before the House and [requested to] postpone it, and give reasons.

SO: I think that was, in fact, more to do with the dynamics within the Conservative Party – that the government didn't feel that it had sufficient standing to be able to push that further down the line. Of course, Robin Renwick at the FCO was arguing that sanctions did not simply depend on the British Parliament, but that there were other international legal constraints.

MA: You know what I would've done?

SO: What?

MA: I would have dramatised it even more, if I had been in Carrington's position. I would have gone to Dar es-Salaam and spoken to Nyerere, man to man. I would have gone to Zambia and spoken to Kaunda, and I would have gone to Nigeria. That would have covered the field. [I would have] said, "Look, we are in this thing for an honorable outcome. Don't believe anything that's contrary to what I've just said. We are all partners in this, and that's why I've taken time to come and brief you personally. Because I want you to hear from me

what [the] British policy objectives are in all of this. They're going to be different from yours – [you], who have a bigger stake in it, because this is your continent, your neck of the woods." If he had done something like that, I can imagine him carrying African support as a result of such a direct approach.

SO: Now, that's what I don't know – the extent to which Carrington's tight team at the Foreign Office was, in fact, in constant communication with Dar and also with Lusaka. I suspect they were, but I don't know.

MA: Really.

SO: I don't know. I know that Leonard Allinson, who was the British High Commissioner in Lusaka, felt that he didn't have excellent contacts with State House, and in fact that's why the Commonwealth High Commissioners network was very useful for him in terms of feed information and getting information about the thinking within the Zambian government. I also know that because the British High Commission was attacked by a crowd, he was withdrawn. So, I don't know who was representing British interests down in Lusaka at that particular time.

MA: Which year was that?

SO: 1979.

MA: The High Commissioner was withdrawn? That must have escaped me at the time; I'm surprised.

SO: Given the importance of Nyerere in these discussions, I don't know what the contacts were between the British government and Nyerere.

MA: Well, he had a big influence.

SO: Yes, he did.

MA: From his distance.

SO: Exactly. But I don't know what the contacts between the British government and Dar es-Salaam were, and particularly with the Office of the President and the President himself.

MA: In diplomacy, there comes a point when a bit of drama helps things, provided you don't go too far. [*Laughter*] But a bit of drama helps.

SO: Well, I think Carrington's version of drama was a little different from yours. You're saying that his style of diplomacy was harsh. I know that he would hand over documents and say, "Please consider them," and then the next morning he'd say, "Right, what have you considered? You haven't agreed? Well, we're moving on with this." So, he was certainly pushing it through. There was a sense of driving and pushing the momentum of the conference.

MA: One of his aides has published his memoirs.

SO: Oh, Miles Hudson has published his memoirs.

MA: I haven't seen that. An earlier one?

SO: It's called *Triumph or Tragedy? Rhodesia to Zimbabwe* [(London: H Hamilton, 1981)]. Robin Renwick has also published his memoirs, *Unconventional Diplomacy in Southern Africa* [(Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997)].

MA: Oh, again, I haven't seen that.

SO: Now, whom else? Christopher Soames has not published his memoirs. Carrington has published his own memoirs, but he doesn't go into exhaustive detail on the Rhodesian issue.

MA: There was another one, who went on to be Ambassador in Washington, I think.

SO: You're thinking of Robin Renwick: he was Ambassador in Washington and he also became British Ambassador down in South Africa. I think that's the one you're thinking of.

Have we covered every aspect, do you think, of your perception of the Lancaster House discussions?

MA: Yeah. One of the constructive contributions of the Secretariat was to have these weekly meetings between the two representatives of the Patriotic Front and the High Commissioners – for us to hear what had been discussed, what the problems were, and for the High Commissioners and British FO officials to make constructive suggestions to the negotiating teams.

SO: How useful – that you could see – was that committee as a source of advice for the Patriotic Front?

MA: Very. You see, it was important for the Patriotic Front to know that they had continuing Commonwealth material and moral support. That was important. Equally important was for them to know that any party that was seen to be breaking up the conference would be regarded in a poor light. Everybody was tired of the Zimbabwe issue; they wanted an end to it so they could move on to other things. Throughout the Zimbabwe thing, South Africa was almost frozen, so to speak. There was no initiative on South Africa.

SO: No, nor on Namibia, either.

MA: Nor Namibia. But as soon as there was a breakthrough in Zimbabwe, look at the effect.

SO: Yes. In your view, how important was Mozambique?

MA: Mozambique was important in an unacknowledged way. And we couldn't acknowledge it: that was necessary, because the Mugabe Patriotic Front was a fighting Patriotic Front. It could not be in Zambia; Zambia was too vulnerable to Rhodesian military pressure. Mozambique was different. In Mozambique, you had a very politically-educated army – which Zambia didn't have – and I think [that] through the Mozambicans, the Patriotic Front knew, let's say, the limits of military action. Not the *how*, but the *limits* of that weapon – what it can do and what it cannot do. And I suspect that Samora

Machel would have himself been – when the need arose, whenever – a moderating influence. I don't know whether that's what you've come across or not?

SO: No, very much so. He actually told Robert Mugabe that if he pulled out of the negotiations…

MA: He would have to leave his country.

SO: …he would have to pull his fighters out of Mozambique.

MA: There's something else I should say about Mozambique.

SO: Yes.

MA: Now, when the Falklands War was coming up… Have I told you this story before?

SO: No.

MA: This is just to shed light on the general situation. A Ghanaian delegation, on separate business, went to see Fidel Castro…

SO: Oh, you did mention this in your earlier interview. Fidel was telling them that they should support the British government.

MA: That's right. He would have been giving the same kind of practical advice to the Patriotic Front.

SO: He did, indeed. I know that at the Non-Aligned Movement meeting in Havana in September 1979, the Patriotic Front had been encouraged to take part in the constitutional discussions in London. Also, when it was put to them that the Patriotic Front didn't agree in any way, shape or form with the proposed land settlement, the message coming back from Fidel Castro was, "So, you're saying that I should continue to support the struggle because a paragraph is missing?" In other words, that Cuba should militarily engage – at great cost in terms of blood and treasure – because a paragraph on land was missing from the proposed constitution.

MA: Of course, I've never met him, but everything I've heard suggests a real practical thinker – Fidel. And he would… No, but there was also a rumour [that] I heard: that Samora Machel was speaking in a similar language to the Patriotic Front. So, "Look, make sure this talk succeeds. Otherwise I won't let you back." That sort of thing.

SO: Well, certainly Samora Machel was encouraging the Patriotic Front to keep white skills in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. "Don't do what we did. Don't throw the whites out."

MA: You see, it's a shame that they came to associate the importance of skills, generally, with colour – skin colour. I wouldn't have put it like that, no. Obviously, these are Zimbabweans. They've never known any other country – most of them, anyway, except those who went there after the Second World War. [They were] born there, bred there and they happen to have skills that the country needs desperately. Is it a colour issue now?

SO: For some in ZANU-PF now, it *is* a colour issue. But I'm talking in the climate of the time: in the late 1970s.

MA: Yeah, I know. I know what you are saying. In the climate of the time, I think the issue was mis-phrased.

SO: Indeed. You needed the skills. They happened to be white.

MA: Yeah, yeah. So, it's subsidiary to all you need. Although I don't know that people like Nkomo would have put it like that. If you go to South Africa and you go to the rural areas – farming areas, that's what I mean – then look how whites speak the local tribal languages.

SO: Yes, they do. Indeed.

MA: They've grown up together. They know each other, and those kinds of whites wouldn't enjoy living in the UK, for example.

SO: No, indeed.

MA: At all.

SO: But Moses, I'm trying to take it back to the climate of the time in the late 1970s. Was there a racial attachment to skills that you remember? Was it talked about in terms of 'African versus white' skill capacity?

MA: Yes, yes. There was.

SO: But let's face it: that was also a function of limited delivery of education. But the incoming Zimbabwean government had how many PhDs and other degrees?

MA: The exiles. Well, they studied outside, but you see… Look, the Cuban experts that are sent all over the world, they are of mixed colours. [*Laughter*] Zebra nations!

SO: Rainbow nations! Zebras? [*Laughter*] Zebras kick.

MA: [*Laughter*] No, but you see, these are the sort of humorous points that should have been put!

SO: Yes.

MA: It helps, you know? Especially when the negotiations get tense, as they tended to get from time to time.

SO: Very much so.

MA: But reading these memoirs of Ian Smith... They are interesting.

SO: The whole tone of *Bitter Harvest* [(London: John Blake, 2008)] is, "We were robbed." Yet this was a man who genuinely believed that he was not a racist. He was paternalistic. He stayed in Zimbabwe and his farm was never taken, interestingly.

MA: But there was never any chance that his farm would be taken. He knew that. He must have known that.

SO: Of course he did; that's one of the reasons he stayed. He was a Zimbabwean.

MA: But it's interesting in the sense that he was a local boy, too – a local African.

SO: Most of the Rhodesian Front Cabinet had been born in 'Rhodesia', as they saw it.

MA: Yes.

SO: As you say, they were local boys, but from…

MA: He went to university in Rhodes – in Grahamstown. That's right. What a shame. It would have paid off if he'd come here [the UK] and mixed with…

SO: He would have had a very different world view had he done that.

MA: I think so.

SO: Just going back to Mozambique, then. After Zimbabwe's independence, to what extent was Political Affairs continuing to do what it could to support Mozambique in terms of technical assistance and political support?

MA: I think there was a fund – a Mozambique Fund. But what I'm interested in – because that was my job – was the idea of Mozambique joining the Commonwealth.

[*For additional information on Mozambique and the Commonwealth, see Moses Anafu Appendix One, Insert Two*]

SO: When did that first raise its head, do you recall?

MA: The soundings were made by Joaquim Chissano, Machel's successor. He'd obviously thought through the whole issue. He said, "Our colonialism was Portuguese only in form: its content was British." That's how he put it, word for word. In fact, he said [it was] "English". And then we asked him to explain, and he said, "Well, our railways – the railways from Rhodesia to our part – were owned by British interest." He said, "Our farms – the big commercial farms in Mozambique – were owned by English-speakers." As a result, he said, "A number of English words have crept into our tribal languages." Then he went on and said [that] ever since he'd become President, he'd spoken at many, many international conferences. All but two speeches were in English.

SO: So, there was a strong English influence from Zimbabwe, and also coming up from South Africa?

MA: More from Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

SO: Okay, yes, because of course the trade links went down to Lourenço Marques, as it then was.

MA: That's right. In fact, the port of Beira was the port of Zimbabwe – of old Rhodesia.

SO: Yes, okay. So, the proposal for Mozambique to join the Commonwealth then came up in Chief Anyaoku's time. How was it handled?

MA: Oh, positively – very positively. I suspect they came through the Zambians and the South Africans.

SO: Were you involved in any of these discussions?

MA: I was.

SO: So, if it was handled very positively, were there key criteria? Were you thinking, "Is this a one-off?" Or, in fact, "Is this going to be the first of a number of other African countries that may wish to…?"

MA: No.

SO: This was unique, in your view?

MA: Well, it was an individual case. I'm not sure that there were other candidates. Angola couldn't join; they had no link with us. But in the case of Mozambique, I suspect they came through the Tanzanians and the Zimbabweans and maybe the Zambians. But they would have had to be supported by an existing member country.

SO: Yes, and it was obviously of critical importance that other Commonwealth Front Line states were going to support it. So, how was this managed? Was there a decision to make this proposal to heads?

MA: Yes. It was discussed at the heads… Which one was that? 1991 was…I used to remember them like that.

SO: Harare.

MA: Harare, that's right. 1991 was Harare and 1994 was where?

SO: 1993 was Limassol.

MA: There, yes. 1993, Limassol. Yeah, Zimbabwe was very successful there – it was very popular with the Cypriots. At Limassol, Mugabe openly called for sanctions in the Commonwealth style against Turkey. This made him the darling of the Cypriots. [He] was one of the opening speakers, and he said, "The Commonwealth has a lot of experience in dismantling settler regimes." [*Laughter*]

SO: [*Laughter*] Well, that would have appealed to the Cypriots!

MA: "Why are we not applying the same thing here, in the case of Cyprus?" And you know, after that, they would ask you, "Are you from Zimbabwe? Come and have a drink."

SO: [*Laughter*] So, you became an honorary Zimbabwean, did you Moses?

MA: [*Laughter*] Robert's very popular there.

SO: So, the discussion over Mozambique took place in 1993 in Limassol. The 1995 meeting was down in New Zealand, in Auckland.

MA: Yeah, that's where it was endorsed. Mandela attended that.

SO: Yes, he did; he did indeed. So, was it a formality that Mozambique was being invited to join the Commonwealth…

MA: Oh, yes.

SO: …or was it an application that was then endorsed?

MA: No, you're right. They had already written, but then the Secretariat would write back and say, "These are the usual things that Commonwealth membership [requires]: democratisation…" What do you call it? The Harare Declaration. That became an important document. "You must have an elected government, you must have periodic elections…" That sort of stuff.

SO: Okay, so this was used as the template [to decide] if you were going to satisfy new membership criteria.

MA: The Harare Principles. That's what was applied.

SO: Was the fact that the language is Portuguese ever considered problematic, or…?

MA: No, language has never been an issue in the Commonwealth anyway. In any case, because of exile, many Mozambicans speak fluent English.

SO: No, I realise that, but because the Commonwealth is overwhelmingly Anglophone, here is a country that…

MA: But Mozambique will move away from Portuguese anyway.

SO: You think so?

MA: Oh, yes. You see, as Chissano said, where would Portuguese take them outside Portugal and Latin America? They don't have much to do with Latin America, unless under President Dilma Rousseff Brazil suddenly becomes an economic superpower there.

SO: Well, that's faltering at the moment, I'm afraid.

MA: Exactly. No, Mozambique really was a Commonwealth country manqué.

SO: So, when was the idea of Cameroon joining first mooted? Do you remember?

MA: Ah, Cameroon. Cameroon started out even earlier. You see, Cameroon has got an English-speaking side: Bamenda. Anyaoku was invited when he became Secretary General – that must have been 1991, I think – to Cameroon. I didn't go with him, but when he came back I asked him and he said he was given a rousing and emotional welcome. So, it was "lancing a boil" – that's how he put it. And of course, the government, for its own reasons, wanted to be part of the Commonwealth, because that would have met the demands of the English-speaking side of Cameroon. But I don't think

that Biya really cares himself, one way or the other. Once he's in the Commonwealth, it resolved an internal problem. I don't even think he attends many Commonwealth meetings.

SO: So, were there any issues for the Cameroon government as to whether they join the Commonwealth or *La Francophonie*?

MA: They were already in *La Francophonie*. Oh, they came to us from *La Francophonie,* and I don't think the *Francophonie* liked it very much.

SO: I shouldn't think they did!

MA: But find out from the Foreign Office people; they will tell you.

SO: So, that you remember, it wasn't particularly contentious?

MA: No.

SO: It was a question of endorsing the expressed wish of a government…

MA: Yeah, which is committed to Harare.

SO: …which is committed to the Harare Principles, and which already has the English-speaking Cameroon. Within an association which enables multiple identities, this, then, was not problematic?

MA: Yeah, it was fine. In a way, I suspect the Canadians had something to do with it as well, but I'm not sure.

SO: Okay. Why do you think, particularly, that Cameroon wanted to join the Commonwealth?

MA: Internal pressure from the English-speaking side of the country.

SO: Yes, but what was in it for them, particularly?

MA: Now, what's in it for them is that, one, it means that they can continue coming to English-speaking institutions; [they can] continue coming here for education. Two, it linked them with the wider West Africa – to Nigeria next door, Ghana… With the Francophone thing, they were taken out of circulation with us. They wanted those old links re-established. I will tell you an experience. At one of the Commonwealth meetings – we should have had this interview years ago – after the Commonwealth heads of government had agreed in principle to the application, subject to acceptance of Harare Principles… Now, I would translate that as a 'Conditional Offer'. The guy who was sent to be present was Francis…something. A Cameroonian official. He wrote a fulsome letter to his president to congratulate him on Cameroon's accession to Commonwealth membership, making no mention of the qualification. It opened my eyes to what civil servants can be up to – how a point can be stretched.

SO: How manipulative they can be.

MA: He didn't say, "I have come, presented the case and this is the outcome."

SO: Ah. [*Laughter*] He swept the qualifications, the conditionality, off the table and said, "Not an issue. Here you are."

MA: Yes. "Congratulations, Mr. President."

SO: And so the President would turn to him and say, "Congratulations, Francis!"

MA: I don't think they gave him anything though.

SO: Oh, I'm just wondering if the Cameroon President would say, "Fantastic. This is an unconditional offer."

MA: That would have been the reason for him doing that.

SO: Of course, yes.

MA: He showed the letter to me. That's how I know.

SO: Were you able to stop it?

MA: It was not my business to stop it.

SO: So, the invitation from the Commonwealth went forward, unconditionally.

MA: In his terms, yes.

SO: So, what happened?

MA: It was written in the communiqué; look through the communiqués.

SO: What happened, then, if there was a discrepancy between the communiqué and the letter?

MA: No, they would have then written back to say, "Oh, subscribe to democratic principles, good governance, etc., etc."

SO: And the President could say, "Okay, I'll do that."

MA: Yeah. It's a formality. He would have played it down…down, down, down.

SO: Moses, I want to ask you… At this point, the Commonwealth was changing from its earlier guise, pre-Harare Principles. It was now acquiring codes of conduct. It was acquiring principles of good government, where member countries had to have democratic institutions...

MA: Like an independent judiciary…

SO: An independent judiciary, freedom of speech… These had to be embedded and accepted and honoured Commonwealth practices and values – Commonwealth institutions. But this was not the Commonwealth of yore, and increasingly governments were finding themselves part of a 'club' which suddenly had an increasing number of rules. Now, that could be tricky.

MA: Why tricky?

SO: Well, if they felt that the Commonwealth they'd originally signed up to had developed into a very different…

MA: Alright. Why has it developed like that? That's the question you should ask. Why has the Commonwealth developed along these lines? My take on it is as follows. One, the Commonwealth must move with the times. Rule of law, you know; respect for human rights, democratic and credible elections. If the Commonwealth doesn't have these things, it would have no credibility in the various countries. So, that was more or less going with the times. When Cameroon applied – and this is very important – we had a delegation from the region, what used to be French Equatorial Africa. That's Cameroon itself, Congo-Brazzaville, and the Central African Republic. They sent a team to us, and you know what they said? They were sent by the Bar Associations of their respective countries to come – in their own words – "to support and reinforce Cameroon's application."

[That was] the first time I've heard this for Commonwealth membership. So, I had the meeting with them, with Amitav Banerji. As Head of Africa, I did most of the talking. I asked them, "Why? Why is it important to you? Why is Commonwealth membership so important to all of you?" And you know what? They put it very colourfully. They said, "Moses, we know that the Commonwealth is serious about human rights. France doesn't give a damn about human rights." They said, "In our countries, any head who tramples on his people but is on good terms with France, protects French capital and investments, is a good man. He stays there forever. That is why we want Cameroon to join the Commonwealth, because Cameroon joining the Commonwealth is a big plus for human rights in our region."

Then, one of them added [that], "France invests more in Nigeria – neighbouring Nigeria – but it harvests more out of our countries." That's his sentence: "France invests more in Nigeria, but harvests more out of our countries." You see the grievance? Popular sentiment towards the Commonwealth in member countries is in the opposite direction.

So, in a way, I think the Commonwealth saw the trend and moved in the direction of credibility and popular endorsement. As an association of governments, it's got no weight, whereas as an association of peoples… And this is why, up to now, the Commonwealth has been able to go and observe elections [and] was able to play a role in South Africa: because they knew that it was not a ritualistic commitment to majority rule, but at the bottom of it would be human rights, popular government and so on. So, it was good [that] the Commonwealth went that way. Now, *La Francophonie* is not like that. *Francophonie* countries don't have the same consciousness of their being a member of an association which can speak of itself in the language of family, which the Commonwealth can actually do. It says it's a real family. The UN is not like that.

SO: No, not at all.

MA: It's an association of governments.

SO: Yes. Moses, how much do you think that sense of an association of family, though, is now breaking down?

MA: I've now been out of it for a long time. All the same, I don't think that it will break down. You know why it won't break down easily? It's already become part of the institutional structure of member countries. You've got meetings of lawyers, of bar associations... You've got too many professional networks. You understand? Which, in a way, takes the Commonwealth right down to families.

SO: It does, indeed. It's unique in that – in its networks and its associations.

MA: And that's why we must – all of us – do whatever we can to protect the old association.

SO: What of Nigeria in the 1990s? Before we started recording, you mentioned that you felt Chief Emeka had focused on Nigeria, particularly, after the challenge of Sani Abacha, his military regime and the execution – which you've mentioned in the earlier interview – of Ken Saro-Wiwa. What of the push towards CMAG and the attempt to bring Nigeria back into the fold of the Commonwealth?

MA: The Commonwealth is the only institution with a CMAG.

SO: Yes, it is; indeed.

MA: The UN hasn't got one. Neither has the OAU.

SO: So, was the OAU or the United Nations in any way trying to ameliorate the Sani Abacha regime?

MA: From what I know – and my information is from second-hand [and] third-hand sources – Sani Abacha didn't really give a damn about international institutions. I never discussed this with him, but I suspect that it was a particularly difficult time for Emeka. For most of his career, he had been a Commonwealth servant and had developed a certain strong feeling for the association – which is not to say that Sonny Ramphal didn't have a strong feeling, but his childhood thing, as it were…Okay. And, if it had come to it, Emeka would have offered to resign.

SO: You think so?

MA: Yes. But – and this is important – the Commonwealth leaders wouldn't have let him. They would have drawn a line.

SO: Were there any grumblings that you picked up on?

MA: It didn't get that far. But if Abacha hadn't died and hadn't been carted out... No. Abacha's death made the whole thing unnecessary. But of course, he – Emeka himself – in honour bound, would have submitted his resignation.

SO: After Abacha's death, how quickly did you in Political Affairs or Chief Emeka and people from within his office open up again the links with Abuja?

MA: The links with Abuja were never broken. Don't forget [that] Abacha didn't pull out of the Commonwealth.

SO: No. The Abacha government was suspended.

MA: Yes. The government was suspended, but this is again the interesting thing about Commonwealth membership. Yes, a government brings a country into membership, but somehow there is something in the system which makes it a 'nation to nation' association. You understand?

SO: So, the complexion of the government may change, but the link with the country stays the same, and the country and the people.

MA: That's what I mean, yeah. Now, if Abacha had tried, say, to pull Nigeria out of the Commonwealth because he felt or sensed it coming, he would have had it tough. He would have had to justify it, and could he have said, "Oh, they're throwing us out because they're calling me a dictator"?

SO: But do you recall how quickly the Secretariat tried to resume links with other elements within…?

MA: Well, those links were never tampered with. That's what I'm saying.

SO: No, but you must have had to reach out to Abacha's successors who became, after all, the new heads of that military regime.

MA: Yeah. The usual letter would have been written to say that, "On your assumption of office I thought I should write, first of all, to congratulate you, and also to let you know that as you undertake these onerous responsibilities, the entire Commonwealth resources are at your disposal." That kind of letter would have been sent out from the Private office.

SO: Okay, thank you. In terms of other issues for CMAG, Nigeria was not the only country on the CMAG agenda. Gambia was also an issue in the 1990s.

MA: It's gone out now, hasn't it?

SO: Yes. President Yahya Jammeh pulled Gambia out of the Commonwealth in October 2013.

MA: I went to the Gambia with Kris Srinivasan, who was DSG then. Oh, it must have been 1998 or 1999. He is an unpleasant piece of work, Jammeh. There was a big hall. He was having a meeting there with his people, and we were invited. In the course of his speech, he said that Anyaoku used to come to the Gambia to play golf with Dawda Jawara. When he finished, I put my hand up. I said, "Mr President, as you know, we're here to represent the Commonwealth. I would like first to thank you for the warm welcome we've received since our arrival" – which we hadn't received, but anyway, that's neither here nor there.

SO: That's diplomatic niceties, yes.

MA: Then I went on, "Actually, I have been working with Emeka Anyaoku since 1979. It's a long enough time to get to know somebody, and Mr President, I've also been with him to the Gambia. We had a good time here; we walked around and… And I know he doesn't know how to play golf. He's a friend of the Gambia, yes, of course, but he doesn't know how to play golf. He's never held a golf stick in his hand."

SO: Excuse me, but it's quite a funny thought. The Chief playing golf!

MA: Exactly! So, I said, "No. That's not him." I put my life in my hands and I got up and I made the statement. I said, "Mr President, he doesn't know how to play golf. He's never played golf."

SO: And what was the reception of your words?

MA: Jammeh said, "I used to guard them when they played golf, and I remember guarding him." I said, "Well, look. As I say, he has never played it in his life. I don't know what other games he plays, but not golf."

SO: "You're mistaking him for another leader."

MA: Yes. I thought I had to put the record straight. But you see, it says a lot about how insecure that regime is. Years after Jawara, he was still trying to lay the ghost. Now, the last time I saw Jawara [was] in Johannesburg. Sue, he looked wan. W-a-n. Totally crushed, and all the old confidence gone – without a trace. I said, "No! This is the father of Gambia!"

SO: And one of the first supporters of human rights.

MA: Oh, yes. And his country had a good record on human rights.

SO: Yes, they did.

MA: But this guy, Jammeh, is an animal, Sue.

SO: So, you only had one encounter with President Jammeh?

MA: Yes – one too many!

SO: It sounds to me this was a dialogue of the deaf. There you are, trying to encourage him to…

MA: Oh, he wasn't interested. No, no, no. You see, do you know the economy of the Gambia?

SO: No, but I know how small a country it is.

MA: Okay. Well, that's the beginning, but it exists on the basis of an entrepôt economy. In other words, it depends largely on Senegal.

SO: Yes, which completely envelopes it.

MA: Yeah, it's a little enclave. So, if it keeps on good terms with the Senegalese, and if the Senegalese economy doesn't explode, he's reasonably safe. Okay. Now, they live off tourism and the entrepôt economy. Therefore, this particular dictator doesn't feel that he needs to get his wider diplomatic relations right. That's my sense of it.

SO: Did you only go the once with DSG Srinivasan?

MA: The once. I'll tell you a little story, which one of the retired Vice Presidents told me. I think [in] June 1980, Senegal was celebrating twenty years of independence, and the then-President Senghor invited President Jawara to

the celebrations. Now, you know, all they have to do is just to take a boat across. So, when they took the boat across, Jawara expected a suitable reception – that even if the president himself couldn't be there because of the preparations for the celebrations, he would send a minister, at least, to receive another head of state. Instead, he sent a junior official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

SO: That's insulting!

MA: So, when Jawara subsequently met the Senegalese President, he raised the issue with him in the following terms: "My brother, you have done me the honour of inviting me to come for these celebrations, and even though I have been busy, there's no way I could have not come. But when we crossed, I didn't see a minister or somebody representing you there to receive me. So, it makes me wonder whether we have done something wrong – something that upset you." And Senghor said to Jawara, "Well, if I were a cynical person, I would have said a lot. I would have..." He said, "Gambia, Gambia: that's part of us!" So, Jawara panicked. When he got back, he sent a minister to Ahmed Sékou Touré in Guinea and said to Sékou Touré, "Look, we're now beginning to hear a different tone from our brothers across the water here. They're talking of running, taking us over, and this is the first time we are hearing this kind of language." Sékou Touré, who was a very tough guy, said to the minister, "Okay, you go back to your guest house. Let us meet" – I think he said at 6pm – "in my office." In the meantime, Sékou Touré told all his generals to come to the meeting with maps – war maps. And [when] they arrived, they could see that something important was about to happen, so they asked Jawara's representative to repeat to the meeting what he had told him. So, he repeated, and Sékou Touré asked his generals, "Can you look into your maps and tell me which is the shortest crossing point between here and Senegal?" They told him. "Okay, what do you need to make that crossing?" They told him. "How long will it take?" They told him. "How long do you need for war readiness?" They told him: "We can go into action immediately." Okay. He turned to the Gambian visitor. He said, "Well, you have heard yourself. Go back and tell my brother Jawara to sleep in peace. Know that he should have no worries, and tell him that if Senegal is so stupid as to invade you, he will have to reckon with my army. He has a parade army. I have a war army."

SO: That trumped the ace of Senegal, without a doubt.

MA: "We maintain a combat army in this country. It's not like a parade army."

SO: "This army is not for internal policing duties."

[*For additional material on the Gambia and Senegal, see Moses Anafu Appendix One, Insert One*]

Can we move on to another troubling Commonwealth issue? Zimbabwe in the 1990s. You mentioned that Robert Mugabe was particularly popular when he went to Cyprus and said, "The Commonwealth has a lot of experience in undoing settler minority regimes. Why is that experience not drawn on to dismantle the settler regime in Northern Cyprus?"

Following the structural adjustment programme, the Zimbabwean economy was under strain. There was the whole issue of land, and political tensions with the rise of an opposition, MDC, the National Constituent Assembly, that emerged by 1999. At what point, as you remember it, did Zimbabwe start to rise up the levels of concern in the Secretariat? Or was it only after the election of 2000?

MA: You talk of the land: the way they managed the land issue…

SO: The farm invasions were already starting by the late '90s. The political opposition to ZANU-PF's dominance was also starting to erode with the emergence of MDC and the demands for constitutional change.

MA: I don't remember the Secretariat doing anything specific. Anyway, I'm not sure that Sonny and Mugabe had an easy relationship. Nkomo is avuncular; he's got an ease of manner, which Robert doesn't have. Sonny was, of course, against any internal settlement, but I rather suspect that his social relations with Nkomo were easier. And I'm not sure that Mugabe would have allowed any kind of interference.

SO: Okay. That said, I just wondered how far you, in Political Affairs… In the late 1990s, it was the end of Jon Sheppard's time as Director and the beginning of Matthew Neuhaus…?

MA: No, I wasn't there for Neuhaus. Sheppard was just deadwood.

SO: He was certainly a very different Australian from Max Gaylard, and very different from Hugh Craft.

MA: Max was the best of the lot, by a very long chalk!

SO: Tough?

MA: Oh, no. Intellectually, socially, Max was streets ahead of them. In fact, he was an outstanding Director of PAD. You had to respect Max.

SO: Oh, without a doubt. And he's an extremely pleasant man to deal with.

MA: Yeah. The other guy, Sheppard, I didn't know whether they couldn't find a slot for him at home, so they gave him to us. He knew nothing. Now, Neuhaus, I never met. Hold on. So, that has become an Australian slot?

SO: Absolutely, yes. I've interviewed four Australians who occupied the Director of International Affairs/Political Affairs Division. In the same way, it has to be said that Special Assistant to the Secretary General was a New Zealand slot. There was Gerald Hensley, there was David McDowell…

MA: It was never a New Zealand slot.

SO: Well, there was Gerald Hensley and David McDowell; there was another New Zealander, David Caffin, and then there was Chris Laidlaw. So, there were four.

MA: Chris Laidlaw, I remember. The others must have come after my time in the Secretariat.

SO: But yes, there was a pattern of Australian headship of PAD.

MA: Yes, obviously. I see… What were the Canadians? DSG, I suppose.

SO: They seem to have taken a particular role in…

MA: Economic…?

SO: Economic, but also CFTC.

MA: Yeah, well, that's the same thing, really. And the Brits? DSG Political.

SO: Humphrey Maud would have been there in your time.

MA: He was indolent.

SO: You know, others have said that he was very good. Interesting that you have a different view.

MA: Indolent. I'm not saying he wasn't good.

SO: Okay. Perhaps he cultivated a certain relaxed demeanour but actually worked quite hard underneath.

MA: Really?

SO: That's a British, political/cultural thing.

MA: Really?

SO: Yes, among men of a certain generation and from a certain educational background. You mustn't be seen to be trying too hard: everything has to be effortless. It all has to be so easy. It has to be seen as a joke when actually…

MA: I didn't see it in Cambridge when I was there.

SO: No?

MA: No.

SO: I said among men of a certain generation and a certain time.

MA: There were old men there when I was there. You know what? It's typical: just mystification, isn't it?

SO: Of course it is. Smoke and mirrors. Anyway, going back to Zimbabwe. You don't think the Secretary General did anything? 2000 was the presidential election and also the vote on the constitution.

MA: I think I had left by then.

SO: Okay. And then, after the Parliamentary elections in 2002 and the Commonwealth observer mission's report, things spiraled down – between Zimbabwe and the Commonwealth, as well as in the Zimbabwean economy.

MA: You know, they said I was Mugabe's friend. The press said that.

SO: Moses, what could you do against such a lie?

MA: Where do you begin tackling it?

SO: Exactly. Where do you begin?

MA: Ridiculous things. Anyway, subsequently, I met Mugabe and I said, "Mr President, I have been told that I am your friend, so I've come for us to sort out the friendship properly." He laughed. [*Laughter*]

SO: Where did you meet him?

MA: In Zimbabwe. I went to see somebody there… Martin-something: a British journalist. He's dead now, but he was amazing. So, [Mugabe] said, "Yes, well, anybody they don't like is my friend, so it's alright. You're in good company." But you see, the Zimbabwe issue, it could have been handled differently. I think Anyaoku had also left by then.

SO: Yes, he had.

MA: He left. Okay.

SO: Yes. Don McKinnon came in as Secretary General in April 2000.

MA: Okay. You see, one of Emeka's strengths was the ability to look at the various countries and intuit where there's likely to be trouble. So, whenever he travelled and met heads, he tried to find out, "How is your region? What's happening?" That way, he got a sense of what was happening or likely to happen in various places.

SO: Others have said what a phenomenal information network he had – the extent to which he had his ear to the ground. He had an alternative intelligence network, almost.

MA: Oh, first class. So, he knew how to head off a problem before it arrived on his doorstep.

SO: How did he like to do it? Did he like to do it in person? Was he a great telephone operator? Were there letters?

MA: It depended on the nature of the developing situation. In some cases he sent someone like me to do the preliminary assessment. If the situation later required his personal intervention, he would then decide how best to approach it. Then, he would normally know ministers who would come in to say, "Hello, have a drink," and he will say, "Tell me this, didn't I read about such and such a place. Is it here, in the press, or is it more complicated?" And then he will get information. With somebody like KK or Nyerere, I mean, he had a direct entry.

SO: Wait, but Kenneth Kaunda left in 1991, and Nyerere had stepped down by then, so…

MA: But listen. Nyerere stepped down, but Nyerere was father of the nation, and anybody who succeeded him did so because he had his support. I myself have benefitted from it.

SO: In what way?

MA: Well, when I was negotiating in Zanzibar, we had a problem. If you know Zanzibar, the strength of the two parties is about the same, and it's been like that since the beginning. Okay. But the local CCM, which is the ruling party on the island, derives its strength in part from the mainland CCM. So, it came down to this. [At] the last election that I was involved in – and I went back as a special envoy – the electoral strength of the two parties was nearly the same, and in that kind of situation, in British constitutional practice, parties ask for a coalition. But Salmin Amour was not interested in that, and Emeka said to him, "Look, in that case, why don't you give them an extra seat in the house?" He agreed to do that but didn't do it.

SO: They reneged on the deal. I remember you saying in the other interview.

MA: Okay. I remember Salmin Amour… Listen to this. He had two pictures in his sitting room: one of Nyerere, and one of Abeid Karume, the founder of Zanzibar – the one who led the revolution in 1960, I think, which drove out the Arabs. And you know what he said to me? He pointed to Karume and said, "This is the founder of Zanzibar. This other one is there for African unity." Isn't that interesting?

SO: Yes, it is.

MA: This one is the founder of Zanzibar; this one of African unity.

SO: Moses, if I could just go back to your view of Chief Emeka's particular strengths as Secretary General. You've talked about him being phenomenally well-informed: having his ear to the ground, his political antenna out, his great intelligence networks. What other characteristics did he bring to the position?

MA: Emollience. He is, by nature, somebody who likes conciliation. He's not an aggressive personality, and he's able to get his interlocutor to see that very quickly. So, you find heads confiding in him very easily – well, certainly in Africa.

SO: Yes. Well, one of his great strengths was as an *African* Secretary General.

MA: Well, but also in other places. Except in Bangladesh.

SO: Bangladesh. Yes, he talks about that a lot in his memoirs, *The Inside Story of the Modern Commonwealth* [(London: Evan Brothers, 2004)].

MA: Now, we did, I think, nearly fifty days in Bangladesh: me, Sir Ninian Stephen – the former Governor-General of Australia – and Chris Child. We did all the negotiating back then, and in the end… You know the one who is Prime Minister now? The daughter of Sheikh Mujib? She said to us, "Look, we will get what we want. We know these people" – meaning the ruling party. And I looked at her and said to myself, "I wouldn't want to cross this woman. She's

a street fighter. She has learnt nothing of the arts of compromise." And it will be very difficult to prise the government out of her grip. Bangladesh: I just foresee more trouble there.

SO: So, it was the particular structure and focus of the government on this one, very strong-minded, female head that was a large part of the problem?

MA: The Prime Minister then was also a woman, but she was ready to compromise. The present Prime Minister is not a woman for compromise, and whoever is Secretary General ought to begin focusing on it before too long.

SO: You were there for fifty days. You must have become aware of her intransigence very quickly and, as you say, noted that she was a street fighter. Did it take you time to get in to talk to her?

MA: Well, she didn't… These sorts of things come up only when you've pushed them to a corner and you've taken away all their negotiating cards. You can't pretend anymore. So, if it's power they want, then they have to come out with it, and that's what she did. We reached all sorts of compromises, but what she really wanted was this other lady to stand down and for her to take over. That's what it ultimately came down to, and now she is PM.

SO: Oh, so it really was a power struggle between two women.

MA: Yes, a real power struggle.

SO: Between two women.

MA: Between two women. And I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy.

SO: Indeed. Which of the local diplomatic corps were helpful to you?

MA: There? Well, I don't think the Australians had a High Commission there at the time. There was a British High Commissioner: I've forgotten his name now. The Indians cut off, I think, because Sheikh Mujib – the current Prime Minister, her father – was more aligned to the Indian National Congress. And this other woman, her husband had made a coup some years back that she more or less inherited. So, she's not educated either. None of them are – hardly any English.

SO: But well-versed in the rough-and-tumble of Bangladeshi politics!

MA: She is. The other one was a housewife propelled into the situation. Mujibur Rahman's daughter – Sheikh Hasina, she calls herself – Sheikh Hasina is a street fighter.

SO: So, you were there for fifty days?

MA: Yes, at least.

SO: That's a very long time. At what point were you sending messages back saying, "This diplomatic mission is going nowhere?"

MA: Whenever we met, we reported back. Quite honestly, there never was much of a hope.

SO: Where was your leverage?

MA: We had none. We couldn't recruit a local influential force.

SO: No, especially if the Indians were standing back.

MA: But this is where civil society comes in. If you've got a very vibrant civil society that takes an interest in the issues and the discussion, then that can help you, because at a press conference you can say, "Well, so-and-so has considered this, considered that." From the other side, we are still waiting. You don't say they haven't considered, obviously – even if they haven't. But, "Today we met so-and-so and got A, B, C, D"; or, "Yesterday we met X and got nothing." You can use the press like that imaginatively to put pressure on the parties. Not there.

SO: So, you didn't have a particular representation of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, or the Commonwealth Business Council? There were no Commonwealth cards that you could play?

MA: Quite a primitive country.

SO: What of Sri Lanka?

[*See also Moses Anafu Appendix One, Insert Three, on Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers*]

MA: Sri Lanka… I told you what happened? The representative of the Tamil Tigers came to Marlborough House, and Emeka decided to send me and Stuart Mole [to Sri Lanka]. Now, it was going to be a very complicated operation. We would go to Colombo. We would arrive in Colombo, meet with the government, talk and get their position. Then [we would] go from there by road – from Colombo, by road – to the limits of government control. [There], we would be handed over to the Tigers and they would take us to their leaders. We would talk to them and then see where we can begin the negotiations.

SO: Okay. Were you present when the original deputation from the Tigers came to Marlborough House?

MA: Their representative in Paris came.

SO: So, the representative of the LTTE in Paris came to meet Chief Emeka.

MA: Yes.

SO: Were you present at that meeting?

MA: Yes. I took the record. It was a very complicated meeting.

SO: In what way?

MA: Well, first of all, the issues they, the guy – it was one guy – were raising sounded like a lecture hall discussion. He talked about the lack of parity between the languages – that the language of the Tamils was not given the same status as the language of the Sinhalese. In fact, at the end of the day,

on the basis of that meeting, there was nothing to get my teeth into, politically. And that's when I began to have doubts about any possibility of a breakthrough.

SO: Because there were no concrete issues on which you might try to see compromise?

MA: Well, there were no concrete issues on which to compromise, but I also thought he was holding back. I don't know if he was holding back in order to feel his way, or he was holding back because he didn't want to exceed his brief. It's difficult to tell. And the fact that he wasn't based here but in Paris meant a follow-up was not going to be easy. Strange. But to be based in Paris, isn't that a strange location for a representative of the Tigers to be based? In contrast with the representatives of African political parties…

SO: Did you ask yourselves that at the time? "Why is he based in Paris? Why is he not in London?" Let's face it: London has a very well-established track record of being the centre and base for opposition movements – from Commonwealth countries, especially.

MA: And their people are here. They're not in Paris. The Sinhalese are here.

SO: Did you receive any Canadian encouragement, because of the size of the Tamil community in Canada?

MA: It hadn't got to that stage. But if it had, I suppose we would have had to talk to the High Commissioner here seriously, and also find out what their take on the issue was. But the guy [from Paris] was the wrong man to send to Marlborough House. He didn't speak like a politician.

SO: No, you said he spoke like an academic. So, were both you and Stuart concerned at this idea that you weren't being properly briefed as to the agenda of the LTTE?

MA: It just fizzled out. I think Emeka would have read the minutes and said, "Look, this guy is wasting time." But also, sometimes people don't open up because they're not sure of their ground. How much of their mind was on a military solution, and how much on a diplomatic solution? Now, I think, probably – this is now me – at that stage they didn't think that they would lose a military contest. The problem with this particular envoy was his failure to set out the issues in concrete language – in a manner which would facilitate negotiation.

SO: Did you contact the British government about any of this, or had you decided…?

MA: No. It would have been premature, anyway, at that stage.

SO: Okay. So, the idea of you flying to Colombo and then driving to the outer edges of government control, being handed over… I think Stuart Mole mentioned the Red Cross was also involved…

MA: Possibly.

SO: …and he said that it came down to the fact that there was no written guarantee.

MA: Of what?

SO: From the LTTE to the Red Cross ensuring safe passage for everybody. Or perhaps the Red Cross was insisting on written confirmation. I need to look at my notes…

MA: Stuart is always worried about safety. He came to South Africa when I was about to hold one of my most dangerous rallies, and there was talk of violence. I asked Stuart, "Will you come with me?" He said, "No." I said, "Why? You've come from London. Do you want to come and witness how we work here?" He said, "No, no." He's heard that it could be unpleasant.

SO: He is different from Max!

MA: Oh, Max would have.

SO: Max described being in the middle of a football stadium pitch with ANC supporters at one end and Inkatha supporters at the other.

MA: Max was born for that sort of stuff. Anyway, we went and some of my own team were a bit scared. But nothing happened. True, they came with so-called traditional weapons…

SO: The *assegai*.

MA: Yeah, but there was no violence. You see, somehow they had come to trust the Commonwealth.

SO: Excuse me, Moses, did you have an advantage, being a Ghanaian?

MA: The fact that I was an African who was prepared to trust Inkatha and to give them a fair opportunity to state their case – this was part of the reason for the confidence in the Commonwealth.

SO: Moses, you had a very, very dangerous job. Given the suspicions of the time, given the infiltration of government spies and informers, given the violence that was meted out to people that the ANC felt it couldn't trust.

MA: I used to go to the Inkatha warlords' houses in the night. One of them got killed not long after. Anyway, their wives would cook and we would eat and chat and drink and I would drive back – no problem – because they knew that there was no way I could be partisan.

SO: But Moses, with respect, somebody could have mistaken you.

MA: Yeah. Well, that can't be helped.

SO: Of course, but I think that your guardian angels – this not the work of one guardian angel, this needed at least two – were working overtime.

MA: I think so too.

SO: Seriously, this was a highly fraught time, with so much violence in KwaZulu Natal between Inkatha in the rural areas and the ANC township youth. What was the casualty rate? 20,000? 30,000?

MA: You see, this is where Mandela first heard of me – that there was this Ghanaian who had managed to open up KwaZulu for us, the ANC, to be able to go and campaign and meet with Inkatha. Early on, when I used to address rallies, I made two points. One was to say who I was and what the Commonwealth was about, and to say, "We are here not because we, off our own back, think that we should come here and do good, [but because] your leaders have asked us to come. The first of your leaders who approved the coming of the Commonwealth was Nkosi Buthelezi himself." [I would say], "I came here with my boss, Chief Emeka; we met [Buthelezi] at the airport. He was on his way out of the country. So, my boss said, 'Oh, I'm coming to have this important conversation with Buthelezi and he's leaving.' So, Buthelezi said, 'Okay, I'll delay my going.' He sat down. My boss briefed him about sending observers and Buthelezi was the first South African leader who said, 'Send them. They will help us a lot.'" So, that usually disarmed the local Inkatha people.

SO: You're underlining a hierarchical power structure there – that surely, if you got the endorsement from the top, it would filter down.

MA: So, this is how the Inkatha people began. Then I would go and see Buthelezi and he would make sure it appears on telly. He was that desperate for publicity. And I told you the other day how Mandela sent me, didn't I?

SO: Yes, you did.

MA: When he discovered that I had entrée to Chief Buthelezi, he was very happy, because it added to those forces wanting a peaceful settlement. So, the UN didn't like us, because the Commonwealth, in their view, was a piddling little organisation [*Laughter*] which was stealing the limelight. I was in particular 'bad odour' with the UN.

SO: Did UN officials try to contact you? Did they try to use your…?

MA: Yes. What they said [was] that, whenever we arrange a rally, we should let their man lead: somebody from somewhere – Tanzania. So I said, "But if we arrange the thing and they come because we've asked them to come, and then hand it over to you, how would it look?" Their idea was that we would eventually emerge in the public eye [and] that I was just one of their flunkies. Obviously we could not allow any blurring of the Commonwealth's image in so important an arena.

SO: Okay, but *who* in the UN? *Where* in the UN? Was this the Secretary General's office? Was this…?

MA: The local representative there, I don't know. It was a woman. But there was also a Tanzanian, who was their local representative in Natal. I used to remember his name…

SO: What about the OAU? How were you regarded by the OAU?

MA: The OAU's presence was damp squib, really. The OAU had no profile there, although they should have had one. They should have had a higher profile than the UN and the Commonwealth, because the South African issue was first and foremost an African issue.

SO: Now, was that lack of funds, lack of interest, lack of…?

MA: They had the funds; they had the personnel. It's just that they sent bureaucrats. This is a job that [is] slightly risky. You need someone who's not scared to take a risk.

SO: As a risk-taking diplomat at the sharp end of Commonwealth diplomacy in the 1990s, what – in your opinion – was the value of the Queen as head of the Commonwealth? In terms of a symbol, cement?

MA: You know who you should have asked this question? Sonny Ramphal.

SO: No, I have. I've talked to him about this.

MA: Because he has got the best take on that. No, really. Anyaoku was also very successful with her, but not in the same way as Sonny.

SO: **My understanding is that Sonny Ramphal's qualities included being very personable, charismatic, courteous, courtly, mischievous and fun. Chief Emeka has other qualities. Now…**

MA: No, they match each other well for work. I think the two qualities are different, and both served the Commonwealth very well. Now, [as for] the Queen, I'd take the Sonny line on it: I don't think anybody can do better. You know, at CHOGM, she receives each head separately and they are supposed to be formal calls. You go and call on the Queen and so on, but I rather suspect that if she judges, if she assesses, an individual to have a lot that is of interest or importance, she will spend more time with that person and may even want a one-on-one with that person. Now, in which organisation in the world do you have that degree of engagement? Not in the UN. In the UN, they don't even communicate. They go and read speeches at each other and go away.

SO: Did you go to any of these UN General Assembly meetings?

MA: Many.

SO: So, this is all part of the Commonwealth's observer status?

MA: Yeah, representation. The Vatican man used to sit next to me.

SO: And did the PLO sit on the other side?

MA: Hold on… I don't remember seeing the PLO down there!

SO: Well, Peter Marshall said that you were a very select group! It was the Holy See, the PLO and the Commonwealth having observer status.

MA: They've gone up, haven't they? PLO.

SO: Yes, they have.

MA: I think they are full members of the General Assembly or something like that? Something recently happened there.

SO: I believe so, Moses.

Now, I have to ask you, what do you think for the future of the Commonwealth, going forward? Was it successful because it operated below the radar? It achieved phenomenal things on very limited resources, because of the particular context of the time. That context has now changed.

MA: But also, don't forget that, especially in the early days, you had people who knew each other. Either they had been students here [in the UK] together, or they had been colleagues in the liberation struggle and so on. There were a lot of 'commonalities', to use a word beloved of Sonny. Those links, more or less, are no more. There's no bush war anywhere for people to congregate over a fire and become friends. [*Laughter*] Is there?

SO: I don't think the Commonwealth needs a bush war to get it going again.

MA: Well, it benefitted from one in Southern Africa.

SO: It did, and it had to resolve it too.

MA: Going forward, on what can it draw? What does it need to re-invent? I think that the informality of the consultations is one of its strengths. The Retreats, where Secretariat officials don't go with them [the heads of government], and they have informal conversation: no record, except the basic things, noting only the outcomes. Now, I hope that doesn't fall by the wayside, because that is one of the great facilities of the Commonwealth.

SO: Was the amount of time set aside for a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting getting shorter during your time at the Secretariat?

MA: Yes, yes. The summits were contracting. The Retreats? Overnight affairs, and nothing more than that. I always regretted that at the time – especially, as I say, [because] the occasion for people to have known each other in a close and informal setting doesn't exist, or it's diminishing.

SO: Well, also, in the early period post-independence, it was the time of particularly long-lived leaders in office.

MA: Yes. 'Presidents-for-life'.

SO: In a way – and this is the paradox – it could be said that democracy and the changing of the guard has, in fact, helped to break down the friendship bonds…

MA: Well, I suppose that is the price of democracy!

SO: Democracy hasn't been good for the Commonwealth?

MA: It has given credibility to the institution with its national constituencies. But you see, at the leadership level, once you come to a CHOGM, there's no reason why they shouldn't be given at least two days – in short-sleeves and so on – to get to know each other. Over golf…you know. That is important. Now, addressing each other by first names? Only in the Commonwealth. In the UN, it's "His Excellency so-and-so…" In the Commonwealth, nobody's an "Excellency". So, that side of things should be reinforced and protected. That's one. Two: the smaller member states. I think the Commonwealth is

probably the only institution that caters for its small member countries in a special way. I think it should continue to look upon that as a special charge.

SO: But it can't only be a small states organisation.

MA: No. Within the organisation, there must be room to pay special attention to its smaller member states. Look at the Pacific Islands. Very far away from everywhere – apart from Australia and New Zealand – and yet the Commonwealth spirit is very strong there. Very, very strong there.

SO: I know, from living in Fiji.

MA: There you are. Who takes care of countries like Fiji and so on? Who has special responsibility for them in today's world?

SO: Australia and New Zealand have a particular interest; far less so Britain. Fiji's representation here in London is a High Commissioner and one diplomatic staff member. Their biggest overseas representation is in Beijing, where they have an embassy of twenty people.

MA: Really? Why? That's interesting.

SO: Because of Chinese investment and the possibility of Chinese trade.

MA: I see. But after the Chinese have come and built a bridge here or a railway line there, they go. They move on. The non-tangible, if you like – the non-material side of things – is just as important. Now, I'm talking on the wider issue you've asked me, [that] you've raised, of keeping the Commonwealth going into the future. Whenever I read about the high-handed way in which some of these countries are treated by the powerful and the mighty… Icily! The sort of Kissinger thing: "Ah, we don't need to please so-and-so; we don't need to…" That kind of tone: "They don't count." Now, it's only the Commonwealth that doesn't do that.

First of all, you've got to sit with people – and this is again one of the imaginative devices, strengthening the binding links through informality. They used to rotate the seating; I don't know about now. If you sit next to me, tomorrow you will sit next to different people. So, you get to know each other. And then they would encourage the use of first names. This is not a trivial detail. It meant that it made it difficult for people to come and read speeches at each other, and the Secretariat enforced that by saying, "If you bring along a written text, we'll collect it from you, make copies, circulate them and ask you to speak to it." That way, people come out as they really are – as they feel, as they think.

Now, I have had a lot of free education from Lee Kuan Yew – free and valuable, thanks to the Commonwealth. Other leaders, I'm sure – apart from Lee – attending the meeting must go away with something valuable. For example, in the days of rampant military coups, one of the discussions was, "How do you make it impossible for a military coup? How do you make it impracticable for a military coup?" The upshot was the decision to exclude a non-elected, unconstitutional regime. That decision is now one of the core Commonwealth values. Now, it's only in the Commonwealth that you know that if you make a coup, there's nothing guaranteed about your acceptance either in the councils of the association or in functional co-operation.

SO: You're not thrown out of the UN, for instance.

MA: Oh, no. They wouldn't even notice it. That's it – that's the whole point. They wouldn't notice it. [*Laughter*] So, the Commonwealth has a lot going for it. If only we can sit down and think it through periodically, every so often.

SO: Moses, to what extent did the Cold War give the Commonwealth a particular alternative focus and agenda? Neville Linton said this morning that it was the Cold War and the Secretary General, Sonny Ramphal, who determinedly pursued a non-Cold War, developmental agenda. Ramphal made sure he was on all major international commissions that were dealing with critical issues that got stuck in other international institutions because of the Cold War dynamic. That was Neville's argument.

The Commonwealth was also giving particular focus to its other grand strategy: that of ending apartheid in South Africa. Now, once those two things were out of the way – the Cold War and apartheid South Africa – did the Commonwealth start to lose its clarity of focus and its energy? Promoting democratisation is a long agenda: a messy, partial and imperfect process that rolls out.

MA: But it's for the Commonwealth to periodically take a long, hard look at itself and to decide on the realisable objectives it can set itself.

[*For additional material on the Cold War and the Commonwealth, see Moses Anafu Appendix One, Insert Four*]

SO: Okay. My other impression is that the international system has changed radically and civil society has become more important as a diplomatic actor. The role of the heads of government meeting has altered because of a contracting timeline, given all those other international meetings that compete for a political leader's time, and with heads changing more often. The Commonwealth now seems to me to be more like a four-legged stool with the Secretariat, heads, civil society, and professional organisations as the pillars of support. So, the Commonwealth is having to adjust itself to a very different world.

MA: It can adjust; it's not a problem. Why can't it adjust?

SO: So, why does it constantly go through these crises of, "What's the Commonwealth for? It's going to fizzle, it's going to die!"

MA: That's a discussion you hear only here, in Britain. In my time at the Secretariat, it was always accepted that the Commonwealth has to run fast to keep still. Member countries were never taken for granted and staff were always encouraged to keep rethinking established agendas and to come out with new ones.

SO: That's interesting.

MA: Yeah. You hear that [i.e. the idea of the Commonwealth in crisis] nowhere else. Quote me on it – any day, anywhere.

SO: So, why do we only hear it here, when Britain seems to attach such little importance to the Commonwealth?

MA: Well, some of the Tories, for example, don't quite appreciate its importance, but you will not hear anybody in Ghana or Nigeria question the Commonwealth. "Why are we in the Commonwealth?" No. You will hear in South Africa, for example, that Francois Mitterrand, at the time that South Africa was celebrating the ending of apartheid, actually offered *La Francophonie* membership to Mandela.

SO: [*Laughter*]

MA: Seriously!

SO: This is rather like Castro asking if he could join the Commonwealth.

MA: Well, he would be useful!

SO: Well, indeed. He would have stirred things up.

MA: No, I don't think he's a stirrer. You know what? He's got passion.

SO: Oh, that's what I mean about stirring things up.

MA: No, but his passion is preceded by or mixed with logic. I told you the other story about him telling off the Ghanaian delegation, didn't I?

SO: Yes, you did.

MA: "Eastern Europe? They've got nothing to offer you. You should have come to me first, because I have experience which may be of use and value to you."

SO: It was notable that after Hurricane Katrina in the United States, Cuba offered emergency humanitarian assistance to the state government in Louisiana. The Americans turned it down flat because they thought it was a diplomatic ploy, and I was thinking, "They're mad! Cuba knows how to deal with hurricanes and their aftermath!

MA: Of course.

SO: They are into disaster management. Cuba has sent more medical personnel to Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia because of the Ebola outbreak than, in fact, America and the United Kingdom put together.

MA: See, the question you asked – "Why is the future of the Commonwealth always raised here in negative terms?" – I think is based on people who themselves haven't taken the trouble to look at what the evolving Commonwealth is about and what has been achieved. I was going to say "new Commonwealth" but it's gone beyond that now, [in] what it is and what it does. They see it as, "Ah, these are people who are dragging us back. You know, we've left all this behind us." You never leave things like that behind you. Never. Now, why should Mitterrand want Mandela in *La Francophonie* rather than the Commonwealth?

SO: Prestige.

MA: But what did they do to help when Mandela was in trouble? Nothing. And South Africans don't know anything about France. Nothing. They don't go that way. [*Laughter*]

SO: So, you feel that there's a vibrancy and a viability for the Commonwealth going forward, and that it's just here in England that we wring our hands and say, "The Commonwealth is going to hell in a hand cart" – this is a particularly British disease.

MA: The pessimism about the Commonwealth and its future is particularly evident in Britain and nowhere else.

SO: But do you think that perhaps the role of the Secretariat is also going through a time of crisis, and that it is now reverting to being more of a conference organisation, as originally envisaged in 1965?

MA: A lot of that depends upon who is at the top, who is the Secretary General. A powerful, imaginative Secretary General always makes a difference, as Sonny's time has shown. A caring Secretary General – caring about stability in member countries [and] about their interests, like Emeka did. Emeka took trouble to find out how countries were faring. "Is there any trouble brewing, and what can we do to help?" Yes, that side of things must continue. If we don't continue that side of things, we will become like the Organisation of American States. What is the use of the OAS? Well, I've never heard of any initiative. Have you?

But no, seriously… International organisations tend not to penetrate the consciousness of the citizens of member countries, by and large. [So, if] your country is a member of the OAU – fine; finished. Now, my country is a member of the Commonwealth, which is active in Southern Africa, which is concerned about environmental change [and], you know, women's issues. When the Commonwealth was agitating these issues – indeed, providing leadership on developmental issues in general – no other comparable organisation was similarly engaged. The others are not yet joining the action. That sort of leadership: I hope we don't lose it. And we can only keep it if we have a very professionally-strong Secretariat.

SO: Yes, exactly, that recruits excellent staff.

MA: Yes.

SO: Leadership?

MA: Yeah.

SO: What about the leadership issue around the head of the Commonwealth? After the Queen inevitably passes on, do you think there will be value in it passing to the next British monarch? Or, in fact, in your view, is there no need, given that there is a Secretary General? Or should there be a rotating, formal head?

MA: No, rotating the ceremonial leadership will be its ruin. I think we should just leave it as it is. Why not? Unless there is demonstrable merit in rotation, all adventurism should be avoided.

SO: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it"?

MA: Quite! It's a 'plus plus' thing, so why bother?

SO: It's also free to the Commonwealth.

MA: Well, yes, of course it's free, if that's what you mean. But I think this fad of saying, "Oh, we must rotate this"… You ask, "Why?" There's no reason; just rotating for rotating's sake.

SO: Everyone would have a turn?

MA: No, but this is where your troubles begin, because when you start to rotate, then somebody jumps up one day and says, "We weren't rotating, but since we have now agreed on rotation, the institution must provide us the wherewithal to make rotation effective." We can try rotation, but I am sure we will find it unworkable.

SO: So, if there was to be rotation around the small states – the majority of Commonwealth members – it could be Vanuatu versus St Kitts?

MA: It would be a laugh. You go to Vanuatu to see the head of the Commonwealth, only to find him busy in a canoe!

SO: Electioneering?

MA: Or more likely fishing for the day's meal! [*Laughter*]

SO: Moses, I'm going to stop there. Thank you very much indeed.

[END OF AUDIOFILE PART THREE]