

Ambassador, Jim Hacker, Claire, Bernard, Humphrey

Bernard The Ambassador of Kumranistan , Prime Minister.

The Ambassador enters

Claire turns upstage and we don't hear the rest of her phone call

Jim I'm not ready for him. Oh God! *(He turns, and jumps as he sees the ambassador standing right beside him)* Oh good!

The Ambassador has a beard, and speaks excellent English. He is wearing silk pyjamas and a monogrammed robe

Jim puts down his whisky on the coffee table and greets the Ambassador like a long-lost friend

Claire hangs up

Jim Ah. Your Excellency!

Ambassador Prime Minister. Please excuse my *déshabillé*, I had just retired for the night when I received your summons.

Jim No problem. *(He loosens his tie)* We're awfully casual at Chequers. Aren't we Bernard?

Bernard takes off his jacket. Jim stares meaningfully at Humphrey

Humphrey?

Humphrey, irritated, pushes his breast pocket handkerchief down, out of sight

Ambassador *(to Humphrey)* Ah, Bubbles, my dear chap.

Jim }

Claire + Bernard Bubbles?

Ambassador It's like the old days isn't it, late night drinks and all that.

Jim Bubbles?

Ambassador They don't know your old nickname?

Humphrey *(mortified)* No, they ... er ... a silly thing, Prime Minister ... I used to be partial to champagne, that's all.

Jim And this is Claire, Head of the Policy Unit at Number Ten.

Handshakes

Do sit down.

They all sit

I'm glad to hear that you and - Bubbles - are old friends.

Humphrey scowls

Ambassador We are friendly.

Jim So. Bernard's briefed you?

Ambassador Yes indeed.

Jim And?

Ambassador I'm not sure that I know precisely what you're asking me.

Jim Does Mr Aitikeev mean what he says?

Ambassador Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister consults me on matters of Kumranistan's policy pertaining to the United Kingdom. Mr Aitikeev's sexual proclivities are not a matter of public policy.

Jim Did you know about his perverted tastes?

Ambassador I don't consider it my business.

Humphrey Well, unfortunately he's made it your business, wouldn't you say?

Claire Your Excellency, do you think Mr Aitikeev will renege on his commitment to the pipeline contract if we cannot - oblige - him tonight?

Ambassador He can be stubborn.

The Brits exchange glances

Look, I suspect that my personal opinion is the same as yours. But in my country sex with multiple partners is fine. We allow polygamy.

Jim But this is prostitution.

Ambassador Yes. But I am here, not as a moralist, but as a servant of our government.

Jim But there are moral considerations here.

Ambassador Indeed there are. And in all fairness to Mr Aitikeev, I'm quite sure that he did not ask you to obtain virgins for him. *(To Bernard)* Am I right?

Bernard is wondering if he ~ losing his sanity

Bernard No, he didn't.

Ambassador As I thought. He'd never do that.

Jim Because?

Ambassador Moral considerations.

Claire Also, wouldn't that be a rather impractical request? Three virgin call girls?

Ambassador The reason is, he would not defile them. He would want women who have already been defiled.

Jim That's more moral?

Ambassador In our culture, once a female has been defiled she is worthless. Dishonoured. Her family will not take her back. If they do, they will kill her. Few men would marry her. Her only real future is in a brothel. As a moral society we have no tolerance for that sort of thing.

Claire Not among women, anyway.

Jim Are you suggesting that we are a less moral society than Kumranistan?

Ambassador (*with irony*) I would say, yes, we are even more rigorous about *purity* than Great Britain. We would certainly not allow page three. Nor some of the publications I saw in a newsagents, like "Lusty Swedish Virgins", or "Big Ones". But in this instance Mr Aitikeev is offering an excellent opportunity to these girls: he's not ungenerous and I'm sure he will give them hundreds of pounds. That's better than death, wouldn't you say?

Claire Yes, but that's not the choice here. In our culture-

Ambassador Forgive me, but I'm describing our culture. Mr Aitikeev's culture.

Jim But it's unthinkable! There'd be national outrage if it got out! The British people would think this is - just *wrong!*

Ambassador Would they? Maybe they would just be envious.

Jim That's even worse, politically.

Claire British *women* would think it wrong.

Bernard And some men!

Ambassador You say tomayto and I say tomahto.

Jim It's that simple?

Ambassador You believe your values are right. So do we. You believe you should impose your values on us. Many of my people would like to impose their values on you. I say, live and let live.

Claire Are you a Muslim?

Ambassador I'm a diplomat.

Claire Yes, I know, but apart from that what are you?

Ambassador I am a Libra. And a member of the MCC, of course.

Humphrey } (*doubtfully*) Well that's good ...

Jim

Claire You don't want to discuss religion.

Ambassador (*smiling*) Dear me, no. I was brought up to believe it was bad manners to discuss religion in polite company, weren't you?

Jim I think Claire was asking because you seem ... rather English.

Ambassador Harrow and Oxford, Prime Minister. I know how to play a straight bat.

Humphrey Opening bat for Oxford, got a blue.

Ambassador The point is, Prime Minister, my government has expressed a willingness to help you obtain a loan that you need. I shouldn't really be saying this, but it is Mr Aitikeev who really wants this treaty, rather than my government as a whole. Quite frankly, our President is not as pro-Western as Mr Aitikeev and he responds to pressure from our extremists. We have thousands of them in Kumranistan.

Claire How do you define an extremist?

Ambassador Anyone who opposes the government, really.

Jim Well, we've got *millions* of extremists here, actually.

Humphrey (*smirking*) A majority, in fact.

Jim gives him a dirty look

Ambassador The President of Kumranistan, I must warn you, is not convinced by your desire to force what you call democracy down the throats of the peoples of our region when he can see the dismal results of it here.

Bernard It's the BBC ...