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Diplomacy for Dummies
or
The World's Third Oldest Profession

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Diplomacy for Dummies or The Third Oldest Profession

Tips for Brexit negotiators from a former diplomat

“The reason for having diplomatic relations is not to confer a compliment but to secure a convenience.”

Sir Winston Churchill

“It is fashionable in English politics to discredit the opinion of people on the spot. They are supposed to be excited and prejudiced, unable to take the judicial and comprehensive views, which can, it is believed, be adopted only in an atmosphere of ignorant indifference.”

Lieutenant W S Churchill

Shamshuk 21 September 1897

Introduction

After whoring came spying, followed by a combination of both with gluttony and drunkenness, cowardice and cheating, lies and betrayal all thrown into the mixing bowl, nowadays called diplomacy. The *raison d'être* for diplomacy remains as described by Winston Churchill, with the advantage that it's less destructive than the fifth oldest profession, bashing each other with clubs, rocks, tactical nukes, anything that comes to hand. Diplomacy involves finding out what other people are scheming before you try to join them on your terms or resort to the fifth oldest. Diplomacy gave birth to the fourth oldest profession; namely, snitching on everyone else for personal gain.

The fifth oldest profession has become more varied over the centuries, with diplomacy on the fringe of all its branches. One of these is called trade wars. For example, so far Donald Trump has declared trade wars on China, Mexico, the EU and Harley-Davidson although others may follow. As another example, parts of big business and some politicians in Germany – whose political power is in effect now camouflaged by the EU – have waged an undeclared though ruthless trade war against their neighbours including Britain since the 1960's and some argue plotting for this began years earlier. Germany's informal empire, the precursor to the EU, began with a customs union – this is an ancient concept whereby other peoples' goods can be kept out of your market through a combination of import duties and product standards unless they pay the entrance bribes. The German word is Zollverein. Until almost one-hundred and eighty years ago Germany did not exist as a country but was made up of dozens of large and small princely states which all charged their neighbours taxes to

trade in their markets. The democratic Swiss cantons did exactly the same. So did most countries on the Continent. Most of the Scottish Act of Union in 1707 is the appendix with all the taxes to make sure the canny Scots didn't undercut the rest of the islands.

Any powerful modern Zollverein is a paradise for cartels and multi-nationals. Business and industry will fight tooth and nail to keep control of a Zollverein rather than open up their market to free trade and therefore competition from everyone. And in the German case, one must add an obsession with controlling the surrounding economies until they are effectively planets of the German economic sun.

Not my words, but from the German Army's *Strategic Plan 2040*.

So far only the Swiss have managed to avoid orbiting the German sun. They voted to stay out of the EEA – the EU waiting room – as long ago as 1992. The political class were horrified and to this day constantly try to by-pass the people. The government's application to join the EU, made at the time of that referendum a quarter of a century ago, only recently was withdrawn. Swiss voters fight a war of attrition against EU meddling and regularly catch out their politicians and officials. By voting for Brexit, the people on the largest planet told their own political class that they'd had enough of being taken for fools and had decided to escape the German sun's relentless gravity field.

Contrary to the nonsense spouted by various old buffers in the House of Lords, gravity economics works for commercially aggressive land powers but is the worst possible option for commercially adventurous island sea powers. Our trade advantage is the sea and our best markets not on the doorstep but thousands of miles away. Places where at last we escape our big neighbour's gravitational pull and trade on better terms than they allow us in their empire. Trade with the German Empire is in the red to the tune of £100 billions and the hole could grow much deeper. Our global trade is in the black. Another example of islands escaping the gravity of a huge neighbour through engaging in global export trade is Japan anchored off China.

We can learn much from the gifted, brainy, industrious and often very charming people of the Far East. Mutual prosperity grows from millions of personal relationships all over the planet. For healthy overseas trade, business, banking and industry should lead the way but there are some things that only governments can do and where sometimes diplomacy smoothes the way ahead.

Are there any simple principles of diplomatic bargaining?

Here are by no means all, but some of the most valuable.

RULE ONE – KNOW YOURSELF

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory you will suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle....”

The Art of War by Sun Tzu

“That’s a corps artillery engaged on both sides - at the rate they’re firing, they’ll run out of their ammunition reserves in seventeen days.”

Leslie Heptinstall, British Deputy High Commissioner, Lahore, watching silver white gun flashes turning night into day during the early hours of the 7 September 1965.

Just after 7.30 on that Monday morning in September 1965 my boss, Leslie Heptinstall, called me into his pleasant office and bade me to sit down. I wondered if over the weekend I had committed some horrendous faux pas – on Saturday night with local pals I had been racing my car against theirs over the mile long bridge above the famous railway sidings, once the junction of northern India. At each end was a long sloping ramp. The competition was about whose car could fly through the air for the longest distance above these ramps like a four-wheeled ski jumper.

He began mysteriously, ‘You’re the only person on the staff who recently served in the Army.’

Less than three years had passed since I was a paratrooper and officer in the Royal Engineers. After joining the Commonwealth Relations Office in London two summers ago, I had worked for a much respected former Royal Engineer, General George Price, as a member of the Defence Advisor’s Department. George had been on Churchill’s team at Number Ten throughout the war. After less than a year, in April 1964, I had been posted to Lahore, former political and cultural capital of the Punjab.

Over several weeks during the summer of 1965 there had been fighting in Kashmir. Pakistan had infiltrated thousands of Mujadeen fighters – mostly tribesmen – across the cease fire line. The Indian Air Force had flown ground strikes with their Hawker Hunter jet fighters. A month earlier the Pakistanis had launched an attack with two whole armoured divisions towards the single main road to Srinagar, obviously trying to cut off most of Kashmir and a hundred-thousand troops from India. I began to relax though wondered what Leslie, a former gunner and ever calm, was about to confide.

‘The Indians crossed the border early this morning. They’re already over the canal with infantry supported by tanks firing from the eastern bank. They may have taken the Bata shoe factory.’

The canal and Batapur were less than eight miles from where we sat.

‘That’s rather close. Do you want me to take a look?’

‘Not at this stage – it’s dangerously fluid – no, I want you to contact the wardens. Just ask them if they could come and see me at nine this morning at the residence.’

We had a large compound, four houses among lawns and gardens, built by a wealthy Sikh for himself and his three sons. Eighteen years ago during partition, they had all fled to Amritsar. Two of the houses were the office and the British Information Services. The other pair were Leslie's residence and that of the Director of the British Information Services, a larger than life character, Gilbert d'Arnaud Taylor.

'What about the staff, Leslie?'

'I'll tell them straight after this – once you've phoned everyone, come back.'

Twenty minutes later I'd managed to reach all dozen wardens living and working within or near the city. All were prominent members of the British community who acted as local leaders in an emergency. An hour later we sat among the chintz sofas and armchairs drinking coffee while Leslie put them in the picture. By now the dull thumps of gunfire could be heard when standing on the main lawn, morning traffic along Racecourse Road already had dwindled to the odd horse drawn tonga.

Our wardens were a steady bunch, nearly all war veterans, and they took the news calmly. One reported that the German Consul-General already had left with a small convoy of cars flying large German flags. Our local British community ran vital parts of the regional economy and infrastructure. Leslie doubted whether he could persuade the Governor of West Pakistan, that old tiger, Kalibagh, that he could do without their services. However, if the men were ready to stick to their posts, he felt sure that the Governor would do his utmost to help send their families to safety. All were content with this idea. At this stage everyone in the room expected the whole city would become a battlefield, perhaps within hours.

I spent the rest of an oven hot morning digging trenches in the vegetable garden of the compound with the malis – gardeners - to bury jerry cans full of petrol. The ground was hard as rock at this time of year, ideal for tanks. The malis were highly amused to have one of the UK staff stripped to shorts and digging alongside them. Gradually the trenches grew deep enough. Around one o'clock I drove home for a shower and quick lunch. The suburbs were deserted, no traffic on the canal road, even the pack of wild pie dogs looked puzzled. I reached Gulbarg and passed empty house after empty house.

My cook and bearer, Ghulam, was an old soldier, a former squadron sergeant-major from the Indian Army cavalry. He had fought in the Western Desert and declared that, Inshala, the Hindoos would not capture the city. I explained as much as I knew while eating lunch and confessed that I had no idea when I'd be back but don't wait up, get some sleep. Ghulam assured me that he would! I was rather touched that the mali and sweeper boy had carried on as usual even when nearly all the neighbours packed their families into cars and tongas and left in a hurry. Only my colleague from the diplomatic wireless service with his wife remained in our road as far as one could tell.

On return to the office I drove round to a girl friend's home – we had parted company not long before but nobody was there and the house appeared locked.

During late afternoon the gunfire became heavier. Our telephone calls and conversations with our wardens in the countryside were relayed by the phone tappers. There were amusing moments. The monitors were running the telephone exchange. When a colleague asked a warden out in the countryside 'How many UK cits' are there?' he was told, 'Please do not speak in code,' by the phone tapper who added, 'He says there are twenty-three.'

Another phone call was from a prominent German resident of Lahore, Dieter Kelms. Dieter was a businessman but chaired two or three charities. He was a former captain in the German surface navy and a man of sturdy moral fibre. The kind of person you would like to have close by in trouble. 'I have fifty German, Dutch and French citizens, adults and children. How can I evacuate them?'

Did he know the German Consul-General already had left? There was a short silence before Dieter replied, 'Yes, I do.' Another pause followed. 'He - is a ****.'

We added Dieter's group to our evacuation plan. In fact, wisely, most citizens of European countries trusted Dieter more than any of their diplomats.

Afternoon turned into a long evening. We prepared for several emergencies. As the Indians were no closer it became clear that their attack had lost momentum. In fact, they had withdrawn their infantry across the canal but we didn't know at that time. Gilbert's deputy, a retired major, wanted to take my cedar green Triumph Herald to see what was happening – urging that it was a khaki car. Fortunately, Leslie drew the same conclusion as me, that if you really wanted to be shot up by both sides, that idea provided the easiest way. My car stayed intact under its usual tree!

But this conclusion led to the obvious next task. If we wanted to evacuate the women and children then somebody had to make sure the Grand Trunk Road was still safe. By now it was nearly midnight and the whole city was blacked out. Silvery white gun flashes lit up half the night sky as Ashik and I set off in the office white Ford estate car. Ashik was Leslie's personal driver, a former Indian Army sergeant, who had been a general's driver in Burma. I had a lot of respect for Ashik.

Lahore Mall was pitch black and deserted apart from police patrols but we drove slowly and crawled past Kim's legendary Zam Zammah gun then around the silent old city. Police patrolled armed with .303 Enfield rifles. They were wary though highly disciplined and, once satisfied, waved us through with torches, leaving no doubt that it was better to drive with an office white car, driven by someone they recognised with an obvious Brit' sitting beside him. Ashik knew many of the police. I was also very friendly with Basil Pereira, Chief of the Traffic Police, so behind the windscreen were two familiar faces.

After a further few minutes we reached the two hundred yards long bridge over the River Ravi and began to cross. At the far end sentries waved us on our way. Someone had telephoned that we were alright. Our orders were to drive as far as the next town, Sheikhpura, some thirty odd miles west, built around a large Moghul fort and the whole place a scene of appalling bloodshed during partition. If the road was clear at night, the odds were that the Indians were still on the eastern side

of the Ravi. Further north the river looped through India, thus an unopposed crossing was possible before an assault over the border.

Once beyond the bridge outposts, Ashiq put his foot down. Soon we were racing at eighty miles an hour into the pitched dark. Warm night air blasted through the open windows. Nobody had poured a drop of hot tarmac on the Grand Trunk road since the Raj. Whenever we hit a pothole, we took off, then bounced when landing. As we flew along, Ashik kept repeating, 'Those bloody bastards.' I enquired as to whom he referred.

'Adrian, Sahib, you are a young man with no family. I am a father of six children. You were soldier and officer. Where would you cross the Ravi to make a pincer movement around the city?'

I saw his point. 'Either close to the bridge, Ashik, so they can grab it before it's blown, or throw one across about thirty miles east of here, where the river makes that large bend through India.'

'And where would they head at top speed to grab the main cross-roads?'

'Sheikhupura, Ashik.'

'You just passed Staff College Selection Board, Adrian, Sahib.'

'Those bloody bastards.'

Our headlamps searched ahead but the worn road, straight as an arrow, stretched empty into the bug crowded night. About half way to the small crossroads town we slowed, stopped, stared eastwards and listened. Silver flashes danced along the horizon beyond where Lahore sprawled, but otherwise we saw nothing other than a vast carpet of deserted fields. Only insects and the distant thunder of gunfire disturbed the warm night.

'Doesn't look as though they've crossed, Ashik.'

'No, the night is calm, no wind, we'd have heard something.'

'What do you think? Press on?'

'Atcha.'

Twenty minutes later we reached the little town with its large fort on a slight rise. Our headlamps swept the fort walls as we turned towards Sargodha and Rawalpindi. We drove on a little further. All seemed quiet. No one challenged us from the fort walls, nor from the entrance to the town and its main bazaar street. Ashiq stopped, switched off the engine. We listened, apart from a million insects, silence. By now it was approaching mid-night.

'Shall I try the old trick, Ashik?'

‘Why not, Adrian Sahib.’ There was a twinkle in those normally disciplined dark eyes, ‘Tonight the ground is perfect.’

I swung myself out of the car and walked a few yards into a field of stubble. I lay down, pressed my right ear against the still warm, rock hard earth, ignoring the stubble scratching my face. Though I listened for several minutes I heard nothing, felt nothing. If the Indians had anywhere near a hundred-and-eighty Centurion tanks across the Ravi, I would have felt the vibrations, given the river was not that distant over the baked earth. The irony was that part of my job in London involved administering the Commonwealth Military Assistance Scheme, a large chunk of which concerned arming India against China. I might have been about to become a target for the very tanks that the programme had supplied.

I heard Ashik laughing, ‘Come back in the car, Adrian, Sahib, we’ve done enough. The Indians tanks are not across the Ravi.’

Less than an hour later we were back in Racecourse Road. As we drove through the compound entrance Ashik and I shook hands warmly. We had done our duty and our mission.

The following day all the women and children from Britain and other European countries including Dieter’s flock, left the city in a convoy of cars under the care of Cliff Gabelle, one of our security guards. Cliff reached a rest house near Sargodha Airbase and settled his flock for the night. What he didn’t know was that his safe haven was right below where the Indian Air Force’s Canberra bombers would release their bombs most of the night to hit the airbase. However, the damage wasn’t enough to close the runways, and next day Cliff’s charges were flown to safety.

The country around Lahore became a battlefield and witnessed the largest clash of tanks, infantry and artillery since the Kursk Salient in 1943.

Ashik and I respected each other’s judgement as former soldiers, although I had been a paratrooper and an officer, a free fall jumper, we both knew that his experience of full scale warfare and married life was far greater than mine. So did Leslie!

* * * * *

Two hundred years ago David Cameron and George Osborne would have been impeached for incompetence equal to high treason. (Admiral Bing was shot after a lesser crime.) The pair called a referendum on membership of the European Union because UKIP were close to 20% of the vote in the opinion polls. They gambled that Germany would give them a better deal over the free movement of people, combined this gamble with what became known as Project Fear and threatened every household in the country with all kinds of malicious fabrications unless they voted to stay in the EU. This campaign is suspiciously identical to the EU campaign in Switzerland during the 1990s when the Swiss voted against EEA membership; all the same threats, all the same lies. Switzerland is more wealthy and successful than the EU today. Dave and George also swore that the peoples’ verdict would be respected yet made no plans for either obvious potential result. They failed to shift Angela, Empress of Germany, to ease the flow of Eastern Europeans into Britain – she

didn't want any more economic refugees on top of all the Arabs and Turks she'd let into Germany, nor did the Germans. Dave and George had no idea what to do next and failed to have a plan drawn up for moving forward and escaping her gravitational pull should they lose the referendum.

Cameron did the obvious honourable thing when they lost, he resigned. That way he dodged sweeping up his own mess. Osborne had to be sacked. The charlatan who threatened voters with mass unemployment now has several new jobs himself. Add their destruction of our Armed Forces and one concludes that never again should either hold public office.

What ought they to have done before the vote, and Mrs May ought to have tackled straight after losing? Lay out a plan for a version of Brexit that the voters could support.

Why did she fail to do this? Judging by the evidence at face value, the intent all along was to cheat the voters and stay in the European Union. Remember, she voted on the losing side as did most of her Cabinet and party in Parliament. As Home Secretary responsible for immigration controls she supported Project Fear. All three main political parties have largely selected only brainwashed EU fans as candidates for the last forty years. She leads a government of remain lemmings. Most MPs of all parties don't care what their constituents think. Take Amber Rudd in Hastings as a typical example. They all believe they know better than we do. The last decent MPs in our part of the world were Bryant Godman Irvine, Ken Warren and more recently Michael Foster.

RULE TWO – THINK LONG AND OUTSIDE YOUR BOX

“Double the effort and square the error.”

Sir Robert Thompson over a Chinese dinner in Cholon

Shortly after becoming Vice-Consul in South Vietnam, my boss, the late Sir Kenneth James, received a message from Hong Kong telling us that a few fishing boats from the colony had been caught in a typhoon off South Vietnam and driven to seek shelter at Danang. The local customs had seized the ships and demanded their cargoes; their holds were loaded with ice and fish, sealed. The fishermen couldn't pay the huge fine demanded for entering Vietnam's waters.

My job was to get them released.

I started with the chief of customs in Saigon. Mr Sinh (yes, it's pronounced as you think) whom I found presiding over a vast old French colonial ministry office with a single vast room on each floor, aired by huge open windows devoid of glass, dozens of ceiling fans stirring the humid breeze though barely disturbing countless towers of paper behind which toiled lethargic perspiring clerks.

Afternoon can hit a hundred in Saigon. The great man himself sat on a raised platform like a high priest, smoking the biggest cigar that I have ever seen. Of course, he could do nothing, but by calling

in a suit and tie I had paid my utmost respects, face was satisfied. That afternoon Mickey Sweeny, our air attaché, a former Lightning fighter pilot, flew me north in his twin-engine Heron. We landed at Qui Nhon about half way just in time to witness a dump of old bombs demolished with a bang and smoke column worthy of an atom bomb.

Late in the afternoon, Mickey dropped me off at Danang. I found the US Marine Corps shuttle truck and made my way to the US Consulate. Terry McNamara, the US Consul in Danang, was Ambassador Ellesworth Bunker's eyes and ears in the northern half of South Vietnam. He put his Vice Consul, Don Westmore, in charge of helping me. In exchange could I stay with Don who had been targeted by the local VC? This was a real threat, the humorous question a serious request. Terry added, he could probably do with a friendly face. After all, nobody likes being told that people you've never met, want to kill you.

Don and I got on very well. He was a warm hearted host. Nobody tried to kill us during the night and next morning we headed for the harbour. The fishermen were good souls, patient, glad to see us though anxious to return, preferably with their catch. They had been driven into South Vietnam's waters by a violent storm. International law calls this force majeure – an act of God, something they're powerless to prevent. Seizing their boats was a breach of international law. But this was corrupt Vietnam, power and money talked. Only I had no money for bribes and corruption. As we were not fighting in the war apart from our Police Advisory Team in Saigon, I had no power for leverage either. The previous evening I had called on a delightful Scottish missionary couple living on the outskirts of the big port. The last time they had seen anyone from the embassy was thirteen years earlier. Whatever I did had better make their lives easier. This was the first test of my resolve in Vietnam, though also a national demonstration, a test of my country.

I had to put across a clear message – Brits don't pay, don't even try.

After hours of haggling with the local customs chief, ignoring the rules of oriental face - to Don's horror - I strolled back across the quay and asked the Hong Kong skippers if their catch was worth more days of delay. After a short discussion, they decided not. They'd do better to try for another catch on the way home. By this time, quite rightly, uneasy, Don pointed out that a small crowd of customs officials were heading across the quay in our direction. Don worried about recent loss of face making things more awkward. There was no time to dither. I agreed with the fishing boat skippers and told them not to worry, just break the customs seals over their holds. Blame me if anyone complained. Given that the afternoon was above a 100 F the fish would turn to Nhuc Mahm, pungent fish sauce, pretty quickly and also become worthless. The crowd from the customs stopped in their tracks, recognised defeat and returned to their office. Within minutes a customs officer hurried across the quay clutching a large wad of paper – formally releasing the boats.

We had decided where we wanted to end up and consequently the key decisions were obvious. Word spread. Nobody asked me for money from Khien Hoa Island in the Mekong Delta to the Ben Hai River Bridge in the middle of the DMZ.

Terry McNamara and I became life long friends. We wrote a book together, the story of his escape in 1975 with his staff and their families – *Escape with Honor* – which is part of the Department of State’s official history of their role in the Vietnam War.

Thirty-six years later I took American families to see the Normandy beaches in Mickey Sweeny’s old VIP aircraft.

RULE THREE – KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

‘Time spent on reconnaissance is seldom wasted.’

Sir Basil Liddell-Hart

To remain in ignorance of the enemy’s condition, simply because one grudges the outlay of a hundred ounces of silver in honours and emoluments, is the height of inhumanity.

Sun Tzu

All countries enter diplomatic negotiations with three positions, what they want, what they won’t accept, how far they’ll compromise – that is all countries save France. The French enter negotiations with only one position – what they want.

Old diplomats’ saying

Throughout the Brexit campaign I kept in touch with German friends. Most are EU fans although by no means all are fans of Angela Merkel. They know I support Brexit and voted against entering the Common Market in the first place. I regarded this as turning our backs on our friends and five hundred years of history. I regarded our entry to the Common Market as a strategic surrender by our defeatist establishment following on from the debacle of Suez. I also regarded the EU as a racist concept to replace the Axis – white fortress Europe defended by high tariffs and hidden trade barriers. Less than six years later Mrs Thatcher started to turn about our economy and changed Britain.

We had friendly debates about what might happen when the vote took place. I introduced my German and EU diplomat friends to the wise analysis of Professor John Curtice. I warned the vote would be close, we might even vote to leave. One friend had been General Gehlen’s trusted close colleague when the German secret intelligence service purged its former Nazi and Communist officers and agents. We discussed the new situation frankly. His view was that the British were needed to soften rule by Germany and France over the rest of Europe. I warned him that if most British voters were like me, they would not regard that as a reason to change their minds.

After the Brexit vote my advice to German diplomat friends was simple - whatever you may wish or want, don’t leave the French to negotiate on behalf of the EU during our departure. They took it on board though stressed that Angela Merkel has her own people in key jobs in Brussels. She will hide behind the French. Not all Germans are fans of the Empress and our lines of communication stay open just as before the vote. Not all Germans are happy at the undermining of NATO by Merkel

combined with Trump's gift for making a bad situation unbelievably worse. So what is the Empress after from Putin that is worth risking the break-up of NATO? I don't need a spy or intercepts to tell me the answer. The barest interpretation – controversially – suggests that it's the restoration of Germany's 1914 frontiers. That can only happen at the expense of the Poles and in those circumstances breaking up NATO makes perverse common sense.

Enter the imperial herald, Michel Barnier. His appointment signalled loud and clear that following Brexit, Empress Angela had decreed that the British must not enjoy any form of friendly agreement on trade or anything else with the European Union. Leaving the Sun's orbit must be seen as costly folly. This would be enforced regardless of collateral damage to German industry. A tunnel vision approach does not bother Mrs May and most her Cabinet because they are all remain supporters. They hope Project Fear round three, trumpeting the threat of damage to our industry, will frighten the voters enough to let her brush aside their referendum vote. Bear in mind, most MPs never meet the vast majority of their constituents, so they have not a clue what they think. More on this further along.

Largely by accident, the Labour Party have been more open; people know that a vote for them is a vote to over-rule the referendum result and thereby themselves. Two years later Mrs May's government still fight among themselves but only because about a third of her MPs are Leavers. Otherwise, apart from this group plus a dozen Labour MPs and the Ulster Unionists, our Remain Parliament makes life as easy as possible for Barnier's negotiating team. Our senior Civil Service, effectively, provide part of Barnier's team incognito – in the British Isles we have a habit of superbly educating intelligent fools or else the civil service has a habit of recruiting them.

Empress Angela suffers no such problems. She stopped giving orders to Junker once she was able to give them direct to her own man, Martin Selmayr, now in charge of the EU Commission. The result is as one would expect. Trade warfare has intensified. Mrs May has done nothing about the poisonous role of the EU Commission Representation in London which reportedly has regular meetings with a fifth column of British remain politicians and business people, presumably to co-ordinate the campaign to defeat the British voters. There is a counter to all this sabotage. At this stage let's just recognise that Mrs May and most of her Cabinet want to remain in the EU and intend to do so in all but name. Her pledges are window dressing. Fellow voters, none of these people are on your side.

Our diplomacy on behalf of the Brexit voters needs to defeat these elements, plus all the fellow travelling organisations such as the CBI and large trade unions. This is not as difficult as it sounds but for a victory without losing beauty sleep, Leavers need to understand how to play the game.

RULE FOUR – USE SPIES WISELY

There are five classes: local spies; internal spies; converted spies; doomed spies; surviving spies. When these five kinds are all at work, none can discover the secret system. This is called 'divine manipulation of the threads.' It is the sovereign's most precious faculty.

Having doomed spies means doing certain things openly for the purposes of deception, and allowing our own spies to know them and, when betrayed, report them to the enemy. We do things calculated to deceive our own spies, who must be led to believe they have been unwittingly disclosed. Then, when these spies are captured in the enemies' lines, they will make an entirely false report, and the enemy will take measures accordingly, only to find that we do something quite different. The spies will thereupon be put to death.

The Art of War by Sun Tzu

Some five-hundred years BC the philosopher and later general Sun Tzu painted those words with a calligraphy brush. Who are today's "doomed spies"? How can we gain the most impact from them before their inevitable political executions?

As described by Sun Tzu, this requires two plans. The first plan is the one that Mrs May and her Cabinet and Civil Service allies are working on – namely, BRINO, Brexit in name only, very similar to the way Harold Wilson cheated the voters back in 1975. Mrs May already has presented this as a kosher Brexit although it's actually EU membership without a vote. Mrs May will claim that she has avoided our joining the Euro. We will remain a vassal state of the EU/German sun and our economy destroyed as a warning to others.

As few of the Brexit-supporting Ministers resigned, the others' careers may not be finished although their reputations are. None will go much further. However, to all those Brexit supporters who are interested in a career in politics, you have a pool of 17.5 million people looking for a political party they can trust and that stands up for their views, hopes and dreams. UKIP never managed to gain their trust. Learn from the Swiss. Christoph Blocher could teach Nigel Farage a lot, and the ERG - his anti-EU party is now the largest in the Swiss Parliament. So the possibilities exist and are limitless.

Does all this mean that Mrs May is our most important doomed spy? She supervised all the work done by David Davis and his team, she did deals behind his back via officials such as Robbins - I am still waiting for the names of the ministers and officials who were in the know although I have a pretty good idea of who were the little helpers. British diplomats are natural appeasers – but watch Treasury-ordained Robbins 'fail' to negotiate a deal and try and lock us into the sun's orbit. Her Chancellor has starved the government machine of money, so despite the passing of two years, preparations for no deal are not ready. She sees all the information gleaned about the EU. She was a leading accomplice in Project Fear. She's still just about Prime Minister. This makes her and the Chancellor with their officials far more valuable assets for the German Empress than the Labour Party, Scottish Nationalists and Liberals put together. The CBI and multi-national business chiefs are merely useful voices. Even the BBC and other left leaning media outlets are insignificant compared to controlling Downing Street and the Treasury. Putin has far less influence over a gushing Trump despite supporting his election, than the EU Commission Office in London has over Mrs May's government with its multi-million budget for political meddling. The whole staff should be declared *persona non grata*.

As the smoke clears from the Chequers Corral the doomed spies already lose their cover. Quite likely David Davies and Michel Barnier were close to agreement in both principal and detail for a Canada style deal. As recently as early September, Barnier briefed visiting British MPs on the negotiations – don't believe me, read it for yourself on the Parliament website. In that context, Olly's plan and Mrs May's support seem more like a last ditch attempt to keep us within the orbit of the German economic sun. Mrs May revealed her Chequers plan to Angela Merkel days before she presented it to the Cabinet. Perhaps the French were also in the loop although Mrs May would have known. Had she not asked if Macron was content she would have been daft. Whatever the facts, had Angela Merkel rejected the Chequers plan, Mrs May would hardly have presented it at Chequers but adopted her limpet mode and delayed making a decision.

Logically that makes Mrs May and the Chancellor with their officials our most valuable doomed spies.

RULE FIVE – WHENEVER POSSIBLE, MAKE AN INDIRECT APPROACH

"Throughout the ages, effective results in war have rarely been attained unless the approach has had such indirectness as to ensure the opponent's un-readiness to meet it. In strategy, the longest way round is often the shortest way home. A direct approach to the object exhausts the attacker and hardens the resistance by compression, where as an indirect approach loosens the defender's hold by upsetting his balance"

Sir Basil Liddell-Hart

"In all fighting, the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods will be needed in order to secure victory. In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack – the direct and the indirect; yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of manoeuvres. The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle – you never come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?"

Sun Tzu

Office of the Deputy Commander, Korea National Police, Seoul, late afternoon, summer 1987. There are seven of us seated around the hot room – the DC KNP, the KNP's tough young chief lawyer, a senior representative from Korea's National Security Agency, the export director of a British company hoping to sell an airship for Olympic Games Security, Jae-Pil Hwang my trouble shooter from the embassy, Me, and the 'buyer' of the airship – a former colonel in the KNSA whose company has paid up capital of US \$ 14,000 – thus plainly doesn't have the US \$ 5 million needed to buy the airship and all its surveillance cameras and kit, but is a front for a syndicate who want to make fortunes from the advertising contracts.

The atmosphere was taut, after weeks of tortuous bargaining we had reached the last hurdle. All of us bar one, wanted to un-plug the 'buyer' and cancel whatever deal was hidden behind the advertising contracts on an airship circling above the Olympic Games for two weeks the following summer, a deal no doubt worth many times more than the airship. And cancel the deal before we'd let him leave the room, never mind NCP headquarters. The National Police simultaneously would sign a new contract with the British manufacturer. Their export director chain smoked throughout the final haggling. His company would just about break even on the sale but it was going to be tight. After an hour we commenced the synchronised contract signing. Ian, the export director, hurriedly popped another cigarette in his mouth and lit it just as I intervened.

'We need another US \$ 450,000,' I said helpfully. A pink glow travelled the length of the poor export director's cigarette. His nerves were raw and worn.

'What for?' asked the Police's chief lawyer.

'Pilot training,' I replied matter of factly.

'Munche obsimnida,' nodded the Deputy Police Commander – no problem.

RULE SIX – NEVER FALL FOR A BLUFF

"What strange arts necessity finds out."

Christopher Marlowe

One very busy morning in Seoul, the agent for British fire engines rang me around 11 am. Could I come to his demonstration for the Mayor of Seoul at mid-day outside City Hall on the other side of the square? Obviously, I wanted to help sell our fire engines but I had an important lunch long booked with the most influential newspaper editor at exactly the same time. I would call him back.

Then I thought, the Mayor doesn't work that way, he would have sent me a proper invitation card, days ago, probably weeks. I phoned the Mayor, who been told that I was attending the demonstration, but had only just let them know. Could he attend? We laughed, picked a date together – and I called back the import agent!

RULE SEVEN – NEVER BLUFF UNLESS YOU’RE READY TO HANDLE THE RISK

“The general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple before the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat; how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can see who is likely to win or lose.”

The Art of War by Sun Tzu

A pal in the CIA invited me down to see his new assignment, Khien Hoa island, astride the mouth of the Mekong Delta. Only recently pacified, the island had been a VC and NVA stronghold for years. The local cemetery had an army of headstones engraved with big stars.

We set off from Saigon in Bob’s sturdy pick up. After a long drive we neared the ferry across the muddy river to the island about three-hundred yards away. The road was a red earth track through banana trees. Moments later in the wing mirrors we saw an ARVN truck – definitely in a big hurry and spewing clouds of red dust. Could it be they also knew the ferry only had room for one big vehicle? The South Vietnamese army driver tried to overtake and hit our rear fender hard then pulled alongside and took another swerve at my door. They were all drunk or high on some strand of weed.

We approached the ferry like racing dodgem cars. The truck again drew alongside, but this time Bob’s side. He span the wheel and slammed the military truck’s cab door, kicked the gas pedal until we owned the dirt track leading towards the ramp onto the ferry which already slowly crossed the sluggish river. The next phase was a lot of shouting in Vietnamese – Ba Mei is something most well brought up boys don’t do to their mothers. The ferry docked and we drove on board. We both got out of the pick-up to check the situation. On the sloping ramp towards the river, in front of the truck four ARVN soldiers were busy cocking their rifles and glaring at us.

I had no weapon but at that moment would have fancied an AK47. I had spent a lot of time with the ARVN Airborne and they liked them. From the glove compartment, Bob produced the biggest forty-five pistol I’ve ever seen; he came from Columbus, Mississippi, and stuck stamps upside down on his mail as a protest about the Yankees. Bob wasn’t about to appease his drunken allies, nor was I - big loss of face. The ferry cable tautened and we started to cross the wide khaki river.

The ARVN soldiers took aim at us, Bob took aim at their leader. Now an M16 round will do a lot of damage and take out more than one organ at a time but at that range a forty-five round is like being hit by a super-sonic brick and can throw a man several yards. As the only one without a weapon I felt more or less naked but knew I had to act as though a rifle lay handy in our truck. Armed stand off lasted until we reached mid-stream. Once the M16s went back in their truck cab, Bob lowered his forty-five. I took my left hand off the door handle.

The moral of this story for diplomats is once committed, don’t back down - you could get killed.

RULE EIGHT – NEVER SHOW YOUR HAND AT CARDS

“All staff officers have the following qualities in varying combinations; they are intelligent or stupid, industrious or lazy. If an officer is intelligent and industrious, he will do well. If an officer is stupid and lazy, he can do no harm. If an officer is intelligent and lazy, he will do the best. If an officer is stupid and industrious, remove him immediately.”

Clauswitz

On top of running our export drive in South Korea, looking after the media, preparing for the summer Olympic Games the following year, I was also responsible for all royal visits. Not only was the Princess Royal a former Olympic competitor but Honorary President of the British Olympic Association and President of the FEI – International Equestrian Federation – thus due to inspect construction of the equestrian event venues. The Princess planned to visit in November 1987, and her private secretary and senior personal protection officer made a reconnaissance trip some weeks ahead of her visit. One of their many sensible questions was if, Heaven forbid, she was injured, could she go to the American Army hospital. This was a perfectly reasonable request and the Koreans took no offence because they knew that although their surgery was the equal of anywhere, unlike their hospitals the Americans had infrastructure – nurses and catering and all the usual support for the patients. In those days all that was done by the patient’s family in a Korean hospital. The blood bank in an emergency was me, due to a Hill family scandal in Brighton some two-hundred years ago.

My own diplomatic relations with our ambassador ranged from cool to frozen. He disapproved of the FCO doing commercial work, hated the media, regarded the Royal Family as a waste of money and the Olympic Games as absurd. I was responsible for all four. Just to make matters worse, he never listened to advice, which in this particular case was don’t ask your American counterpart – who is a very reasonable person but has 45,000 troops and 42,000 civilians in Korea. Most of the latter have nothing to do with the US Army or US Air Force. They are not entitled to treatment at a US military hospital although most would like the option. He will have to say no and that makes it official. Of course, he ignored my warning, asked the US Ambassador, who regretted that he could not be seen to provide a British princess with a privilege denied to 42,000 American citizens.

Fortunately ever since Vietnam the Americans have been a second family. My wife, Regine, comes from Switzerland and is highly specialised children’s physiotherapist. She worked part-time at the US Army hospital on the main HQ base at Yong San. We attended the Episcopalian chapel on the base, only a few hundred yards from our home, so we knew all the senior staff of the 8th US Army as close friends. We celebrated Christmas together and other special times. The 8th Army Commander was the son of a Swiss immigrant from Fribourg. Our daughter aged seven attended Seoul Foreign School – her brother had been a pupil until that summer – as did the children of Chris and Pattie Hill of the US Embassy, who lived on the base.

Seoul Foreign School was on a hill offering the best artillery observation position on the northern fringe of the capital city, an obvious target for an airmobile or special forces assault by either side. Had the North Koreans crossed the DMZ during the school day all our children would have been evacuated from school straight to Japan. The school would have become a key position. Because of

that possibility, safe in her school back pack Margot carried a note on smart blue HM Diplomatic Service paper with all her useful contact phone numbers – neatly typed with the names in our alphabet and Hangul – stuck on a sheet of cardboard. One number was her personal doctor's pager phone – the chief of the US Army Hospital at Yong San.

What does one do when faced with obstinate daftness from one's leader? I couldn't sack the ambassador – but I could un-plug him from anything to do with my duties. After all, we were Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service, and I was simply looking after the Queen's daughter as I did my own. So my wife and I made the arrangements as the Queen's doctor had requested.

Peter, the Princess's Private Secretary, and Phillip, her personal protection officer, arrived in Seoul a few days later. That evening I picked them up for a dinner at our home. We discovered that by one of those quirks of fate as a young officer Peter's first platoon sergeant in the Coldstream Guards had been my platoon sergeant as an officer cadet. We were both taught many valuable lessons by Sergeant Goulston, indeed, some had steered us through life. The other guests were the US 8th Army Provo Marshal, Lee Young and his wife Dee; the Deputy Chief of Protocol for the Olympic Games with his wife; and my friend the national Security Chief for the Olympics was represented by his deputy with his wife.

We explained the problem to our visitors from the Palace, showed them Margot's school back pack to much laughter, suggested our solution but asked Peter and Phillip to keep the arrangement known only those who needed to, at the palace. They were very happy with this simple solution. In a nutshell, Lee as Provo Marshal would inform his MPs and the US 8th Army around the capital that in the event of an incident the Princess would be taken to the US Army hospital. Tom, the hospital chief, always had an emergency surgery team ready for anything. The Korean National Police would instinctively assume that she should be taken to Seoul National Medical School Hospital. In the heat of the moment Philip might have to be ready to make sure the National Police took her to Yong San. As Phillip might also be a casualty, Olympic Protocol would issue a discreet instruction and National Security a confidential warning memo to the National Police. In the morning Peter, Phillip and I would pay a quick call on Tom at the hospital so they all knew each other.

Tom was delighted to receive visitors from the Palace, asking, 'Hey, guys, where are your bowler hats?' We had a very quick pow-wow then headed for the British Embassy. While driving them in our family car, I reminded that this morning's meeting was between the three of us and Tom, plus anyone they had to tell in London. At the embassy my leader gave them a lecture on how their request was impossible although he had personally appealed to his American counterpart. For a moment I thought Phillip was going to overdo his horrified protests but my leader was too thick skinned and full of his own opinions to smell a rat. In the event the Princess made two visits, one that November and then another for two weeks during the actual games. All went peacefully. The main worry of my American and Korean military friends was not terrorism but an incident on the DMZ aimed at scaring off the competing nations. Two carrier groups solved that problem.

My way of dealing with His Excellency may seem harsh but I had a lot of rather special people to look after and hardly any resources with which to do it. The British media out-numbered our Olympic

Team of 500 athletes and officials and there were about two-thousand spectators including some well-known faces. So we weren't dealing with small numbers and none spoke a word of Korean.

From the start it was obvious that the new ambassador was a lesser player than the previous team of Nick and Margaret Spreckley who had gone to Kuala Lumpur. My temple concluded that he would hinder not help and we must work around him as much as possible. During the games I had Penny our secretary, Jae-pil Hwang with his car, Mrs Park and the tiny information team to help me with the media, and Regine complete with driver's pass and our car. Regine used to supply the Athletics Team with such things as Johnson's baby cream which they couldn't get from the HQ store and deliver it herself to the warm up track beside the stadium.

After the games the leaders of Korea's industry and business cornered me one evening and asked when I was next going home. Next summer, I told them, and asked why they were all so keen to know! Was I that hopeless? Not at all, they all laughed. Please tell them to send us someone better at top as we won't have you, explained the Chairman of the largest industrial group. The others nodded agreement as one man. I did as they asked.

* * * * *

Now the moral of this story, whether you're a minister or a back bench MP, for all Brexiteers is simple. If your leader is clearly incapable of seeing the huge advantages of a clean break, don't waste your time reasoning with her or trying to reach a compromise. You've seen the new fisheries policy that simply allows the EU to carry on raping our fishing waters exactly as before and does nothing to revive our own fishing fleets. That won't persuade Hastings to vote Conservative again, nor Scots in fishing communities.

But for the Prime Minister and the likes of Olly Robins staying within the orbit of the German sun is more important than us, the voters. The fishing news is but a trailer for the 'May' BRINO.

RULE NINE – DECEPTION WORKS BOTH WAYS.

All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near; we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him. If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him. If he is superior in strength, evade him. If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow more arrogant. If he is taking his ease, give him no rest. If his forces are united, separate them. Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected.

Sun Tzu

Although an Airborne sapper I had to take a medical when I applied for a commission in 1959. I reported to Millbank Hospital one morning where a brigadier and two colonels checked me out.

They wore white coats over civilian suits. The only tricky part was the eye-sight test – my left eye was perfect, still is, but my right eye was not, still isn't. The brigadier solved my dilemma.

'Now what can we use to cover his eye?' he enquired.

'How about that post card from Dudley in Bournemouth?' suggest one of the colonels.

I took the postcard with my right hand and covered my right eye then went through the tests. On instruction from the brigadier I switched eyes – and took the postcard in my left hand then covered my right eye. I passed with perfect vision.

That was a simple deception. A decade later I was part of much larger ones.

* * * * *

The present House of Commons is populated largely by people who voted to stay in the European Union. Among the rump of Cameron's government, at least two thirds care not that the people voted to leave the European Union. That doesn't surprise me, nor does the rump of New Labour, nor those ultimate wets, the Liberals, nor indeed the Scottish Nationalists. All these people were selected by brainwashed Remain party machines. UKIP could have been the government today had they selected better people to run their party because they would have selected better people as Parliamentary candidates. David Cameron and Mrs May have both led governments courtesy of that fundamental flaw in the UKIP movement. Their public support was a tidal wave. That makes the current government incredibly well-placed to win the next general election or horribly vulnerable to lose through a wipe out.

All voters have been given a warning by Mrs May and her Cabal. We are back in the days before the Great Reform Act. You may have a vote but unless you conform to the opinions of the brainwashed elite who want to stay vassals, your vote is worthless, it doesn't count. Our Parliament asked us to vote because they daren't decide themselves. They promised to respect our decision. We voted to leave. They have contemptuously discarded our votes. They have proved themselves totally inadequate to deal with a national crisis. All people who want to leave the European Union should form a national movement to copy the Swiss. Let's take away all important decisions from Parliament. Instead, strategic matters should be decided by the voters through national referendums – treaties, taxes, defence, international aid budgets and so forth – as the Swiss have done for eight-hundred years.

Wise Brexit supporters should be scouting ahead and gaining observation points and footholds in what may no longer be hostile territory. There was an earlier time in my life when I saw decent people treated like muck by lousy politicians who were their inferiors in all the finest human qualities.

* * * * *

Behind our tail rotor stretches a gleaming silver South China Sea. In all other directions rise dark green mountains looking as though cloaked with giant cabbages, double and triple canopy forest. Our tiny posse of helicopters floats about a thousand feet above the highest peaks. Throbbing engines compete with wind scream through the open doors as we steadily advance further west. Below is bandit country, base for the local NVA division, from where they launch sporadic attacks on the populated farm lands along the strip of coastal plain. Supply and reinforcement paths snake through the jungle over these coastal mountains and right across the next door province, Kon Tum, all the way to Cambodia and Laos and the hidden multiple infiltration branches of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Although the NVA is no longer the force it was a year ago and the reason is people like those with whom I am flying this morning.

I'm sitting beside Jim Anderson in his C and C Huey. Jim commands November Company of the 75th Rangers, the eyes and ears of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. We're about fifteen minutes out from LZ English near Bong Son, a small town in Binh Dinh Province, about half way up the coast between Saigon and the DMZ. This morning we're not looking for trouble rather the reverse. We're inserting small patrols that will go in for five days, moving and watching the enemy from their own backyard. They are five man teams. Seasoned and combat hardened. Better than the enemy. The plan is to insert Sergeant Costello's patrols then confuse the enemy before extracting the previous batch of patrols. Costello has some young though highly experienced Rangers including Johnson who is a head and shoulders taller than his sergeant. Before we took off Costello joked that Johnson carried the smoke grenade that tells the choppers where to pick up, Cas' Costello. Johnson retorted how when they extract, 'Aah hand the guys up to PU chopper before leaping on board mahself.'

Some of the peaks are three-thousand feet high though as yet no clouds form. It's just gone eight in the morning and the sun burns brilliantly as it rises from the sea. I can pick up most of the radio traffic by leaning close to Jim's right head phone. He listens intently and just occasionally intervenes – all the aircrew know their jobs backwards. The two pilots wear big olive green helmets as do the door gunners alert behind their M 60s – brass rounds gleaming from the hard sun as ammunition belts coil across the metal deck. The atmosphere is business-like, ready for ground fire, but unless we're taking hits ready to let the pair of escorting Cobra gunships deal with any opposition. At our port side the Cobras are sinking towards the tree canopy while making wide circles.

Soon the Huey troop carriers follow them down but in a huge circle that takes them further southward. Within a minute, no more, three groups of helicopters are circling over different hills, sinking lower, switching direction with frequent turns. Jim gives our pilots a thumbs up and we commence a wide descending circle towards the lush forest. About three-hundred feet above the rich green foliage we level off, slip over a ridge, and meet one of the Hueys as we climb again; its deck is empty, Costello has inserted without landing on top of an ambush. The air is now a confusion of circling helicopters, some sinking until almost brushing the leaves, others rising lazily.

Voices splutter from Jim's headphone, he turns and confirms that everyone's down. Now he gives the go ahead order to extract the others and as though by magic on the top of a near-by mountain, sudden red smoke drifts on morning wind off the sea. A Huey already climbs the jade leafed mountainside to hover above the smoke and pick up five figures standing up wind of the smoke canister. More radio calls confirm that other patrols have been extracted. We descend warily

towards the tree canopy then keep going down, lower and lower, until we're flying along a valley of elephant grass and following a crystal clear stream; we touch down, brushing the skids through the tall grass. Both door gunners open up deafening fire on the flanking trees. Hot, spent cases fly around the cabin and spin off the deck. Then we're rising from the bleached grass, climbing tantalisingly slowly, gunners shooting bursts, though only for a few seconds or so. We're coming out 'hot' to confuse the enemy, acting as a decoy, as though maybe we'd inserted another patrol. This trick works because the enemy can't ignore the risk, not of a hostile hardcore patrol snooping around their rear area. Twenty minutes later we were sliding in to land at LZ English after a tidy operation, above all no casualties.

Five days later, back in Saigon, an early morning phone call from my pal Carey Williams, Assistant Provo Marshal of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, actually a Brit' from near Bath, who was my host up there, told me that Costello and all his patrols were safely extracted about an hour earlier. Johnson had thrown the pink smoke that told the choppers where to find Cas'.

I sighed with warm relief. Despite a treacherous shower of political leeches as their leaders, my friends, who were the salt of the earth, would live to fight another day. America sorely needed them.

RULE TEN – LOOK BEYOND YOUR NOSE

'Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions.'

The Art of War by Sun Tzu

When the South Korean government of generals in suits won their bid to host the 1988 Summer Olympic Games they did not realise they had created a hostage. The government slogan was that South Korea was open for business but few came to their store. By hosting the Olympic Games they would bring the world to their store. I had met the president fifteen years before when he was a colonel serving in Vietnam and nothing about his style of civilian government surprised. Nine years later he had been responsible for a coup and a massacre of hundreds at the city of Kwangju in the south-west, and his main political rival was under house arrest in Seoul. By the autumn of 1986 the students had worked out that demonstrations and riots might scare the international community enough to consider holding the Olympic Games somewhere else. That threat might force the government to give way and introduce proper democracy. Both sides were engaged in high stakes brinkmanship. The President wanted to keep power. We were going to find out how many wanted democracy. Anyone living in South Korea with responsibilities on behalf of his country – and in my case our Olympic Team as well – had to keep a very close watch on events and constantly sniff the wind.

Fortunately my tutor in Korean politics was a wonderful small, owlish, intellectual media baron with a lightning sense of humour. Doctor Kim Sang-man owned the Dong-a Ilbo, the only big newspaper that still dared to defy the government. The generals had stripped Doctor Kim of his radio station but

dared not silence his printing presses at the Dong-a Ilbo, circulation about two million in those days. Kim Sang-man was a champion of democracy.

Moving the games somewhere calmer would have involved huge loss of face for President Chun Doo Hwan and his government. Half way through January 1987 the Dong-a Ilbo newspaper exclusively reported the torture and death of Park Jong-chul, a student activist for democracy, in a police station basement. This brutal act was the catalyst for the June democracy uprising. Throughout that summer thousands of demonstrators, mostly students, withstood tear gas and riot police batons on the streets of Seoul. The riot police only recently had been students themselves and were national service conscripts rather than policemen. Their hearts were not wedded to the job.

* * * * *

One hot afternoon in June, along with Sangon Chu, our veteran press officer, I climbed onto the tiled roof of the embassy information office, a small house beside the embassy gates and looking onto Sejong, the wide main street of Seoul. The embassy was a walled compound of red brick Victorian houses with a modern office – now cramped and fast wearing out – next door to the old royal palace and near the Anglican cathedral. There was a debate within the embassy rather like leave and remain. The *flat earthers*, led by the ambassador, thought the president would crush the opposition and that we should be helpful to the government even if we didn't like some of their actions. That I of all people, battling to increase our exports, should want to risk what market access we did have – in other words, don't rock our boat. The *round planeters* were few in number but included myself and Sangon, who between us spoke to more ordinary Koreans than the rest of the embassy put together. We both talked to the media including Brian Baron of BBC and Jeremy Thompson of ITV. Trevor McDonald arrived and sent game-changing reports to ITV. I also talked to the Seoul Olympic organisers at all levels, not to mention the National Security Office and National Police and met the US 8th Army Staff at the Yong Son Base chapel every Sunday morning. All of us reckoned the government were on the ropes and it just needed the growing middle class to join the protests and Chun was a 'gonner'.

This afternoon the students were going to put this latter theory to a major test. At five o'clock each day the national anthem drifted across the city from countless loud speakers. It was a mixture of music and proclamation. Normally those in the street stood still and the traffic stopped. Our circle of friends had alerted us that today would be different. Would the middle class join in or stay home? Would instead yet another tear gas versus petrol bombs riot take place a few hundred yards off among the restaurants and boutiques of Myong Dong?

From the scorching roof we stared over the central streets. Namsan's woods and its white needle basked in brilliant sun from a powder blue sky. On almost deserted streets, silver buses raced each other and a few trucks grumbled towards the shimmering sidings beyond Seoul station. Rare cars sped through the burning heat. Along either side of Sejong twin armies of olive ants stood passively, flanking a mile of empty avenue that mocked the inflexible brain who ruled Korea.

At our left, from the fake Norman tower of the Anglican Cathedral, over a loud speaker a woman started screaming slogans.

Sangon remarked, 'Are they re-deploying most of the riot police but keeping some hidden behind City Hall?'

As he spoke, two columns of armoured olive buses entered Sejong from opposite directions, raced along each side of the vast street, before halting like toy trains. Thousands of green ants swarmed around them, soon vanishing on board. The buses hurried away, despatched to a hundred parts of the city, leaving Sejong shocked and silent.

'Anything is possible this afternoon, ' I sympathised.

A huge roar from angry voices floated through the stifling air from somewhere near the Lotte Hotel's butterscotch tower.

We both squinted through the glare towards the hotel and a giant crane that swung over its skeletal twin extension for Olympic tourists. Ants were pouring out of the underground shopping malls near the Plaza Hotel and City Hall, all hurrying towards the rising shouts from Myong Dong, Seoul's version of Bond Street and Soho all rolled into one.

'Sangon, that's a first – the police failed to close your new British subway. That crowd has just ridden a train downtown.'

The first splutters of tear-gas launchers reached the roof and the shouting rose in Myong Dong whilst from the tower the woman began chanting more slogans. Sangon looked at his watch: 'Two minutes before five, Adrian.' White mist spread and smothered City Hall. Tear-gas popped in the surrounding streets. A voice crackled on a radio-phone somewhere nearby. We kept quiet, listened until Sangon confirmed, 'Another group are trying to march over Panpo Bridge while a mob rampages through the East Gate market.'

On the street somebody gave orders by radio-phone in stacato Korean.

Brittle chimes drifted from the cathedral tower. Five o'clock. All over the city motor-horns blared, church bells rang from far directions, suddenly the deep chimes of the cathedral bells began drowning the worn strings and droning sermon on the evening public broadcast of the national anthem. On the vast lanes of Sejong, buses and trucks blasted their horns, now joined by prosperous looking women driving the family black saloon, tooting loudly when some matrons dodged tear-gas grenades fired by forlorn groups of riot police standing defeated near Toksu Palace: nobody could arrest the city traffic. White mist rose above the buildings in a thickening cloud as more whistles blew, phuts rose, volleys of grenades coughed and popped, while among the muddled office blocks a lone police siren moaned.

I folded my arms and surveyed widespread chaos, impressed by someone's gift for grand tactics, enjoying the rare music of church bells peeling across an empty sun-baked city. I became aware of Sangon's face displaying utter amazement yet quiet satisfaction and profound joy.

"Well, Sangon," I remarked, staring towards the drifting white fog, "that's the level of political

debate in your country-----tear gas versus motor-horns."

"But we have a debate now, Adrian, we have debate - and there will be big change,' he declared, peacefully lowering his hands over his eyes for shade, watching the future.

Before the leaves had fallen, Chun had resigned and his deputy taken over - but with a 'mandate' from the Army, National Security and Police and the population generally to introduce real democracy. The Olympic Games were a big success and did indeed put South Korea on the map. Within months our exports were booming – people don't work in modern industries for US\$100 a month in a democracy - wages rose, inflation made UK products and parts a good bargain. When the Koreans couldn't sell their cars abroad during an economic downturn their own population soon took up the slack. They now have the most wired-up society on the planet. They've never looked back.

The *flat earthers* saw only what they feared they would lose; they never looked further ahead for what they might gain.

RULE ELEVEN – STEALTH ALWAYS OUTWITS THE ESTABLISHMENT

"For should the enemy strengthen his van, he will weaken his rear; should he strengthen his rear, he will weaken his van; should he strengthen his left, he will weaken his right; should he strengthen his right, he will weaken his left. If he sends reinforcements everywhere, he will everywhere be weak."

The Art of War by Sun Tzu

During my early months in Lahore, I managed to make a handful of free-fall jumps. Wing Commander Sheik who was Chief Instructor at the Flying Club took me up in the club Cessna 172. We hadn't realised that word spread fast and the bus owners were selling tickets. Eventually we had to give up because excited spectators charged over the airfield to greet me on landing. One evening they were surging down the runway – towards us – as we took off. One little boy proudly brought back my helmet when it fell out the aircraft while we bumped through a down draught and many other small boys were instant ground crew as my boots touched down among the scrub. Sweat poured off me until we were above five-thousand feet and started dripping once back on the rock hard ground. The jumps were never less than interesting and I grew used to jumping at seven thousand feet and meeting the first gliding eagle or kite at four thousand feet. As I was flying at terminal velocity, they rocketed up towards me and sometimes quick thinking, slides and turns needed.

All I had to keep me in touch were regular letters from my pals and my monthly copy of *Sport Parachutist*. One edition brought news that my original instructor at RAF Abingdon, Sergeant Doug Peacock, had been posted to Cyprus where he was Chief Instructor of the Combined Services Parachute Club. Many months later I received a message informing me that my next posting was Nicosia after a sea voyage home and three months training and leave.

No sooner back home than I picked up where I'd left off two years ago. I ordered a brand new lo- porosity parachute – black and yellow diamonds – from Irvin's in Hatfield. In those days your parcel came by train and I picked it up from Caterham station. It was a beautiful canopy, quite fast, very responsive and every landing was soft. One day I had a phone call to tell me that the Army Parachute Association had offered two places for civilians on their next instructors' course. The association wanted to offer Roger Foley and myself. A month later I presented myself at Netheravon Airfield where the Chief Instructor, Don Hughes, and his very able staff, set to work and turned us into free-fall instructors. We had a lot of fun as well, not least because Pete Sherman and the SAS team were training as well, in their case for the Army championships. Lofty Wiseman and I used to run round the airfield on windy days. Suffice it say, when Don awarded our tickets, he said that two civilians had been a bit of an experiment although one was a former officer and now a diplomat, the other a brick layer by trade. As the course progressed one proved reserved and serious, the other spent most of the night drinking and generally leading people astray – so much for the diplomat.

Don, of course, had got wind of my posting. Doug Peacock left the island the same month I arrived and his replacement was not expected for some months.

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We had a reunion and handover in a Limassol kebab restaurant. The club members were full of enthusiasm but their four seater aircraft – essential for students – had left the island. Fortunately the regular pilot (RAF flight engineer) had excellent relations with the Cyprus Flying Club at Nicosia. The club members were mostly the airport air traffic controllers – instant gold dust for any parachute club! They had two Piper Colts, two seaters, so at least those qualified could jump. We used an earth strip near the Dhekelia Sovereign Base Area called Kingsfield.

I wondered if we could do better. RAF Nicosia shared its runway as Nicosia Airport. The station's main job was to provide support, crash and fire services for the airfield as a whole and ground support for the UNFICYP, the UN peace keeping force. Our friends in the flying club showed me the old parachute packing hall complete with proper tables just across the road from the control tower. There were other empty buildings, all in perfect order. Would we be allowed to free-fall onto an airport? Leave it with the flying club. Meanwhile go and see Mr Manglis, richest man on the island, whose office is the tallest building in Nicosia and who owns all the land south of the runway.

Mr Manglis had a fantastic view from his office and was delighted to let us use his land as a drop zone! Within weeks the RAF station commander gave the green light to move into two buildings – the packing hall and next door, our club house. By a huge stroke of luck, Robin Adair, the new Deputy High Commissioner, was a private pilot. He volunteered to fly a four-seater for the Flying Club from the UK. That transformed our situation and over the next two years we trained dozens of students, including Robin and his wife, Diana!

Around that time Doug's replacement, Jan Sparkes, arrived at RAF Akrotiri. Jan took over as Chief Instructor. I was voted club secretary. Our chairman was a very clever Royal Engineer (of course), Steve Clarke. Steve knew nothing about parachuting but he was a very skilful operator. We had lots of parachutists but not so many heads that knew how to get things done. One thing we lacked was a

pea gravel pit for accuracy competitions. Sport parachuting was advancing and contests were decided by centimetres. A pea gravel pit allowed the jumper to stretch out a leg and plant their foot on a ten centimetre diameter disk – without serious injury, usually none at all, because the fine gravel softened the impact.

What did Air Traffic Control think? We looked up the rules. Either side of runway had to be obstacle free for a distance of three-hundred-feet. The control tower side was just about legal; but a pit on the other side, flush with the scrub grass, came within the rules. How could we do it? Steve could arrange the plant and a driver to dig the pit and smooth the spoil but the club would have to buy the gravel. As club secretary I ordered the gravel though for delivery after the pit had been dug. Who should arrive to do that with his digger but Corporal Dingle, a calm and thorough Cornishman, one of my own NCOs from sapper days.

On a warm summer morning Dingle and his digger set work. By lunch time a low wall of earth and stones ringed a neat thirty yards across and yard deep pit. That afternoon the Cyprus Gravel Pit company delivered several tons of pea gravel which all poured into the pit. We were keeping to the works table – gospel for all Royal Engineers. Young Dingle had another job next two days but would return three days later to smooth away the spoil exactly as planned. Air Traffic Control said this would be fine as the earth piles were loose spoil.

Steve telephoned next morning. He was getting a lot of flak from the RAF about our digging. I drove up to the UN camp at the airport to sort things out. His telephone was ringing as I came through the door. I apologised profusely but told him what we'd done was with full consultation and clearance by Air Traffic Control who assured me they were responsible. I realised that I should have cleared it with the RAF as well. Steve nodded - though observed that if I had, there would be no jump pit, just lots of letters passing from Nicosia to Episkopi (RAF HQ) and back. The telephone rang again but he made no attempt to answer it. What should I do? Nothing. Don't even answer your phone, let them all call each other. They're not interested in us or the jump pit, nor air safety. They just have to justify their jobs. Eventually they'll all get bored. I followed Steve's instructions.

Next morning I was summoned as a matter of grave urgency by the RAF Station Commander.

Through his office windows, across the airfield, our earthen ramparts rose at least a yard above the sun bleached scrub covering the rest of the airfield. Who had authorised this? Did I realise that such earthworks were in breach of international air safety regulations? The hole must be filled and smoothed over. After some suitably placatory words it was agreed that next day would be fine.

Soon afterwards Steve suggested that a parachute club needed expert knowledge and why wasn't I chairman? Because it's a combined services club and I'm a civilian. Put it to a vote, he said. We did, and I was voted chairman. But I did what he further suggested – I found a patron, Air Vice Marshal Ronnie Nott, Senior Air Staff Officer, renowned bomber pilot. The establishment had been outflanked. We never looked back. Stuart Cameron, former leader of the RAF Falcons, and Peter Kingston, former leader of the Red Devils, joined the club committee. Yes, there was grudging opposition in the usual places, not least the British High Commission, but we ended up with three

drop zones and lots of displays all over the island, from Cheshire Homes Cyprus for high society to RAF Nicosia school landing on their small playground.

Nowadays the club thrives on the place where we started its second innings, now covered by beautifully smooth tarmac though still called Kingsfield Strip.

RULE TWELVE - BE YOURSELF

“In the digital age authenticity is all.”

Steve Bannon

People from other countries adore the British and remember their days in our country with affection. I run a small tour operation and all our clients are Americans. Some return year after year. They can't get enough of us and our country. These are sophisticated and successful people who live very well at home. They're in finance, Silicon Valley and Hollywood. They realise that London and Britain are different experiences although I show them those old parts of London that have hardly changed. To see Britain you have to travel thirty or forty, even fifty miles depending on the compass bearing, from the centre of London.

Yet the person who best explained this gravitational pull was a Swiss diplomat whom I've known for over forty years. After serving in Delhi and back in Berne, in 1974 he was posted to London as the First Secretary. Fairly early in his posting my Swiss fiancée and I dropped round to see him – Paul Andre lived in the next street to the embassy on Bryanston Square.

* * * * *

Regine asked Paul Andre how he was finding London.

'People cross the road wherever they want, they jump on and off moving buses. As a Swiss who always obeys rules whether they make sense or not, you have chosen a very exotic country.'

Slightly amazed, we asked for another example.

'On my first Friday evening I went to the pub round the corner. The place was full of people having a drink before going home for the weekend. A man came in, sat on the last free bar stool, ordered a pint of beer. Once the foaming glass jug was in his grip, he raised it to the whole crowded bar and announced – I hate my job and I hate my wife, thank God it's Friday evening – cheers everyone.'

'But what's exotic about that?' we both asked.

Paul Andre laughed. 'Regine, I'm pleased to observe that you're becoming so British. Nobody in Switzerland would dare say they hate their job.'

* * * * *

Hold on, Steve, what's so new? It always was.

Back in the last century I was Director of the British Information Services across Canada. We had offices in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa the national capital, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver. At one point I had gone down to Washington and looked after the United States as well. I stayed with Terry and Nhu De McNamara. By that time Terry was the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs.

Our main political job was handing over the Canadian Constitution. This was a 1931 Act of Parliament – in London. The provinces and Federal Government had never been able to agree who controlled resources – land, forests, fisheries, oil, hydro-electric power and so on, the list was long. Pierre Trudeau regarded the situation as absurd. Eventually we were drawn into the political struggles between Ottawa and the provincial parliaments, with London suddenly crowded with instant experts and lobbying MPs; not so unlike our Parliament's arrogant behaviour over Brexit, with MPs and peers treating the voters as though our votes are worthless. Our strongest card was just to be ourselves. How Canadians governed their own country was for them to decide. Though, I made no secret of my hope that they would continue to want to share our Queen.

Just as the whole saga was finally sorted, the Queen coming to Canada for the ceremony, Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands. Shortly afterwards the annual Parliamentary Press Gallery dinner took place. This is the equivalent of the Lobby in Westminster. I had been doing the job for three years so knew all the journalists and ministers and many of the other MPs and Senators. In those days the cocktail was held in the Hall of Honour, rather like the nave of a gothic cathedral, running from the main entrance on the Hill to the Parliamentary Library, a chapter house on a promontory overlooking the Ottawa River.

There we all were one chilly night in our tuxes swigging champagne. I had become very friendly with Bruce Phillips, CTV's news anchor and their chief political correspondent, and Jim Munson of CTV. With us was Mark McGuigan, still fairly young, a Montreal lawyer and the Foreign Minister. I had always thought him a very nice fellow though rather serious. Bruce wanted to muster a Commonwealth press pool and join the Task Force. I promised to put this direct to Bernie Inghams and his press team at Number Ten. Then Mark McGuigan asked me if there was any more news from London. Through the champagne fzzzz one news clip stood out. 'Mrs T has frozen all the Argentine assets in Britain.' For a second or two I paused and gazed quizzically at my companions before the champagne slipped into over-drive, 'And I'll tell you what, I wouldn't like to have my assets frozen by Margaret Thatcher.'

Mark McGuigan became a different person. He exploded with helpless laughter. And we established a trust, what he saw was what he got. That served us well in the difficult days ahead.

After serving in Canada I was recalled to London where I worked on everything from the COBRA Committee to the Channel Tunnel. The desk officer for Canada phoned me one afternoon. She said

hesitantly, 'Adrian, I know it's not your job, but in two weeks the Prime Minister is going to address both houses of the Canadian Parliament.'

'That's splendid, they're great admirers.'

'Yes, but her speech is awful, just full of official speak. Can you write another one?'

'Not a problem.'

'I'll send over the present draft.'

'If it's that bad, don't bother!'

Going home to Sussex that evening on the train I wrote her speech. This was duly sent across to Number Ten. Needless to say the style of some passages did not blend easily with mine but my main points were kept though their impact softened. The jokes were kept but again the language lost some of its Anglo-Saxon punch.

I never took to Whitehall's drab prose. After Vietnam, back in Sussex, one of my chums, Freddie Hodgson, was Production Editor at the News of the World. In those days the paper sold five million copies every Sunday. Freddie was writing the journalists' text book – *Modern Media Practise* – on the train. Eventually he became the editor of the series. Each morning, heading for London, drinking coffee and munching buttered toast in the restaurant car, Fred taught me how to write, including how Anglo-Saxon words have the most impact. Ten years later I wondered how Mrs T would fare. I need not have worried.

A few weeks later a package arrived with the post, from Canada. Inside were a video tape and a slip of paper. The message was from a good friend, Don Newman of CBC whose programme called *The Hill* covered the week in Parliament. Don was Doyen of the Parliamentary Press Gallery. His message was simple – From the first line we knew who wrote most of this speech. Mrs Thatcher was rewarded with a standing ovation. We thought you'd like to hear your own words delivered by her so on behalf of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, I'm sending you a tape.

RULE TWELVE AND A BIT – MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE MEDIA

*“Always broadcast live, Adrian, radio or TV. Then those ****s back in London can’t edit your words to match their opinions.”*

Brian Baron on Saturday morning at the Hotel Continental, Saigon, 1969

Whatever your diplomatic duties, you will find that the best sources of accurate information are journalists. Those who are working for major outlets - whether TV, radio or print - are under constant pressure to report stories first and accurately. News outlets have to earn a living.

Sometimes free-lancers, columnists, stringers with exceptionally good address books will leave the field standing and repeatedly scoop the news. This cannot be a one way traffic. You have to be open and honest and do your best to keep your media friends well informed. Above all, if you don’t know something, say so at once, because otherwise at best you’re wasting their time, at worst misleading a friend.

One sunny Sunday afternoon towards the end of April 1982 the telephone rang in our home in Piccadilly Avenue, Ottawa. Mike Duffy, CBC’s political correspondent, calling from the golf course. Mike had access to far better technology than I did. What did I think of the news?

I explained, ‘Mike, I’m the Director of the British Information Services from the Atlantic to the Pacific, I’m the last person to be told the latest news.’

‘Your guys have re-taken South Georgia.’

‘Have we, that’s good news.’

‘Only good?’

‘Of course, I’m delighted - but our sailors and Toms have a tough job. Down there it’s the start of winter. Things will go wrong sometimes but for the opening move they’ve done very well.’

‘Can you come on TV in a couple of hours? We’re hooking up with Washington, New York, Buenos Aires and Toronto.’

‘Let me check with the High Commissioner. He might want to do it himself. Lord Moran is a naval veteran of World War Two. Aged 18 he was in the aircraft lookout of HMS Belfast the night HMS Duke of York sunk the battlecruiser Scharnhorst. And I need to check with our MOD for their news.’

‘I’ve got all the latest Ministry of Defence briefing in my office.’

‘Seriously, Mike; that’s great. Then no need to phone. Give me five minutes.’

Lord Moran was glad to hear the news but had an engagement that he could not break.

When I arrived at the CBC News studio fifteen minutes later, Mike had all the telex messages from the MOD in London. By the sounds of it, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines with the SAS had overcome the Argentine occupation forces plus appalling winter weather.

This was a good start but liberating the islanders would be a remarkable feat given the damage done to the Royal Navy in particular by the Nott cuts. So while deploying calm confidence I gave no hostages to fortune on TV. War was messy but realistically there was only one outcome. And that was right. We had fought two world wars over the right to self-determination of small countries. We had created the United Nations to protect their rights.

We were linked up over the network across North America and on Sunday evening we had a big audience. My job was to win over the *maybe they're rights*. Americans warm to a reasoned argument about a small group of people's liberty. So do Canadians. Triumphalism doesn't go down well with Canadians who prefer action rather than words. A year later I discussed this with Admiral Sandy Woodward and General Jeremy Moore, who both agreed that caution though confidence was indeed the way to play it. They knew they would liberate the islanders but the cost was exposed to fortune and there would be losses, and people who ought to know better, get nervous. So it proved.

RULE THIRTEEN – IGNORE LOCAL BELIEFS AT YOUR PERIL

My old cook and housekeeper in Saigon was a lay bonze in the local Buddhist temple.

For two and a half years the temple was supplied with cooking fat and margarine from the Singapore NAAFI – apparently both made excellent prayer candle fat.

Never mess with the local management.

RULE FOURTEEN – WHEN IN ROME, DO AS THE ROMANS DO

'The Federal Council told the people that the European Economic Area is the training camp for joining the EU. As the people didn't want to join, we voted no to the training camp.'

Swiss lawyer and great friend, Hans Brunner

Back in the 1970s, my job in our embassy in Berne was the political and economic work. Most days the economic side of the job took priority. Then along came the CSCE – Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe – where the neutrals formed a group of countries and worked together. At that time the Swiss had strong armed forces with an air force as large as the RAF is today and an army seven times larger than ours today. Sweden also had a strong air force and navy. The Cold War

was chilly but not freezing, and the aim of the conference was to reduce the risk of hot war on the Continent.

Hans-Jurg Renk was the Swiss diplomat in charge of the work for the conference. I became his link with London and NATO. Eventually the neutral position paper was agreed among themselves and then with NATO at the official level. Last we had to clear it with the Swiss Federal Council – the seven-minister government of the country – and we only had two days.

In any other capital this was near enough *mission impossible*. Hans-Jurg proposed that we meet for lunch next day at the Dela Casa restaurant just across the main square from Parliament. The Dela Casa is famed for its traditional Swiss dishes, mounds of roesti, and also excellent Italian dishes. Hans-Jurg was very partial to Belito Misto. He had booked a table beside a round table almost enclosed by a horseshoe shaped church pew, known in Switzerland as an eck-bank, a corner bench. The restaurant called this table the Bundesrat Tisch – the Federal Council Table.

We had no sooner been served a bottle of wine than our neighbours arrived, all seven together and in a very jolly mood. They squeezed round the table and the waiters brought their wine and food without being asked – they knew their regular customers' choices. We paid our respects to our neighbours and enjoyed some cheerful banter. They asked what we were plotting and scheming. Hans-Jurg then explained, including about the deadline. Not a problem, boys, said the President for the year, send it over after lunch, we'll all sign except Rudi – the solid farmer defence federal councillor - he'll add a thumb print.

Today the Federal Council still take lunch at the Dela Casa but they have a private room and their officials with them. Gone are the days of jolly lunches for the seven chums where business was done without fuss and a hundred times quicker. Those were the days of truly direct democracy!

RULE FIFTEEN – PLAY BY THEIR RULES, YOU CAN WIN

“If anything moves around in your mouth, swallow it quick.”

Friendly advice at my first Korean business lunch

One Sunday morning late last year, I felt sympathy for Liam Fox facing a bright eyed, bushy tailed Sky News interviewer in London after a long day at almost mid-night in New Zealand. His satellite delayed answers to some good questions brought back fond memories of exporting to wily people in hard markets. Never easy but never dull!

South Korea lies further away from New Zealand than the British Isles. Thirty years ago no free trade deals existed with South Korea. Far from it, at that time the Korean government had lists of banned imports that filled several books.

When a trade mission arrived, on their first morning I would give a talk about the history, culture and customs of Korea so when they went out of the embassy front gates at least they started with some kind of simple lode stone to guide them through the day and one hoped, the whole week.

The commercial department staff consisted of four UK diplomats and twenty very able local staff, more ladies than men. Our missions came from trade associations and regional development corporations, most very well organised. Several thousand Korean businessmen visited the commercial department during a year; our staff were known, liked and respected.

Our problems were less about free trade than encouraging more companies of all sizes, great or small, to come and have a look at Korea. As the DTI budget only allowed us about twenty missions a year – a number they would not increase – somehow we had to persuade hundreds more businesses to visit Korea. As my previous job had been Director of the British Information Services across Canada, my instinct was to run a media campaign about Korea in Britain and a campaign about Britain in Korea. The former was easier than the latter because in those days most of the media in Korea were controlled by the government. For our purpose – promoting an image of British equals quality – that didn't matter; besides, wiser to keep our powder dry for the political messages. A time would come when the Koreans were ripe to hear those and my gut feeling was that would fall during the following summer. Our best strategy with no money was to lure British business people on their way to or from our neighbouring markets, Japan, Hong Kong and China. Free trade deals obviously can help but enthusiasm, energy, imagination, stamina, flexibility, above all good products and salesmanship, reliable delivery and support, all at fair prices are all keys to success. The Koreans have one more, the most important - good kibun.

This is often clinched by meeting your potential business partners at a Kaesong house – like a geisha house – where you spend the evening sitting cross-legged, entertained by the ladies wearing their hanbok dresses, while the men each drink about a bottle of whisky. During the 1970s there was still a great deal of Hepatitis B in Korea and by tradition brim full glasses were exchanged throughout the evening! So you really had to believe in your product before taking the medical risk. My wife is a doctor's daughter from Switzerland and after stern interrogation she decided that I'd done enough Kaesong parties. We struck a deal. I could do one more – backing out would have been bad manners and great loss of face – with the Vice Minister for Trade who was a good sport. The meeting was about lifting some of the countless trade restrictions but, of course, none of us were going to attempt any business while running super-charged on a mixture of blood and whisky.

About half way into the night he and I began swopping full glasses until one of us keeled over. The honour of the Korean Government and the British Airborne Forces were both on the roulette wheel of fickle fate. Through my steadily blurring vision I saw yet another bottle of Grant's Single Malt – which we had been promoting – being passed like a rugby ball along the cross-legged line of trade ministry staff perched on their cushions opposite. In the corner of my left eye I vaguely recorded the embassy number two, who had spent seventeen years in Brussels on secondment to the EC, looking horrified. Suddenly the bottle reversed direction and my confused brain slowly worked out the contest was winding down. Eventually both competitors were helped onto their feet and taken home by their trainers. After being steered through the garden gates I weaved and swerved until after a several attempts I managed to open the front door. Then, still in my overcoat, I lunged

forward, hands out-stretched to break my fall. Soft carpet rushed up to meet me and I crawled on all fours up the wide stairs and along the corridor. I rose and leaned against the wall, then reported to my better half, who was sitting up in bed, reading. My breath smelt like a petrol bomb when voice kept low, (our children were asleep) swaying violently I blurted, ' Prob' wone ash me agin' aarter toonyte, nobowee' won rizz anudder' beeeg losh off faysh.'

The Koreans enjoy such hilarious encounters. We all agreed it was a draw. Nobody lost face. I was never invited to another Kaesong party. But in a Confucian society with very strict social discipline any slack provided by a foreign devil was a present from heaven. All you bright young diplomats if you're allowed to read stuff written by the enemy, those disruptive Brexiteers, take this on board; it's the thousands of human encounters like that night in Seoul that make our influence so special all over the world. Indeed, from then onwards, something changed. I'd passed a test and the Koreans liked that. They knew me. What they saw was what they got. We felt at mutual ease with each other, we had reached good kibun. They became much more interested in talking about possible deals and British goods. We enjoyed our good kibun. I'm not suggesting that he and his staff hit the bars and Kaesong houses night after night. They were all respectable government officials. I am saying that our human relationships are more important than anything else.

Leaving aside the single malt promotion, Dr Fox's challenge is very similar though global. Many small and medium sized companies in the British Isles have good markets at home and never think of exporting. Why bother if you're making a good living from familiar customers? This is one of the reasons why so many British companies who are comfortable trucking products to the Continent are less adventurous when it comes to selling into a market thousands of miles away. I call this timid approach the nation of shopkeepers. Yet our forefathers were second to none at importing raw materials, manufacturing, exporting the finished products. By so doing, they modernised whole continents.

During three years running the commercial department in Seoul, I admired how our Korean staff helped numerous small and medium sized British companies double or triple their turnover by selling to Korea. Over three years our exports to South Korea not only doubled in value but shifted from an awful lot of raw materials with far too few manufactures to many, many more manufactures while increasing our sales of raw materials. My message for any politicians reading these words is that nothing beats a first class local staff in a distant and tough market. And the local staff are the first to say that they need switched on, streetwise, experienced UK diplomats running on the inside fast lane for the tricky sales and moments that need political savvy. By all means appoint trade commissioners for markets similar to our own such as North America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, India, Malaysia, Singapore and much of Europe; but strengthen the embassies and consulates to carry on their highly effective work in the places where language, culture and politics are the crucial cocktail and very tricky to mix unless you know precisely what you're doing.

How did we persuade them to buy plane tickets to Seoul? For that, you'll need to read the Red Cell paper *The Other Side of the Planet...*

RULE SIXTEEN – SOMETIMES THE MOST DANGEROUS PATH IS THE SAFEST

“If there were no corrupt, violent, dangerous countries run by crooks, people like Adrian – and me – would never have earned a living.”

Ronnie Bloom at the club bar explaining the world beyond Dover and Lands End

*“He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not put it to the touch
To gain or lose it all.”*

James Graham, First Marquess of Montrose

Before becoming US Consul in Danang, Terry McNamara had served with CORDS as a province adviser at Vinh Long in the Mekong Delta, and then Quang Tri next door to North Vietnam. When a new senior official arrived, Terry would organise a tour around the provinces of I Corps. He found these excursions very useful for his own job as Ambassador Ellesworth Bunker’s eyes and ears in the northern part of the country. Sometimes I would join these groups for one learnt a lot and met many people on the spot. CORDS appointed a new refugee officer for I Corps and Terry organised a day in Quang Tri Province.

Early on an overcast morning, we met the new refugee chief, Karl Fritz, at the chopper pad. Always the optimist, Terry carried a Panama straw hat. Although the visibility was good enough to fly, the Marines’ met’ people warned that north of the Hai Van Pass there was a lot of sea mist. So it proved. As we flew around the mountain flank we plunged into thick white fog, so thick that our pilot took his Huey down to just above the sea and keeping close off shore, hugged the coast. He soon found Route One and its flanking telephone poles. Flying barely above them, we followed the wires north along the coast. About ten miles south of Phu Bai we landed on a chopper pad occupying a small outcrop over-looking the sea. We all got out and stretched our legs while our pilot spoke to the control tower. The fog was thick and we could just about see the waves only forty feet below our perch. To the north many other aircraft and choppers were circling until the ground fog cleared. After a quarter of an hour we took off again though flew straight past Phu Bai and pressed on north to Hue where Karl was given a briefing on the refugee situation. An hour later we returned to the chopper pad on the river bank.

By now the mist had burned off and as we rose from the chopper pad, beside us sparkled a bottle green Perfume River. We climbed away over the walled city with its lakes covered in huge water lilies. Our next stop was a refugee camp on the barren strip of sand that the French called *The Street without Joy*. Dozens of children ran beneath us screaming with excitement as we circled overhead before coming down to land. You could hear them over the turbines from two hundred feet. The sun was hot and Terry wore his Panama hat. He had made a smart choice of head gear after all.

Next stop was Dong Ha just below the DMZ. When I arrived in Vietnam this had been a huge base for the Third US Marine Division. Now the South Vietnamese watched over the DMZ and thanks to the

Marines all seemed peaceful. The chopper crew hopped over the airfield to get some fuel while the Quang Tri Province Advisor, Colonel John Burke, introduced Karl to the senior Vietnamese officials and military officers, starting with the Province Chief.

After another briefing we four strolled back to our waiting crew with their Huey. Nearby was a heavy artillery battery with silent guns though elevated for maximum range and pointing towards North Vietnam. The Ben Hai River was less than four miles away.

John was a big, calm man though with a mischievous side. He knew the chopper crew were experienced and led by one of the best pilots. Moreover, he also knew that Terry was a cool customer with a wicked humour.

John turned to me and remarked, 'Well, Adrian, you're at the DMZ, you're within their artillery range. Karl can say he's seen it.'

I suspected he and Terry had conferred. 'Yes, indeed, John, but shouldn't he see all of it, their bit as well?'

He grinned conspiracy. 'Let's ask the pilots.' And we strolled ahead.

Our command pilot didn't blink. 'They won't see us until the last second, we'll be gone before they react.' Nor did he think there was too high a risk that somebody might fire a man-portable heat seeking surface to air missile. There had been intelligence reports that the NVA along the DMZ – two divisions, sometimes more – had been equipped with some of these new weapons.

We all clambered on board the Huey. Terry still wore his Panama hat. No sooner were we off the ground than our pilots aimed our Huey straight towards north. We flew at zero feet faster than I'd ever flown in a Huey, throbbing over abandoned paddies with the sea not far off on our right. About a mile distant on our left, the sandbag walls and guns of a firebase crouched on the long, low escarpment over-looking the Ben Hai River valley – Alpha 1, the most northern firebase in South Vietnam. We swooped down a long gentle slope towards the river. Our door-gunners swung their M 60s forward into the wind blast. Now we raced over a moonscape of flooded shell craters. To all directions the valley was pock-marked with round ponds of all sizes. Suddenly on our left was a rail track. We sank lower. Then our pilot climbed in a hard left hand turn. Through the open door I saw the old railway track from Saigon to Hanoi crossing the narrow river on its French colonial bridge. At the middle of the bridge stood a mast flying a red flag emblazoned with a large yellow star.

As we banked hard to avoid the flag a voice, Karl's, shouted over the throbbing turbines, 'Hey, Terry, is that a range or somethin'?'

And as we descended to fly lower than the bridge deck, Terry shoved his Panama hat on the back of his head and declared amiably, 'Karl, you gotta' be ***** me.'

The rest of us howled with laughter as the flooded craters sped just below the skids.

We stayed low until south of Camp Alpha then gradually climbed and headed towards the mountains and the Laos border. Our chopper crew were in a celebratory mood. Around this time Karl realised where he had just been.

Half an hour later we circled over steep emerald mountains before swiftly descending onto a chopper pad on a mountain top ringed by razor wire and claymore mines. Sandbag walls protected sandbag bunkers and an old self-propelled one-five-five gun. A burly veteran warrant officer ran this Special Forces camp. He gave Karl his briefing at the end of which his guest asked how close were the NVA.

‘Usually about a mile, sometimes fifty yards. They’re mostly across the valley on the west flank of this hill, just inside Laos. They like it up here, fish in the mountain streams, chatter, often sing. Gee – I wasted a guy the other day as he spread out his washed shirt to dry over a big flat rock.’

When we took off jungled mountains basked under late afternoon sun. The crew chief passed round cans of ice cold beer. Our door gunners relaxed. I sat on the port doorsill, my feet resting on the skids, admiring the spectacular view, shouting chatter with the door gunner, enjoying our conversation through cool wind blast. We were at three-thousand feet, hundreds of feet above the jungled hills, beyond the range of most ground fire. Away to the west lay the mountains around Khe Sanh, northwards stony smoke swelled from the guns of Camp Carroll bombarding the DMZ. Far to the east I could just about pick out the mouth of the Ben Hai River. Beside the distant sea, northwards stretched the same abandoned strip of fertile coastal plain.

Our helicopter crew knew what they were doing. Surprise is everything. They had seized the moment for gambling but that had now passed. Karl and Terry were VIP passengers. At this end of a long day they were taking no more chances.

RULE SEVENTEEN – ALLOW FOR MISTAKES

“One day, Adrian, someone will put a match to the Foreign Office.”

Lord Moran, High Commissioner to Canada, on hearing Argentina had invaded the Falklands

On a spring morning in Ottawa I sat down at my desk with a vastly reduced workload. After more than a year of daily political tightrope walking, the Canadian Constitution debate was done and dusted. The Queen was coming to Ottawa to hand over the fancy paperwork from one of her Parliaments to another. Seconds later my highly respected deputy, Maureen Kincaid, dashed into the room. Maureen was a very calm though highly switched operator. She knew everyone in the media and her husband, Bill, was on the board of a commercial TV station. As a teenager Maureen baby-sat Peter Jennings eventually of NBC fame. ‘Argentina has invaded the Falkland Islands,’ she announced, leaving no doubt that she wasn’t pulling my leg.

By the time the Queen arrived and Pierre Trudeau's political guests, the Task Force was on its way south. One special guest was former Prime Minister Jim Callaghan. Lord Moran, our High Commissioner, asked me to go round to the hotel and make sure Jim Callaghan had everything he needed – Jim had also been Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. I had met him two or three times when he came through Ottawa on the way somewhere and I never understood why people in the FCO said he was pompous. He was the complete opposite.

I found Jim sitting on his bed, dressed in a smart suit, jacket off, ready to head downstairs though not for at least an hour. So I ordered some coffee and eats from room service and we started chatting.

He told me all about the previous Falklands scare when he sent both submarines and surface ships which had the desired effect. We came round to Denis Healey via John Nott's daft defence cuts. Jim confided, 'I'll give you a tip, Adrian. When somebody makes a mess of a job as Denis did with the whole economy, make 'em sweep up their own mess. I did that with Denis. Kept him sweeping up for years. But I'll tell you what, in the end, Denis became a very good sweeper upper.'

I asked if there was anything he needed before I left. 'Yes, Adrian, there is one thing you could do for me. I should imagine you're on the phone to Downing Street quite a bit.'

'Yes, indeed,' I grinned, wondering what was coming.

'Next time you call them, remind the lady who ordered all those ships she's sending south.'

'With great pleasure,' I assured him.

Jim volunteered to go on TV for us which was splendid. Later that day, Maureen escorted him to the TV studios. She informed him that 'Adrian passed on your message.' He gave a terrific interview, striking just the right tone and with great natural authority.

RULE EIGHTEEN – EXPECT BIG SURPRISES

"There are bold parachutists and old parachutists, but there are no old, bold parachutists."

Flight line folklore

By the spring of 1968, the Cyprus Combined Services Parachute Club was ready to hold an annual championship. We chose April as the month, when the island was enjoying the first really warm weather after the winter cold and rain, but the drop zone still lay soft before summer heat baked the earth hard as rock. A special event also gave the club a chance to say thanks to everyone on the island who had helped us during the previous twelve months. The event ran over two days and Ron Griffiths was chief judge, who I'd known since making my first long free-fall jumps at Kidlington. Ron's battalion of the Greenjackets was on the island for six months' UN duties. Ronnie Nott and his

wife came from Episkopi, Mike Harbottle, UN Force deputy-commander and a Greenjacket from UNFICYP, Cyprus TV sent a camera crew, Mr Manglis joined the event as did Hercules Paniotides, the boss of Air Safety for the island and many others. The chairman won the individual accuracy – no cheating or favouritism!

On Saturday evening we ended the show with Ron and I going up to about 8000 feet and making a link-up in freefall. I can still see Ron's rubbery grin and cheerful salute at 120 miles an hour when we broke apart for opening our chutes. As the climax of the weekend, on Sunday evening three of us would attempt to break the Cyprus high altitude record with a jump from 13,500 feet which was about as high as our old Piper Tripacer could climb.

The team was Sergeant Jan Sparkes RAF instructor and Falcons team member, Flight Lieutenant Bruce Burman RAF Regiment, and me with Warrant Officer Bert Poulton RAF as pilot. We had about an hour to climb that high before we started to lose the daylight, which happens quite fast in spring at that latitude. As we clawed our way into the evening sky over olive groves and villages our shouted banter concerned who should be thrown out so the plane broke its own record by a measurable margin. As the smallest I was squashed alongside Bert though facing the tail. Jan and Bruce sat on the metal deck facing the nose. For parachuting the rear port door and all the seats were removed save the pilot's.

We soon reached 1500 feet and were climbing west of the airfield when Bert frowned and next moment Jan shouted sharply, 'Get out, get out, we're on fire!'

Bruce and I grinned. You can't fool us. Try something better.

Barely a second passed before a yard long flame shot between Bert and myself though fortunately missing Jan and Bruce on the deck.

Bert switched off the engine and started calling May Day, May Day, over the radio. We all three knew that we had to abandon the aircraft. With our weight gone, Bert could glide and land somewhere. Already Bruce swung his legs into the slipstream and hurled himself into the evening sky. Jan slid across the deck, hauled himself through the door and vanished beyond the wheel. I yelled good luck to Bert while I fought my way over the door sill. Bert was having trouble keeping the aircraft level as its centre of gravity shifted without any pulling power from the propeller. By now all the weight was in the nose from the engine and fuel tank. I dragged myself over the sill and plunged into the cool air. I realised we were much lower than 1500 feet, reached down to open my reserve parachute only to find its white canopy already rushing past my face. I glanced back. Overhead the aircraft was turning rightwards as Bert searched for somewhere to land. Next moment my parachute cracked open but with its rigging lines twisted a third of the way towards the canopy. I started kicking myself round to undo the twists and allow the canopy to open fully.

Kicking hard I overtook Jan and Bruce floating down towards small brown hillocks. Both had opened their main parachutes. I heard Jan shout, 'Get your legs together.'

I did, fast.

Next second I hit the ground, a soft patch of reddish brown earth.

'Are you Ok?' called Jan descending from the evening sky.

'Fine, Jan.' I shouted upwards. 'What about Bert?'

'Can't see him,' yelled Jan from his circling parachute, 'but can't see any smoke either.'

Seconds later Jan and Bruce landed a few yards off. We listened but heard nothing so rolled up our parachutes and climbed onto some high ground. A few moments later we heard a chopper in the air and soon the duty Wessex helicopter, lights flashing, closed on our hill. A car full of Cypriot press photographers - and two young soldiers from the National Guard, running fast - beat the Wessex. The two National Guardsmen posed for the press but were unlucky – they drove past and jumped out with flash bulbs going before their car stopped. We obliged with big smiles as they told us Bert had landed safely on a road.

The Wessex shattered the evening as it touched down on our small hill and ducking into the rotor wash, we clambered on board. Wessex helicopters were quite large and this one was fitted for medevacs with a bed attached to the wall opposite its wide door. Jan swiftly stretched out on the bed with his parachute canopy draped over him like a pall. A few minutes later we landed by the club house at RAF Nicosia. Jacquie, Jan's wife and mother of their five children, rushed anxiously forward. She stared in horror at the pall. Then the corpse lifted its cover, winked and said, 'Ello, Jacquie.'

She forgave him.

Apparently I had quit the aircraft so low that nobody saw my parachute open. Those watching presumed someone had been killed. Later Bert told me that I had left the aircraft at about 500 or so feet. This was recorded as the Cyprus Low Altitude record. That night airliners heading down the perimeter taxi way to the main runway threshold for take-off were surprised to pass happy revellers dancing all around the control tower to bouzouki music and the latest pops.

RULE NINETEEN – NEVER ASSUME, YOU MIGHT PUT YOUR FOOT IN IT

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned."

William Congreve (as paraphrased)

"A woman is a dish for the Gods, if the Devil dress her not."

William Shakespeare

After more than three years in Korea and the huge city of Seoul, we found ourselves on the island of Jamaica. Our son, Julian, was a boarder at Vinehall just up the road from our home in Sussex. The

house was rented so we were living 5300 feet up in Murren across the valley from the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau. My wife went to Sussex to take Julian back to school while Margot, aged seven, and I set off for Jamaica.

In those days this was a beautiful trip on the top deck bubble of a BA 747. One touched down in the Bahamas then flew on to Montego Bay before island hopping to Kingston. After living in a city of ten million souls, Kingston was emerald splashed red with palms and bougainvillea, the blue mountains and the turquoise sea always in sight. There were less humming birds after hurricane Gilbert – I'd been to Jamaica for the UN Law of the Sea Conference – but the pelicans still hung on the wind over Kingston Bay. Margot loved everything and everyone from the moment she stood on the island. My first job was to find a place in a good school for her.

We discovered that Hillel Academy had a very good reputation. One hot afternoon we arrived at the school's large green compound and made our way along a veranda to the head mistresses' office.

Margot went off to do a test to see which class she should join. Mrs Owen, the head mistress, a very attractive and charming lady suggested that we could have a chat while Margot took the test.

'Now tell me, Mr Hill,' she began curiously, 'most people in the British High Commission with daughters Margot's age have them at boarding school in England.'

'Well, she was with us in Korea as was our son for a year, at the American school, Seoul Foreign, and we just think she's too young for boarding school.'

Mrs Owen smiled, 'No other reasons?'

I thought and then offered, 'We think if girls go to boarding school too early they can lose their individuality, if you like, their charm.'

Mrs Owen gave me an even bigger smile then teased without mercy, 'I went to boarding school.'

She'd outfoxed me with the opening question. What on earth could I say? I struggled to dig myself out of the hole.' There are exceptions to every rule, Mrs Owen.'

She laughed, delighted at catching me out, and my escape. 'I can see why you've got your job.'

Margot had a very happy time at Hillel and through her we came to know many Jamaican families as friends. We keep in touch to this day.

RULE TWENTY – DON'T FALL FOR CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

“What, have a Muslim as our Chief Justice? My dear boy, he would become a crook overnight. No, no, no. We’re very content with dear old Vincent de Silva – he’s a devout Roman Catholic, honest as the day is long.”

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Adrian in Lahore 1964

When I arrived in Lahore in April 1964, the Indian sub-continent had been independent for seventeen years. The city had been capital of the whole Punjab and its cultural heart beat. According to some of today’s students anyone British should have been hated. The reality was the opposite. Not far away was Amritsar, scene of one of the most appalling atrocities carried out during the Raj, when a crazy general ordered Indian troops to open fire on peacefully demonstrating civilians. Did I feel hated? Was I hated? When I crossed the border into India I was welcomed. The Sikhs very proudly showed me their Golden Temple with its amazing huge carp sharing the lake with human bathers.

My visits to Amritsar were about every two months. There was a row of shops before the border customs at Atari Road. One day I went in the one selling cigars. Wooden boxes of Churchill Specials wrapped in pink cellophane walled the shop right up to its high ceiling. On the lids was Winston gripping a Tommy gun and wearing a stove pipe hat.

‘Do you wish to become famous?’ probed the old shopkeeper sitting cross-legged in a corner on the carpet.

‘Why not?’ I replied cautiously.

‘Then you should smoke cigars.’

I took three boxes and have been hooked ever since.

A year later I set off in my Triumph Herald for a much longer journey around Northern India. Leonard Cheshire suggested that I should visit John Martyn, headmaster of the famous school in Dehra Doon, who would show me the Cheshire homes nearby and tell me how they managed to do this. Back in 1965 the Grand Trunk Road hadn’t changed since partition. A narrow single lane strip of tarmac flanked by red dust verges, stretched over three hundred miles across the Punjab from Lahore to Delhi. The busses raced each other to the next village. Overtaking one was suicidal. A mile wake of red dust streamed behind each bus, and overtaking was a gamble with your life.

Eventually, after a day behind the wheel, I arrived before the Red Fort of New Delhi. After all those miles, as the sun set I took a wrong turning. My hosts lived near the Ashoka Hotel. I saw a busy street with lots of lights and decided to go that way. Within a few minutes it became clear that I’d made a mistake but everyone was incredibly friendly. Children came from the houses and stared wide-eyed at me and the car. As it was very hot I had the windows open. A cheerful Indian stuck his head through the passenger window and suggested, ‘I think you’re lost, Sahib.’

'Yes, I am,' I admitted.

'You're in Chandni Chowk, the heart of old Delhi. You can't turn, the street is too narrow. Besides, everyone wants to see your Lahore number plate. So we're going to clear the way for you.' Fruit stalls, all sorts of shop stalls – fruit and vegetables, meat and fish, groceries, clothes, jewellery, made room, even buffalo carts made way for my little car. Crowds of smiling people waved, children climbed onto the bonnet. When I reached the other end of the horse shoe shaped street, about two hundred yards from the other entrance, a motor scooter rider was waiting and he led me right across the green splendour of the new city to the front door of my hosts.

Don't believe word of lefty rubbish; all over the world being British is a big advantage.

RULE TWENTY-ONE – A LITTLE BIT OF HUMOUR PERFORMS MIRACLES

"If you find it hard to laugh at yourself, I'd be happy to do it for you."

Groucho Marx

Leonard Cheshire came to Lahore and during his visit asked me to help him organise a Cheshire Home. He had founded homes in India and wanted to do the same in Pakistan. He said, 'I'll send someone to help but I'm not sure who at the moment.'

One morning, Rashid, our office chapprassi, put his head round my door and said, 'There's a lady in the front hall asking to see you.' In the hall I found a very pretty New Zealand girl who took one look at me and immediately burst out laughing.

She showed me Leonard's letter to her. 'When you arrive in Lahore, go to the British High Commission and ask for Adrian Hill. I should warn you that he is a lifelong invalid and on no account is he allowed to lift heavy weights.'

I had been doing circuit training with weights since joining the Army.

That was typical of Leonard. He was so thoughtful towards other people that he even organised how two young people would get along from the start. He knew that a good laugh always cracks the ice. And in those days young people didn't take themselves so seriously. We got on very well and although the Cheshire Home didn't happen while I was in Lahore, partly because of the war in September 1965, we did help to lay some of the main foundations.

RULE TWENTY-TWO –THE BUSIEST PEOPLE ARE OFTEN THE MOST HELPFUL

*“An extraordinary affair. I gave them their orders and they wanted to stay and discuss them.”
The Duke of Wellington after his first Cabinet meeting as Prime Minister*

One of the great pleasures of living on the beautiful island of Jamaica is that everyone knows everyone. Doing something or going somewhere without bumping in to someone you know, or without someone you know seeing or hearing who you were with, believe me is near impossible.

We always headed for the north-east coast when our son came home during the school holidays. A friend in Kingston suggested that we try a hotel called Goblins along the coast from Ocho Rios. Lots of spectacular beaches were only a short drive distant. The family favourite was Frenchman’s Cove, once a famous hotel where the Queen had stayed, but closed through lack of hard cash. Henry, the barman, and several of the staff kept the name and concept alive by running a bar and selling all sorts of food on the beach. An ice cold stream came through a small valley and escaped into the warm blue green water of the cove.

We set off on Friday evening and reached the hotel after dark. Reception was a little thatched house attached to the main hotel, other houses were scattered across the grounds. Regine volunteered to check us in while the children and I found our small house and unloaded the luggage. We drove a few yards further, found our house. The children were fascinated by the fireflies in the grounds as we unloaded the luggage and sorted ourselves out. Regine seemed to be taking a long time to book us in but eventually she appeared.

‘All signed in?’ I enquired.

She looked doubtful.

‘I think we are,’ she debated, ‘but I don’t think the man at reception worked for the hotel.’

‘What made you think that?’

‘He seemed more like a guest.’

‘Was he tall?’

‘Yes, and very charming.’

‘Rather distinguished?’

‘Yes, definitely.’

‘Silver hair, reddish face, twinkling blue eyes.’

‘How do you know?’

‘You were booked in by none other than the Prime Minister.’

Later, I went to the next door house, where I found Michael Manley unloading the last of his family’s luggage. I gave him a hand with the bags and thanked him for helping Regine to book us into the hotel.

He protested cheerfully, ‘We put adverts all over the world saying Jamaica, irie, no problem – and then I make one right here on the island? No way, Adrian, no way.’

RULE TWENTY-THREE – ALWAYS NETWORK

“Seeing once is worth a hundred questions.”

Old Korean proverb from China

Both the High Commissioners that I worked for in Canada, John Ford and Lord Moran, independently advised me to get out of the Diplomatic Service while still young enough to do something else. Both thought that as their generation, who had served in the war, retired, the Service was changing and not for the better. There would be no place for people like me. I took their advice and applied for early retirement. After months of lost mail this finally was agreed and I retired from Jamaica – the children would have stayed on the island forever – and rather like the EU, no sooner had I accepted the package than the FCO tried to change my mind!

While job hunting I wrote a novel set in Korea during the Olympic Games called *The Tiger Pit*. Every publisher turned it down. Aged fifty I was far too old for the usual new young talent promotion strategy, nor likely to live long enough to offer a worthwhile investment. Ronnie Bloom told me how to get round that wall and within weeks Fiona Kennedy, in those days with W H Smith down in Swindon, turned me into a new publisher and put me in business on their special programme. I asked my friends in the media how and when to launch the story. The type-setting wasn’t very good but over 5,000 copies were sold. However, at that point, Regine suggested that it was time for a real job! So I became a chief executive and even a member of the CBI Council. But I kept on writing and finally an agent took me on for one of the big American agencies.

Peter also represented actors – the agency was called United Talent – and he took a shared table at the Evening Standard Literary Awards lunch. Peter shared the table with guests of the newspaper. Our table had quite an economic and government flavour. On my left was Rita’s boyfriend from Coronation Street and on my right Sarah from Downing Street. Next to Peter sat a man with the build and complexion of a farmer, but the vibes of a professor. I introduced myself across the table. I had very friendly dealings with the business chief one of the most well-known enterprises in his

hometown. Its tower HQ was known all over the city as the pencil – HQ of the Frankfurt Messe, the Trade Fair. Its big rival was further north, Cologne.

The world immediately beyond the Grosvenor Hotel on this sunny Friday lunchtime was in the middle of the ERM crisis, but across the table Hans seemed to have not a care in the world. He was a brilliant economist who thought the idea of the Euro – as proposed – was complete nonsense.

Eventually his advice was ignored by the German Parliament who have a lot to answer for - while he's been proved horribly right!

By this stage Rita's boyfriend and I had consumed plenty of red wine and everyone was very jolly. The prettiest young female author won the prize – a much easier job for the marketing department at the publisher, heaven forbid the prize went to a man, or even worse, an older female.

I asked across the table, 'Are you going to buy the pound, Hans?

Only Sarah and I were interested in his answer.

He gave us a big smile and shook his head. 'Not this week – we had to buy the Italian Lira on Wednesday.'

Had I been in banking or stocks that was probably a valuable tip!

RULE TWENTY-FOUR – LEARN TO COUNT

"If you see a Swiss banker jumping out of a window, follow him, there is sure to be a profit in it."

Attributed to Voltaire, though not proven

After a very 'cheerful' lunch at our club, three of us talked about the news that the freehold was up for sale of the next door house in the street down the side of the club house.

In those days the club had about a thousand members. The sellers were asking a million pounds for next door's freehold. I was still a diplomat and my fellow lunchers were both retired spies. We decided that the club ought not to miss this rare chance. The club owned its freehold, adding the house next door would make possible accommodation for the staff, more bedrooms for the members.

We rose enthusiastically and headed towards the suggestions book.

As the diplomat I was put in charge of the pen. Ronnie as the businessman dictated the suggestion, checking that our third man agreed and proof read. We proposed that the club purchased the

freehold by every member contributing a hundred pounds. A few days later we all looked at the book to see if anyone had supported our idea. Somebody had written something.

*'I think you left off a nought. Good job you chaps aren't in money!
Robin Leigh-Pemberton'*

RULE TWENTY-FIVE – ALWAYS HAVE READY YOUR PLAN B

"The best pleasures of this world are not quite true."

"Take life too seriously, and what is it worth? If the morning wake us to no new joys, if the evening bring us not the hope of new pleasure, is it worthwhile to dress and undress?"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

While working for the furniture industry, I used to make regular trips to Germany and became good friends with the business chief of the Frankfurt Messe.

Gerhardt had been a helicopter pilot in the Luftwaffe so we were both on second, indeed third careers. Frankfurt wanted to hold a furniture show and Cologne, host of the biggest furniture show, was not pleased. None-the-less, having talked to our manufacturers, quite a number welcomed the idea of a second big show in Germany. So the event went ahead.

On the opening night there was another event elsewhere in the Messe, which is huge. Our show would start with a speech from the Italian industry minister followed by a cocktail party. However, Gerhardt confided that there was a much better party at the other event.

When the Italian Industry Minister began his speech I stood at the back of the crowd. The lighting was dimmed for the party but I found the top of a large staircase to the lower floor. I stood right beside it as instructed. The Minister was in full flow, spouting Europeak in Italian, French and occasional German. I wore my most interested face. The waiters gathered with their drinks trays.

The Minister droned on. I heard female footsteps approaching on the floor below and glanced down the stairs.

A rather beautiful tall girl with long hair had started up the wide stairs. She stopped and smiled shyly, 'Herr Hill?'

'You're very kind to come and fetch me,' I confirmed and as quietly as possible joined her on the floor below. No wonder Gerhardt said his team were all specially selected people! A good friend's daughter was his assistant and her sister their father's office manager.

We walked along a huge hall until we came to the doors and stepped outside into a pleasant night. Across a large square the sound of jazz floated from a German version of the Dome at Brighton Pavilion. Lights blazed inside. We strolled towards the sound of music. Once through the door we found the party in full swing, the whole dome crowded with happy people. Some were drinking and eating, the other half dancing. All gave the impression of being experts at letting their hair down and having a good time. The dome was a good hundred and fifty feet wide and its floor covered by white clothed tables loaded with champagne and food – known in those parts as a cocktail riche, one where you don't need to stop for a dinner. At opposite sides of the dome were two permanent stages. On each was a jazz band, one playing, the other taking a break.

I thanked my charming young guide for steering me on the best compass bearing. She laughed and waved to a grinning Gerhardt who called, 'Hi, Adrian, welcome to annual conference of the marketing association for the whole of Germany.'

Introducing the author



Adrian Hill served as an officer in the Royal Engineers before joining the Commonwealth Relations Office in summer 1963. He spent nearly thirty years as a diplomat and was directly involved in many of the great events of our times. After leaving HM Diplomatic Service he wrote books, worked for industry, served on the CBI Council and created a unique business.

All his life he has been a supporter of Britain as a Commonwealth nation. He opposed membership of the Common Market. He regards the 2016 referendum result as a watershed and credit to the courage of the British people. He also believes that after its utter failure to defend the voters' choice, indeed outright hostility, that Parliament should be stripped of many of its powers and these responsibilities given to the people or local governments as in Switzerland.

From nearly thirty years as a member of HM Diplomatic Service, he knows there are many brilliant and very decent people representing our country. Perhaps their views were ignored or they suffer mass tunnel vision. Certainly the Commonwealth Office ought to be revived and given the aid budget to manage.

As for the FCO – their leadership set themselves a low standard which they failed to maintain.

