VOICE FILE NAME: COHP Moses Anafu (Part One)

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

Part One:

SO: This is Sue Onslow talking to Dr Moses Anafu in Willesden, London, on Tuesday, 17th June 2014. Moses, thank you very much indeed for agreeing to take part in this project. I wonder if you could begin by saying, please, how did you come to be recruited to the Commonwealth Secretariat?

MA: Well, first of all, I didn't get there through government, because a lot of my colleagues were seconded from their governments – especially the political offices. I saw an advert for a research officer in what was then the International Affairs Division of the Secretariat – later Political Affairs Division. I applied, was interviewed, and given the job. That's how I came to be working there.

SO: Before then, you were based in Cambridge?

MA: I was finishing my PhD in Cambridge.

SO: So, you joined in 1979?

MA: In January '79.

SO: The hot topic for the Commonwealth at this particular point was, of course, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

MA: Yes, it was coming to a projection, I would say, at that point.

SO: Yes. It was anticipated that the Conservative Party, at that particular time, was going to win the UK elections, and it was very much feared that the Conservative Party under Mrs Thatcher would recognise the

internal settlement of Bishop Abel Muzorewa. Do you recall the debates in the Commonwealth, in the Secretariat, around this time?

MA: Yes, they were very animated. After the so-called 'internal settlement', Secretary General Ramphal got the Secretariat to produce a very critical analysis of the internal settlement [See Appendix Two], under which Muzorewa and Ian Smith were in harness together. I remember that, when the High Commissioners considered the document, everybody supported it.

SO: So, this was a critique of the internal settlement?

MA: Yes, and devastatingly so.

SO: It wasn't a critique of the political economy of Rhodesia?

MA: No, no – the settlement.

SO: Because there was another very detailed assessment – by two independent consultants – of the political economy of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, and what its needs would be, going forward.

MA: Going forward, yes. It was not that one. This was a purely political document.

SO: I know that Secretary General Ramphal was particularly keen, in the run-up to the Lusaka meeting in August 1979, to ensure that Mrs Thatcher should not be too isolated. He embarked upon a highly deliberate diplomatic campaign around the capitals of the African Commonwealth to solicit their support for gentler treatment of Mrs Thatcher at her first Heads of Government meeting. Were you involved in any of these visits to African capitals?

MA: No, I wasn't personally involved in that, but I do know that it's customary, before a CHOGM, for the Secretary General to visit select capitals, especially the ones that would be key to the debates. And, of course, as Rhodesia/Zimbabwe was an Africa issue, he visited all the Front Line States – I know that – and Nigeria. I'm not sure he went to my own [country], Ghana. And, the idea was: A), to point out to them the issues; and also B), to ensure that there was, if you like, a consensus position at the Lusaka meeting – and, significantly, because it was also being held in Zambia, on the border with Zimbabwe, and a leading Front Line State at that. So, KK's role, President [Kenneth] Kaunda's role, would have been critical. So would have been that of the other Front Line States, and Nigeria, because in those days, we used to speak of 'the Front Line States and Nigeria'. Nigeria was an honorary Front Line State, for that purpose.

SO: Mrs Thatcher said, with her logical brain, and I quote, that she "couldn't quite grasp why Nigeria was an honorary Front Line State."

MA: I know. Everybody else did. We all did.

SO: Were you part of the advanced party that went down to Lusaka?

MA: I didn't go to Lusaka. I was involved in preparing the documents for it, but I didn't go to Lusaka; although, I subsequently struck up a warm friendship with KK on my own.

SO: In what way?

MA: Well, he and I have a common friend, and I asked to see him. By then he'd left office, so I always made it a point to greet him whenever I was in that region.

SO: President Kaunda was, of course, very important behind the scenes at the Lancaster House negotiations between September and December 1979. I know that Secretary General Ramphal was very keen to offer administrative and diplomatic guidance and support to the Zimbabwean liberation movement leaders when they came to London for those negotiations. Were you involved, in any way, in helping to brief or support them?

MA: No, that would have been restricted to [Ramphal] himself, and possibly Moni Malhoutra, and Anyaoku, who was his number two. And it would have been to do with the issues, basically, and how they might be managed at the meeting itself.

SO: So, that suggests that Secretary General Ramphal kept that discussion very, very close, and that it was only in a very tight and trusted team. I know that Chief Emeka had been part of the diplomatic back-up going to the Geneva negotiations in '76...

MA: He was then Assistant Secretary General.

SO: Yes. So, by the time of the signature of the Lancaster House Agreement in December 1979, Secretary General Ramphal had made the suggestion of a Commonwealth Observer Mission for the election. At what point did you become involved in this?

MA: The Observer Mission for the elections would have prepared the usual kind of briefing for all the observers, and it would have been an outline of political trends, some appreciation of the personalities, and other peculiarities that we thought were important to be taken note of.

SO: Did you accompany the team?

MA: I didn't go to Zimbabwe for the elections.

SO: Were you reading the briefing papers coming back at all?

MA: There were no briefing papers coming back, as such. They would have been reporting to Ramphal on the phone, possibly, but I didn't see them.

SO: Did you go down to Salisbury – as the capital was still known – for the independence celebrations?

MA: No.

SO: Were you involved, in any way, in the post-election push to encourage Governor Soames and the British Government to ramp up British development aid to Zimbabwe?

MA: No.

SO: So, after the success of Zimbabwe, how quickly do you recall that the attention started to shift to Namibia and also South Africa?

MA: Really, once Zimbabwe was out of the way, the focus of the political department of the Secretary General was on South Africa. Maybe it wasn't really as big a problem as South Africa itself. Namibia, not having been a British colony, which Zimbabwe had been, wasn't quite as directly our issue, so to speak. We shared it with the UN – the UN was in the driving seat there.

SO: I just wondered, though, because Britain was a core member of the Contact Group, whether the Secretariat tried to use its position in London to press the British Government on a particular stance.

MA: How did Namibia come to be? After the defeat of the Germans, the mandate was given to Britain; and Britain, in turn, gave it to South Africa.

SO: It was a Class C Mandate under the League of Nations, and the administration was awarded to South Africa.

MA: Exactly. So, Britain had co-responsibility, if you see what I mean…

SO: Yes.

MA: …for resolving that issue. Especially when the South Africans started exporting full-blown apartheid to Namibia, which was regarded as not in keeping with the original spirit of the mandate. That's how the Commonwealth was able to have an *entrée*.

SO: So, at the next Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Melbourne in 1981...

MA: I went to Melbourne.

SO: It seemed to me, when I was looking at the briefing papers this morning, that Malcolm Fraser was very determined to push forward ideas of economic development [at this meeting] and that he was eager to link the West-South axis with Australia in collaboration with other key members of the Commonwealth: to set up things like a Common Fund, to support or to modify prices on commodities – to support the whole economic developmental agenda. But how much was South Africa, also, as you say, increasing in importance in the discussions?

MA: Oh, very much, because – first of all – South Africa was the effective occupying power. Two, the position in the Commonwealth was that South Africa was the source of all the problems in that part of the world – the Front

Line States' destabilisation, in particular – and so it was very difficult to discuss Namibia without bringing in South Africa. Are you with me?

SO: I am. Because South Africa was the regional hegemonic power, it had administrative control over Namibia. By this point, it had acquired nuclear weapons; it was militarily present in South West Africa. It was a question of getting South Africa out of Namibia, in political terms.

MA: Yes.

SO: Did you, in any way, see the Cold War as important?

MA: Yes.

SO: In what ways?

MA: It was the South Africans who made it an issue. The South Africans projected their regime as anti-communist – they were a bulwark against the coming of communism to Southern Africa. That was the argument they made. And they pointed to Angola, pointed to the MPLA Marxist Government there; they pointed to Mozambique, which had an avowedly Marxist government – FRELIMO didn't hide it, either. Now, South Africa saw itself as part of the free world – as it put it – and [suggested] that if you are against communism, then you must back them. You must back South Africa. We called it apartheid, they called it 'South Africa'. So, there wasn't much of a job to do there, within the Commonwealth. South Africa's destabilisation campaign was also, by then, overt. They had decided that they would take the battle to the enemy. So, if you can cause as much instability in Zimbabwe, [then you can do the same in] all the Front Line States – minus Tanzania, because Tanzania was far, if you look at the map…Although, Tanzanian soldiers had fought alongside the Patriotic Front inside Zimbabwe. Then, after the end of Ian Smith's nonsense in Zimbabwe, a decision had to be taken by the Tanzanian Government, which was, "Can we send troops to go and fight alongside the ANC if it comes to that?" And they said, no, they couldn't. The supply lines would be impossible: it's too far. So, this limited their support, like the rest of us, to political support for the ANC.

SO: Yes, military intervention and military action was not feasible, hence the importance of making a moral and historic gesture on sanctions. That makes sense, rather than having diplomatic 'hand-wringing'.

MA: Support sanctions throughout the world: supported in the UN, supported in the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as in the Commonwealth.

SO: Please, could I just ask about the South African destabilisation programme? How much do you recall of the Gukuruhundi campaign – the violence and killings in Matabeleland – that took place from 1982 to 1987? What was the view from the Commonwealth? Was it seen as part of South Africa's destabilisation programme or, in fact, was there a different view?

MA: There was no official Commonwealth view, as far as I knew. This is the post-independence conflict between Mugabe and Nkomo, that's what we mean. And the so-called Fifth Brigade, a unit of the Zimbabwe Army…

SO: Trained by the North Korean military instructors.

MA: That's right. Now, you see, some of us knew that Nkomo had stockpiled weapons in Matabeleland, [and] also that his army, ZIPRA, had not done much fighting. They were in Zambia, but nobody ever saw them fire a shot in anger. The fighting was on the front with Mozambique, because the Rhodesian Government knew that that's where the real enemy was. Nkomo did not want anything to be resolved by violence. He just wanted Smith to hand over power to him. He didn't want any kind of mobilisation; no, he didn't want that. He wanted the kind of neo-colonial settlement that we all got.

SO: But in the February 1980 election, when Mugabe got 57 seats, Nkomo got 20 and Muzorewa got three. In the post-election discussions, Governor Soames encouraged Robert Mugabe to go into coalition with Nkomo and to make him Vice-President. You are saying that you knew that Nkomo and ZIPRA had stockpiled weapons in Matabeleland?

MA: Yes.

SO: So, you attributed this to a rising of disaffected former fighters who felt that they had lost out in the independence settlement? That Nkomo had triggered it? Or that South Africa was behind it?

MA: Well, Nkomo was himself shocked by the outcome of the election. He had overestimated his support base. Okay, fine. But, initially, he was holding out for more in terms of [political power]. His argument, which was a very technical argument, was that they were all called 'Patriotic Front' – that was the name of the alliance. But it was an alliance of two different parties. The parties themselves had not meshed; they hadn't formed one party, as it were. There was ZAPU for Nkomo and ZANU for Mugabe. And Nkomo, after the election, said, "But we had fought as the Patriotic Front, so it was a common victory." This is where the ZANU people said, "No, you fought as ZAPU. Your troops were for ZAPU. Ours were ZANU." So, ZANU, this is where they then put 'PF' [in their name]: ZANU-PF. So, it was a *ZANU* victory, not a Patriotic Front victory, and so, "we must decide who gets what." Now, that's when the trouble started. That's when this trouble in Matabeleland started.

SO: But why was the Commonwealth – why was the Secretariat – so quiet?

MA: What do you think the Secretariat could have done?

SO: Could there have been any statement calling for a moderation of the violence? Calling for political reconciliation between the parties?

MA: What we didn't know at the time – even now, we still don't know, I'm sure – was how much was South Africa involved in it, really. And we didn't know who else might have been involved. I don't know how to put this to you. Countries freshly arrived at independence tend to be very prickly, and you have to be

very careful who you speak to. Because not too long ago, they were refugees; today, they are a sovereign government. You have to find a way of speaking to them and getting things across to them. I would say [that] the other point [is] – and I have no evidence for this, it's just guessing, what I'm about to tell you – I think, at that point, the position of ZANU was, "Thank you, but we can handle our problem." That's my guess.

SO: That's your view? Well, that's a very informed take. You made reference, then, to South Africa rising up the critical issue list for the Commonwealth in the 1980s. Opposition to apartheid has been described as the Commonwealth's 'grand strategy'. Mrs Thatcher, of course, famously took a different view to the Commonwealth on the issue of economic and financial sanctions. This featured frequently at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings. Again and again and again, she states her opposition to apartheid: that she's completely hostile, she loathes it, it's detestable. However...

MA: But, no sanctions.

SO: But, no sanctions. Were you privy to any of the discussions on how to try to persuade her otherwise?

MA: I didn't detect any warmth between her and Ramphal from the beginning. I didn't. Now, when you say "persuade her", it's not like she didn't know what she was doing.

SO: I think she knew perfectly well what she was doing!

MA: Exactly, and she was taking a position which was unalterable against sanctions. But we hoped that the collective influence of her colleagues – as well as those countries closer to the situation – would have some impact.

SO: This obviously was a rising issue at the New Delhi Heads of Government Meeting. It particularly came to the fore in 1985 at the Nassau Meeting.

MA: Yes. Nassau was very important because of the EPG, but how did the EPG arise? It has to do exactly with trying to convince Mrs T. Now, at the meeting, she was going around saying – this is what I learnt – that, "the South Africans are prepared to negotiate, so hold off sanctions." You understand? "Hold off sanctions, because they are prepared to talk." Well, how do we test that statement? With an Eminent Persons Group. So, the EPG was [established] in order to deprive Mrs T of the only fig leaf she had: go in and establish whether they are prepared to talk or not.

SO: Were you part of the advanced party that went down to South Africa ahead of the actual EPG mission? I know that Hugh Craft was very involved in going down to Lusaka [and] to Botswana beforehand.

MA: I didn't go at that time. When Anyaoku took over as SG, I used to go there on my own, even. He would send me alone.

SO: But before then, you – a brilliant Ghanaian – was left to the side!

MA: Yes, and not only that, I had a lot of contacts with the South Africans. Some I had met at university here. Others, I had met in the swim of life. And others, because they knew I was both a Ghanaian and a Nkrumahist, they came to tell me [what was going on]. The South Africans themselves. This is how I met people like Thabo Mbeki. He was very good to me, Thabo Mbeki. Thabo does not easily confide in people. Have you ever met him?

SO: I haven't had that pleasure, no.

MA: If you can try, he is very, very clever, but his human relations are a different matter. That's why he wasn't a success as President.

SO: You do need that common touch – that sense of being able to exploit personal chemistry – to be an inspirational leader: particularly, of course, following Nelson Mandela.

MA: No, he could carry it off. Mandela, that is. Mandela was not very up-to-date with the world when he came out of prison. When I was in Natal, Mandela called me into his office, and he used to call me "Mos". He said, "Mos, this is the heart of the violence. What is happening [here] is going to ruin everything that my generation has lived and worked for." The violence in Natal [between the ANC and Inkatha Freedom Party Supporters] was playing straight into the hands of the enemy. "Now, it's no use telling one of my colleagues. You go and talk to him. You, somebody from the UN, and somebody from the OAU*:* the representatives of the international community." So, I asked him, "Madiba, may I speak frankly to you?" He said, "Yes!" I said, "Okay. Yes, we are the international community, as you've enumerated. But we speak with different accents*.* A Commonwealth representative knows what the Commonwealth position is on this issue. The EU, for example – Mrs Thatcher has a representative there, right? Now, if you send a mixed delegation representing the international community there, the message won't be as sharp as sending one person." He said, "Okay, then you alone should go." So, I went. You know, Buthelezi, whenever I've been to see him, always received me very well – very, very well – and I even must say that I came to have a certain feeling for him, which, unless you've had dealings with him, you won't know.

SO: You said beforehand that, when you met him, you had a sense of a real hunger in Buthelezi.

MA: Yes, true, [a hunger] for contact with the outside world. His message, such as it was, hadn't been aired. He had no platform. No African country would host him, other than in secrecy. Maybe Ivory Coast, maybe...Where else? Morocco. But these were peripheral countries, you see, with no impact on the situation.

SO: Did he mention any contacts with Mrs Thatcher? Looking at the British archives, she very much emphasised the particular importance of Buthelezi as head of Inkatha, so I just wondered.

MA: No, he knew what we thought of Mrs Thatcher's position. But, also, if he allowed us to know openly that he was trying to rely on Conservative

politicians here and [in] America to come and put down apartheid for him, it would just expose his position.

SO: Yes. He would seem a 'stooge', as you say. So, when did you first meet Mandela?

MA: I first met him when he came to Lusaka – two weeks or so after his release from prison. I went with Ramphal and Anyaoku.

SO: So, that was his first international visit after he'd been let out of jail in February 1990?

MA: Yes. Two weeks after he'd been let out of jail, he came to Lusaka, and the whole world went there to meet him.

SO: And you were part of the world coming to see him.

MA: But you know what? He looked so tired. So, Ramphal said, "Mr Mandela, I will forego my meeting with you out of friendship." You could see that the man was physically worn out.

SO: Did you hear Mandela's address to the ANC when he said, "You have to understand how difficult it is for the Afrikaner to negotiate"?

MA: When did he make that?

SO: As I understand it, this was in his first meeting with the ANC in exile, in Lusaka, following his release on 11th February 1990. It may have been a different meeting.

MA: No. You see, it's not the sort of thing he would have said in the presence of outsiders. I'm sure what you've just quoted reflected his general position. Did you see the obituary notice Anyaoku wrote for him?

SO: Yes, I did.

MA: Well, I wrote it.

SO: It was a particularly warm tribute.

MA: Very, very warm.

SO: Sir, how good were your contacts within the ANC in Lusaka at that point? You made reference to Thabo Mbeki. Had you met him back here in the UK?

MA: I first met him in the UK.

SO: In addition to your own contacts, how good were the Secretariat's contacts with the ANC in exile in Lusaka?

MA: Anyaoku, of course [had good contacts].

SO: At what point did you really start to become more and more involved?

MA: 1990.

SO: In 1990. So, did you become Anyaoku's emissary after that meeting in Lusaka? Or did it have to wait until the Harare CHOGM meeting in late October 1991, after which Chief Anyaoku decided to make the big push for Commonwealth assistance to transition in South Africa?

MA: No, I went on my own: quite a number of times.

SO: So, what was the purpose of your visits?

MA: Well, it depends. There was one...Yes, I knew there was to be another summit – was it '91?

SO: Yes, in Harare.

MA: Now, when was Mandela released? 1990.

SO: February 1990, yes.

MA: And that's when the violence also began. Anyaoku wanted Mandela, Buthelezi and De Klerk to attend the CHOGM, and the idea was for Commonwealth leaders to read the riot act to them about the consequences of the violence. His strategy was that, of course, they will be speaking to all three [of the] responsible leaders, but then they would be gunning for Buthelezi. He would be the person [to whom] they will say, "Switch it off". So, I went. Buthelezi and I flew on the same flight. We took the same flight. He would say, "Oh, but you are coming my way, you didn't tell me." I said, "Chief, I didn't know I would be coming. I have come to collect something here for the office." He said, "Okay". Well, I first went and tested this idea on Mandela. I said, "The rise of the violence is now the concern of the Commonwealth. We've come this far, and from nowhere this problem has arisen. So, the idea is that the Secretary General wants to invite the three of you to the Heads of Government Meeting, so that the riot act will be read out, but we'll really be gunning for Buthelezi. He is the one who would need to be convinced and persuaded of the urgency of ending the violence." You know what he did to me? He said – and I went straight into his office, just the two of us, and I delivered [the message] – he said, "Okay, wait here for me." He went to the next room and he came back with Thabo and Aziz Pahad, both of whom I knew well. He then said, "Mos, repeat to them what you've just told me here." So, I repeated it. Thabo said, "The ANC policy has been to keep this man as nothing but a local politician. Now you want to give him the international stage! This will make him bigger than he is. No, we will not accept that."

SO: Did Aziz Pahad have a view?

MA: No, he didn't say anything. Would you believe, the old man himself also said nothing thereafter.

SO: So, once Thabo Mbeki had made his remark about not wanting to give Buthelezi the platform, [then] that was it?

MA: That was it; no further discussion. But, you see, Mandela's management technique was to intervene as minimally as need be. He'd been in prison for so long, [during] the course of which the world, Africa and South Africa had changed. He came out into a new world, and he didn't want to put a foot wrong. This issue is a foreign affairs issue in his eyes. These are his foreign affairs experts, so why should he say anything?

SO: True, and because he didn't want to expend his political capital, which, after all, was fragile and limited: the difficulty of the reality of Mandela as opposed to Mandela the icon.

MA: The way Thabo spoke also revealed to me the sway he had over the old man.

SO: So, in your discussions with Mandela thereafter, did you make sure that you were also in touch with Thabo Mbeki? Having come to this realisation yourself, did that in any way alter your diplomacy with Mandela and the ANC?

MA: No. I had been working with Thabo for a long time by then, and I knew how his mind worked. I knew that he had a lot of respect – especially among the Presidents of the Front Line States. He wasn't a warm personality, Thabo. He was almost a machine, in that sense.

SO: Well, you could say it was, in part, the damage of exile.

MA: Partly: the damage of exile and its deprivations. No, that I noticed.

SO: After all, having being an exile – he was not an 'in-xile', nor was he in the military command structure – his relationship with other struggle leaders would have been complicated, as well.

So, you were Chief Emeka's emissary – to try to suggest to Mandela the idea of Buthelezi coming up to the Heads of Government meeting in Harare and having their heads knocked together. How did the Chief respond when you came back and reported?

MA: He said, "Well, if that is the case, fine. We'll drop it." We dropped it.

SO: In the run-up to Harare, were you involved in drafting the Harare Declaration? Or was that Max Gaylard and others in the Political Affairs Division?

MA: No, what I did was write the opening speech for the Secretary General in Harare, as well as background briefing papers. But when it came to the Declaration, I think our New Zealand colleague Jeremy Pope, the lawyer, had a lot to do with that.

SO: I know that the British also came forward with their own version.

MA: You know what surprises me? You can answer this. After all these centuries of African experience, it doesn't show in British policy in Africa. It certainly didn't play to any useful effect on the Southern African issue. Why?

SO: That was your perception?

MA: Yes.

SO: Sir Peter Marshall would say that the trouble within the British diplomatic corps at that particular point was an obsession with "Europe, Europe, Europe", and so Commonwealth issues fell into the shade. So, historical linkages and important ongoing cultural ties with an extra-European world didn't matter as much. That's Sir Peter's view.

MA: Really? Is that all he says?

SO: Well, he said a lot more! But on this particular point, that was his view: "Europe, Europe, Europe". Just going back, though, to the Harare discussion in 1991, which was Chief Emeka's first Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting as SG. I am aware that he'd gone into retreat after he was elected Secretary General. Did he in any way communicate with you – to talk about African issues, African governance, democratization?

MA: No. He did say that he wanted the promotion of democracy to be one of his major issues as Secretary General, but he didn't do anything until he came back from leave.

SO: After the Harare meeting in October, Chief went straight down to South Africa – with the mandate of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting – to talk to De Klerk. Did you accompany him?

MA: Yes.

SO: Do you remember that first meeting?

MA: Very well.

SO: What was your impression?

MA: Well, I'll tell you what happened. De Klerk was there, surrounded by his entire cabinet.

SO: That's interesting.

MA: Yes. And there was me, there was Mary Mackie, I think Stuart Mole, and somebody else.

SO: Not Moni Malhoutra, as he would have left the Secretariat by then – quite apart from the strained relationship between himself and Chief.

MA: No, he wouldn't have taken Moni anyway. Moni was generally good – a kind of excellent generalist. But I always got the impression that he didn't have a feel for African affairs. But I don't blame him for that.

SO: Because he was from a different political and cultural background?

MA: Yes, that's right. Well, De Klerk welcomed the Chief and his delegation, and then the Chief said, "Look, over these many years, we've been speaking at each other across distances. We would have liked to be able to communicate with you the way we are now doing, but the circumstances at the time made that impossible." He said, "As long as you had a government here that was committed to policies of racial discrimination – apartheid and all that – there was no way that the Commonwealth could have established normal ties with you. But now that you, yourself, have said that you want to change course, our job is to help you. We see it as a primary responsibility of the Commonwealth: to help you move away from Apartheid, and on to genuine democracy. That is what I'm here to do. It's the beginning of that conversation." And [did] you know De Klerk smoked? He was a chain-smoker – literally, one cigarette after the other – but he planted a stare at Anyaoku, and then he said, "Yes, I think we can do business."

SO: Please, can I ask, Moses, how much were you aware of Mrs Thatcher's attempts to contact the South African Government in the 1980s? And that wasn't just PW Botha; she was repeatedly saying, "You have to release Mandela, you have to modify apartheid, you have to promote reform." When De Klerk became President in August of 1989, Mrs Thatcher also had met him, and repeated, "You have to release Mandela; you have to accelerate reform." The night before De Klerk made his momentous speech in the South African Parliament, he phoned up the British Ambassador Robin Renwick at midnight and said, "Mrs Thatcher is not going to be disappointed." Now, if she wasn't important, he wouldn't have bothered to make that call at midnight, before he stood up in Parliament.

MA: She was important because she was the only major Western power that stood up in support of the regime.

SO: That's interesting [that] that's your abiding perception. Because if you look at what she's saying behind the scenes – captured in the documents available on the Thatcher archive website – she's not actually saying that.

MA: What was she saying behind the scenes?

SO: Behind the scenes…When she met PW Botha at Chequers in June of 1984, she was saying, "You have to release Mandela; you have to accelerate reform. You have to deconstruct apartheid. Unless you do this, you're promoting the forces of destabilisation." In other words, "You have to change."

MA: Why didn't she say that in public?

SO: This is what I don't understand.

MA: This couldn't have done her any harm.

SO: And she *didn't* say it in public, and this is what I'm trying to work out. Why? This is a continued and enduring perception of Mrs Thatcher as a

supporter of apartheid, which she was not. I'm trying to work out this paradox.

MA: For a normal or regular politician, it is not surprising that she took a position internally. But [this position was one] of universal popularity, and [she] didn't air it outside the four corners of the [room]...!

SO: Sir Bernard Ingham, Mrs Thatcher's Press Secretary, noted that she didn't make the most of her foreign policy activity in private, and was remarkably diffident. I wonder if, in a bizarre way, Mrs Thatcher felt that – in asserting her opposition to economic and financial sanctions – her parallel message of, "We have to be constructive, we have to engage, we have to support," was as meaningful in opposing apartheid. So, in her view, it was plain to see, but it became overshadowed by her shrill opposition to sanctions. Also, she was in step with others in the British Government and Foreign Office who were consistent in saying, "We shouldn't push forward with sanctions."

MA: Why not?

SO: Because it was felt that sanctions would be fundamentally counterproductive. Mrs Thatcher felt apartheid made economic nonsense, but she also felt that sanctions would fall disproportionately upon the black population – that was her view. She felt that sanctions were a tool of international diplomacy, but they were a tool to be used in parallel with others.

MA: No, but they were busy imposing sanctions on Eastern Bloc countries.

SO: I know.

MA: Cuba: perpetually under sanctions.

SO: There were American sanctions against Cuba – I don't know about the extent of British measures. There were sanctions against Uganda between '72 and '79, sanctions against the Eastern Bloc, and on the oil/gas pipeline and the transfer of technology to COMECON countries.

MA: She was a great believer in sanctions. You see, I take this view. People say that her husband had a stake in South Africa. Maybe, maybe not. But the point is, surely, that if the regime had known – or had been made to realise – that Britain has worldwide responsibilities and cannot keep on risking its global position in order to protect a doomed system anyway, that might have concentrated the minds of the apartheid leaders.

SO: Did you go to the Kuala Lumpur CHOGM meeting?

MA: Yes, and Mahathir struck me as a confident leader – ambitious for Malaysia's development and for its place as a major power, especially in the Asian region.

SO: Were you there at the Foreign Minister's discussion, when Gareth Evans was quite so rude to John Major in the CCFMSA meeting?

MA: I was there. Gareth is a great guy. Whenever we met, he would say, "Have you brought your drafting pen along with you?" Gareth and I got on well as two university men.

SO: In the interview I did with him, he was very forceful in underlining the importance of the contribution made by Australian officials to the book on international financial sanctions. He stated firmly it was international financial sanctions that broke the will of the South African Government and made them accept that they had to accelerate reform and had to release Mandela. He feels passionately that that was the critical issue.

MA: He would say that, because he's Australian. But, also, we mustn't forget, the ending of the Cold War in Europe blew the mind of the South Africans, because they thought they could go on forever saying, "We are the bulwark against communism here." But, of course, we knew better. But even as a piece of symbolism, they were now to be denied that.

SO: We can say it was their self-justificatory rhetoric but, quite honestly, I think they believed it. I think that there is a connection: the end of the Cold War in Europe, the collapse of Soviet-led socialism, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the belief that the South African Communist Party would then be deprived of its external support from Moscow…

MA: It was never much, the South African Communist Party. Its heyday was in the '50s and '60s.

SO: Ah, okay, because the big debate now among academics is that the South African Communist Party occupied a particular place within the ANC, and certainly within the thinking of the National Party elite. Although the SACP were small in number, they had links to Moscow, which inflated the SACP's influence.

MA: Moscow had no interest that way. You had individuals – individual South African Communist Party members – who were brilliant.

SO: Indeed, such as Ruth First and Joe Slovo.

MA: Joe Slovo…Most popular. But the South African Communist Party could not, alone, have encompassed the end of apartheid. No way.

SO: No, of course not.

MA: Also, the Africans feel insulted when they say it was the Communist Party that was doing their thinking for them. This issue is so clear-cut. You don't need to go and read maps to come and debunk it, do you?

SO: No, I agree. After all, the SACP was not involved in drafting the Freedom Charter of 1955 [NB: They did later fully endorse it, i.e. in 1962 programme *The Road to South African Freedom*]. But how is it that this feeling of the particular contribution of the SACP has endured? Is it because of the terminology of 'National Democratic Revolution'?

MA: No, because it was easier as a scapegoat to blame. And, of course, it brought in the Americans and all these other unthinking people.

SO: Moses, at the time, what was your understanding of the thinking of the ANC? That it was a movement? That it was a 'broad church'?

MA: That is a very good definition: a 'broad church', in the best Anglican tradition. [*Laughter*]

SO: Obviously, there was a range of opinion within the ANC – the clandestine ANC inside South Africa, [and] the ANC externally. Did you feel that there was a generational divide that needed to be bridged and assisted? I'm just wondering about your particular perceptions of the ANC. It seems to me that, with the unbanning of the ANC in February 1990, it had to go from being a movement to a political party, which is a huge challenge.

MA: You see, to black South Africans, the ANC was not one among many other competing parties. It was *their* party.

SO: What of the PAC?

MA: The PAC…Forget about the PAC. The PAC coasted on only one thing: that they had brought about the first mass protest at Sharpeville in 1960. That was all that they had. They had played an important part in organising that. But don't forget, too, that the ANC goes back to 1912: this is the party where the fathers of Mandela and Buthelezi cut their political teeth. And, what made that so? First of all, the Africans – in the wars with the Boer – had supported the Brits, because the Brits had given them to understand that they would get a better deal under them. Then, nothing came of it. In 1914, the Africans were not really...Hold on; I have to be careful here, because there was some ambiguity as to what role they should play in the war. They were made to carry ammunition and supplies, but they weren't given guns. In the Second World War, [it was] outright: no! So, they knew that only the ANC was their party. There was no competition with the ANC. From where? Africans didn't know the Communist Party. For the masses in the veld?

I have to give one little story. I met a very old man in one of the rural parts of Natal, and he asked me where I came from. I said, "I come from Ghana." He said, "Oh, yes, I remember seeing a man here. Old Aggrey, a Ghanaian, who went there on a Phelps-Stokes Education Project. This Ghanaian, he used to say that if you use the different [piano] keys – black and white…You will play one, you get music of sorts. You play the other one: another sort of music. Play both, and you have harmony." And that was the school in which the immediate post-WWI generation was raised. The ANC is slightly older than that. So, this idea that black and white can coexist in harmony: that was what was implanted in that generation. The Communist Party was an affair of intellectuals. It couldn't have had mass African support.

SO: No, it didn't have resonance within a wider population.

MA: No.

SO: So, how often did you go to South Africa as Chief Emeka's emissary? I know that you made multiple trips, and that you were working to support the ANC in their negotiations in CODESA I and CODESA II.

MA: Yes, I was there. I was in CODESA throughout.

SO: Were you there as an observer, or were you there actually to provide guidance, support, contacts, facilitation…?

MA: All these things. You see, what was the position of the ANC at CODESA? In fact, the name CODESA – the Convention for a Democratic South Africa – that's a name that...The word 'convention' recurs a lot in South African history. So, it wasn't a haphazard choice. Now, a democratic South Africa is what the Commonwealth always stood for, so, we could hardly not be there. And we were under instructions to do whatever the conference needed by way of help – to make progress. No problem.

SO: When you say 'we', whom do you mean?

MA: Commonwealth representatives.

SO: How many Commonwealth representatives were there?

MA: Well, Max and I were there for a lot of the time.

SO: What were you asked to do by the delegations?

MA: Well…What can I say? For example, they would say, "Look, we want a document. Can you get it for us?"

SO: So, you'd be asked to get the document, or to draft it?

MA: No, to get it. They could do their own drafting! I must say this: the South Africans, at that stage, wanted the role of the outside world to be minimal. This was *their* thing; they wanted to do it themselves.

SO: They wanted complete control of the negotiating process?

MA: Oh yes, and they made that clear to us.

SO: Absolutely. And their drive to protect minority rights.

MA: Yes. But it's also, I think, they did not want to be treated as if they were a Lesotho newly coming to independence.

SO: Well, the National Party was a particular group that had, after all, achieved economic and technological dominance on the back of black labour; they had acquired nuclear capability – which they were decommissioning – and so their sense of Afrikaner pride and achievement...

MA: Where did they send it to?

SO: I don't know where they sent the nuclear fuel, nor the warheads.

MA: Because Castro asked Mandela about it – I think [that] the only occasion Castro went there was during the transition – and Mandela said, "They took it out without telling me. I don't know where they sent it to."

SO: I believe – and I don't know this for sure – that the Americans were pressing the South Africans to decommission their nuclear arsenal. And, in fact, when De Klerk became President in August 1989, Pik Botha had a meeting with him – pretty much the next day – saying, "Mr President, there are two things you need to decide: you need to release Mandela, and we need to decommission nuclear weapons." And so, I would say, before De Klerk started negotiating seriously, they had decommissioned.

MA: We probably never will know the truth as to why they decommissioned.

SO: I have a friend and colleague in South Africa, Dr Anna-Mart Van Wyk, who has done extensive research on this topic. The suggestion is that the Americans were particularly concerned that if a radical black African government came into power, then there was a possibility of nuclear proliferation and that Colonel Gaddafi may have got hold of nuclear weapons; then, through Libya, the PLO…

MA: No, I know. But, you see, this is what always surprises me: that even those who've had contact with Africa – unrestricted, free, and all that – even they can talk like that.

SO: There's a saying that I have used as a historian: that, 'facts are facts, but perception is reality.'

MA: 'Discuss!' [*Laughter*]

SO: Yes, exactly! To go back…You and Max Gaylard were there to support the CODESA negotiations. To what extent were you then also brought in as the negotiating team for the ANC?

MA: The ANC would never have allowed it. If they wanted something, they would come and ask us for it: saying, "We want your 1985 communique," whatever! Or, "Commonwealth Human Rights Declaration." But drafting – no.

SO: Were you also, in any way, Moses, giving financial support to this negotiating process? Because this was an expensive undertaking…

MA: No, it came from the South African Treasury. That was really *internal* money – and owed!

SO: So, what were your observations on this process – on CODESA I and CODESA II? There must have been times when you absolutely despaired that any progress would be made.

MA: No, no. The CODESA itself went off well.

SO: But what of the violence which was going on in the background?

MA: The violence was going on in the background, but we were also involved in that as well. You see, if CODESA made progress, they would be able to get on top of the violence – which was our point. Of course, the Commonwealth observers in Natal and in the Transvaal would remain in place; so would the UN observers. The OAU had a small team of observers, as well. What would have endangered the negotiations would have been the violence. But if, on the other hand, the negotiations were seen to be making progress, then the prospect of ending the violence would be apparent to everybody.

SO: But it wasn't simply the violence between the ANC and Inkatha in Natal. I know Mandela was convinced that radical elements within the South African military and within the South African National party were orchestrating, collaborating, [and] stimulating this violence. There was a new Conservative party, and the right wing of the Afrikaner community was very vocal indeed; and there were speculations of a counter-coup...

MA: But remember when they killed...when they shot the senior ANC leader, Chris Hani? I was in Natal – I was in Durban – and Mandela, at the time, was in his village, Qunu, and a plane was sent to go and bring him. And that was when we all held our breath, because if ever there was a provocative killing – the kind of killing that precipitated the First World War – that was it: Chris Hani's death. And South Africa held its breath. There was fear in every face I saw around me. Then he came, and I was with some white friends, drinking, and when Mandela arrived, he came out of the plane, and this white lady turned round and said to me, "Our President has come. It will be all right now. Our President is here now." And when he spoke – on radio, [on] television – the whole country…all the TV stations were crowded, listening to what he was saying. And he said, "No retaliation. These are the enemies of our transition who are causing this in order to provoke a counter-violence. Don't you react. Don't respond. Leave it to the authorities; they will handle it."

SO: Mandela was in a particularly difficult position himself. The murder of Chris Hani was obviously a crisis moment for the whole country, but I have been told by a BBC World journalist who covered the 1990-94 period, that Mandela had tried to calm the violence in Natal, but his ANC colleagues feared that this would adversely affect Mandela's political capital with the ANC radical youth. After all, there were those in the ANC who felt [that] the violence was being stimulated and manipulated by outside forces, particularly within the government and security services – that there are radical elements in other groups, and the ANC should stay together on this.

MA: I don't know, but this is a guess I will hazard. People like Nyerere [and] people like Kaunda – with whom Mandela was in regular contact – would have said to him, "Now that you have brought about investigations, you are the 'last post', really. The enemies of freedom will try and wreck it. Don't you be provoked into doing something irresponsible, because you are now playing them down to their last card."

This reminds me of what Nyerere said to ZANU-PF when they threatened to withdraw from Lancaster House because of land [issues]. He said to them, "Don't be silly. Land is not a constitutional issue; it's a policy issue. Get your constitution first, and then you can go and redistribute your land the way you want to distribute it. Nobody can stop you after that. But what you are doing..." So, it's the same kind of advice, I can imagine, he would have given to Mandela. Don't rise to this bait.

SO: Moses, what did you do, yourself, to try to ameliorate the violence?

MA: What did I do in that time? That's where I was based. First of all, I went around to greet as many of the chiefs as I could and to introduce myself and my team. When the Commonwealth Secretary General came to South Africa to propose these international observers, the first person he met was Chief Buthelezi and, actually, I happened to be with him. We met Buthelezi at the airport. He was on his way out; we were on our way in. So, SG Anyaoku said, "Look, Chief, I must tell you something; this is why I have come. I want us to send international observers because, unless you can get on top of the violence, there's no future." Buthelezi said, "Yes, send them, please, send them." Now, I know what you're going to say: [that] he was not sincere. How much was he his own man? I sometimes wonder.

SO: So, which political constituency within Inkatha was Buthelezi having to assuage, to soothe?

MA: No, no; I mean, Inkatha was his own invention anyway.

SO: So, when you say, "How much was he his own man..."?

MA: In terms of the white government. You see, this is the point I made at the beginning of our conversation: that he's one of these African politicians – that generation is gone – that had been in the wrong camp for so long, that when it came [time] to leave it, it wasn't easy. There was nothing that they didn't know about Buthelezi. Look, they used to organise his rallies, give him helicopters to travel around; [they] made him big, inflated him beyond his size. Now, I dare say that there must have also been others who would have said to him, "Chief Buthelezi, you know, you are the real leader of this country in the future. Don't listen to these loudmouth communists. There's you: be constitutional, be correct."

SO: But Buthelezi refused to take part in the elections, right up until the last minute.

MA: Hold on. But…not taking part in the elections, he would have also realised – or they would have told him – that, "If you, yourself, of your own free will, hold back from the elections, that doesn't invalidate them."

SO: True. 'An empty chair says nothing.'

MA: Exactly. Especially if they have an overwhelming majority on the other side, because your people didn't turn up at all. You will have no leg to stand on.

SO: Are these words you used to him?

MA: No, he wouldn't have revealed himself like that. But those who were his confidants – the Anglo American people, the people who used to give him helicopters to ride around [in] and bankroll him – they would have said something like that. And, bear in mind, these are astute, experienced people.

SO: Did you have any contact with the Anglo American people?

MA: Yes.

SO: So this was Harry Oppenheimer and his colleagues?

MA: His people. They are…No, they said that they were for talks, [that] they were for peace. There was a certain chief who needed some help with a little project, so I went and talked to the executive head of the Tongaat Sugar company. They said, "That's nothing. Tell him we'll give him the money." And they did. It was 5,000 rand or something ridiculous like that, but it's big in the bush. So, no, I think they were much more sophisticated than that. Certainly, they would also have realised – and I suppose they would have been told by their foreign friends here – that, "Look, boycotting elections, we have realised it's not a good thing. If you are against elections, what are you for? Violence? What's the alternative?"

SO: Yes. Was the Commonwealth in any way involved in identifying the Kenyan professor Washington Okumu who was supposed to have flown down at the very last minute and persuaded Buthelezi to take part in the April 1994 elections?

MA: Oh, that man. I have worked with this character over the Sierra Leone crisis, when he was a consultant to International Alert. I have my reservations about him.

SO: Yes.

MA: He put out that he did [persuade Buthelezi]. I think the forces that led Buthelezi into the election were much bigger.

SO: Well, thank you, because I read this in Allister Sparks' book and it seriously puzzled me.

MA: Have you heard of International Alert? An NGO working mainly on conflict resolution...

SO: No, I haven't heard of International Alert.

MA: Yes, it's here in London somewhere. Anyway, they hired him to help bring the parties to the negotiating table in the Sierra Leone peace talks. I represented the Commonwealth there. International Alert brought this guy from Kenya. I've forgotten his name.

[Back to Buthelezi:] Not taking part in the elections is never advisable. It would never have held back anything.

SO: True. So, you were obviously part of the Commonwealth Election Observer mission to South Africa?

MA: I did that as well. Mandela came to our place to vote. He went to the late Albert Luthuli's village to vote – [Luthuli was] the last president of the ANC before his [Mandela's] generation took over.

SO: Chief Luthuli had opposed the use of armed struggle.

MA: Now, suppose he had supported the armed struggle. What difference would it have made? He didn't have an army. He hadn't any resources. The position he took was the right one…in retrospect, I would say. Wouldn't you?

SO: Yes. It was the younger generation – within the ANC Youth League – who are thought to have pushed forward the idea of establishing MK [Umkhonto we Sizwe].

MA: MK is for the young. I used to hear Oliver Tambo, the ANC President before he died… You know, you could say these were all reluctant revolutionaries. By nature, they were not revolutionaries. It's a burden [that] history imposed on this generation, which they accepted.

SO: Moses, please, could I ask you…What was your perception of the ANC's view of the Commonwealth?

MA: The ANC, I would say, in the end, had to love the Commonwealth, because the Commonwealth had a reach which the OAU didn't have. They would have wished that the OAU had been half as effective as the Commonwealth. It would have made matters easier for them, because then there's no question of winning one side over – like the Margaret Thatcher camp – because the OAU spoke with one voice.

SO: Yes, they did. It was through Brigadier Hasim Mbita's OAU Liberation Committee…

MA: Yes. You see? So, that was [closer] to what they had been used to. But, in the end, they would have realised that a Commonwealth agreement can reach places where the OAU consensus cannot reach. So, they came to value that.

SO: Do you think ANC leaders such as Thabo Mbeki came to value the Commonwealth?

MA: Yes, particularly Thabo Mbeki, because Thabo Mbeki – whatever one may say of him – has got a first class brain. [A] first class political brain. I think, of the younger generation, he is probably the one who came closest to being Mandela's equal. I mean, this is a bit dicey now, what I'm about to say, but let me illustrate my point by saying that people like me were overawed by the old man – his history, his stature. Not Thabo. Now, how much this has to do with the fact that his father, Govan Mbeki, was an equal of Mandela's, I don't know.

SO: How much was it also coming to recognise that the Commonwealth had an international standing? Was there a general recognition – among ANC leaders – that the Commonwealth represented…

MA: Universality.

SO: …universality, and also that the Commonwealth included important elements of the Non-Aligned Movement? That it represented Afro-Asian ideas? You made express reference to Nkrumah. So, this was drawing on a pan-African heritage that was manifest through the Commonwealth.

MA: The Commonwealth, for its own reasons, normally underplays these things, but we know that its strength is derived from a mixture of these varieties that you've enumerated. If the Commonwealth takes a position, [and] if I were the UN Secretary General, I'd pay close attention to it.

SO: So, was the Commonwealth's implicit appeal linked not only to the diversity of its membership, but also the intellectual traditions, the thought streams, the political philosophies?

MA: The experience, as well. You see, the Commonwealth up to...Well, even up to now…the Commonwealth embodies a degree of experience which very few international organisations can rival – even the UN. Now, if you read [Sir Robert] Menzies…You remember the Commonwealth mission to Egypt in the Suez Crisis of 1956? Chaired by Menzies. Now, that was a disaster, because the man they chose as leader was somebody who was out of sympathy with the emerging third world. He had no experience of dealing with these countries. In fact, in his memoirs, *Afternoon Light,* he says that places like Singapore and Malaysia were places you saw from the window of your aircraft when you were going to London. Now, that is why, when the Commonwealth tried again to mediate in the Vietnam conflict, they chose Nkrumah to lead it.

SO: But Nkrumah had also made that his initiative at the Belgrade meeting in 1961. He was one of the initiators of this whole idea of 'non-alignment'. He and Nehru were leading lights…

MA: Oh, they were good friends.

SO: …at that particular point. And in 1965, when Wilson came up with the idea of a Commonwealth mission to Vietnam, Nkrumah was one of the three members of this mediation team. It seemed to completely fizzle out.

MA: Well, it didn't fizzle. I don't blame you for losing track of it, because when Nkrumah was on his way to Vietnam on this mission [24 February 1966], the coup [in Accra] took place. Then, of course, he couldn't go anymore. I think the Commonwealth wanted to substitute somebody, and Ho Chi Minh said no.

SO: I read the minutes for the 1965 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, and then the January '66 special meeting in Lagos was

entirely on the Rhodesia UDI crisis. I didn't find reference to the Vietnam mission in the September 1966 meeting in London.

MA: Well, according to Arnold Smith, the Vietnamese government wrote a letter to explain why they didn't want another leader to take Nkrumah's place. Have another look in Arnold Smith's papers. After the coup in Ghana, Nkrumah's enemies deliberately ignored the fact that he was on a Commonwealth mission, and they said it was a personal grandstanding mission. I was in Ghana at the time.

SO: What were President Nkrumah's views of the Commonwealth, as you understood them?

MA: Well, Nkrumah was a very strong Commonwealth man. He could see that, in a world already divided, it brought together people from all the divisions. There was India, there was emerging Ghana and Nigeria, there was Zambia, coming to independence then. He thought it was a great asset, to be well looked after. After Nkrumah, he was succeeded by…Well, let's forget about the soldiers. No point wasting our time on them. [Kofi Abrefa] Busia was the next civilian politician after him, but he was hopeless. Totally inadequate. Not only that, but I don't think he had a feel for external relations – for foreign affairs – and that has to do with anthropology. He studied anthropology, so his horizon wasn't any wider. And then, after that…Well, there's nobody to worry about, really.

SO: What about Jerry Rawlings?

MA: Jerry didn't have that kind of education which would have helped him to appreciate the Commonwealth. Of course, he was a great friend to Castro, and I'll tell you a little story which, in a way, also sheds a lot of light on Castro's approach – which is probably the way Thabo Mbeki thinks. On the eve of the Falklands War, Jerry Rawlings sent a Ghanaian delegation to Eastern Europe – to Russia – and it ended up in Cuba, and Castro gave them a lot of time. When they had finished discussing the issue that took them there, Castro asked them, "With this war coming up between Britain and Argentina..." – he was already looking at it as a war – "which side are you going to support?" And, quite frankly, the Ghanaians hadn't thought about it. They said, "Well, which side will you be supporting, yourself?" And Castro said, "Of course, I'll support Argentina." And the Ghanaians said, "Well, in that case, maybe that is the right side. We, too, will support Argentina." Castro said, "No, it's not the right side. For you, the right side is Britain." He said, "I support Argentina because they are my neighbours. Whether I like it or not, I have to live here with them. Your neighbour is Britain." He says, "You have got a lot of economic problems. Britain is in the World Bank, the IMF. Britain has a say in all these things. Why are you trying to jeopardise your interests through adventurism?" That's how he described it.

SO: The paradox here is that Ron Sanders – who was then a very junior diplomat for Antigua and Barbuda at the UNO – said exactly the same thing to Caribbean state representatives who were critical of what they saw as British imperialism in the Falklands war. The other diplomats were proposing to vote with Argentina, and he said, "Where do most of your tourists come from? Where are your financial links? Where are

your business connections? What language do you speak? Look at it in terms of your national interest. That says, support Britain."

MA: That's right. That is the sort of thing you can associate with Thabo. Thabo is like that.

SO: Your point about Castro's pragmatism is very interesting. Cuba was a leading member of Non-Alignment, but in the late '70s – right up to Afghanistan – Castro had sought to argue that the NAM should be leaning towards the Soviet Union as a supporter of the anti-imperialist struggle. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan caused huge problems in the Non-Aligned Movement, as Afghanistan was a NAM member. In contrast to the NAM, the Commonwealth as an association dealt with multiple strands of political thought across the Cold War divide.

MA: As Ramphal showed as Secretary General – and Anyaoku continued like that, as well – the Commonwealth's strength lies in the fact that it is a truly non-aligned organisation. Individual members may have their alliances, but the institution, as a whole, is not aligned to anybody.

SO: American diplomats in the early '80s described it to Peter Marshall as "the English speaking non-aligned movement", which was remarkably shrewd.

MA: They are not wrong. But, you know what? They'd have spent some time trying to study this peculiar animal.

SO: Well, Mrs Thatcher had to give Ronald Regan a potted history of the Commonwealth and its significance immediately after the New Delhi meeting, because of the crisis caused by the American invasion of Grenada.

Just to end this part of our discussion, you've remarked that the Commonwealth's finest hour was under Ramphal and Chief Emeka?

MA: I would say. Ramphal put it on the map; no doubt about that.

SO: How much do you think that was because Ramphal had two grand strategies for the Commonwealth – which he articulated, and he represented, on South Africa, but also on development?

MA: Yes, I agree. 100%.

SO: Also, that the Commonwealth did things that in no way reflected its limited resources…Did it attract, in any way, the admiration of the UN, which was much larger and more unwieldy?

MA: No, but the UN didn't like us in the end. Well, between the two of us, they always thought we were being a trumped up, piddling thing.

SO: Chief Emeka describes the Commonwealth as 'a global subsystem': [because], although it operated at a slightly lower level, it still had

international networks, multiple contacts with heads, international bureaucrats, institutions, as well as...

MA: I preferred it when he used to call it 'a force for good'. Then you have the moral dimension. You see, it is the kind of institution which, I suppose, only British history could have produced.

SO: But it wasn't only British history – that was the point we've just made: there also themes of non-alignment, of Afro-Asian attitudes….

MA: No, for example, how does it proceed? Consensus. Now, how do you define consensus? I remember one of the clever heads saying, "Well, it's a decision you may not support, but you can live with it." [*Laughter*] That's brilliant, isn't it?

[END OF AUDIOFILE PART ONE]